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Presenting Cultural Awareness

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Presenting Cultural Awareness

Andrew Willimetz

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont.

November 1986

This project by Andrew Willmetz
is accepted in its present form.

DATE: November 1986

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I thank my co-workers at the Florida Summer Program:

Kathleen Quinby, Sally Smith, Jeanne Jensen

And my principal adviser:

Pat Moran

ABSTRACT

This project is a collection of activities and materials for teaching U.S. culture in ESL classes. The overall purpose of the activities and materials is to provide structured opportunities for students to interact with the target culture, either directly through the cultural environment of the U.S. or indirectly through viewing the values and beliefs of the students' original culture.

ERIC Descriptors

Instructional Materials: English as a Second Language
Curriculum Enrichment: English as a Second Language

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INTRODUCTION

Culture is a vital, integral part of language. When it is stressed in a consistent, structural manner in a language classroom, not only do students gain access to new insights into the target culture and their own, but their motivation for learning the language can be increased. Certainly, this has proved true in my own teaching of English as a Second Language both in the U.S. and in other countries.

This paper presents a selection of key activities and materials that I have found effective for teaching U.S. culture in ESL classes. The sources for this IPP come from the summer ESL programs that I taught in New Jersey and Florida in 1982 and from my ESL classes at a language institute in Korea, where I taught from 1983 to 1985. The overall purpose of the activities and materials is to provide structured opportunities for students to interact with the target culture. This is done either directly through the cultural environment of the new culture or indirectly through viewing the values and beliefs of the students' original culture which may parallel or diverge from those of the new one.

Accordingly, the paper is divided into two parts: Teaching U.S. culture in the U.S. and Teaching U.S. culture in Korea. The first part reflects my work in summer ESL programs in the U.S. and features four activities which ask students to enter the world outside the classroom to carry out specific tasks which bring them into contact with Americans and U.S. culture. The second part, in contrast, is derived from my experiences in Korea and the focus is on a series of newspaper articles that were used to stimulate discussion on a range of specific cultural topics.

The format for the presentation of the activities and the materials is systematically structured so as to be easily read and used. In Part One, the four activities are sequenced in order of degree of challenge to the student. Students move from a simple non-verbal interaction with their environment to a total immersion into an American environment. The format breaks down as follows: the first page provides a brief description of the activity--the topic, purpose and the procedure; the second page presents sample materials (handouts) that can be used with the activity; the last page consists of my observations and experiences in conducting this activity with students.

Likewise, in Part Two the format is also intended to facilitate comprehension and use. An initial general lesson plan reflects how the articles were used. Each cultural topic is then presented in a two-page format: the first page consists of a newspaper article (sometimes with an accompanying photograph); the second page includes a list of discussion

questions on the cultural focus, followed by my comments and observations on the kinds of student responses the article and the discussion have provoked.

The reason for drawing a distinction between two approaches to teaching culture is that each context offers certain advantages and constraints which affect what a teacher is realistically able to do. In the case of the activities in Part One, the outside environment offers a unique laboratory in which students can experiment with language and U.S. cultural practices. The learning experience is much more meaningful and lasting if students put time, energy and thought into functioning in the culture, as opposed to simply reading about or discussing it in class. Of course, journeying out into the environment brings with it the likelihood of unpredictable and possibly disturbing situations and encounters for the students, but the benefits of a better understanding of the culture far outweigh the potential difficulties. In addition, if all four activities were used in a program, students would be nurtured into the environment through progressively more challenging activities.

In Part Two, the reason for working with newspaper articles is that students in Korea are not likely to find many foreigners and entering the immediate environment would not present them with any new cultural information. Newspaper articles on topics from the students' own culture--their values, attitudes and customs--present a useful starting point to enter and compare the same topic in U.S. culture. The articles also

provoke greater student interest and curiosity, since (in the case of Koreans) the students come from a homogeneous society that places relatively little value on other societies. Entering their own society first, they are more likely to give the topics and the discussion greater energy and attention.

The target of any cultural activity is to create a critical awareness in the student towards views and values people hold. Looking at a student's first culture before the second one facilitates a comparative or contrastive approach. The Korean who becomes consciously aware of the values held by people in his society, would be less likely to be overwhelmed by those he finds in the new culture. If students work for months in a language class with only the new culture as a model, it may lead a student to view this new culture, consciously or not, as the cultural role model to look at and emulate at the expense of the values and beliefs he held up to this point.

Korea, for example, is a country that is undergoing deep social and cultural changes. The new generations of Koreans are finding themselves caught between the cultural values their parents hold and those presented by the "developed and modern" Western culture they are being exposed to. If students attend ESL classes for many months where they may work with controversial and sometimes conflicting values and beliefs different from those they hold, there might be an inappropriate influence upon them. Since this is not the purpose of teaching a language, and since it should be, in part, to create a critical understanding of a different people, it would

be more beneficial to create a comparison and contrast between the two cultures. By presenting their native cultural beliefs first, comparisons are further encouraged and mono-cultural views avoided.

The activities and materials in the paper were prepared for specific ESL students in specific contexts, but I believe that they can be adapted to fit any teaching environment or students of any proficiency, with the aid of imagination on the part of the teacher. I hope these activities will be useful to ESL teachers and that they will serve as a catalyst for those teachers looking for ideas on teaching culture.

PART ONE

TEACHING U.S. CULTURE IN THE U.S.

Scavenger Hunt Teachers Guide

Brief Description

Students look for items and answers to questions in order to become acquainted with their new surroundings.

Purpose

- a. To gather information specified on a list.
- b. To expose students to surroundings outside of class.
- c. To follow simple directions
- d. To build group dynamics (group ice-breaker).

Procedure

1. Explain the purpose and rationale of the activity.
2. Go over the items on the list so that all understand them.
3. Review the format for the activity.
 - a. students are divided into pairs according to different native languages, but similar ability in English.
 - b. students return to class after getting information or items.
 - c. information will be tallied and scores given to pairs.
 - d. students will recount anecdotes and impressions.
4. State limitations to the activity.
 - a. activity should not take longer than 45 minutes.
 - b. students should not talk to other pairs or staff members.
 - c. The pair that returns first will receive extra points.
5. Discuss information.
 - a. students keep information and items until all return.
 - b. taking turns, the students orally present their information while the teacher writes it on the board.
6. Go over (as a group) anecdotes and share perceptions on the new culture.

Scavenger Hunt Sample Student Handout

(This was used at the Florida Summer Program)

With a partner you are to find the items or answer the questions on the list below. If you don't know the vocabulary, ask for help before the activity starts.

1. Find one chewing gum wrapper.
2. What is the depth of the deepest end of the swimming pool?

3. Find one empty beer or pop can or bottle.
4. What is the price of a large Coke at the Poolside Snack Bar?

5. Find one dead bug (a mosquito, a cockroach, or another bug).
6. Find one stamp (used or new).
7. Find one piece of string.
8. What is the telephone number of Howard Johnson's restaurant on US 1?

9. Find a piece of crushed coral.
10. Find one paper cup.
11. What time does the swimming pool close in the evening?

12. Find one pine needle.
13. Find one flower.
14. What musical group is playing at the Rathskeller this Friday evening?

15. What is the license plate number of Kathleen's yellow VW?

16. What is the name of the famous football stadium on campus?

17. What are the sport teams at the University of Miami called?

18. Find one leaf.
19. Find one candy bar wrapper.
20. What is the name of the University library?_____

Scavenger Hunt Observations and Comments

1. This activity is most effective during the first week of a program in that it presents students with immediate involvement with their surroundings.
2. It also provides for a cohesiveness in "program recognition" which leads to group dynamics and positive interpersonal relationships.
3. It presents students with the fact that they can enter their new environment, and interact with it, without the help of a staff member.
4. Students saw their summer program as taking place in as well as outside of their classroom.
5. Students working with partners of different native languages used the target language to communicate with each other.
6. Some areas of caution:
 - a. That the procedure followed be understood by all participants.
 - b. That all pairs don't follow the same order of locating items on the list.
 - c. That disorganization does not ensue as students return for the tally.
7. Some insights acquired through this activity:
 - a. The crushed coral found on the campus led to a discussion of Florida's geographic history.
 - b. The name of the library, Thomas S. Hoover, brought out questions on whom the person was and what his contributions were.
 - c. The students could be asked to write down the information which they have gathered in note form as they return to class so that they remain focused on the activity until all have returned.

Campus Search Teacher's Guide

Brief description

Students obtain information on their campus surroundings through a series of questions on task cards.

Purpose

- a. To obtain information that will help familiarize students with the campus services and locations.
- b. To enter into verbal dialog with native speakers of English.
- c. To present students with a controlled interaction with their campus environment.
- d. To expose students to the process of finding information on their own.

Procedure

1. Explain purpose and usefulness of activity.
2. Review task cards with class so that all understand them.
3. Explain procedure to follow in the activity.
 - a. Students are to be divided into pairs
 - according to different native languages.
 - according to similar English language ability.
 - b. Once information is gathered, they should return to class.
 - c. Their information will be worked with in class.
4. Present limitations to the activity.
 - a. Activity should not take longer than 45 minutes.
 - b. Students should not talk or exchange information with other pairs or staff members during the activity.
5. When all students have returned,
 - a. Write the information they gathered on the board.
 - b. Experiences related should also be written on the board.
 - c. Students copy information for their own use.
6. Impressions of the new culture should be discussed by the entire group so all can benefit.
7. Students are asked to compare and contrast campus facilities seen with those in their home campuses.

Campus Search Task-Cards

- Book Store:** Buy a piece of bubble gum or candy. Remember the price. Find out what other items besides books are available for students to buy.
- Main Desk:** Ask for the swimming pool hours, location, rules, etc. Find out what other activities are available for students on campus.
- Policemen:** (campus security) Ask them about the parking rules on campus. What kind of crimes students should be careful of. How can students get in touch with them?
- Post Office:** Buy overseas stamps (specify amount). Bring back the cost and other information on post cards etc. that students can use. Also find out the post office hours and ask if they offer any special services.
- Dorm RA:** Find out the dorm RA's name, where he can be located and when. Ask if there are any rules that you must be aware of. Get information on linen change, etc.
- Cafeteria:** Find out the times for the meals and how they are paid for. Do you pay cash, need a meal card, or both? Can you request a special meal if you are on a special diet?

Campus Search Observations and Comments

1. Since this activity presents relevant information for a positive campus stay, it would be most helpful at the early stages of a program.
2. Students gained a sense of accomplishment in personally acquiring information they could use and share with others (language students of other programs asked participants for directions to locations and information on them).
3. Students were able to get to know fellow members of the program better, and in addition were able to meet people out of the program.
4. Some students with limited classroom interaction, 'opened up' to the group, using English, to present details on their experiences. From then on they continued to participate actively throughout the program.
5. The group that went to the main desk found out that the clerk was out for lunch, but had an interesting time conversing with various people finding it out.
6. The group which went to find out about the campus police, were told by the officers on campus that crime on campus was a confidential matter and wanted to know the name of their teacher in order to report him/her. They gave the students the name and place they could go to if they wanted to get information from the "chief" (the chief was invited to speak to the students in a later class).
7. The group that went to the book store found all their information with no trouble.
8. Some areas of caution are:
 - a. Persons working in campus services might not be native speakers of English and have unintelligible English.
 - b. Teacher should make sure services are open and staffed at the time of the activity.
 - c. It is best not to let a lot of time transpire after the activity before going over anecdotes.

Around Town Teacher's Guide

Brief Description

Students are directed to off-campus businesses to obtain specific information.

Purpose

- a. To interact verbally with native English speakers.
- b. To follow directions.
- c. To obtain information.
- d. To expose students to "town life."
- e. To enter an uncontrolled environment with unpredictable possibilities of experience.

Procedure

1. Explain rationale and challenge of the activity.
2. Review and make sure students understand where they are to go and the information they should obtain.
3. Go over format to follow in the activity.
 - a. Students of different linguistic backgrounds, but of similar ability with target language are paired.
 - b. Each pair is given a 3 x 5 index card with a task on it and information attained should be written on the back side.
 - c. As they return to class, students should write information on the board.
 - d. When the whole group has returned, students will share situations, information, observations and anecdotes they experienced.
4. State limitations to the activity.
 - a. It should not take more than one hour.
 - b. Students should not ask other students or staff members to help or accompany them.
5. Students should keep notes on their experiences to share with class.
6. As a group, students compare and contrast locations with those in their native countries.

Around Town Sample Student Handout

1. Go to the Rainbow Restaurant and ask:
What kind of food they serve.
What specials they have.
What kind of entertainment they have.
2. Go to the Pantry Pride (Rt. 1) grocery store.
Buy one box of Entenman's Chocolate Chip Cookies, or another kind.
3. Go to the Riviera Theater.
Find out what movie is playing now,
How much it costs;
What time the movies start;
What is the next movie playing there.
4. Go to the Away Travel Agency on U.S. Rt. 1.
Ask for prices and information regarding travel to Nassau-Freeport.
5. Go to Baskin & Robbins.
Buy a strange flavored ice cream cone and eat it.
Make sure to remember the flavor. Describe it to the group when you return.

Around Town Observations and Comments

1. Since students frequently returned to the task locations with other students, it would be helpful if done early in the program.
2. Going over information and experiences the same day of the activity leads to students being more willing to "open up" in class, as they are excited and the activity is still fresh in their minds.
3. When one pair made an observation about what had taken place, another group would mention that they had experienced something similar and volunteered anecdotes. If a teacher makes notes on them, they could be used in future classes as topics of discussion.
4. The following are some notes on students in one of the groups:
 - a. Odair told about the pretty girls he saw working at the restaurant. Loli told about the food and the prices.
 - b. Karen bought Chips Ahoy because they didn't have Entenman's cookies. Roberto didn't know what chocolate chip cookies were until the lady at the counter told him. He had fun convincing the lady that he really didn't know what they were. All the time the lady thought he was joking. We all ate the cookies he brought.
 - c. Valdir explained the movie schedule that was given to him the best he could, but he couldn't fully understand it. Borge was not able to interact in this situation, so he let Valdir do all the talking with the clerk at the movie theater.
 - d. Ignacio had no problem getting information from the travel agent. Gilles accompanied Ignacio and talked about the information he gathered for his return trip to France.
 - e. Fred bought a "horribly flavored ice cream which was black and funny looking." He couldn't eat it so he gave it to Jose Maria, who in turn

couldn't eat it and threw it away. Great adjectives and expressive details were used to describe the color and flavor of that strange ice cream.

Jose Maria had very little to say about the ice cream.

5. Some areas of caution:

- a. give the more challenging activities, such as going to the travel agents, to the higher level students.
- b. make sure students have sufficient time to complete the activity.

Student Discovery Teacher's Guide

Brief Description

Students go on a day or overnight trip to an area of interest to them to observe and interact with the environment.

Purpose

- a. To expose students to areas that are not campus oriented.
- b. To present students with an opportunity to interact with the extended environment.
- c. To place more emphasis on culture and language in context than on the view of language in the classroom.
- d. To allow students to make their own interpretation of a culture.
- e. To present students with an activity which offers unpredictable variables and challenges.

Procedure

1. Explain rationale for the trip and discuss ideas on its usefulness.
2. Go over areas to be visited along with points of major interest.
3. Review procedure to be followed during trip.
 - a. students stay with the teacher and the group unless other arrangements are made.
 - b. students are to keep notes on experiences they find interesting to share as anecdotes with others in the group.
4. When all students reunite.
 - a. students get together to go over experiences.
 - b. Information is presented informally by each group to the rest of the group.
 - c. teacher makes notes of experiences that may be used back in class.
5. Compare and contrast views on people and their customs in their native countries with what they experienced during the trip.

Student Discovery Places Visited in Washington D.C.

1. Motel
2. Museums
 - a. National Gallery
 - b. Air and Space
3. Monuments: Lincoln, Washington, Jefferson
4. White House
5. Arlington Cemetery
6. Hotel visit
 - a. Lobby
 - b. Coffee Shop
7. Mall (shopping center)
8. Lower income neighborhood

Student Discovery Observation and Comments

1. Many questions and observations were made in the bus going to Washington:
 - a. Questions were asked on geographical locations of industry, rivers, cities, state boundaries, distance between states.
 - b. Conversations on rest stops and the conveniences they offered:
 - an Italian student could not understand why people waited in an orderly line in order to get food. He said that in Italy people would move up as fast as they could (an interesting conversation on lines ensued).
 - Understanding the black lady at the register was a major challenge for them. Questions on why she spoke such a different English came up.
 - c. Students became interested in all the road signs on the highway and trucks they saw with advertisements written on them.
2. On the way to the White House, students found people of all ages with signs and pickets denouncing the president and his policies. Many students couldn't understand why they were allowed to say this in front of the White House. Some upper level students went up to the protesters to get handouts and talk to them.
3. Some questions that arose from the monuments were:
 - a. Who is the Washington Memorial dedicated to?
 - b. Who built it and why?
 - c. Why are these memorials in Washington and not in the interior of the country?
 - d. What's so interesting about the monuments?

4. Visiting the Hilton Hotel:

- a. A student walked in front of a person taking a group picture. Apologies were given to each other. The student then asked if he could take their picture. He took the camera and waited for about ten minutes for the flash to light up, making jokes all the time. The flash had been ready all the time. He takes a picture of his foot by mistake. The ladies laugh and we all walked away.
 - b. A big conversation on tipping took place in the coffee shop. Among the many questions that ensued were: Do you have to tip and if so, how much? Students compared the tipping in Washington with the customs they have in their countries. They stated, for example, how tips were included in bills in their countries. Some of the Spanish students mentioned that in Spain tipping was optional and only done in high class restaurants. They also wanted to know if students were expected to tip.
 - c. One student didn't like the root beer float he had ordered because he thought it should have been served at the end of the meal, not during. Salad, on the other hand, should have been served with the first course (Italy-Spain) or after (France).
5. Many problems arose with the Spanish students because of their way of asking for service appeared to be condescending. The service was a little bad because of this. We talked about this, and about the fact that the people behind the counter usually are not professional waiters.
6. At the park, a man asked a student for change. The student thought he wanted to change a bill into smaller change, but the man was asking for a handout.
7. I found that groups smaller than 14 were conducive to having more students participate during the comparing and contrasting of people's views.

PART TWO

TEACHING U.S. CULTURE IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Newspaper Articles

Brief Description

Students discuss cultural topics found in newspaper articles written about their native cultural values, attitudes and customs.

Purpose

1. to make students aware of their own culture.
2. to make students aware of their own attitudes toward their culture.
3. to make a contrast between their native culture and that found in the United States.

Procedure

1. Pass out folded handouts with photo on top and text underneath and tell students not to read the article, only to look at the picture.
 - a. If it is a low level class, leave the picture captions in.
 - b. If the class is intermediate or higher, take the captions out.
2. Have the students describe everything they can see in the picture, the physical things and the situations.
3. Read the article, making sure all understand it.
4. Use questions on the second page to continue the discussion. Questions could be given to the students and have them go over them in groups, or the teacher keeps the questions and the class works together.
5. Lead students into comparing and contrasting cultural topic either by having them do the comparison simultaneously, or at the end of the exercise.

6. Some areas of caution:

- a. Teacher should not make value judgements on the topic until the end of the activity, when compared to the American culture.
- b. In the upper levels, the teacher should try to get students to participate fully, interjecting comments as little as possible. This will allow the students to express themselves without looking for or depending on the teacher's contributions. They work with each other with more intensity and less distractions.
- c. Students may find it hard to accept if too much discussion time is based on their culture alone. The reason is, in the case of Koreans, that many articles deal with controversial topics that may have undesirable stigmas when compared to other cultures. This might build defensive and counterproductive attitudes in the student toward the topic.

Child Adoption

The Korea Herald, Wednesday, July 15, 1984



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Orphanages in Korea care for the children until they reach 18 years of age, at which point they are sent out to make their own way. The children come, for the most part, from families with internal problems. Many divorced fathers, for example, who haven't the energy or desire to care for their kids but refuse to suggest that the ex-wife take them bring their kids

One finds, however, that Koreans do feel compassion for these abandoned children. Many orphans are sponsored by families who may or may not know the child, may or may not invite him home for a meal and an evening with parents and siblings from time to time. There are also young people who want somehow to help the kids get by, bringing them gifts and spending spare hours at their side. It isn't that Koreans don't care.

When, on a rare occasion, a Korean couple does adopt a child from an orphanage they adopt, almost without exception, a baby. "If a Korean is going to adopt a child," the teacher from Aeji said, "he always wants a baby. After five years of age there is no way that an orphan will be adopted by a Korean." Furthermore, many of the few Koreans who do adopt also change their place of residence. Their reasoning is clear: the child must never know that he has been adopted and the neighbors must never know that the child is not of the parents' blood.

The bloodline. In Korean society, the relations between people are patterned after the relations between family members. The family is the unit and the society is an amalgamation thereof. Change the structure of the family and there will follow a gradual change in the structure of society.

The structure of the family is founded upon Confucianism, which teaches that respect for elders and propriety in behavior is not a learned characteristic but,

in the Aeji teacher said. Most such fathers, she continued, indeed plan to take their children back eventually — but they generally never do. The offspring of other social mishaps also fall into the hands of orphanages: Children of unwed mothers, children of those too poor to support them, children whose parents die somehow end up at police stations, district offices, or centers where troubled children are taken by their parents. They are taken, then, to orphanages.

indeed, the most fundamental instinct of humankind. Filial piety, by Confucius' interpretation, is not learned in the environment but is known at birth. If a baby is not born of the parent with whom he grows up, this trait, this means of expressing love, is not natural — the bond which holds the family together then, is not natural. For Koreans to adopt children would be to change the fundamental nature of the family and thus the most basic unit of life.

There is obviously some confusion about the place of orphans among the Korean people. Although Korean families do not want to or do not feel capable of adopting orphans, neither do they approve of foreigners adopting them. The outside influence spoils that which is, in these children, Korean by nature. So there is a duality to the attitude: the orphans have Korean blood so they belong to the society but because they are of, shall we say, anonymous blood, they do not have a particular place in society. They don't fit in, but they mustn't go out.

The fact that this kind of paradoxical thinking persists despite the very human suffering that it effects indicates how deeply rooted the values of this society are. It is not merely that Koreans believe society should be ordered as it is here ordered, but that this order is recognized as the order of nature. To change the very basics of Korean society would counter, it is thought, the role of mankind in the structure of the natural world.

A young woman who supports herself, lives on her own, and has not yet married — the portrait of a strong, independent woman who defies the norms of Korean society. Yet ask her about orphans, those children who have never had a place in society, against which to rebel, and she wrinkles her nose, furrows her brow, shakes her head and says, "No, I would never adopt a child. Koreans don't do that."

The number of orphanages in Korea is steadily growing but the number of these children who eventually find real homes is still small. At one small orphanage which has been running for nearly 20 years, the Aeji orphanage in Seoul, there are currently 56 children. In the last four years, said a woman who teaches religion at the home, she recalls only one child being adopted. He was adopted by a West German couple.

This tends to be the norm for Korean orphans — either they remain orphans for life or they become citizens of another country. Koreans are extremely touchy on the issue. They neither like the fact that so many children are cast out nor do they approve of the fact that so many are adopted by other nationalities. For the orphans, the transition from the people they know, the friends they have and the language they speak must be difficult when they move to another country, but certainly it is preferable to spending one's life without a family.

Child Adoption

Questions:

1. What is the relationship between all the people in the picture?
2. What is the sex of the children? Is this important?
3. What do you think each person is thinking about?
4. What is the definition of an orphan?
5. Are there many orphans in your country? Why or why not?
6. Who takes care of them? Explain.
7. What happens to them? What do you think about this?
8. Are most orphans adopted? By who?
9. What is the relationship between blood line and adoption?
10. Why would parents change their place of residence after adoption?
11. Can a Korean orphan be raised just as easily by a non Korean? What are you basing your answer on?
12. What influence do grandparents have over a couple's decision to adopt or not?
13. According to Confucian thought, if a woman is unable to give birth to a son or is not fertile, this is grounds for divorce. What do you think about this? Do you think it should be the same for the husband?

Commentary:

1. Once I have gone over the picture, I like to start the lesson by saying, "I had a nurse from a very distinguished hospital in Seoul tell me that some Koreans prefer to get sperm from a brother (if he's sterile) than to adopt. Do you think this is true?"

2. Some students became touchy with this activity, I later found out, because they were embarrassed that so many orphans were sent overseas and not taken care of in Korea.
3. An interesting misconception that arose and was discussed in class was that there were many orphans in the United States because when people got divorced, they gave their children up for adoption.
4. Some students believed that it was inherent in adopted children that they would only think about their parents' money and not their love.
5. Many students believed children are orphans because they have emotional problems.
6. Many times students brought up the idea of surrogate mothers although they didn't understand what this meant.
7. Students said I was making up stories about Korea and should stop telling lies. This reaction indicated to me that students were honestly involving themselves with the subject matter. Unfortunately, anything perceived as criticism is a lie to students in Korea, especially if it is a foreigner who makes it. Although this is a difficult stumbling block to work with, it is helpful at times as a means of inciting reactions from the students and getting them more involved.

Adultery

THE KOREA HERALD, TUESDAY, AUGUST 21, 1984



CHUNG YUN-HI (LEFT), A POPULAR FILM AND TV ACTRESS, AND CHO KYU-YONG, A construction company president, are put into separate detention cells at the Kangnam Police Station after being arrested on charges of adultery yesterday.

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Actress Chung, Cho formally arrested on adultery count

The Kangnam Police arrested Chung Yun-hi, 30, a popular film and TV actress, and Cho Kyu-yong, 38, a construction company president, on charges of adultery yesterday, two days after they were taken into custody.

Shortly after being arrested early yesterday morning, they were placed in separate detention cells of the police station.

During police questioning Sunday, Chung admitted her adultery with Cho, president of the Central Mill Supply Co.

Miss Chung was quoted as saying, "I feel much relieved now that I have admitted to the charge."

However, Cho insisted on having had no illicit relations with Chung even after he was put into the detention cell.

When he was arrested, Cho reportedly said, "I have nothing to say at this moment." He said he will tell everything later.

He said that he will refrain from telling anything until the compromise is reached

between him and his wife on 700 million won in alimony that his 29-year-old wife reportedly proposed he pay. Cho's wife, identified only as Pak, denied the report.

Pak said that she needs no compromise and her husband and Miss Chung should be dealt with in accordance with the pertinent law.

Cho's lawyer asked Pak to drop the lawsuit but she refused to consider any compromise.

According to the arrest warrants, Chung visited Cho's apartment in Apku-jong-dong, Kangnam-gu, July 5, 1984 where she had illicit relations with Cho, though she knew Cho was a married man.

She also visited the same apartment and committed adultery with Cho on July 8, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 29.

When Chung moved from an apartment in Hannam-dong, Yongsan-gu, to another apartment in Apkujong-dong, Kangnam-gu, Aug. 8, Cho brought his clothes and personal belongings to the apartment to stay with Chung there. Cho and Chung had illicit relations on about 10 occasions.

Cho's wife, Pak, her relatives, friends and police officers broke into the apartment early last Saturday morning to find Chung and Cho staying together.

When Chung and Cho flatly denied the suspected adultery soon after they were taken to the police station, Pak submitted a list of 13 people who signed a letter that Chung and Cho stayed together in the apartment. Pak claimed that the signers are residing in the same apartment complex.

Adultery

1. Who and where are the people in the picture?
2. What are some possible crimes they might have committed?
3. Is Adultery punishable by law in Korea? If so, why?
4. Which puts more control on adultery: moral, legal, or social pressure?
5. Is a man more responsible for adultery than a woman? Explain.
6. If the woman were married and the man single, would social reaction be the same? Why would this be true?
7. Does the fact that this woman is a popular movie and TV actress influence how people perceive this situation? If so, how?
8. Why do you think Mrs Cho made her husband's adultery public?

Commentary:

1. Most students knew about this situation or had relatives who knew the people involved. This added anecdotes and interest to a lively discussion.
2. Because students got so interested in the topic, language blocks were dropped and eagerness to express themselves took over.
3. There was a big interest in how this would be treated in American society because of similar situations they had seen in American movies. Their views reflected values perceived in soap operas and movies that were generally not representative of the American way of life.
4. Mr. Cho was seen as the victim of the two because a man has the unspoken right to sleep with single women and was convicted because of Ms. Chung's popularity and not because he did anything wrong.
5. Students expressed the view that when a man divorced a woman, he must have a reason, but when a woman divorces a man, she must have personal problems.
6. When asked why the man automatically receives guardianship of the children in a divorce, a frequent answer is, "if a man puts a coin into a coffee machine, whose coffee is it?" By this they mean that since it is the man who impregnates a woman, the children belong to him.

Poshintang

The Korea Herald, Tuesday, August 25, 1984

Gov't considers barring restaurants from serving 'poshintang'

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The government is seriously considering preventing restaurants from serving "poshintang" in response to foreigners' criticism of slaughtering dogs for food and encouraged by a decline in consumption.

Poshintang is a soup made with boiled dog meat and consumed primarily during hot summer days. When eaten, the food is accompanied by distilled liquor "soju." Some people have a notion that poshintang is good for those feeling rundown.

Last Friday, officials of the Ministries of Health-Social Affairs and Agriculture-Fisheries met to begin talks on legislation and administrative measures needed to stop sale of the food.

"The government has just started discussions on poshintang," said an official who knew of the meeting at the prime minister's office. "The officials are expected to discuss specifics later," he added.

The official who wished to remain anonymous recalled protests against the killing of dogs for poshintang heard from abroad last year. In one of the protests, the International Fund for Animal Welfare in Boston sent approximately 350 letters to the Korean Embassy in Washington saying that it will launch a campaign against the killing of canines.

The organization said at the time it would conduct a program to boycott the purchase of Korean products if the cruel act continues. It mailed its written protest together with pictures showing pots in which dog meat is boiled.

A similar protest reportedly occurred in Europe.

The knowledgeable official also recalled last year's newspaper reports saying that a disease-causing germ, Brucella, was found in some dog meat.

"After the news broke, dog meat consumption in restaurants greatly decreased," he added.

About 80 percent of the poshintang restaurants were compelled to close or turned to other types of business, according to him.

The operators of the remaining 20 percent are considered those who took over

the poshintang business from their fathers or other relatives.

The official said there is a view that when the dog meat is sanitarily boiled, prepared and served, no harm will come to its consumers.

In Seoul, the city government asked the people operating poshintang restaurants in downtown and near tourist spots to relocate their shops to unrestricted areas, before two international meetings were held last year. The international gatherings were the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) meeting in September and an Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) conference in October.

At that time, the operators of shops selling food made with snakes were also asked to relocate, if their restaurants were in the areas often visited by foreigners.

Under a decision made at last week's meeting, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries will study ways of controlling the slaughtering of dogs. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs will consider measures of banning newly licensed restaurants from serving dog meat. Preventing the existing restaurants from selling poshintang will also have to be considered, the official said.

He said the current law on processing livestock needs to be revised for a ban on the dog slaughtering. The law has no provisions on dogs. However, it provides for controls on the slaughterings of cattle, horses, goats, pigs and the processing of their meat.

According to the official, restaurateurs now need no special permit to serve dog meat to customers. They have only to hang the sign, "poshintang served," if they want to sell the food.

The official conceded that in the face of the growing concern over the dog meat, effective ways of controlling poshintang appears necessary before Seoul hosts the 24th Summer Olympic Games in 1988.

He noted that the government is trying to improve the system in which food is served to both Koreans and foreigners, as part of preparations for the Olympics.

Poshingtang Questions

1. What do you think about the custom of eating ants, squirrel, monkey, or snails?
2. What is Poshingtang? Is it a traditional food?
3. How do you perceive dogs in your country? Explain.
4. Why do you think certain animals are eaten in some countries but not in others.
5. Does or did anybody in your family eat Poshingtang? Which members?
6. Should one group of people tell another what not to eat? Why?
7. Why do you think the government stoped the sale of Poshingtang?
8. Should the country change its eating habits because of the upcoming Olympic games in Seoul? What are your reasons?
9. Do people in other countries like China, Taiwan and Indonesia eat dog? Do you think they will change? Why?
10. Do people in other countries have eating habits you consider strange?

Commentary:

1. Students see dog as a source of food, nutrition, medicine and stamina, but not as pets (this is slowly changing.)
2. Only the traditional yellow dog is used for Poshingtang.
3. This article works very well as an introduction to a discussion on the role of pets in a culture.
4. A teacher should be aware that this article can be very sensitive to students if presented in a way perceived as prejudicial.
5. Towards the end of the discussion, students could be divided into two or more groups. Members of each group tell each other the different or "strange" types of animals they eat and explain the custom.

Portrait of Nuclear Family

The Korea Herald, Tuesday, September 16, 1984



Korean women—pulled in opposite directions by tradition and modernity.

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By Jennifer Jean Robinson
Staff reporter

There's the father who goes to work early in the morning and returns home late at night. On Sundays he plays with the children or engages in "leisure activities" with his business acquaintances. There's the mother who cooks, cleans, shops, looks after the children, manages the household finances and serves the father. She respects her husband, whom she married because of his good background and potential for success. There are the children who run around, go to school, eat, sleep and make the mess that mom spends her day cleaning up. They are respectful of their mother but they are more than that — polite and proper — with their father.

Statistics indicate that all this is changing. Mom seems to be spending time out of the home and helping dad earn money. Such is the requirement of development — all able hands must pitch in to help the nation get ahead and to get ahead themselves. The question is whether the entrance of women into the work force is helping women get ahead as a social group. Are the norms really changing?

Ms. Kim, 26, single, attended Ewha Woman's University, one of the most prestigious schools for women in Korea. She chose this school because of its good reputation and because her father wanted her labeled as an Ewha grad so she could "catch a good husband."

Dad's little girl had other plans, however. Before she graduated, she applied for a job with a foreign company in Seoul, got it, and proceeded to move through two more companies over the next four years. During this time, she remained at the same job level and her salary increased at a meager rate. Now, with a stable job and at that age when one should be getting married, Kim has decided to study abroad as a means of getting out of Korea.

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"I would go into meetings sometimes to translate for the Koreans who were visiting our company and my English-speaking bosses," Kim said. "The Koreans would give me dirty looks and treat me as if I were an evil person. They thought that just because I spoke better English than they did I was outstaging them and causing them to lose face."

Korean men still question whether women are competent in the office and they treat them as inferiors even when the women facilitate their own work. "My boss expects me to go out with visiting businessmen and show them a good time in the evening," said one "manager" in a large business. "I can hardly earn respect when I have to do that."

Getting a job can be just as trying as holding onto it for women. The Women's Development Institute recently conducted a survey whose results showed that more and more women are applying to take, and are passing, tests of technical skills. Says institute member Kwon Young-ja, "A certificate of qualification does not guarantee employment or favorable treatment afterwards."

Furthermore, nepotism still ranks as a primary means by which jobs are obtained in Korea. There's an old boys' network that begins to form in the high school years — high school, where the boys and girls are segregated. Even if a woman does find her way in, she cannot take part in the old boys' activities that endear a worker to his boss because much of that is drinking and visiting kisaeng houses. Women don't fit into this picture unless they are working at a different game.

Family life is probably the most valued element of Korean existence. So that one is assured a satisfactory match and time enough to bear children, and before the woman's beauty and innocence is squandered, Koreans are expected to marry. Women beyond 24 or 25 and men beyond 27 or 28 who have not married are regarded as outcasts. Why have they married? What's wrong with them?

For a woman line is parti-

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cularly final. One can earn the title of old maid at a spry 28 years of age if there is no husband in tow. For the working woman, this means that, by 25, she will be caring for a husband, looking after a household and putting in eight or 10 hours at the office. Then there are children, and a break required from work (sometimes as short as a month) to bear them.

Most women give up at this point. "After 26 or 27 there's a social electricity that pulls us around like jumping jacks," said Kim. "Most women are only working to make money or for something to do before they get married," she added. "They aren't looking to achieve anything."

This lack of career ambition is the primary bridle that harnesses women, Kim said. Furthermore, those women who do consider their work personally important and who do put effort into it, are disliked by the other women around them. "Women are the hardest people for me to work with," she said. A young Korean businessman echoed, "It isn't the men that don't want women working. It's the women."

The bear hidden in this forest of obstacles seems to be the structure of the Korean household. If a woman is expected to take care of the husband, the kids and the house all on her own, and if she cannot postpone marriage and child-bearing until she has established herself in a career track, she will not decide to take work seriously. Until she herself considers work an important part of her life and part of her role as a Korean, men will show her no respect when she sticks her fingers in their pie.

Portrait of a nuclear family Questions

1. What are the women doing in the picture?
2. What are they wearing?
3. Describe their daily life as you see it.
4. Do you think they are both married? Why or why not?
5. Is age a factor in marriage?
6. Are these role models changing? In what ways?
7. Do as many men as women attend university? Why is this?
8. What is the relationship between men and women, at home and at the work place? Do they have equal opportunities at work?
9. At what age do most people leave their families to live on their own? What are the reasons for this?
10. Compare the options open to men and women.

Commentary

1. The vocabulary used in the article proved to be most suited for advanced ESL students. It worked out the best if given to the students the day before it was to be presented so they could go over the vocabulary at home.
2. Most women say they want to work, but they only say it, apparently, because they believe it is the expected answer.
3. The need for the mother to stay home and bring up the children is always talked about when using this topic. They base their opinion on their belief that a mother has a natural/genetic quality that no other person could have with that child.
4. An interesting final activity could be to have students role-play a conversation between a "traditional" woman and a "modern" woman.

Korean Americans

THE KOREA HERALD, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1984

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The other day I went shopping with a visiting Korean-American friend. Completing a purchase in a small shop in obviously imperfect Korean, my friend was subjected to some rather raw language by the clerk who expressed his displeasure at my friend's lack of language facility.

Recently I also accompanied Ewha Summer Session students on their field trip around Korea: One of the young ladies encountered similarly rude treatment from a desk clerk in one of the major tourist hotels in Kyongju (prompting a very strong letter from me to the manager.) Many are the Korean-Americans who have been the recipients of this kind of abuse for their inability to speak fluent Korean.

It is quite ironic, since Koreans have generally a good reputation with foreigners. If you are non-Asian looking, Korean taxi drivers, waiters, and shopkeepers will praise your every utterance in Korean, no matter how accented and unintelligible. But look Asian and make the slightest error in speech, and you may be in for tremendous abuse. (Japanese-Americans complain of the same sort of treatment when they visit Japan.)

I have been involved with the Ewha program a number of times, and each summer this sort of thing happens with the regularity of a rule. Young Korean-Americans come over to study the language, customs, and history of the country where their parents or grandparents, or some-

times they themselves, were born. Eager to learn, to share in a heritage which often becomes diluted in the States, they are all too often subjected to this kind of criticism rather than given the support they deserve.

Of course it doesn't happen all the time, and most Koreans are not so rude: But this attitude is something I have seen every summer, and statistics show that it is rather widespread. At Korea National Tourism Corporation, for example, we conduct surveys of what visitors think of Korea.

A recent survey asked about a variety of things visitors found pleasant or unpleasant. One question concerned the friendliness or kindness of Koreans. Overall, some 47 percent of foreign visitors surveyed felt that Koreans were kind; but the national breakdown was interesting. Westerners reacted most favorably (or, put another way, Koreans seem to have treated most Westerners kindly): 95 percent of Canadians, 89 percent of Americans, 75.9 percent of Frenchmen, and over 80 percent of other Europeans nationalities found Koreans to be kind.

Asians reacted somewhat differently. 59 percent of the people from the ASEAN countries and Hong Kong, 47.7 percent of Taiwanese, and only 40 percent of Japanese found Koreans to be friendly. And at the very bottom of the list were the overseas Koreans, only 24.5 percent of whom were impressed with Korean kindness! Perhaps this is one reason why they are overseas Koreans.

Korean Americans Questions

1. What is your definition of a Korean American?
2. Are there any American Koreans? Explain.
3. What, if anything, can a Korean American offer Korea?
4. Would he/she have the same cultural outlook as those Koreans who had never travelled? Why would this be?
5. If their cultural view had changed, would this offend Koreans within Korea?
6. Do Koreans look down on other Koreans who do not speak the Korean language fluently? Why or why not?
7. Why did the clerk in the article use such raw language toward a person's inability to speak Korean?
8. Why do you think Asians, but specifically Korean Americans, rated Korean kindness so low?
9. Doesn't a Korean who goes to America ever become an "American" after a few generations?

Commentary

1. Among the questions that came out in the discussion were: Does citizenship make you an American? Should your loyalties stay with your country of birth?
2. Some students "excused" the Korean American's inability to speak perfect Korean by saying their tongue structure had changed after a generation preventing them from being able to pronounce correctly.
3. One student saw the use of broken Korean as a ploy to pick up women.

4. Many points of view were brought out which helped the students to understand the difficulties faced by the Korean Americans and the perceptions Koreans, as opposed to Americans, hold of them.
5. I frequently introduced this activity by presenting the class with the following situation and asking them how they interpreted it. I was at a swimming pool when a group of five Koreans came in speaking perfect English. A Korean friend of mine leaned over to me and said it was disgusting that a Korean would not speak Korean.
6. As a final activity, have students write dialogues on Korean Americans returning to Korea for the summer. Students must decide how much Korean they speak, the Korean customs they know, and the problems they might have. You might have them role play the dialogues and discuss their reactions to them.