Building Effective Communication Skills: A Workshop for International Graduate Students

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UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
Our Co-Sponsors

> Core Programs in the Graduate School
> GPSS
  – Graduate and Professional Student Senate
> FIUTS
  – Foundation for International Understanding Through Students
Who are we?

> Ziyan Bai
  - From Beijing, China
  - Came to UW in 2011
  - Educational Researcher & Practitioner
  - Love food and traveling

> Monica Cortés Viharo
  - From Oakland, CA
  - Came to UW in 2014
  - Actor, Public Speaking Coach, PhD Student
  - Wife and Cat Mommy

We are both graduating in June 2019! Yay!
Goals of the Workshop

> Learn about cultural differences and communication styles
> Discuss communication skills in and out of the classroom
> Practice tips for effective communication and networking skills
> Develop strategies for real world communication situations in academic, professional and social setting
> Connect with your peers to build community
Networking Opportunity

“Communication”

> What’s one strength you possess with regard to communication?
> What’s one challenge you face in communication?
> What is the difference in communication styles between your home country and here?
Non-Verbal Communication
Differences in Communication
Cultural Dimensions and Individual Factors

Theoretical underpinning

- High/Low context
- Large/small power distance
- Individualism and collectivism
- Tolerance for ambiguity/uncertainty avoidance
- Silence
Communication Scenarios
Scenario I

> You call the office of your advisor to make an appointment, he/she isn’t in the office, and you decide to leave a message. You call again later and your advisor is able to answer. You ask for an appointment to talk about your research project. Discuss a time when you can meet, and then conclude the conversation.
Practice with a Partner

> One plays faculty/phone
> One plays student
> Then, Switch.
> You have 5 minutes.
Scenario II

> At a gathering, you are walking up to someone to start a conversation. Please write two questions and be ready to ask two follow up questions. An exit strategy is needed to end the conversation.
Find someone you haven’t talked to.

You have 3 minutes to ask a question, ask a follow up question, keep the conversation going.

At the end of the 3 minutes, exit the conversation when the light dims in the room.

Then find a new partner.
Scenario III

You are at a conference or reception, and two people are having a conversation. You are going to join the existing conversation, and introduce yourself.
Practice III

> Find two other people you haven’t spoken to.
> Decide quickly who will be the person joining the conversation.
> Start chatting and make sure the person joining the conversation has enough time to make introduction.
> You have 3 minutes.
Bottom-Line in Communication

At least, remember these…

- Be open-minded;
- Critical Thinking;
- Group/Team Work;
- Ask questions when in doubt;
- Don’t take it personal;
- Cordially professional relationship: Let things go
American Values in Communication

This is never a golden standard since we are all human.

> Casual Conversation (a.k.a. small talk): weather, weekend, holiday, vacation, sports
  - People take turns frequently
  - Not much personal topic involved; unless close friends
  - No controversial topics (i.e. sex, religion, politics)

> Body language
  - Not much touching involved; moderate or event quiet conversations preferred;

> Story narratives – With “details”
Modes of Communication

There can be more than this list can encompass...

- Email;
- Phone;
- One-on-one (work);
- Group (social);
- Meeting (work);
- Presentation (1 to many – small audience);
- Public Speaking (1 to big audience);
- Teaching (lecture, lab, office hour, quiz section);
Resources

- FIUTS Conversation Group;
- Public Speaking Course;
- Speaking Center;
- Core Programs: Winter & Spring Quarter Workshops
- Career & Internship Center: Networking events/workshops
- Community Building: RSOs; GPSS; Meet-ups;
- Counselling Center & Ombud – Conflict Management;
- Legal Services – Landlord;
- Others? Please share with the group!
Get Involved!
- International Grad Student Advisory Board (IGSAB)
- Fill in the Catalyst Application to be part of this group
- https://catalyst.uw.edu/webq/survey/baiziyan/341682
Your feedback is appreciated!

> Please take some 5 minutes to fill out the evaluation form.

> Then we will move onto Q&A.
You will Rock in Graduate School!

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