

EAP Presentation 9/2014

Amanda Weppler

EAP Fellow aweppler@nd.edu

US Classroom Culture: What to Expect as an International Student and Teaching Assistant

Co-Sponsored by the Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning

CSLC (Center for the Study of Languages and Cultures) 329 DeBartolo Hall

cslc.nd.edu

EAP (English for Academic Purposes)

cslc.nd.edu/programs/eap/

Weekly Workshops, Tutoring and Consultation Services, Courses for Graduate Students

loglesbe@nd.edu

Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning

353 DeBartolo Hall

kaneb.nd.edu

kaneb.nd.edu/rsrscs/resources-for-international-faculty-and-tas/

Books in Kaneb library; Links to web resources

krudenga@nd.edu

Graduate School Professional Development Activities and Calendar

http://graduateschool.nd.edu/professional_development/

http://graduateschool.nd.edu/professional_development/pdcalendar/

There are certain prevalent American cultural values that have an effect in the classroom:

Freedom of Choice
The Rights of Individuals

Interactive Thinking
Democratic Principles
Personal Responsibility

In American Universities, students:

Choose their course of study and each term's classes
Are expected and encouraged to speak up in class
Participate in hands-on learning
Engage in opportunities for learning outside of the classroom

International Students face the difficulties of cultural differences, and the English of the American Academy

Classroom Language Tips:

Be prepared for class.

Look up the pronunciation of uncertain words
Practice saying key words and phrases
Prepare and practice your lesson plans...
...but don't try to memorize them
Record yourself (before or during class)
Practice with a friend, and ask for feedback on clarity

In-Class Communication

Speak slowly
Be upfront about your language ability, but never apologize
Encourage students to ask you to clarify or repeat something
Give them important material (key terms and ideas) in writing, through handouts, PowerPoint, or writing on the board

Dealing with Nervousness

Act confident and enthusiastic about what you are teaching. Energy is contagious!
Take care with the pace of your delivery
Look out at the audience as much as possible, and make eye contact with 2 or 3 people in different places in the room
Check in with your students to verify their understanding

Help Students Pay Attention

Use listening cues and signal words
Transitional phrases help students follow the trajectory of a lesson
Use more than just your words—pitch, inflection, body language, gestures, and eye contact all aid in auditory understanding

Purdue OWL transitional phrases (see link in post)

Practice!

Engage in English conversation in more informal settings
Talk with other graduate students in your program
Participate in campus activities
Learn more about American cultural practices, ideas, and humor

Develop Rapport with Your Students

Ask students to fill out an information card;
 include an unusual or entertaining question
Learn the students' names, and encourage them to learn each other's names
Devote energy to a positive learning environment
Relate to your students on a personal level
Treat your students as fellow adults
Encourage students to interact with one another—in class discussion, and
 before and after class
Make yourself available
Provide positive reinforcement
Avoid judging students
Give nonverbal encouragement
Refer students to help services on campus

Your Supervising Professor

Consider their teaching styles; you don't have to copy it, but if your style is
 very different, address that with your students directly
Be more wary of arguing with or criticizing the professor than you might in
 your own classes; if you are certain you have valuable critical feedback
 for the professor, wait until you can talk privately
Always speak of the professor respectfully to your students