

## New Culture Questions

- 1. You are a 7th grade teacher with new students from Mexico. You suspect that they are not literate in native language but wonder why they don't seem to respond to your Spanish teacher when she speaks to them. These students from Mexico do not speak Spanish but are from a rural town where a Mayan dialect is spoken.**
- 2. Your principal is upset with your 4th grade student from a rural village in EL Salvador. He has been reprimanded twice for urinating on the playground. He doesn't seem to understand that this is inappropriate. This student comes from a very rural area of his country and urinating outside is accepted behavior for a boy of ten.**
- 3. You have new Congolese students in your third grade class who are not used to being in school. You make allowances for that until one of your students is discovered undressed in the boys room. What is going on? Students from many African countries are not used to wearing a lot of clothes.**
- 4. Your student from Saudi Arabia refuses to work in cooperative groups. You have tried changing the groups and putting him with a student who speaks his native language. He still refuses to participate. This student is a boy and considers it uncomfortable to work in the same group as girls. They come from a culture where girls and boys are usually separated in school. You have compounded matters when you pair him with a girl from his native country.**
- 5. A Japanese student is uncomfortable when you praise her English insisting that she still had a lot to learn. You try to teach her to say "Thank you very much" in response to your compliments. She is even more uncomfortable. You wonder why. In Japan, "thank you very much" implies that the student agrees with your assessment. It is very rude to brag in Japan.**
- 6. Your new Somali Bantu students do not seem to be able to sit still at their desks. Even though you give them constant breaks to walk around and stretch, they are continually out of their seats. What is the problem? These students come from a persecuted tribe in rural Somalia. Many children from this area have probably never been in school. They may have never sat in a chair.**
- 7. You are invited to dinner by the parents of your student from Costa Rica. You arrive right on time. You feel insulted because your hosts are not ready to greet you. Your hosts do not expect their guests to arrive on**

time. Arrive 45 minutes late and you will probably still be the first to come.

8. You notice that your Asian students frequently point to their nose while speaking. In many parts of Asia, it is believed that a person's soul is in their brain not in their hearts. (We point to our heart when we mean "self").

9. Parents of your new students from Guatemala are 45 minutes late for their parent-teacher conference. The classroom teacher feels that they don't care how their children are doing in school. Being 45 minutes late is considered acceptable in many South American countries.

10. Your new student from Argentina stares at you all the time. You decide that the student is belligerent and wasn't taught any manners. It is not considered impolite to stare in many South American countries.

11. You give your Brazilian middle school student the "o.k." sign when he performs well in class. He looks shocked. This gesture is obscene in Brazil.

12. The math teacher of your 5th grade students from Mexico is upset because the students do not show their work when they are solving long division problems. In fact, she accuses them of copying their answers. In many countries, students solve these problems using mental math. When the problem is written down it is written considerably different than in the U.S.

13. Your Puerto Rican students seem to daydream a lot. You wonder why they are so inattentive. Space is at a premium in Puerto Rico. In order to have privacy, people go inside their own heads rather than separating themselves physically as we do in the U.S.

14. A student from Argentina is experiencing difficulty with writing numbers in Math class. She is especially having difficulties with decimals which she doesn't seem to understand. When given the problem  $108.6 \times 507.4$ , she wrote 55.103,44 as her response. In many countries a period is used in numbers in the same place we use a comma and vice versa.

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- 15. You have new sixth grade student from Bolivia. The student appears to have a negative attitude from the first day. Now he is out of his seat fooling around and you've just motioned to him to come over to talk to you. He glares at you and seems even more angry. What happened? The student is probably angry because he has had to move away from all that is familiar. Culture shock plays a part in this behavior. How did you motion for the student to come over to you? Beckoning with one finger is rude in many cultures. It can be a gesture reserved for animals.**
- 16. A new ESL student from Bolivia has been getting every addition problem with the number 7 in it wrong. Why? The number "1" is written like the American "7."**
- 17. Hui is a 6th grade student in your class who speaks no English. He has an allergy and his nose runs constantly. He uses his fingers instead of a tissue. You and your class are upset by his behavior while Hui is unaware of the impact of his actions. What causes this behavior and how can you handle it? In some cultures handkerchiefs and tissues are not used. It is not unusual to see this behavior. Try giving this student a pocket pack of tissues to use in the classroom. Have someone explain to him what he needs to do when his nose is runny.**
- 18. You have new ESL students from Mexico who are absent for what you consider flimsy reasons: A visit to a grandmother, caring for a sick relative or a family party. You feel frustrated because there is no continuity of instruction. Why are the students absent? Don't their parents value education? Family is valued more highly than consistent attendance in school.**
- 19. The nurse in your school consistently sends sick children home. The parents of your Korean students will send their child back again the next day, still sick. In some cultures it is very important to "tough it out" and not miss school or work, no matter how sick you are.**
- 20. You are a 6th grade teacher. Your new South American student does not seem to celebrate the birthday you have marked on the classes' birthday calendar. Is this a religious observance? Children in many South American cultures celebrate their Saint's Day rather than their birthday.**

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