

Spring 2012 Conversation Session Guidelines Part B Week 6: Societal values/family

<p>Community Building Bring a roll of toilet paper. Tell students that they are going on a camping trip and that they need to bring enough toilet paper for 2 days and 1 night. Allow students take as much or as little of toilet paper as possible.</p> <p>After everyone has gotten the pieces of toilet paper, tell the students that they each has to use a word/phrase to describe their family values for every piece of toilet paper they have gotten. E.g. Honesty is the best policy and/or faithful.</p> <p>Have students explain WHY they chose that particular word and/or phrase and explain its significance.</p> <p>*Can use other things, such as candies</p>	<p>Society Values Write down on a piece of scrap paper one word that the students would use to describe a country in terms of societal values (home country or any country). After students write down the word and put it in the middle, volunteer reads the individual word that describes the society and the rest of the students guess what country that is.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students need to justify why they chose/guessed the country at the end. • For instance, some people may say “freedom” when describing the United States. 	<p>Heated Topics Do you believe that the government should regulate domestic/personal affairs? Domestic affairs may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The age in which one can drink • Number of children one can have • The job or opportunities that are available to you • One’s religion and spiritual affiliation • Whether parents can engage in physical punishment when punishing their children <p>Why or why not? Example: -In an overpopulated world, should people be free to have as many children as they want? - Do you think it's acceptable for parents to use corporal punishment as a means of discipline? Why/why not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think the government can indirectly regulate these domestic/personal affairs? • Do you think the government in your native country has directly/indirectly regulated domestic/personal affairs and in what way?
<p>Culture Corner Family Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have your parents/family members impacted you in your career, relationship and life choices? • What are some expectations parents have for their children? <p>Societal Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think is the most serious problem in the world? Why do you think so? What can we do as individuals to solve this problem? • What are the perceptions of homelessness in your country? Are there food kitchens for the needy in your country? Are there homeless shelters in your country? • Do you think that minorities should be given job priority because of their race? Why/why not? • In terms of your own life experiences, do you want to accomplish a lot in your life or do you want to take it easy and simply be happy? • How does your culture view the aging population? • Is there a system implemented for taking care of senior citizens in your own country? 	<p>Probing deeper on societal values/family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who/what do you think have the most power in influencing the societal values? Explain your response. • An apple doesn’t fall far from a tree. What do you think is the meaning of this idiom in terms of societal/family values? • “We are the products of the society” • Do you agree or disagree with the statement? • Are there influential factors that help us to defy the status quo? • Some people think that: “The United States is: Children’s heaven, Young people’s battlefield, Elder people’s graveyard” - Do you agree or disagree with this statement. Why or why not? <p>Additional issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some reasons people use illegal drugs? • How do people view suicides in your country? • What are some things people can do to eliminate discrimination and prejudice? 	

Spring 2012 Conversation Session Guidelines Part B Week 7: Education

Community Building
Could've, should've, would've

- If you could go back in time and choose your major/field of occupation again, what would you choose?
- If you could change something related to your education in the past, what would you do differently?
- Will you/have you projected such “regrets” on your children?

No regrets!

- What are some things that you would like to learn now? (academic or non-academic)

Old Wise Wizard
 There is a Chinese saying, “If you don’t work hard in your youth, you will be depressed in old age.”

- Do you agree with this statement?
- What do you think is the background meaning of this statement?
- Do you know of an example/counter example of this statement?

Learning is a lifelong process; you grow old the minute you stop learning.

- *Agree or disagree?*

HOT TOPICS
 What are some topics that are relevant to you regarding education?

a) Procrastination

- Why do people procrastinate?
- When is it good to procrastinate?
- What kinds of things do you put off doing?
- How do you feel when other people put off something you want done soon?
- What can procrastinators do to change their lives?

*For more information on ways to change procrastination, come to one of our study skills workshop for procrastinators! (Open to all UMD members).

2. Tuition

- Is it the government’s responsibility to provide free education for all (even in the postsecondary/college level)?

Debate

- Corporal punishment (physical punishment in school)
- Equity vs. equality (What’s the difference?)
- Exams: Should end-of-year written examinations, which can be very stressful and many students fare worse in exams than in other forms of assessment, be replaced with other forms of exams?
 Or is it good training for later life when success depends on being able to deal with stress and perform well on big occasions?

[pros and cons](http://www.idebate.org/debatatabase/topic_details.php?topicID=78)
 (http://www.idebate.org/debatatabase/topic_details.php?topicID=78)

Idioms/slang

Culture Corner

- Is it difficult for people without a college degree (or any other post-secondary degree) to get good jobs where you are from? Why or why not?
- In your opinion, why is education important?
- Some people believe that education is the greatest equalizer in society, do you agree with the statement? Why or why not?
- Whose responsibilities is it to educate a child?
- There is a saying, “It takes a village to raise a child.” What are your viewpoints on that?
- In your opinion, does the United States provide a good public education? How about your country?
- What are the pros and cons of the education system in your country and the United States?
- From your own education experience, what are the qualities of a good teacher? Have you ever had a teacher who had/have inspired you?

Idioms

- **Butterflies in your stomach:** Being anxious and nervous.
 As soon as my name was called to give the speech, I felt butterflies in my stomach.
- **cream of the crop:** The best of the best.
 You are going to be very impressed with these young kids. They are the cream of the crop in math nationally.
- **Hit the books:** begin to study hard
- **Pass with flying colors:** pass something easily and with a high score
- **Teacher’s pet:** the teacher’s favorite student

Slang (education-related)
 Nerds, dork, geek, four-eyed
 Got more? Share with us!

Values in Education: *Perseverance* (See week 7 in Supplementary Guide)
 Questions: Different ways of illustrating not giving up. What are some common analogies used across cultures for illustrating values and character?

Spring 2012 Conversation Session Guidelines Part B Week 8: Expertise/strength/Major Exchange and jobs

Community Building
If you need to pick one area/word/characteristic as your strength, what would you pick?

In other words, what is an area/field that you are confident about?

Funds of Knowledge
For this week’s session, give each student 3 to 5 minutes to present their strength/major/expertise by sharing with each other their interests etc.
E.g. They could share what with each other briefly what their major is about, what they do or what they enjoy doing in their spare time.
E.g. Maria may be good at playing soccer, she could explain the rules for soccer and what she does to make herself a good soccer player. Maybe she could even teach her peers how to play soccer one session!

Tips: Have students listen to each other’s mini presentation and ask follow-up questions to check for their comprehension.

Culture Corner

1. In your culture, are there certain majors or fields that people strive towards?
 - Why do you think more people want to be in those fields of work?
 - Do you think societal values and expectations have an impact?
2. If money was not an issue (you get paid the same no matter what you do), what is your dream job?
3. Why do people have jobs? What would happen if half of the people in the world do not go to work tomorrow? Do you think it’s going to have a major impact on our society?
4. How does your job/what you do benefit the society?
5. Does what you do have to benefit the society in order for it to be a job? Why or why not?
6. If you don’t have to work for your living, what would you do in your life?
7. Is there minimum wage in your country? What are the pros and cons of minimum wage?
8. What could you do to support fair trade so that the workers are not exploited?
9. What are some factors/circumstances that may determine/impact one’s job/vocation?
 - What can be done about those factors/circumstances?
 - E.g. One’s socio-economic status may determine one’s formal education, which in turn impact on qualifications for job.
10. Define success. According to you definition, are you successful? According to your peers’ definition, are you successful?

Storytelling: Scaffold the reading passage as needed

Anticipation Guide: Agree or disagree?

1) Being the best possible version of yourself requires a good attitude and understanding of life.

The story of the violet

A story is told of a king who went to his garden one morning, only to find everything withered and dying. He asked the oak tree that stood near the gate what the trouble was. The oak said it was tired of life and determined to die because it was not tall and beautiful like the pine tree. The pine was troubled because it could not bear grapes like the grapevine. The grapevine was determined to throw its life away because it could not stand erect and produce fruit as large as peaches. The geranium was fretting because it was not tall and fragrant like the lilac.

And so it went throughout the garden. Yet coming to a violet, the king found its face as bright and happy as ever and said, “Well, violet, I’m glad to find one brave little flower in the midst of this discouragement. You don’t seem to be the least disheartened.” The violet responded, “No, I’m not. I’m small, yet I thought if you wanted an oak or a pine or a peach tree or even a lilac, you would have planted one. Since I knew you wanted a violet, I am determined to be the best little violet I can be.”

(Excerpt from *Streams in the Desert*)

Follow-Up Question/Activity:

- What can we learn from this excerpt (paragraphs)?
- Use the anticipation guide once again (ask students to write on a separate sheet) and see if students’ perceptions have changed.

Spring 2012 Conversation Session Guidelines Part B Week 9: Controversial Issues

<p>Community Building (5-10 min.) If you could trade lives for 24 hours; who would you trade with? Why? 1. Who would you want to live as for 24 hours? 2. Why does their life appeal to you? 3. What do you think you could learn from them?</p>	<p>Expand the Linguistic Repertoire (10 min.) Agreement: There is no doubt about it that... I completely / absolutely / totally agree with you. I simply must agree with that. I am of the same opinion. I am of the same opinion. That's exactly what I think. Disagreement: I don't agree with you. I'm sorry, but I disagree. I'm afraid, I can't agree with you. The problem is that... / I (very much) doubt whether... This is in complete contradiction to... With all due respect,...</p>	<p>Activity: Making Good (45 min.) In this activity, participants take part in a 'sentencing circle', an experimental approach to sentencing. Once a defendant has been found guilty of an offence, all the people who have been affected by the offence take part in decisions about the sentence. Stage 1 Explain that the activity will involve participants taking on the roles of people affected by a criminal act. Their responsibility will be to take part in the decisions about sentencing the offender. Read out or give out copies of the scenario (Handout 1). Stage 2</p>
<p>Culture Corner (20 min.) What are your stands on the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abortion • Capital punishment • Animal right • Arranged marriage (Please respect each person's opinion even if we differ on it). The discussion can take the form of a debate.</p>	<p>I am of a different opinion because ... I cannot share this / that / the view. What I object to is... I have my own thoughts about that. Partial agreement: It is only partly true that... I can agree with that only with reservations. That seems obvious, but... That is not necessarily so. It is not as simple as it seems. I agree with you in principle, but... I agree with you in part, but... Well, you could be right.</p> <p>Retrieved from http://www.myenglishpages.com/site_php_files/communication-lesson-agreement-disagreement.php</p>	<p>Stage 3 Run the activity for 30 minutes or until a decision is made about the sentence. The judge should chair the meeting and ask each person to speak briefly without interruption from anyone else. Stage 4 Ask each participant in turn how he/she feels, in role, about the process that has just taken place. Facilitate a discussion on the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think about sentencing circles? Are they better or worse than the system where the judge decides on the sentence? • Should victims and others affected by a criminal offence have a say in the sentence? Why or why not? • Did the simulation enable all participants to understanding the points of view of others involved? For more detailed instruction, please see supplementary guidelines.</p>

Spring 2012 Conversation Session Guidelines Part B Week 10: Environment

<p>Community Building: Never Have I Ever (5-10 min.) Everyone sits in a circle and take turns saying something they have never done, beginning the sentence with the phrase “Never have I ever...” For example, a person could say, “Never have I ever been to Europe.” Each player starts with ten fingers showing. Each time says something that you’ve done, you drop a finger. The goal is to be the last player remaining.</p>	<p>Environmental Impact (20 min.) In pairs or small groups, discuss the possible impact on Earth’s environment of these situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an increase in divorce • more and more people being able to speak English • a huge increase in the popularity of the color pink • Mickey Mouse being totally unpopular • a doubling of the ant population • people becoming ten times happier • people watching, reading and listening to the news more often • 1960s fashion making a comeback 	<p>Anticipation Guide (30 min.) Divorce and Environment? <i>Before reading:</i> True / False: Look at the article’s headline and according to your opinion, decide whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F) <i>During reading:</i> Synonym Match: Students are provided with a list of vocabulary. While the group leader read the article aloud, students look for words from the article which match with words in the vocabulary list. <i>After reading:</i> Revisit the True and False statements, have your opinions changed after reading? Why or why not?</p>
<p>Culture Corner (25 min.) Discussion Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should gas for motorist be more expensive? What are the advantages and disadvantages? • Do you think nuclear power is safe? • If you could choose one alternative energy source to develop which one would you choose? Why? • What are the things that can be recycled? For example: cassette tape, broken mechanical pencil, paper, plastic bottles, old electronics, toys, clothing, and etc. • How do you reuse those items? • Should civilians be fined for not recycling properly? • As individuals, what can you do to help prevent pollution? • Who do you think is more responsible for pollution in the environment? Individuals and the government? Explain your reasons. • What are some ways that energy is wasted? What can you do to reduce such energy loss? • How can we protect the environment and at the same time improve people's standard of living? • Do you think overpopulation is an important environmental issue? Why or why not? 	<p>Future of Our Planet (10 min.) Brainstorm in the large group: What predictions can you make about future? Do you think future will be better than today?</p> <p>Read the short paragraph on the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changes on Earth 2. The Effects of Overpopulation 3. Energy Revolution 4. High Technology <p>Based on what you have read, in pairs, talk about your own predictions that are likely to happen in 50 years’ time. Then report what your partner has predicted as in the example.</p> <p>E.g. A: I believe people will commute from the Earth to space every day simply by pushing a button. B: My partner said that s/he believed people would commute from the Earth to space every day simply by pushing a button.</p>	<p>Supplementary after-reading discussion questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you think when you read the headline? • What else is divorce bad for? • Why would a married couple use resources more efficiently than two divorced people living alone? • Do you think divorcees should pay a special charge for damaging the environment? • Do you think this study will be taken seriously? • What other negative impacts do you think divorce might have on the environment? • Do you think more couples will think about the environment before splitting up and getting divorced? • Do you think the research findings will encourage environmentally conscious single people to cohabitate? • Why do you think divorce has been overlooked as contributor to climate change for so long?