International TAs in UF Classrooms.

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Outline.

• I. What do you think?
• II. US Classroom cultural norms (Rapport, Language, Pragmatics.)
• III. Culture quiz.
• Continuing cultural resources.
• References.
• “Good communication = good teaching = good communication.”
Activity 1: What do you think?

• Don’t panic.
• First impressions matter.
• Get to know your students.
• Let your students get to know you.
• Don’t panic if you can’t understand them.
What do you think?

• Smile. A lot
• Organize your lectures.
• Check, constantly, that students understand.
• Don’t answer with a “yes” or “no.”
• Show enthusiasm for course content.
What do you think?

- Repeat your name often.
- Rephrase important information 3 times.
- Be very clear about how to get an “A.”
- If you are bored your students are bored.
- Talk to experienced TAs.
What do you think?

• Use UF Teaching Center resources.
• Silence is usually a bad thing.
• Get feedback.
• You lose if you don’t know names after 3 weeks.
• You are not expected to know everything.
What do you think?

- Classroom/lab “rapport” is formed largely in the first 3 weeks.
- Problem with student? Act like the teacher.
- Don’t panic.
Let your students get to know you.

• Share something from your life.
• Why grad student in the US. Why your field.
• Hobbies.
• Goals for the future.
• Me.
Me, 3
Activity 2: What do you know about your students?

• Age range.
• GPA
• Majors?
• Social/political attitudes?
• Learning preferences (group work/ solo, multimedia/textbook)?
• Educational background (preparation for your course)?
Your Students
“Generation Z”

- 4.35 AVG GPA -- Fall 2016 freshman @ UF
- 55% Caucasian and 45% other (Hispanic, African-Am, Asian, et. al.)
- Both younger and older than previous classes.
- “Digital natives.”
- Socially “liberal.” Same-sex marriage, ethnic diversity, post-2008 entrepreneurial/money oriented, sober realism (no-American dream).
- Church attendance up (41%)
- Risk averse (college debt, rule abiding.)
Gen Z (according to Wiki)

• “Generation Z college students prefer intrapersonal and independent learning over group work, yet like to do their solo work alongside others in a social manner when studying. They like their learning to be practical and hands-on and want their professors to help them engage with and apply the content rather than simply share what they could otherwise find on their own online.”
Digital Natives.

**Digital Immigrants**
- Prefer to talk in-person or on the phone
- Don’t text or only sparingly
- Prefer synchronous communication
- Prefer receiving information slowly: linearly, logically, & sequentially
- Prefer reading text (i.e., books) on processing pictures, sounds & video

**Digital Natives**
- Prefer to talk via chat, text, or messaging thru social media
- Text more than call
- Prefer asynchronous communication
- Prefer receiving information quickly & simultaneously from multiple multimedia & other sources
- Prefer processing /interacting with pictures, graphics, sounds & video before text

(Zur & Zur, 2011; Rosen, 2010; Prennsky, 2001)
Activity 3:

• What kind of rapport/relationship do you want to have with your students?
• What can you do to add clarity and organization to your lectures?
• Do you expect your students to be polite and friendly? How can you be perceived as polite and friendly? How can you fit in in the US?
Rapport building, organizational language, and pragmatics.

• In the US, instructors/TAs attempt to build a positive “rapport” with their students.
  – Positively impacts student learning outcomes and teacher evaluations.
  – UF study (2015) – ITAs have limited rapport building strategies. Video of 30 ITAs at UF.
  – Webb and Barrett (2014) – “Student views of instructor-student rapport in the college classroom.” (See handout.)
Using language with greater clarity.

• Cultural differences in classroom discourse.

1. **Organizational Clarity** -- Tyler (1994); Tapper, *et. al.* (2016) – US TAs use DMs (Discourse Markers) more frequently and more “richly” than ITAs.
   • “…and this is important, and you have to know this, and this is also really important.”
   • “Three key ideas...this is just an example of #2. So the three main ideas were?”

2. **Responding** to student questions. 3 - 4 step rule.

Fitting in: pragmatics

• Communication improves when we think that you are one of us.

• How to:
  – Apologize politely
  – Criticize politely (or not)
  – Ask a favor politely
  – Refuse a request politely
  – Express condolences or a compliment appropriately
Mini Summary

• What do you think?
• Me. Rapport, language, & pragmatics.
• Activity 3: How can you use this to create a good first impression for your students in the next three weeks?
Teaching and Culture Resources.

- UF Teaching Center – TA Development -- [https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/ta-development/](https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/ta-development/)
- ASE website – [http://ase.ufl.edu](http://ase.ufl.edu)
- Independent Florida Alligator newspaper -- [http://www.alligator.org](http://www.alligator.org)
- Reitz Union Leisure Courses -- [https://leisure.union.ufl.edu/#/](https://leisure.union.ufl.edu/#/)
- Classroom Pragmatics competence -- [https://americanenglish.state.gov/resources/teaching-pragmatics](https://americanenglish.state.gov/resources/teaching-pragmatics)
US Culture Quiz

• Name these people
References


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