



Intercultural Communication in the U.S. Classroom: Teaching Across Cultures



Hillary Patton -
Dr. Thomas Greene -

Office of International Services
Office of International Services

Welcome / Introductions

Hillary Patton, Senior International Student & Scholar Advisor, Office of International Services

Thomas Greene, Ph.D., Associate Director, Office of International Services



Learning Goals & Outcomes

- Explore different cultural norms and discuss how they impact the learning environment.
- Discuss appropriate ways to manage interactions with students.
- Participate in a variety of activities to demonstrate effective teaching methods.
- Learn ways in which to design a learning environment that recognizes and embraces cultural diversity.
- Identify at least two additional resources for you to learn more information about teaching.



Icebreaker & Debrief



Exploring Cultural Values

- Realize that culture isn't a dichotomy
- Think of these values on a continuum
- These comparisons are extremes; cultures have variations of all of these values
- Even with culture, individual differences and values vary



Educational Systems are Cultural

- U.S. education is more “social-constructivist” than “behaviorist”.
- Pedagogical practices are more learner-centered, active, engaged, and both within and outside the classroom.
- “Social-constructivism” means that “knowledge” is created socially and actively. If learning is passive, students are acquiring information, not knowledge.



Exploring Cultural Values

Low Power Distance

- People are more or less equal or deserve to be treated equally
- Any “status” is largely based on perceived merit of accomplishments and character (earned respect)

High Power Distance

- Rigid hierarchies
- “Status” (age, gender, income, family, general position of authority) matters



Exploring Cultural Values

Direct Communication

- One means what one says
- Do not keep one's feelings to oneself (positive or negative)
- Little guessing of another's meaning

Indirect Communication

- What is said is not necessarily what one means
- One must infer meaning
- Being too direct is arrogance and sometimes shameful
- "Saving face" is valued



Case Studies

Purpose:

- To exhibit differing communication styles and expectations among domestics and internationals in a university setting and how miscommunication can occur
- To identify teaching strategies that will aid Teaching Assistants in mitigating the intercultural classroom.



Case Study Video #1



NC STATE UNIVERSITY



OIS | Office of International Services

International TA Training

INTERCULTURAL TEACHING SCENARIO

Teaching Strategy

Discussion

- What types of cultural values do you see playing out in this scenario?
 - How would you describe Shelly's communication style? The TA's?
- Do you see any potential conflicts?
- How would you handle this situation?
 - What could both the TA and student have benefited from?



Case Study Video #2



&

present

Intercultural Communication in the US Classroom
Teaching Strategy: *Anyone?... Anyone?...*



Cultural Values and Teaching Strategies

Discuss in small groups. Try to identify cultural values you saw present and teaching strategies you think could help the situation. Be prepared to bring your thoughts back to the larger group discussion.



Exploring Cultural Values

Low Uncertainty Avoidance

- Comfortable with risk
- Differences among individuals and groups more easily tolerated
- Less regulation/control over life's situations

High Uncertainty Avoidance

- Risk averse
- Differences within or outside groups not easily tolerated
- Conformity is comfortable



Exploring Cultural Values

Direct Communication

- One means what one says
- Do not keep one's feelings to oneself (positive or negative)
- Little guessing of another's meaning

Indirect Communication

- What is said is not necessarily what one means
- One must infer meaning
- Being too direct is arrogance and sometimes shameful
- "Saving face" is valued



Cultural Values

Individualist

- Privacy valued
- Competition valued
- Individuals praised
- Loyalty to self and pursuit of own goals
- If I am healthy and happy, then the group will benefit

vs

Collectivist

- Identifies self within a more important group(s)
- Group decision making
- Individual praise is uncomfortable even shameful
- Group (family, community, “clan”) welfare is goal
- If the group is healthy and happy, then I will benefit



Teaching Strategies

- Icebreaker
- Lecture
- Video
- Case study
- Think/Pair/Share
- Role play
- Small group discussion
- Large group discussion
- Questioning
- PowerPoint
- “Chunking” information
- Reading
- Writing
- Reflecting
- Next: Self quiz & panel

Main Points:

1. Break up your lecture every 15 minutes
2. Add small activities to your class



Questions?

Evaluation:

https://ncsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dnEYvZili3PcJwN

