

A Listening Activity in a Foreign Language

It is easy for us to forget what a daunting experience it can be to suddenly be in a situation where we don't speak the language of the majority around us. To simulate the experience of our newcomer English learners you can use this activity.

1. Find someone who can give a short self-introduction in a less commonly spoken language.
2. Determine some listening comprehension questions based on the content of the self-introduction.
3. Have the speaker introduce the questions to the participants in their language then give their self-introduction.
4. Have the speaker ask the comprehension questions in their language.
5. After the experience, ask the participants:
 - How did you feel about listening to the speaker and trying to answer the questions?
 - What, if any, techniques did you employ to try to understand what was being said?
 - Did you give up? Why or why not?
 - Have you observed students going through this same experience?
 - What would you have wanted the speaker to do to support your participation and learning in this activity?
6. After processing the experience it is most important to draw connections to the participants' daily experiences with English learners and brainstorm modifications and practices that will support those who struggle the most.

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Do not show members of other cultures!

Cha-~~NA~~ Cha-~~NA~~ - Cultural Simulation Activity

Welcome! You are now a member of the Cha Culture. Read the rules of your new culture below. Have fun, play along! There will be observers and rule enforcers watching.

Object of the Activity: You, the Cha group, have enough salsa for your entire group but not enough chips. The Na group has lots of chips. Your mission is to try to get enough chips to feed your group.

How to begin:

- Practice greetings, showing reverence and food sharing in your new culture.
- Discuss and plan how to make your first contact with the Na culture.

Cha culture Description

You are a member of the **proud** and **reserved** Cha culture.

1. Cha people never talk above a loud whisper.
2. Cha people stand in close proximity.
3. Cha people greet one another and say thank you with a gentle pat on the arm.
4. Cha people revere people with long hair. Cha people show their reverence by
 - Offering food to long haired people first.
 - Bowing their heads to long haired people.
5. When a Cha person wants something to eat they announce, "I wonder if anyone is hungry." Those around bring food and offer it to the revered long haired people first. **Cha people never serve themselves.**
6. In Cha culture, if someone breaks the rules, those around will hiss at the rule breaker. At first gently as a reminder then gradually more aggressively.

Stick with the rules! Have fun! Good luck!

Cha-Na Cha-Na Cultural Simulation Activity

Some think of language as a subject for students to learn, a body of knowledge to master. However, even when a student has an adequate vocabulary and a good understanding of how to put sentences together there can be hidden challenges that can make assimilation into their new school environment difficult.

Language and culture go hand in hand. One must know how, when and why to use language appropriately to be successful in our English speaking culture.

To allow people to experience what it is like to be in a foreign culture, need to accomplish a task and not know the rules, this cultural simulation activity has been created.

The Cha-Na Cha-Na Cultural Simulation Activity has been adapted from the following:

- Ba fa' Ba fa': A face to face, cultural simulation learning game created by Dr. R. Garry Shirts and distributed by Simulation Training Systems.
- Newfields, T., (December 2001) NaZa NaZa: A Classroom Adaptation of a Cross-Cultural Training Simulation, Journal of NanZan Junior College, Vol. 29. Retrieved from <http://www.tnewfields.info/Articles/naza.htm#Overview>

Also of interest:

- Rieger, A., & McGrail, E., (2006) Understanding English Language Learners' Needs and the Language Acquisition Process: Two Teacher Educators' Perspectives. On Point Series, National Institute for Urban School Improvement, Arizona State University. Retrieved from <http://ea.niusileadscape.org/lc/Record/211>

A Simple Conversation without the letter “N”

When we talk with friends in our native language it is usually an easy experience. We express ourselves automatically, without having to put much effort into word choices or how to form sentences. For beginning language learners it is a much more difficult task. To simulate the effort and frustration that beginning language learners experience we can use this activity.

1. Have participants pair off.
2. Have the pairs determine that one of them is participant A and the other is participant B.
3. Tell the participants that they will be having a simple conversation about what they did during the weekend but there will be two rules.
 - Participant A should initiate the conversation.
 - Participant B should answer as they like but may not use any words that have the letter “n” in them.
4. Give the participants 5 minutes to have their conversation.
5. If time allows, have the participants switch roles and talk about what they plan to do next weekend.
6. Bring the group back together and ask the participants:
 - How did you feel when you were the one who couldn't use words with the letter “n” in them?
 - How did you feel when you were the conversation initiator?
 - How similar do you think this experience is to that of beginning English learners?
 - What did your partner do to help you through the conversation?
 - What can we learn from this experience that we could apply to our beginning English learners?
7. After processing the experience it is most important to draw connections to the participants' daily experiences with English learners and brainstorm modifications and practices that will support those who struggle the most.

---SECRET---

Do not show members of other cultures!

Cha-~~NA~~ Cha-~~NA~~ - Cultural Simulation Activity

Welcome! You are now a member of the Na Culture. Read the rules of your new culture below. Have fun, play along! There will be observers and rule enforcers watching.

Object of the Activity: You, the Na group, have enough chips for your entire group but not enough salsa. The Cha group has lots of salsa. Your mission is to try to get enough salsa to feed your group.

How to begin:

- Practice greetings, showing reverence and food sharing in your new culture.
- Discuss and plan how to make your first contact with the Cha culture.

~~NA~~ CULTURE Description

You are a member of the **expressive** and **outgoing** Na culture.

1. Na people always speak clearly and with enthusiasm.
2. Na people are very expressive with their hands when they talk so they give each other ample personal space.
3. Na people greet each other and say thank you with a high five.
4. Na people revere people who wear glasses. Na people show their reverence by
 - Waiting for them to start the sharing of food.
 - Thumping their own chest with their hand.
5. When a Na person is hungry they give the closest person wearing glasses some food saying "Revered One, we are hungry." Then the eyeglass wearer offers the food to all around.
6. In Na culture, if someone breaks the rules, those around will laugh at the rule breaker. At first in a friendly way, then gradually turning away and not giving eye contact.

Stick with the rules! Have fun! Good luck!

Observer

Read through the culture descriptions of both groups. Without interacting, observe participants and take notes about what you see.

Observer

Read through the culture descriptions of both groups. Without interacting, observe participants and take notes about what you see.

Cha Culture Rule Keeper

Read the Cha Culture Description. When you see a participant not following the rules, gently remind them what they should do.

Na Culture Rule Keeper

Read the Na Culture Description. When you see a participant not following the rules, gently remind them what they should do.