

## College Education Across Cultures- Interviewing & Sharing Activity

**Goal:** Provide you with a better understanding of the educational backgrounds (attitudes, priorities, expectations, styles of learning, classroom etiquette) of the students (domestic and international) in your classes that could affect their approach to learning, their behavior in and out of the classroom, and their success in your class.

### Directions:

- ❖ Review the questions below. Be sure you understand the point of each question.
- ❖ If you are an international TA, use the questions below in an interview with a domestic undergraduate or graduate student. If you are a domestic TA, use the questions below to interview an international undergraduate or graduate student.
- ❖ After your interview, prepare the following:
  - (1) Summary of your observations regarding the similarities and differences between you and the person you interviewed.
  - (2) Comments on the implications for teaching a diverse population of students.
- ❖ Be prepared to share your revelations during the last workshop of this course, **Friday, November 16<sup>th</sup>**. If you need help finding an international student, contact Alexis Finger: <[fingerag@drexel.edu](mailto:fingerag@drexel.edu)>.
- ❖ Be sure to bring **all of your observations and midterm evaluations** with you to the final class, as well.

### Interview Questions:

1. What is required to get into a good college/ university in your country?
2. What determines which school students attend: proximity, grades, and money?
3. What determines students' majors?
4. What stimulates/ inspires students to work hard in school? (competition, parental support, parental approval, self motivation, finances, other reason)
5. In what situations do students interact with faculty: in the classroom, the office, school activities, after school activities?

6. Do all instructors have office hours? Are students encouraged to visit their instructors during office hours to get help with course work or discuss career goals? Explain.
7. Are students encouraged to participate in class: never, sometimes, and frequently? If they are encouraged, what are the reasons: ask questions, answer questions, something else?
8. What types of classes are typical: lectures, recitations, and labs?
9. Approximately how many students are in a typical class- lecture, recitation, and laboratory? (10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 100, or more)
10. Do students need to make presentations in class? If so, what kind? Explain.
11. Is group work (group projects/ collaborative learning) common in university classes in your country? If this is true, in what kinds of classes and for what kinds of assignments?
12. How many classes do students usually take a term/ semester?
13. How long are your terms/ semesters?
14. How many papers do students usually write a term/ semester? What kinds of papers are these? How long are they?
15. How many hours do students usually spend on homework during the week and on weekends?
16. Are students asked to analyze an idea, experience or theory? If so, in what types of classes? Are they asked to do this orally or in writing?
17. Are students asked to give their opinion? If so, in what types of classes? Are they asked to do this orally or in writing?
18. Is creativity encouraged in your classes? If so, which classes? In what ways can students demonstrate their creativity?
19. What kinds of classroom exercises/ activities are most common in your culture? What do you prefer? Why?
20. What kinds of tests are given- written and oral? How often?
21. What kinds of test questions do you get- short answer, multiple choice, essay, other?

22. What happens when a student fails a test? What happens when a student can't take a test?
23. How is cheating on a test regarded in your country? Is it encouraged, discouraged, or ignored? What about plagiarism?
24. Are there teaching assistants in your country? If so, what are their responsibilities? Are there tutors? What do they do?
25. What do students do when they are having difficulty with the content of the class material and homework assignments?
26. What do students do when they are having difficulty with their instructors?
27. What types of behavior are considered taboo in the classroom: eating, sleeping, texting, checking email, talking, and exiting before the class is over, other things? Explain.
28. How much time is generally spent on socializing during the week and on the weekend?
29. What activities do students engage in during their free time?
30. Are social organizations, clubs, such as fraternities and sororities, common at your high schools and universities? Explain.
31. How important are sports at your university? What kinds of sports are popular?
32. Is participation in community service encouraged or required in your school? Explain.
33. Other questions?????

**Final Workshop: November 16th**

- ❖ Get into groups of four to six teaching assistants. Try to have diversity in your group: international and domestic students.
- ❖ Share the results of the interviews and observations about similarities and differences. Look for patterns.

Answer these questions:

1. How does this information help you prepare to meet the expectations and needs of all of your students?
2. How does this information help you interact more effectively with all of your students?
3. What practical things can you do create a positive learning environment in your classroom that encourages all students to participate in the learning process?

Prepare to present:

- ❖ First, focus on important things you learned from the interviewing and discussion activity, including any patterns.
- ❖ Second, provide concrete suggestions for teaching a diverse class.