

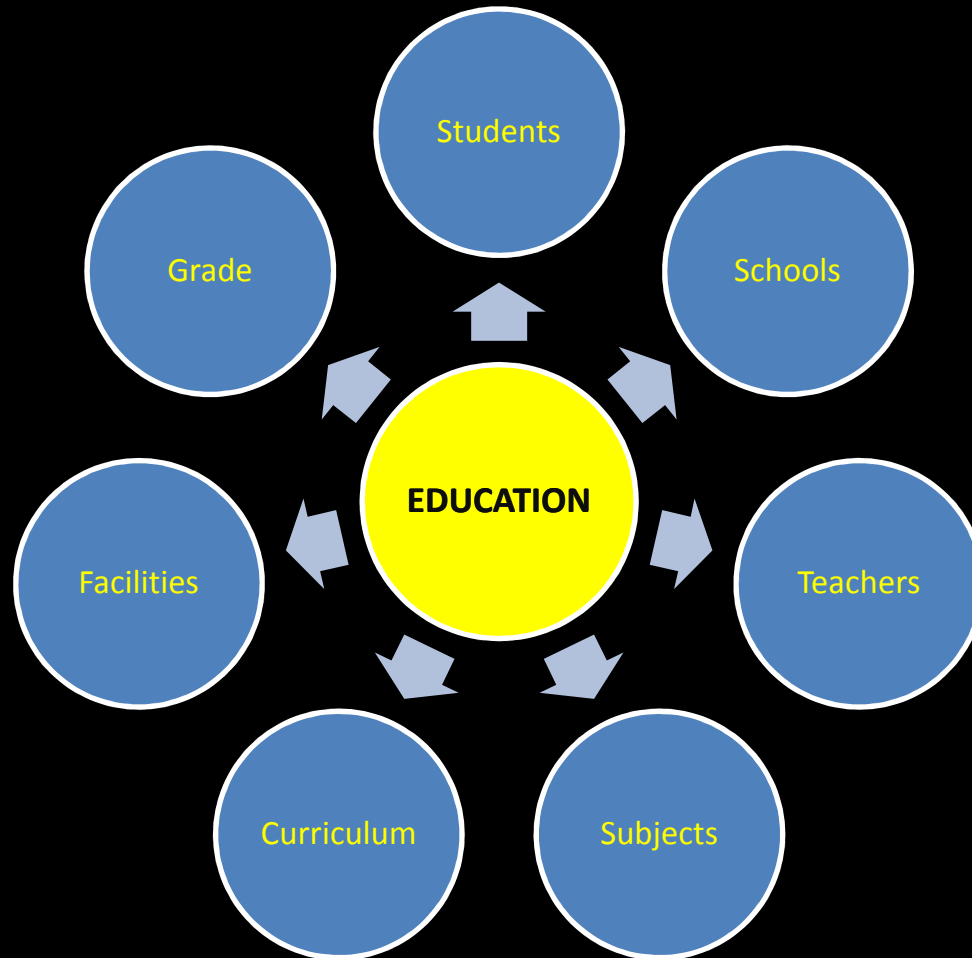


EDUCATIONAL VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS

*Intercultural Communication
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To start with, think about words or things related to (formal) educational systems



What this lecture is about

- This lecture will talk about (American) educational values and expectations, which are mostly viewed from several main components:
 - teachers (including lecturers and trainers)
 - students
 - teacher-student relationships
 - among-students relationships
 - learning
 - classroom interactions
- Some cultural comparisons and tips for adjustment are also given

TEACHERS

- How people perceive the word “teacher” varies across different cultures.
- Some may think of teachers as being **older** than their students, being someone **to be highly respected** and **not to be argued or criticized**, and being **the one who knows everything (especially in Eastern countries)**; some others may think differently.

Teacher's roles

- Teachers do not always serve as the ones who transfer knowledge through lectures; they often become **facilitators**, who encourage and guide their students to actively take parts and contribute to the process of learning by **asking questions, having a discussion, giving opinions, or giving a presentation.**
- There is a strong belief that **students have to be responsible for their own learning.** It is closely related to the values of *self-help* and *personal control over the environment.*

STUDENTS

- Education has been considered very important and has become one of human's basic needs. In relation to this, students in the United States are not restricted to younger people or only to men, many of them are elderly people and women who study for a number reasons including careers, job requirement, or self-satisfaction.

What is expected from the students

- **Active participation:**

It becomes an expectation in the classroom. It may include students being free to choose topics and materials to study. Students are highly encouraged to **take initiatives** and **to be responsible for their learning**. Those who do not give questions or share ideas may be considered **uninterested** and **not cooperative**.

...

- **Trust, honesty and honor system:**

When a student violates the honor system, which emphasizes academic trust and honesty, s/he can get a range of punishments. The punishment range from failing a course, being blacklisted, being suspended or even expelled from the university, and even socially marginalized.

Examples of academic dishonesty to avoid:

- plagiarism
- cheating
- fabrication
- aiding ... dishonesty
- falsification of records and official documents

To illustrate:

[Assignment cover sheet.pdf](#)

[LittleBlueBook.pdf](#)

TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

- Teacher-student relationships are **easygoing, friendly,** and “**less formal**”. Students can call their professors by only using their first names.
- Outside the classroom, teachers and students may have social relationships, but they still maintain their professionalism.
- Teachers can have several roles in relation to students: **counselors, friends,** as well as **teachers.**

AMONG STUDENTS RELATIONSHIPS

- **Cooperative**: indicated by the exchange of knowledge and information among students. Students are usually helpful toward each other. This kind of relationship is usually common in programs or courses where no grades or degrees are given.
- **Competitive**: indicated by students competing one another, often by characterized by the reluctance of sharing notes and information. This mostly happens when “one’s grade is calculated in relation to others’.”

LEARNING

- In many Asian cultures, learning is often “a one-way process or construction”. Students would seldom disagree with a teacher. The teacher is often regarded and respected as someone who is giving sacred truth. The task of students is “to absorb knowledge”, which is taught by the teacher.
- Many teachers in the United States view knowledge as something relative and negotiable, resulting in a different style of learning which is often indicated by lively class discussions and disagreements.

CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS

(Andersen & Powell, 1991)

- In the United States, active classroom interactions are common and necessary: **teachers and students interact a great deal in pursuit of knowledge.**
- In some cultures, **students speak only after the teacher has spoken to them.**
- In **Vietnamese** culture there is virtually no classroom interaction, and in **Mexican** culture all classroom interaction is tightly controlled and directed by the teacher.
- **Chinese** classrooms tend to be so quiet that North Americans teaching there often find the silence unnerving.
- **Cultures reflecting a Buddhist tradition** hold that knowledge, truth, and wisdom come to those whose quiet silence allows the spirit to enter.

Coping with academic culture-related stress (Riesky's personal experience)

1. Keep saying "I can do it; I will survive; I'll never give up"
2. Set priorities
3. Remember that you are not the only one taking this academic burden
4. Learn from mistake
5. Find some you trust to share your stress
6. Find someone who can give you academic assistance
7. Balance your life by exercising and having some fun
8. Balance your diet
9. Keep on praying
10. Tawakal: learn to accept what you cannot change

References:

- Levine, D.R. and Adelman, M.B. 1993. *Beyond Language*. Cross-cultural communication. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.