CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE CLASSROOM

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“Student-centered”

- Active learning - **not** the “container” model
- Critical thinking, expressing and defending your position
- Ongoing Assessment
- Learning outside the classroom
- Degrees of *formality* vary
- Teachers’ authority
- Student Responsibilities
- Tone of feedback
“Active Learning”

- Classroom Formats
  - Discussion/Debate
  - Presentation
  - Role-playing
  - Group project
  - Freewriting
  - Case study

- Expectations Outside Class
  - Reading (Lecture/Seminar as Supplement)
  - Problem Sets
  - Response Papers
Classroom Structures

- Classmates
  - Varying “majors”
  - Varying ages

- Professors and GSIs
  - Lecture/Discussion Leaders
  - Different relationships
  - Who to contact?
  - Who’s grading?

- Outside the class:
  - Canvas [formerly ctools]
  - Office Hours (OH)
  - Group Projects, Responses, Preparation

- Various formats.. [LEC], [DIS], [SEM], [LAB]..
Format #1: Lecture

An educational interaction facilitated by the professor in a classroom.

- **Expectations?**
  - Be punctual, attentive, respectful…etc.

- **Tips that may help you succeed**
  - Active participation
  - Take good notes
  - Ask questions without disrupting the flow of the lecture
  - Talk to your professor/GSI at the end of lecture or, visit him/her during office hours
Format #2: Lab

A hands-on experience, mostly offered in science courses, to help students understand the lecture materials.

- **Expectations?**
  - Be cooperative, observant, curious, honest…etc.

- **Tips that may help you succeed**
  - Don’t be afraid to ask questions
  - Ask why - understand the science behind the experiments
  - Be a good team player
A conversation/debate on a specific topic, served as a platform to exchange ideas.

- **Expectations?**
  - Be open-minded, creative, active...etc.

- **Tips that may help you succeed**
  - Come to class prepared
  - Don’t be afraid to disagree with your classmates and the GSI
  - Don’t make disagreements personal
  - Be mindful-don’t dominate the discussion
Format #4: Office Hours

A time set aside by your instructor to meet with students outside of class in a more personal environment

■ Expectations?
  ➢ Be respectful, open, inquiring...etc.

■ Tips that may help you succeed
  ➢ Check the time and location for the office hours before you visit
  ➢ Ask any questions that you had during lecture (doesn’t have to be related to lecture)
  ➢ Build personal relationships with your instructors
Format #5: Group Activity

Form small groups for one of the following activities:

1. Design a workshop for new international students on how to prepare for winter weather

2. Create a menu for international student welcome brunch with a $200 budget

3. Brainstorm a birthday party for your friend who loves soccer
Academic Expectations

■ For students:
  ➢ Active participation in seminars and discussions
  ➢ Feel free to ask questions
  ➢ Thoroughly read and understand class syllabus
  ➢ Readings and ideas ahead of class
  ➢ Good time management
  ➢ Good relationships with peers, faculty and staff

■ For faculty:
  ➢ Effective communication
  ➢ Hold office hours
  ➢ Mentor students
  ➢ Report any suspected violations of academic misconduct
  ➢ Evaluated by students
Cultural Expectations

- No tolerance for discrimination based on gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation
- Openness to foreigners, but often uninformed about their countries and cultures
- Competitive, but collaborative
- Emphasis on creativity and individual achievement
- Constructive feedback for peers
- Grades often discussed, but not officially public
- Ask for clarification, explain disagreement
“Is it okay…?” - Behaviour

- To greet my professors/GSIs with their first name?
  - Start with Dr. ___ or Prof. ___ or Mr./Ms. ___, they’ll let you know when first names are okay.

- To eat during class?
  - Yes (probably)! Don’t starve yourself. But be sure not to bring food that has strong smells and eat quietly.

- To avoid asking/answering questions in class because of language difficulty?
  - No! Increased confidence requires risk taking and experience.

- To ignore my UM email account?
  - No! Everyone at UM communicates through university email, and you will miss important information.

- To leave the classroom before the class is over?
  - No, unless you have a legitimate reason and are given permission beforehand.
Is it okay…? - Academically

- To interrupt the professor to ask for clarification?
  - Don’t interrupt them in the middle of a sentence, but it’s okay and expected to put up your hand so that they can stop and find out what needs more explanation.

- To ask my partners to contribute more effort to our group project?
  - Yes. It is their responsibility to participate and you shouldn’t be the only one working on a group project.

- To ask my professor about why I received this grade?
  - Yes, they should be willing to explain it to you.

- To paraphrase someone else’s writing in your own essay?
  - Yes, but only with proper citations. If the words and/or ideas you express originated elsewhere, you need to acknowledge the exact source.

- To request a change in assignment due dates or exam dates?
  - Perhaps. Syllabus for each class should have a policy on extensions.
Classroom Behavior

- What are some of the behaviors you observed from the students?
- What are the students doing that interferes with the professor’s ability to teach?
- What can the professor do differently?
- What can students do to create a better environment?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frK7UoNo8Og
Make Use of Campus Resources

- U-M Student Handbook
- Language Resource Center
- Math Lab
- Science Learning Center
- Sweetland Writing Center
- English Language Institute
- Student Organizations
- Rackham Graduate School
- International Center Workshops

- Library
- Academic Affairs
- Tutoring Services
- Peer Mentors
- Study Groups
- Academic Advisors
- Career Advisors
- Professors/GSIs
- Academic Support Services
Improving American Language Proficiency

- Take courses in English Language Institute (ELI)
  - [www.lsa.umich.edu/eli](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli)
- Join a Conversation Circle through ELI
- Attend social events (e.g. school, college, department, International Center, etc.)
- Listen and read, but most of all, practice speaking and writing

*Practice, Practice, Practice!*
Improving American Language Proficiency

- International Center Orientation Workshops:
  - Communicating with Your Academic and Research Advisors (*for graduate students only*)
  - Finding Your Voice: In Classes and Your Department
  - Communicating by Email
Common UM Campus Terms

- Michigan time
- Wolverine Access
- Uniqname
- UMID
- Ctools/Canvas
- Mirlyn
- UGLi / Hatcher / The Dude
- The Diag
- GSI/GSRA
- GEO / CSG
- MGet It
- ILL

http://parents.umich.edu/studentlife/lingo.php
Academic Integrity & Misconduct

- What is academic misconduct?
  - Any activity that compromises the academic integrity of the university’s educational and academic process.

- What is plagiarism?
  - Representing someone else’s ideas, words, statements, or other work as one’s own without proper acknowledgment or citation.

- What is unacceptable collaboration?
  - When a student works with another or others on a project and then submits written work which is represented explicitly or implicitly as the student’s own individual work.

Source: http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/examples.html
Academic Integrity & Misconduct

- Cheating
- Unacceptable Collaboration
- Classroom Disturbances
- Falsification of Data, Records, and Official Documents
- Aiding and Abetting Dishonesty

Source: http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/examples.html
Potential consequences of academic misconduct include loss of legal immigration status.

Ignorance of academic integrity policies is *NOT* an acceptable explanation for academic misconduct.

Honor Codes and Academic Integrity policies are published by each School and College:

- [http://www.crlt.umich.edu/faculty/honor.php](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/faculty/honor.php)
- [http://internationalcenter.umich.edu/intlstudents/integrity.html](http://internationalcenter.umich.edu/intlstudents/integrity.html)
GO BLUE!

G: Go to class prepared
O: Organize your time wisely
B: Be ready to participate in class
L: Learn by observing, thinking, doing, and asking
U: Utilize campus resources
E: Enjoy yourself while you work at your adaptation to new cultural and academic environment.
Questions?

Please remember to complete your evaluation forms.

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