

## Tips to Teaching in a Cross Culture Setting

Faith Builders Teachers Week 2016

By Amy Zimmerman

### I. Introduction

### II. Relating to parents

- A. Little support
- B. Takes much effort
- C. Opportunity for witnessing
  1. You might be asked for advice. Even if you're not a parent, you can give advice from God's Word.
  2. Make it clear that you like their child, but also be honest about what happens at school.
- D. Teach students to respect their parents
  1. Difficult when parents don't live godly lives
  2. You need to respect the parents as well
  3. Express sorrow rather than horror when relating to students with a difficult family situation.
- E. Encourage parents to do their job as much as possible. Don't agree to do things for the students that the parent should do.

### III. Relating to students

- A. Academics are important.
- B. Your students are more important.
- C. Be clear about expectations both academic and behavioral.
- D. If homework is too much of a battle, don't give any. The students may not have the support they need to get it done.
- E. Find expectations that are reasonable for the students you are teaching

### IV. Relating to local co-teachers

- A. Respect them and their ideas.
- B. Go to them with your questions, especially cultural questions.
- C. Be aware of their reactions to your suggestions.
- D. If you are teaching in a government school or other non-Christian school, the other teachers might be your greatest mission field.

## V. Curriculum and Supplies

### A. American curriculum

1. Might not connect with students
2. Needs extra explanation
3. Possibly Christian curriculum
4. Use local textbooks for your own reference or to use as supplement material especially if your students will be taking local achievement tests.

### B. Local curriculum

1. Puts them on the same plane as their peers from other schools
2. Will connect with their culture
3. Maximize on whatever advantages you find
4. Will give opportunities for you to learn about what is important to them
5. Books might not be attractive or follow your thought process
6. Probably not Christian curriculum

### C. School Supplies/Art supplies

1. You will likely have fewer supplies available.
  - a. If there are few supplies available, then students will not be spoiled by elaborate projects. A few special additions will be happily received even by older students.
  - b. Find local products that you can use or repurpose trash.
  - c. Take it with you if it's very important.
2. The school might pay for very little of what you think you need. Ask questions before purchasing something assuming the school will pay.

## VI. Addressing superstitions

- A. Remember our culture has lots of superstitions as well
- B. Be cautious and take your time. Don't ruin relationships.
- C. School children will believe you much more than adults.

## VII. What is important to their culture?

- A. Include things that they think are important whenever possible
  1. History of that country/region
  2. Local fables or traditional stories
  3. National Anthem
  4. Local Agriculture
- B. Will students need any special skills to get a job when they are older?
- C. Teaching English or Standard English well is typically one of the greatest academic gifts you can give them as an American teacher.

VIII. What is enjoyed by their culture?

- A. Music: Find something they will connect with and then stretch it.
- B. School events
  - 1. Length and time of day
  - 2. Types of events, fairs, fundraisers
  - 3. Planning events that the parents appreciate will increase the likelihood that they will be involved in helping

IX. Learn the local culture

- A. Be ready to change expectations based on their culture
- B. Are they time conscious?
- C. Be aware that certain topics might be considered taboo. Sometimes it might be best to discuss these topics anyway, but do so carefully.
- D. Discipline
  - 1. God's Word trumps all
  - 2. Sometimes the school will have a discipline plan that is very foreign to you. Try it before throwing it out. The students are already used to what is in place.
  - 3. Find out how much freedom you have to change the discipline plan.
  - 4. If there isn't a discipline plan, make one for your classroom. If there are local teachers in the school, discuss your plan with them. It's good for both of you to share ideas.

X. Introduce students to other cultures

- A. This is especially important if their world is small.
- B. Use books and speakers
- C. Show pictures from your own travels or pictures from friends or family who have traveled
- D. Introduce them to your home culture, but do so carefully. Be ready to point out things that you've learned to like better about their country. It's easy to make it sound like heaven when you are homesick.

XI. Conclusion