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# Examining Values: A Comparative Cultures Course at SIT for non-English Speakers

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*School for International Training*

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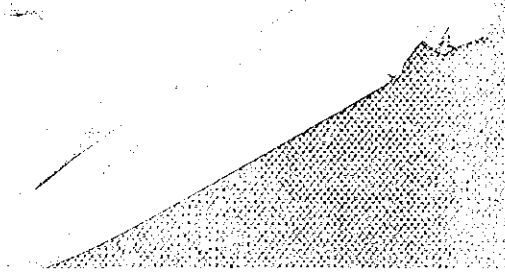
EXAMINING VALUES:

A Comparative Cultures Course  
at SIT for non-English Speakers

Ann L. Munch

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

January 21, 1974



This report by Ann L. Munch is  
accepted in its present form.

Date

1/22/74

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Many thanks to the class members,  
the people who made this report possible:

Abdullah	Saudi Arabia	
Ali	Saudi Arabia	
Armando	Colombia	(joined the class late)
Beat	Switzerland	
Carlos	Mexico	
Consuelo	Venezuela	(left the class after 5 weeks)
Denise	Brazil	
Khaled	Kuwait	
Khalid	Kuwait	
Masaki	Japan	
Salvador	Mexico	
Susanne	Switzerland	
Ruth	Switzerland	

This paper reports the Comparative Cultures section of a 10-week English course I taught at SIT the summer of 1973. Although the report is descriptive, its thrust is primarily instructive. Its purpose is to provide other teachers of Comparative Cultures some supplemental material. It includes my pedagogical approach to cultural awareness in the classroom, a syllabus to the material the class covered during the ten weeks, student involvement and reaction, and suggestions for adapting and improving the material.

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Part of the 10-week English course at the School for International Training is spent in studying various topics other than the English language. For two hours a week in a section called Comparative Cultures each English teacher is responsible for presenting some kind of cultural aspect in the classroom. Each teacher does it differently with different goals in mind. I decided to present several cultural aspects to my students during this course through the examination of values. By looking at ourselves and examining what is important to us, I believed we would gain insight into how to function in a foreign culture.

I wanted all of us to examine our values, not necessarily change them. None of the students was American; therefore, no one in the class except myself was expected to have or adopt American values. However, one purpose in looking at our values was to acknowledge them and determine how they might differ from or conflict with those of another culture. If conflict did occur, we might learn to lessen it and still keep our own values intact.

Another purpose in approaching the Comparative Cultures section in this way was to try to provide an atmosphere for personal learning to take place. I felt that examination of values would have a longer and more pertinent effect on my students than discussion of cultural information alone would have. This part of Comparative Cultures is also very important, but I felt that by examining our own values, the members of the class would be learning not just facts,

but a process which they would be able to apply to themselves anywhere for the rest of their lives.

In order to organize my presentation of Comparative Cultures through the examination of values I imposed an abstract order on the presentation of the material. This abstract order consisted of presenting material in one or more of three different manners. One manner was to examine values. A second manner was providing stimulus for multi-cultural interaction among the students and a third was presentation of cultural information. The manner or manners in which material would be presented were determined by the subject matter of the session. For example, when we did an exercise from Values Clarification<sup>1</sup> we wanted to examine values. When we discussed the film "When Parents Grow Old", we interacted on a multicultural level, sharing information about the treatment of old people in our respective countries. However, we also examined our values because, by discussing the film, we began to think about how we would act under the circumstances of the film. We began to define what was important to us in this situation.

When I was presenting cultural information, usually all three manners of presenting material were incorporated. For example, many of the students in the class were interested in learning more about black Americans. We read the preface

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<sup>1</sup>

Sidney B. Simon, Leland W. Howe, Howard Kirschenbaum, Hart Publishing Company, Inc., New York, 1972.

to Black Power by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton<sup>2</sup>  
so that we would have the basis for a factual discussion.  
In our discussion we not only interacted on a multi-cultural  
level, but we also expressed some varied values.

The reader's interest in this abstract order of presenting  
material should be secondary to his/her interest in the over-  
riding purpose of this report which is to provide some dif-  
ferent and perhaps new ideas for presenting a Comparative  
Cultures session. These three manners in which I presented  
material served only as a framework for me within which I  
could ask myself what my objectives were for each Compara-  
tive Cultures session and how I would reach them.

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<sup>2</sup>

pp. vii-xii, Vintage Books, New York, 1967.

### WHO ARE YOU?

On the first day of class I decided to conduct a values clarification exercise called "Who are You?" taken from the book, Values Clarification.

The purpose of the exercise is to have students begin to define themselves. I had hoped that after the exercise was finished we would know more about each other and we would also have the raw material for a discussion on why the class members were at SIT and what they expected to get out of the 10-week English course. Would only their knowledge of English increase or would they grow in other ways too?

The procedure of the exercise is to ask three classmates to leave the room and then have them re-enter one by one. Each of the three is asked separately "Who are you?" When the question is asked ten times and ten different answers are given, the second person re-enters the room and the same procedure is followed. This happens again for the third person. After all three students have responded orally, the class is asked to write down their ten answers to the question "Who are you?" I would suggest the teacher do this also. It is not a particularly easy thing to do.

Since this was a values clarification exercise, I expected to begin to examine the values the class members placed on being at SIT and learning English. I also expected to share factual information and talk about our various cultures.

During the exercise the three volunteers were perplexed by my redundancy and the first two couldn't answer the question after responding five or six times. The third volunteer, Ali, answered with "ambitious", "amusing", and a few other adjectives after going through the obvious nouns of "student", "Saudi", "male". By demonstrating the procedure with three volunteers, the class heard varied answers to the same question and then each wrote down his/her ten answers.

Up until this point the exercise had gone fairly well, but once we had the raw data, I didn't know what to do with them. A discussion would have been a good thing at this point, but it didn't develop for several reasons. For one, the students did not feel confident enough in their English to carry on a conversation, although the class was considered to be at an advanced intermediate level. Perhaps a more important reason was there was little trust among the twelve of them. In order to reveal and discuss who you think you really are, a certain amount of trust must exist among group members. Thirdly, they didn't know what to make of the exercise and were probably asking themselves if this was an English class or a transactional analysis group.

A fourth reason a discussion did not develop was that the questions I had prepared did not fit the objectives I cared to reach by the end of the exercise. I had prepared three questions: How do we define ourselves? Do we define ourselves by our roles in life? What other criteria do we use besides the roles we play? These three questions did lead into a discussion about nouns and adjectives - "student"

valuable, but not exactly what I had in mind when I first planned the lesson.

I think the exercise is still valuable if used properly. If I had asked the class to answer the question ten times a second time, but this time projecting themselves ten weeks into the future, perhaps we would have found out how each individual expected or wanted to change. If this procedure is followed, then it can be used on any class level. No discussion is necessary, because the two lists can be saved until a future date, halfway through or at the end of the program, when the class members are able and willing to discuss them to see if objectives are being reached or desired changes are taking place.

The exercise still could have been used the way it developed that first day if I had done one thing differently. If I had presented it in the second or third week of classes, the students would have been much more confident in speaking English, more trust would have developed among the class members, and by then they would have been acquainted enough with me and class procedures to continue with the exercise and not try to predict its purpose until it was finished.

## SIT ENVIRONMENT

The next several sessions of Comparative Cultures were spent on the basic theme of exploring the environment. This is an idea I had gotten from my MAT year when our class was given several days to research the resources which would be available to us during our time in southern Vermont.

The first step to this unit was to acquaint the students with the campus. Although they had been on campus about a week, many of them were unsure of all the buildings and what they housed, the fact that there is a swimming pond and what other students were doing on campus. We set out to explore these things by taking a walk one morning and finding out what we didn't know. This is a simple enough thing to do and everybody enjoys it as long as the weather is nice.

Since our class took the tour just before the lunch break, there was no time that morning to work with the material we'd learned. However, one thing which can be done, and which works well with elementary level classes, is to divide the class in three to four groups and ask them to draw maps of the campus, with buildings and views labeled. This introduces new vocabulary - pond, river, Carriage House; directions - left, right, north, south, etc.; and a host of questions about other programs and people on campus.

The next session in this unit was to introduce someone to the class whom they had never met before. The purpose of the exercise was manifold: to hear an English speaker other

than myself, to ask questions and practice question words<sup>3</sup> which we had been reviewing, and to talk to an American.

Peter Kenny, a fellow MAT, visited the class to be interviewed. The students knew little about Peter except that he was an MAT. During the interview I took notes and used this information in the next hour as a listening comprehension exercise in the language laboratory. (See p. 9.)

Following the joint interview in class, the students interviewed people on campus. I asked them to divide themselves in pairs and I assigned each pair a certain person on campus to interview. The objectives of this exercise were primarily the same as the last with one exception: I wanted the students to be out of the security of their classroom. They would be interviewing someone on the interviewee's terms. I asked the student to find out some specific information from each person so the exercise was somewhat structured. (The questions they asked the interviewee were: What are your responsibilities in your job? Whom do you work with? What are their responsibilities?) I also asked them to remember how they were feeling during the interview.

The next day when the students returned with their information we discussed the functions of Ray Clark, Sam Achziger, Klem Rourke, Gay Northrup and Harry Starkey. It developed in discussion that initially the ten students involved in the exercise were apprehensive about confronting people in their offices and a little bit nervous about talking to Americans on a formal basis. It seemed they all came away

<sup>3</sup>

At this time of the summer course, early July, there were very few Americans on campus and many ISEs complained of not being able to talk with native speakers.



# INTERVIEW REVIEW SHEET

Tuesday, July 10

## New Vocabulary:

MAT:	Master of Arts in Teaching
bilingual:	Many bilingual schools are found in the U.S. particularly where there are large populations of Cubans, Puerto Ricans or Mexicans.
surplus:	There is a surplus of English literature teachers in this country.
cosmopolitan:	San Francisco and New York are cosmopolitan areas in the U.S.
comprehensive:	including everything
to get a lot from something:	to appreciate something, to learn a lot from something
tendency:	inclination
special education:	This is an area of education where teachers work with children who are handicapped or have a learning disability.
a dime a dozen:	This is an idiom which refers to something which is very common. For example, sea shells on the sea shore are a dime a dozen.
advise:	This is a verb, to advise. My students advise me every day.
advice:	This is a noun and is what you give when you advise someone. My students give me advice every day. This word has no plural form.

4

## Lab Listening Comprehension

Peter Kenny is an MAT student. He comes from Connecticut, but lives in Vermont now. He would like to teach English as a Second Language in the U.S., but it is difficult to find a job. Many jobs are in bilingual schools where a teacher must teach a subject in a foreign language - for example, history in the Spanish language. Therefore, to teach in a bilingual school, a teacher must speak English and another language fluently.

Peter has taught in Jamaica and Spain. He taught English in Jamaica for two years and then did his student teaching for the MAT program this year in Spain.

Peter's hobbies are reading, swimming and going camping. He would like to live in San Francisco if he could find a job there.

4

As the class interviewed Peter Kenny I took notes. Following the interview I wrote up the above paragraphs to read the next hour in lab as part of a live recording. After reading it I asked the students questions about the information which they had to answer as a homework assignment. This would require returning to the lab and listening to their tapes again. For

with positive reaction to their conversations and found the people they spoke with to be very pleasant. For some of them this experience showed that Americans weren't as cold as the students had been led to believe. This exercise prepared them for the next unit we were to cover - exploring the environment in Brattleboro.

4

the following morning I mimeographed the paragraph and new vocabulary so the students would have the information for their own reference. However, before they received this handout, we went over the answers to the questions I had asked the previous day in lab.

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT

One exercise which is commonly used at SIT is the Southside Survey. With a list of questions about Southside in hand a class goes downtown to find out the answers to such questions as "What is the name of the highest point in town?"

I had planned to go something along these lines, but I asked the students to bring up a list of questions themselves so that the questions would be things in which they were interested. The exercise covered a series of questions and developed in several stages.

The first stage covered several hours of class work. On Monday morning I asked the class to think of the differences that they could find up and between life in the U.S. and in Southside. I divided the class in three groups and with large sheets of brown wrapping paper they listed these differences. After spending 15 or 20 minutes on this, the groups came with the following categories:

sports	industry
government	army
education	language
clubs	religion
food	recreation
music and cultural events	family living
nature and topography	

We discussed the categories further to see if we could consolidate them. At first we eventually worked with the first seven items but the other topics could either be covered under one of these or could be discussed with host families during the homestay which was coming up.

Some topics were completely eliminated because the class felt there couldn't be very much information about them.

In the following class session I asked the group to think of sources in Brattleboro where a student could go to find out information about a particular topic. The following is a list of the topics and sources which the class decided upon:

sports: WTSA, "The Brattleboro Reformer", sporting goods store  
government: municipal building  
education: municipal building, schools  
cars: car dealers, rent-a-car agencies, garages  
food: supermarkets, restaurants  
music and entertainment: music store, WTSA  
nature and topography: municipal building

In the final part of this first stage we asked ourselves what specific information we wanted to learn about each topic. As the class threw out questions, I wrote them down. After class I typed out our Brattleboro Survey. (See pp. 13-15.)

The formulation of the survey is the first stage to this exercise. The second stage is the seeking out of information on the students' parts and the third is a feedback session after the trip downtown to discuss what they found out and how they felt about the procedure. I believe the teacher has a strong influence in how the first stage develops, but has no influence in the rest of the exercise because the students carry it through during their free time outside of the classroom. In this manner they can find out first hand the information they want to know about and they can also familiarize themselves somewhat with the town in which they will spend at least another two months.

### BRATTLEBORO SURVEY

Sports: Sources would be WTSA radio station on Putney Road and the "Brattleboro Reformer" office on Main Street.

1. What is the favorite sport in the U.S.? Which is the best team?
2. Where can people in Brattleboro play sports?
3. What kind of facilities and clubs for sports are there in Brattleboro?
4. Do you have professional teams in Brattleboro? In Vermont?
5. How do you join a club or a team?
6. How much does a professional athlete earn?
7. When are the seasons for the sports?
8. What is the most important single game in the U.S.?

Government: The main source would be the people in the Municipal building on Main Street.

1. What type of government do you have in Brattleboro?
2. Who are the senators for Vermont? for Brattleboro? Do they represent you well?
3. What are the social institutions in Brattleboro?
4. Who is the mayor?
5. Do you have any crime? What kind?
6. How many accidents on the road do you have in a year?
7. Do you have close cooperation between police and the public?
8. What party won the last three elections in Brattleboro?

Education: The best source would be the department of education in the Municipal building on Main Street.

1. How many elementary, Junior and Senior high schools are there in Brattleboro?
2. How many years must a student attend elementary school?

Education, cont'd.

3. How many years must a student attend high school?
4. Do you have exams for college or university entrance?
5. Must you go to high school?
6. In which season does the school year begin?
7. What school problems do you have?
8. What subjects do students study in high school?
9. Do you have a specific school for preparation for college?
10. How do you grade students?
11. How do you become a teacher?
12. What is a teacher's salary in Brattleboro? What does the administration earn?
13. Is there a teacher's union in Brattleboro?

Cars: The best sources would be car dealers or rent-a-car agencies.

1. What is the price of popular cars?
2. What are the conditions for renting, leasing or buying a car?
3. Are sales going down because the price of gas is going up?
4. How many car companies are there in the U.S.?
5. Why are so many cars imported?
6. How much does it cost to fill the tank of your car?
7. Do you believe the electric car will replace the gas car?
8. Do most people prefer automatic or standard cars?
9. Why do American cars have so many options?

Food: Go to any supermarket or any restaurant.

1. How much do eggs, bread, butter, milk, fruit, vegetables,

Food, cont'd.

1. sugar, meat, cheese, coffee, rice, flour, cost?
2. Where can you get Japanese food? Arabic food?
3. Where can you buy deer meat?
4. Do you pay taxes for food?

Music and entertainment: Sources are the music store and WTSA.

1. What are the best places in Brattleboro for entertainment?
2. Does Brattleboro have a theater?
3. What are some places to go on the weekend?
4. What TV and radio stations does Brattleboro have?
5. What types of music are most popular in Brattleboro?

Nature and Topography: I think the best source would be agencies in the Municipal building on Main Street.

1. What river flows through Brattleboro?
2. Are there any industries on the river?
3. Is there a pollution problem in Brattleboro?
4. What animals are indigenous to this area?
5. What are the hunting seasons?
6. What is the population of Brattleboro?
7. How many races are represented in the population of Brattleboro?

I made copies of the survey available to all the students and asked them to decide among themselves which topics an individual would cover, making sure that all seven categories were covered. We decided to allow three class days before the information would be due back in class.

So far two manners were used to develop this exercise: stimulation of multicultural interaction, as when we discussed differences between life in the U.S. and in students' native countries; and the gathering of information, i.e., finding out the answers to the questions in the survey. The third stage of the exercise involves examination of values.

Before the students left to gather their information, I asked them to keep in mind how they felt when they were asking their questions because we would be discussing this when they returned to class.

The feedback was very interesting. It was obvious once I handed out the survey that for some of the students the trip downtown was an intrusion on their free time and they wanted little to do with it. Others were looking forward to finding out information in which they were interested. However, all seemed to agree that once they got involved in talking to someone about their topic, it was an enjoyable and worthwhile experience, not so much because of the knowledge they gained, although for some this was a benefit, but because they made themselves go into a strange environment and interact with total strangers.

From the practical point of view several of the students found out information which they wanted to know. Susanne,





towards their environment had changed between the beginning when the survey was originally conducted and seven or eight weeks later, probably quite a few differences involving adjustment, homesickness, culture and language shock could be discussed.

### MINI-HOMESTAY EXPECTATIONS

About three weeks after an ISE program begins, weekend or "mini" homestays are arranged for the students. They visit families in the area from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon. For many of the students it is the first time they have spoken with Americans other than those they have met at SIT. It is also the first time that many of them have eaten anything other than SIT cafeteria food in this country, so the mini-homestay is usually something students look forward to.

It might be worthwhile to spend some preparation time in class for this weekend, although I wouldn't go into sociological studies of the American family (if your students happen to be sociologists). Instead, I might want to ask the students what they expect from the weekend. The reason for asking such a question is not to start a discussion, but have the students begin to think of how they will fit into their particular family. Usually a discussion like this is slow to get off the ground because everyone's afraid they might say the wrong thing even though there is no "right" or "wrong" answer. Even if there is little verbalization, a question such as this usually starts someone thinking. That the thought processes are not evident in class doesn't mean they're not occurring. If a teacher would like to spend more time on expectations, it might be wise to have the students write them down. This can help the unwilling student become more involved because writing is usually less threatening than talking. Writing also helps clarify thoughts.

A question such as "What do you expect from this weekend?" brings thoughts to examining values. It may be difficult to even discuss this because there will be such varied answers to the question. "Sleep" might be one, "good food" another, "practice my English" a third, "exchange ideas" yet a fourth. Instead of discussing the possible answers to the question, we had time for thinking. I mentioned that I wanted to talk about the weekend when they returned and asked them to keep in mind their mental answers to my question.

When the class returned after their mini-homestay I asked them if they experienced what they had expected. Almost all of them agreed that they got to speak English, which they had expected. However, unexpected things did turn up. Food, of course, was a big expectation. Beat ate only ice cream until a Sunday afternoon picnic. Carlos, who had rarely seen anything cooked let alone spent much time in the kitchen at home in Mexico, saw his breakfast of waffles and toast cooked right on the dining room table of his mini-homestay family.

All of the students felt they had spent their weekends with well-off families and they were wondering if poverty really did exist in this country. At this point the discussion took a turn because I became an active participant. They asked me if poverty existed and if it did, where, because they certainly hadn't seen any in Brattleboro or on their mini-homestays. Unfortunately the attention focused on me because I was their only "reliable" source. I explained to them there was poverty in this country and that it existed mainly in cities. It seemed to me that many of the poor people

in this country were black.

This started a rash of questions which so many foreigners ask Americans about the racial problem in this country. Emotionally I didn't want to pursue this discussion because little understanding or learning develops from it. Pedagogically I didn't want the discussion to continue because I, the teacher, was the center of attention. I feel that when this happens no creative thinking takes place among students because they are being spoon-fed by the teacher. To quell the discussion and re-focus the attention on the class members, I asked them what they thought the black situation was really like. Of course we got various opinions. The term "Black Power" was being used a lot in the discussion so I decided to find some general, yet accurate, information on Black Power and the black movement and use it in class so we would have some facts to talk about rather than just personal opinion. I did this and we discussed blacks in America later during the course. The unit will be discussed in this paper.

One can see that a discussion of mini-homestay experiences can take several directions. If we had concerned ourselves only with expectations of the mini-homestay I would have guided the conversation in the direction of understanding why certain expectations were met and other were not. However, it happened that in our class the discussion became a jumping-off point for other topics which we could cover. One was black people in America. Another was American music. Questions

such as "What do Americans sing when they're together in groups?" and "Who are the popular American singers now?" were raised. Still a third was the problem of the elderly in this country and how Americans deal with the problems caused by loved ones growing old.

All these ideas were discussed later through the use of films or other exercises.

## MUSIC IN AMERICA

Howard Shapiro, media consultant for the English Language Office, was able to procure the film "American Music from Folk to Jazz and Pop" at a perfect time for my class because they were just beginning to ask questions about the music young Americans enjoy. It's quite an encompassing field and the film did a satisfactory job of overviewing the history of American popular music. (See pp. 24-25 for summary of film.) All the class saw the movie and everyone seemed to enjoy it for the music itself; however, I would not recommend the film for an elementary class because the comprehension level of the text was advanced. I would recommend going over the summary of the film before it is viewed. The students can then learn the new vocabulary and get an idea of what the film will cover.

My main objective in seeing this film was to offer a summary of American music to the students. The film reached its objectives for many of the students because they were familiar with western music anyway. However, some of the students, the four Arabs in particular, were confused by the film because they had little background in western music. It was obvious at this point that listening to and singing American music was far more important to most of the students than to studying its history.

It was very easy accomplishing this. We simply played and sang popular songs in class and recorded them in the language laboratory. (See pp. 28-36 for song lyrics.)

## AMERICAN MUSIC FROM FOLK TO JAZZ AND POP

America's musical heritage comes from two areas of the world: Africa and Europe. Rock and Roll combines both traditions.

Regional variations of popular music:

The Detroit Sound. For example, The Supremes. Their music is a combination of gospel and blues with a heavy beat. It has "soul".

The British Sound. For example, The Beatles, Rolling Stones, The Dave Clark Five. It is based on Negro blues.

The Nashville Sound.

Disc Jockey - a radio announcer who plays popular music on his radio show.

Richard Rodgers (who wrote Sound of Music, South Pacific and other musical plays) thinks that rock music is too repetitive, that it uses the same chords and the same beat for too long.

The music of the 1960's comes from many sources:

Bluegrass banjo - for example, Earl Scruggs.

New Orleans blues - for example, Punch Miller. For many years the night clubs on Bourbon Street in New Orleans, Louisiana, have been the center for blues.

Jazz piano player Billy Taylor says that ragtime music started during the time of slavery (before 1863). Ragtime music, with its definite African beat, developed into jazz.

Jazz expresses emotions! Musicians improvise - they play what they feel, and together create their music. They don't use written music.

For a long time, blacks weren't allowed to be in politics or sports. The only thing they could participate in was music. The Negro church became an important source of music. Marching street bands play for funerals. They play a slow, sad song on the way to the cemetery and then a lively song on the way from the cemetery, to turn people's thoughts from the dead to the living.

After World War I, New Orleans jazz spread to other parts of the country. The form of the music changed as new musicians such as Benny Goodman developed their own styles.



Meanwhile, in the Southeastern part of the United States, another musical tradition was being developed: Bluegrass or Country Music.

Mountain jigs have been done for hundreds of years in the southeast part of the United States. The Grand Ole Opry is the center for country music, equivalent to the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City, which is considered the center of opera in the United States.

Country musicians use banjos, guitars, fiddles (violins) and other stringed instruments in their music.

By the mid-1960's country music was known and liked in all parts of the United States, not just in the South, at least partly because many southerners left the South during the Depression and afterwards and moved to other parts of the country.

Country and western music is popular in other countries, too. For instance, Japanese musicians perform it.

Folk music, such as the music Peter, Paul and Mary sing, has become very popular, especially among young people. Mary Travers of Peter, Paul and Mary says it has become popular because it reflects what people are concerned about, such as war and social change.

Broadway is the street in New York City where many musical plays are performed. People like Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Cole Porter and Rodgers and Hammerstein have written much Broadway theater music. Show music has had a big effect on popular music. Richard Rodgers explains why music is useful in plays: he says that music can say something with few words that would take a much longer time to explain just by talking.

Tony Bennett's singing is an example of music generating emotions in people. His songs can make people laugh or cry.

In the 1930's and 1940's big bands were popular. Since then smaller bands have become popular, such as the one in which Gene Krupa plays drums.

Today every jazz musician has his own style. The piano player Billy Taylor says that jazz has something to offer to everyone no matter what sort of music someone likes. If a person likes classical music, he can find jazz that is very similar to classical music. If he likes folk music, there is a sort of jazz very much like folk music.

American artists such as Tony Bennett are popular all over the world today. American music influences music of other countries, including those whose music originally influenced American music.

When searching for a song to learn in class, I looked for various things. Often I wanted to find certain grammatical structures (the conditional in "El Condor Pasa", nominalized verbs in "The Boxer", infinitives and the future tense in "The Impossible Dream"). Sometimes I wanted to discuss emotions ("I Feel the Earth Move", "Me and Bobby McGee", "So Far Away", "Beautiful", "Bridge Over Troubled Water, "Tenderness"). Other times I looked for songs the students wanted to sing in groups which Americans would know ("Puff", "This Land is your Land"). Another type of song which is valuable to learn in class is the popular song constantly being played on the radio during the time the students are at SIT. Some of these tunes may insult the musical appreciation of some listeners, but the lyrics are often simple, repetitive and easy to learn and most students are genuinely excited about committing the lyrics to memory because they are so familiar.

The songs we learned were spread out over the 10-week course.. Although I would not state that all the songs we learned sparked stimulating discussion on examining values or comparing cultures, we often found ideas in songs that were unfamiliar or strange. Masaki found an example of this in "American Music from Folk to Jazz and Pop". In the film we heard a Japanese group perform American Country and Western music. They were dressed in cowboy outfits, sequins and all. After seeing the film, Masaki made the startling comment that the Japanese people had inferiority complexes and we could see this in the film through the eastern Country and Western

singers. All of us were caught off guard by Masaki's thoughts. Beat was particularly upset because to Beat Japan was a country composed of marvelously clever people who had no reason to feel inferior. Masaki retorted that Japanese cleverness was just the problem. "We are so clever that we can imitate anything foreign and we honor foreign accomplishments more than our own." This sparked quite a few comments to bolster Masaki's moral. "Japan has an ancient history with many beautiful traditions." "Cleverness is something to be proud of in itself." But Masaki stood by his original convictions that the Japanese people in general feel inferior because they must import and imitate in order to survive.

This is just an example of what might happen in an English class where many nationalities are ~~presented~~. A dynamic discussion such as the one sparked by Masaki's comment is not very common, but it is an example of what can happen when a multinational class is talking about such general topics as American popular music.

We never really finished talking about Masaki's claim in our morning class. It took courage to say what he did and Masaki is somewhat shy. However, the inferiority complex intrigued the class so much that they continued discussing it in their afternoon class.

THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

Roberta Flack

To dream the impossible dream,  
To fight the unbeatable foe,  
and to bear with unbearable sorrow,  
To run where the brave dare not go.

To right the unrightable wrong,  
To love pure and chaste from afar,  
And to try when your arms are too weary  
To reach the unreachable star...

This is my quest, to follow that star  
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far,  
And to fight for the right without question or pause  
To be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause...

And I know, if I'll only be true  
To this glorious quest,  
That my heart will lie peaceful and calm  
When I'm laid to my rest.

And the world will be better for this,  
That one man, scorned and covered with scars,  
Still strove, with his last ounce of courage  
To dream the impossible dream  
And to reach, try and reach, the unreachable star!

ME AND BOBBY McGEE

Gordon Lightfoot

Busted flat in Baton Rouge, headin' for the train,  
Feelin' nearly (as) faded as my jeans.  
Bobby thumbed a diesel down just before it rained-  
Took us all the way to New Orleans.

I took my harpoon out of my dirty, red bandana  
And was blowin' sad while Bobby sang the blues.  
With those windshield wipers slappin' time and Bobby clappin' hands  
We finally sung up every song that driver knew.

CHORUS:

Freedom's just another word for nothin' left to lose,  
Nothin' ain't worth nothin', but it's free!  
Feelin' good was easy, Lord, when Bobby sang the blues,  
Feelin' good was good enough for me, good enough for me  
And Bobby McGee.

cont'd.

ME AND BOBBY McGEE, cont'd.

From the coal mines of Kentucky to the California sun,  
Bobby shared the secrets of my soul.  
Standin' right beside me, Lord, through everything I done,  
Every night she kept me from the cold.

Then somewhere near Salinas, Lord, I let her slip away,  
Searchin' for the home I heard she phoned,  
And I'd give all my tomorrows for a single yesterday,  
Holdin' Bobby's body close to mine!

SIT DOWN, YOUNG STRANGER

Gordon Lightfoot

I'm standing at the doorway, my head bowed in my hands,  
Not knowing where to sit, not knowing where to stand.  
My father looms above me, and for him there is no rest.  
My mother's arms enfold me and hold me to her breast.

They say you've been out wandering, they say you've traveled far.  
Sit down, young stranger, and tell us who you are.  
The room has all gone misty, my thoughts as all in spin.  
Sit down, young stranger, and tell us where you've been.

Well, I've been out to the mountain, I've walked down by the sea  
I never questioned no one, and no one questioned me.  
My love was given freely, and oft'times it was returned.  
I never came to borrow, I only came to learn.

Sometimes it did get lonely, but it taught me how to cry.  
And laughter came too easy for life to pass me by.  
I never had a dollar that I didn't earn with pride  
'Cause I had a million daydreams to keep me satisfied.

And will you gather daydreams, will you gather wealth?  
How can you find your fortune when you cannot find yourself?  
My mother's eyes grow misty, there's a trembling in her hand.  
Sit down, young stranger, I do not understand.

And will you try to tell us you've been too long at school,  
That knowledge is not needed, that power does not rule?  
That war is not the answer, that young men should not die?  
Sit down, young stranger, I wait for your reply.

The answer is not easy, for souls are not reborn.  
To wear the crown of peace, you must wear the crown of thorns.  
If Jesus had a reason, I'm sure he would not tell.  
They treated him so badly, how could he wish them well?

The parlor now is empty, there's nothing left to say.  
My father has departed, my mother's gone to pray.  
There's rockets in the meadows, and ships out on the sea.  
The answer's in the forest, carved upon a tree:  
"John loves Mary", does anyone love me??

I FEEL THE EARTH MOVE

Carole King

I feel the earth move under my feet,  
I feel the sky tumbling down,  
I feel my heart start to tremble  
Whenever you're around:...

Ooh, Baby, When I see your face,  
mellow as the month of May;  
Oh, Darling, I can't stand it  
When you look at me that way!

Darling, when you're near me,  
and you tenderly call my name,  
I know that my emotions  
are something I just can't tame.

I've just got to have you, Baby!

SO FAR AWAY

Carole King

So far away...  
Doesn't anybody stay in one place anymore?  
It would be so fine to see your face at my door.  
Doesn't help to know you're just time away.  
Long ago I reached for you and there you stood;  
holding you again would only do me good-  
Oh, how I wish I could,  
but you're so far away!

One more song about moving along the highway,  
Can't say much of anything that's new.  
If I could only work this life out my way,  
I'd rather spend it being close to you,  
but you're so far away!

Doesn't anybody stay in one place anymore?  
It would be so find to see your face at my door.  
Doesn't help to know you're so far away.  
Traveling around sure gets me down and lonely,  
nothing else to do but close my mind...  
I sure hope the road don't come to own me-  
There's so many dreams I've yet to find!

BEAUTIFUL

Carole King

You've got to get up every morning with a smile on your face  
and show the world all the love in your heart.  
Then people (are) gonna treat you better,  
You're gonna find, yes you will,  
That you're beautiful as you feel.

Waiting at the station with a workday wind a'blowing,  
I've got nothing to do but watch the passers-by.  
Mirrored in their faces I see frustration growing,  
And they don't see it showing, why do I?

You've got to get up every morning with a smile on your face  
and show the world all the love in your heart.  
Then people (are) gonna treat you better,  
You're gonna find, yes you will,  
That you're beautiful as you feel.

I have often asked myself the reason for the sadness  
In a world where tears are just a lullabye.  
If there's any answer, maybe love can end the madness.  
Maybe not, oh, but we can only try.

You've got to get up every morning...

EL CONDOR PASA

Simon and Garfunkel

I'd rather be a sparrow than a snail.  
Yes I would.  
If I could,  
I surely would.  
I'd rather be a hammer than a nail.  
Yes, I would.  
If I could,  
I surely would.

Away, I'd rather sail away  
Like a swan that's here and gone.  
A man gets tied up to the ground  
He gives the world it's saddest sound,  
It's saddest sound.

I'd rather be a forest than a street.  
Yes I would.  
If I could,  
I surely would.  
I'd rather feel the earth beneath my feet.  
Yes I would  
If I could,  
I surely would.

THE BOXER

Simon and Garfunkel

I am just a poor boy,  
Though my story's seldom told,  
I have squandered my resistance  
For a pocketful of mumbles,  
Such are promises  
All lies and jest  
Still, a man hears what he wants to hear  
And disregards the rest.

When I left my home  
and my family,  
I was no more than a boy  
In the company of strangers  
In the quiet of the railway station,  
Running scared,  
Laying low,  
Seeking out the poorer quarters  
Where the ragged people go,  
Looking for the places  
Only they would know.

Lie-la-lie.....

Asking only workman's wages  
I come looking for a job.  
But I get no offers,  
Just a come-on from the whores  
on Seventh Avenue.  
I do declare,  
There were times when I was so lonesome  
I took some comfort there.

Lie-la-lie.....

Then I'm laying out my winter clothes  
And wishing I was gone,  
Going home  
Where the New York City winters  
Aren't bleeding me,  
Leading me,  
Going home.

In the clearing stands a boxer,  
And a fighter by his trade  
And he carries the reminders  
Of ev'ry glove that laid him down  
And cut him till he cried out  
In his anger and his shame  
"I am leaving, I am leaving."  
But the fighter still remains.

Lie-la-lie.....



BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER

Simon and Garfunkel

When you're weary, feeling small,  
When tears are in your eyes, I will dry them all.  
I'm on your side. When times get rough,  
And friends just can't be found,  
Like a bridge over troubled water  
I will lay me down.  
Like a bridge over troubled water  
I will lay me down.  
When you're down and out,  
When you're on the street.  
When evening falls so hard,  
I will comfort you.  
I'll take your part.  
When darkness comes  
And pale is all around,  
Like a bridge over troubled water  
I will lay me down.  
Like a bridge over troubled water  
I will lay me down.

Sail on silver girl,  
Sail on by.  
Your time has come to shine.  
All your dreams are on their way.  
See how they shine.  
If you need a friend  
I'm sailing right behind.  
Like a bridge over troubled water  
I will ease your mind.  
Like a bridge over troubled water  
I will ease your mind.

TAKE ME TO THE MARDI GRAS

Paul Simon

C'mon take me to the Mardi Gras  
Where the people sing and play  
Where the dancing is elite  
And there's music in the street  
Both night and day.

Hurry take me to the Mardi Gras  
In the city of my dreams  
You can legalize your lows  
You can wear your summer clothes  
In the New Orleans.

And I will lay my burden down  
Rest my head upon that shore  
And when I wear that starry crown  
I won't be wanting anymore.

cont'd.

TAKE ME TO THE MARDI GRAS cont'd.

Take your burdens to the Mardi Gras  
Let the music wash your soul  
You can mingle in the street  
You can jingle to the beat  
Of Jelly Roll.

KODACHROME

Paul Simon

When I think back on all the  
Crap I learned in high school,  
It's a wonder I can think at all.  
And though my lack of education  
Hasn't hurt me none  
I can read the writing on the wall.

Kodachrome

They give us those nice bright colors,  
They give us the greens of summers.  
Makes you think all the world's a sunny day.  
I got a Nikon camera  
I love to take a photograph.  
So, mama don't take my Kodachrome away.

If you took all the girls I knew  
When I was single  
And brought them all together  
for one night.  
I know they'd never match  
my sweet imagination.  
Everything looks worse  
in black and white.

TENDERNESS

Paul Simon

What can I do, What can I do?  
Much of what you say is true.  
I know you see through me,  
But there's no tenderness  
Beneath your honesty.

Right and wrong, right and wrong  
Never helped us get along.  
You say you care for me,  
But there's no tenderness  
Beneath your honesty.

You and me were such good friends.  
What's your hurry?  
You and me could make amends.  
I'm not worried, I'm not worried.

cont'd.

TENDERNESS cont'd.

Honesty, Honesty,  
It's such a waste of energy.  
No you don't have to lie to me  
Just give me some tenderness,  
Beneath your honesty.

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

Peter Paul and Mary

CHORUS

This land is your land,  
this land is my land.  
From California to the  
New York Island.  
From the Redwood Forest  
to the Gulf Stream waters.  
This land was made for you and me.

I roamed and rambled and  
followed my foot steps,  
to the sparkling sands of  
her diamond deserts.  
And all around me a voice  
was singing: "This land was  
made for you and me."

CHORUS

As I went walking that ribbon  
of highway,  
I saw above me that endless  
skyway.  
I saw below me those golden valleys.  
This land was made for you and me.

CHORUS

As the sun was shining and  
I was strolling  
And the wheat fields waving  
and the dust clouds rolling.  
As the fog was lifting a voice  
was singing: "This land was  
made for you and me."

CHORUS

PUFF

Peter, Paul and Mary

CHORUS

Puff the magic dragon  
lived by the sea.  
And frolicked in the  
autumn mist  
in a land call Monalee.

Little Jackie Paper  
loved that rascal, Puff.  
And brought him string,  
and sealing wax and other  
fancy stuff.

CHORUS

Together they would travel  
on a boat with billowed sail.  
Jackie kept a lookout perched  
on Puff's gigantic tail.  
Noble kings and princes would  
bow whene're they came.  
Pirate ships would lower their flag  
when Puff roared out his name.

CHORUS

A dragon lives forever,  
But not so little boys.  
Painted wings and giants' rings  
Make way for other toys.  
One gray night it happened -  
Jackie Paper came no more  
And Puff that mighty dragon, he ceased  
his fearless roar.  
His head was bowed in sorrow,  
Green scales fell like rain.  
Puff no longer went to play  
along the Cherry Lane.  
Without his life-long friend Puff  
could not be brave.  
So, Puff that mighty dragon sadly  
slipped into his cave.

CHORUS

## GROWING OLD IN AMERICA

When we were talking about experiences during the mini-homestay, Ali mentioned that the elderly grandfather of his host family volunteered as the telephone operator at the local police station. This intrigued him for two reasons: the grandfather was not paid for his work, and, to Ali, he seemed too old to be working at all. Ali's comments prompted some discussion on growing old in this country and the viewing of the short film "When Parents Grow Old" taken from the Feature-length film "I Never Sang for My Father".

"When Parents Grow Old" concerns a young man who has just become engaged to marry and the problem he faces when his elderly father is left alone after his wife's death. It is questionable if his father is well enough to live alone and the young man must make a decision about his father's future: should he place him in an old people's home or hire a housekeeper, or should they live together thereby jeopardizing the young man's future married life? (See pp 38-39 for script of film.)

My objective in showing this film was primarily to discuss how a situation such as this would be handled in the students' respective countries. After viewing the film I asked the students to put themselves in a situation similar to that of the young man in the film. How would they act in their own countries if they were married with three children, their father was alone because his wife had just died, and their spouse would leave if the father-in-law

# WHEN PARENTS GROW OLD

INTRODUCTION: Gene calls the woman he is going to marry, to tell her that his mother has just died.

SCENE 1, THE HOSPITAL: With Gene's mother's death, his father is now left in the big family house with no one to live with him. Gene has to decide what to do about his father. The family doctor thinks that Gene's father is too old to live alone.

SCENE 2, IN THE FATHER'S BEDROOM: Gene is staying with his father to help him after his mother's death. Sometimes Gene's father is cheerful and lively, talking about all the things he is going to do, but at times he suddenly weeps from the pain of losing his wife.

SCENE 3, OUTSIDE THE HOUSE: Gene's sister thinks that they should find a full-time housekeeper to live in the house with their father. She doesn't want him to come live with her family; she feels that her main responsibility is to her own children, and tells Gene that his main responsibility is to himself. She believes that her father is a selfish man who doesn't care about the lives of his children, only about himself, and that he will take advantage of them if they let him. She has never forgiven her father for refusing to accept the man she married, and she feels little love for him.

Gene doesn't think their father will accept a full-time housekeeper. He does not like the way society treats and ignores old men who are no longer productive. He doesn't want to put his father in an old age home, but he also doesn't want to give up his own life in order to take care of his father.

SCENE 4, IN THE LIVING ROOM: Their father becomes very angry when his daughter tells him they want to hire a housekeeper for him. He feels that they are treating him like a child or like an old man who can no longer take care of himself. He is hurt that they want to take his independence away from him. He is still upset at his daughter because she married a man he didn't approve of, and he doesn't hide his preference for his son. He wants Gene to spend a lot of time with him. But he gets upset and angry again when he suspects they think he is a burden to them, and he tells them he doesn't need their help.

Gene's sister tries to convince her father that he is too old to live alone. She thinks he is a stubborn old man who is trying to rule Gene's life. She tells their father that Gene wants to get married and live his own life.

Gene still doesn't know what he should do about his father. He feels guilty about leaving his father alone or in an old age home. He decides he should stay in town and spend time with him. When his sister announces that he wants to get married, he gets angry at her for trying to run his life.

SCENE 5, AN OLD AGE HOME: Gene visits an old age home. He sees people sitting in wheel chairs, doing nothing, being treated like children. The old people there are useless and just waiting to die. He cannot imagine his active father wasting away in an old age home.

moved in? (See p.42 for Values Clarification exercise.)

I felt that in answering this question both the cultural aspects of the problem and the students' personal values would be discussed.

The film created a morose atmosphere in the class, for it is rather a tragic yet real set of circumstances. All the class members identified with the situation even though they were far from being old themselves. The Kuwaitis and Saudis found the problem fairly simple to solve. They would just build for their father a new villa adjacent to their own, where he would be cared for by the son's wife. If she didn't like it and wouldn't obey her husband's wishes, he would divorce her. Paternal relationships are very strong in these two countries, so the loyalty naturally lay with the father rather than with the wife. Although the problem of the father's well-being seemed solved, the wife's problem horrified most of the other students. Carlos felt that if the situation resulted in a choice between his father and wife, he would choose his wife for the sake of the children's future. However, that still didn't solve the father's problem. The three Swiss in the class seemed to take the practical point of view that the father would be best off in a home. At least in that way his health would be taken care of. Consuelo agreed with this, but brought out the idea that a person's heart and will would be broken if he were relegated to an old people's home when he still felt capable of taking care of himself. She also felt that hiring



a nurse would still hurt a father's integrity. Consuelo finally decided she would take her father into her own home.

The problem remained unsolved, but talking about it brought out many reactions to old age. We all knew that we couldn't generalize because many older people live rewarding lives, such as Ali's host grandfather. However, we also knew older people are forgotten and considered useless in most of our cultures. We heard how various people from various countries would deal with the problem and no solution seemed totally satisfactory.

In general the students enjoyed this exercise because, although sad, the situation was real and something they knew about. The only difficulty encountered was that they kept qualifying the situation of the exercise by saying a spouse would never leave his/her family because a father-in-law was moving in. We realized slowly that if we didn't adhere to the situation, we would just be avoiding the problem rather than trying to solve it.

### VALUES CLARIFICATION EXERCISE

Please respond to the following situation as if it were happening to you in your own country.

You are married and have three children. Your mother has just died and leaves your father alone. He cannot live alone because of his health. Your spouse does not get along with your father and would find it very difficult to live in the same house with him. In fact, your spouse has told you that he/she would move out of the house if your father comes to live there. What would you do?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Hire a nurse to take care of your father.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Put him in an institution for old people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Have him come and live with your family.

BUT WHAT IF THE DREAM COMES TRUE?

In the middle of August, Howard Shapiro acquired a film, in two parts, about an upper middle-class family, the Greenwalds, in Birmingham, Michigan. The film gives a view of this active, socially involved family, and its desire to get ahead and climb the corporate ladder. I wanted to show the film for several reasons, but I think my main one was rather moralistic. I had gotten the feeling all summer that many of the class members were enamored with the American idea that more, more, more meant better, better, better. I wanted to show them something which might prove that material wealth didn't necessarily mean happiness. "But What if the Dream Comes True?" seemed to do a good job of demonstrating this.

I previewed the film and wrote up questions to be discussed in class for the first part. (See p. 44) I had planned to show the film on two separate days, so I didn't make up questions for the second part at that time. However, due to film scheduling problems we saw both parts together and had a discussion about the entire movie afterwards.

It seemed to me at the time I used this film that my objectives were to examine values. Indeed, if I were to show the film again, I would want to do the same, but would go about it from another direction. The questions I asked the class to keep in mind while they viewed the film focused on the Greenwald family, i.e., Americans, and their home,

BUT WHAT IF THE DREAM COMES TRUE? PART I

Keep these questions in mind while you watch the film:

1. What do you think is the "American Dream"?
2. What do you think is the difference between names like Sam and Jane, and Sheri, Tammy and Sonny?
3. Why do you think Jane Greenwald doesn't like to stay home?
4. Who do you think is the most important member of this family?
5. What is an identity crisis and why do you think many American women go through them?
6. Do you think American men go through identity crises?
7. According to the black photographer, American women are pampered (well taken care of). Why do you think they are still unhappy? Do you think they can change this?
8. Why do the young people of Birmingham, Michigan have nothing to do.
9. What do you think shoplifting by young people indicates? Does this happen in your country?
10. Do you think the Greenwald family is satisfied with its life in Birmingham?

Birmingham, Michigan. These provided the impetus for an interesting, yet superficial and condemning discussion of the people in the film. Because the questions did not focus on us, the class, we couldn't switch from the Greenwald's position to our own and we wound up discussing their values rather than our own.

If I were to show this film again and wanted to use it to discuss personal values of wealth and happiness, I would try to arrange a situation where the students would play roles of people like those in the film. (See pp. 46-47 for Values Clarification exercise). The roles would have to be strictly defined to avoid ambiguity. By taking roles and becoming other people, I think the students would have understood better such things as why Jane Greenwald had machines and other people to run her house and why her daughter, Sheri, told a young black man that he was "cool" because he was black. If I were to do something like this with a class, i.e., a simulated family exercise, I believe the students would identify more closely with the predicament in which the Greenwald members found themselves. The class members would be able to transfer the Greenwalds' situation to their own lives.

## VALUES CLARIFICATION EXERCISE

Become one of the following people. Determine if there is a contradiction between your actions and personal values. If so, how would you change your actions or values so that the contradiction would be alleviated or eliminated altogether? Remember - you are this person now. Do not hesitate to impose your own values on the circumstances.

1. You are Hank Reynolds, a 38-year-old physician. You live in rural northwestern Massachusetts and you work in a clinic with three other doctors. You serve approximately 500 families and work between 12 and 18 hours a day. You earn \$50,000. a year. You came to Massachusetts with your wife originally because you enjoy the country and there was a demand for physicians in the area. You don't mind working as hard as you do because your goal has always been to serve others. However, you consequently have little time to spend with your wife and two children.

2. You are Ellen Reynolds, 38 years old, the wife of a physician in northwestern Massachusetts. You married Hank after graduating from college and worked to put him through medical school. During that time you also had two children. You are primarily a wife and mother although for the past two summers you have volunteered on an archeological dig in the area. You would like to return to school and get a Ph.D. in archeology. This would necessitate moving closer to the town where the state university is located, but you feel such a move would be unfair to your family. Instead you become the secretary of the town's historical society. However, you are still not very satisfied with your life.

3. You are Carolina Reynolds, 15 years old. You have just participated in a 6-week high school student exchange to the Bronx, New York, where you lived with an Italian-American family and attended a high school where the majority of students is black. All this was very new for you, since in the town where you live there are neither blacks nor Italians. You are angry with your mother because she decided not to go back to school and denied you the chance to move to a more metropolitan area.

4. You are Casey Reynolds, 12 years old and champion downhill snow ski racer in junior competition for your county. You think your sister is crazy to want to

leave such good snow country and you are proud of your mother for becoming secretary of the historical society of the town. You think your father is a nice guy, as long as he doesn't bother you about school grades, but since you see him rarely, you don't know him very well.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE TEACHER

1. Although certain values are implicit in this exercise, e.g. comfort, standard of education, wealth, family time together, work, etc., they are not explicit. Perhaps it would be wise to talk about some of these values before doing any role playing.
2. There are many ways to use an exercise like this one. If the class is unwilling to act out roles, ask them to re-write the characters with their own values. Perhaps students could interview each other. A possibility for a class that is willing to act out the roles is to set a scene. For example, the time when the mother tells the family she wants to return to school.
3. Encourage changes from the Reynolds' values to the students' values. Students should not take on a characterization as is, because each student will have values different from those of the Reynolds.

I think a Values Clarification exercise, such as the one on pp. 46-47 would be valuable to a group only after its members had discussed the film and answered the questions they had about it. We had a rather lengthy discussion about "But What If the Dream Comes True?" which brought us back to the situation of black people in this country. Why are they discriminated against? Why have black people traditionally been so powerless? What are they doing now to change this? What is Black Power? Why can't whites and blacks live together peacefully in this country?

At this point, I decided to give the class members Stokely Carmichael to read.



## BLACK POWER

In the preface to Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton's Black Power, they tell us that their book is not a blueprint designed to end racism and achieve freedom for the American black people. Rather, they offer a framework in which people can develop long term strategies to equalize racial injustice. Carmichael and Hamilton's basic thrust was well put by Salvador the day we talked about Black Power: "Since the black population is only 10% they will never be able to take over the whites so they will never improve themselves if they try to conquer the whites. Instead, they must develop a pride of their race which is separate from the whites."

I think it is obvious to the reader by now that my objective in reading the preface to Black Power was to give the students some facts about the black movement in this country today. I had told them that I could not do this because I'm not black. I explained it would be presumptuous and misleading if I tried to give them my own information. So I assigned the preface hoping that they would read it and, if they did read it, understand Carmichael and Hamilton's beliefs.

Reading the preface was purely an act of obtaining information about an aspect of this country's culture and had little to do with examining values until we got back in the classroom and the students expressed their opinions about what these two gentlemen had to say.

It's evident from Salvador's comment that at least one person understood the thrust of the preface. I got Sal's answer by asking: "What did the preface say to you?" However, from other comments it seemed the students still perceived the situation of the black man as it was perceived in the 1950's when integration was the black leaders' goal.

I was a little nervous about this discussion because I knew I would have to take an active part in it. There was pressure on me from the class members to give an American's viewpoint and pressure on me from myself to make sure facts in addition to personal opinion were discussed. Participation normally wouldn't upset me except that I knew I could become emotional about the topic if someone in the class expressed an opinion which could be labeled as racist. I realized that if this were to happen I would have to walk the fine line between participant, where I might unwittingly judge another person, and teacher, where I must show facts to point out fallacies.

As we talked about Carmichael and Hamilton's beliefs, it became evident that we all had varying opinions about blacks and various ideas on how to solve their problems. It was also obvious that we were talking about "they" because, although Carmichael and Hamilton were blacks, they were too far removed from our classroom to have much of an impact. The students asked me if we could ask a black to visit the class and tell us about the black movement first hand.

Ruth's roommate, Debbie Allen, an ICT who had just returned from her internship in Africa, was asked to talk to our class, but she came only after much deliberation on the students' part on how to ask her without offending her. Could a group of whites ask a black to talk to them about the black movement without appearing to be condescending? Would she feel comfortable and not threatened? Would she feel the necessity to tone down her words since she would be talking to whites? These are some of the questions the group had to answer before it extended the invitation. Quite proudly, I must admit, they thought of these questions themselves without any suggestion from me. It made me realize that the group had understood Carmichael and Hamilton's words that a black man's pride in himself puts him on equal terms with a white man. They recognized that pride and did not want to offend it.

After much discussion we decided on two things which made Debbie's visit possible. One, they were a group of foreigners and therefore could not be held responsible for any racial unrest, at least not in this country. As a result, they thought Debbie would speak frankly with them. Secondly, it was decided that on pain of ostracism from the class, each member would come to class with at least three questions to ask Debbie. This would prevent any uncomfortable lag in conversation. This latter decision came about because I insisted that if they were going to have a guest, they were responsible

for that guest's entertainment. If I had just told them that their homework assignment was to write three questions to ask Debbie, it may very well have not been done. However, putting the preparation of questions in terms of making a guest feel comfortable made a lot of sense to everyone.

I would like to recount some of our talk with Debbie, but it has little place in this paper. Although Debbie's visit was very important, my goal of achieving a level of open-mindedness about the Black Movement was reached before her visit. Indeed, we had a lively talk, much information was exchanged and Debbie was happy about the pertinent questions the class asked! We came away knowing full well we would never completely understand what it means to be black, but because of our class discussions and Debbie's visit, we had a better understanding of black pride and perhaps the will to look into it further on our own.

## TWENTY THINGS YOU LOVE TO DO

We had come from being perfect strangers, afraid to answer the question "Who are you?" to becoming thirteen very good friends who would put up with almost any quirk in each other's behavior. Ten weeks were almost over and I felt that before my friends left SIT, we should think about the homestays most members of the group were about to begin.

I have been on several homestays so I know that living with strangers can be both a nerve-wracking and rewarding experience. In my first experience with living in a foreign family as a daughter, I realized that I couldn't always do the things I enjoyed because I had obligations to others. My obligations were sometimes even stronger than those of the natural daughter of the family. It took me a while to understand that if I wanted to do something that I would normally do in the States, like read a book in my room, it wouldn't always be accepted as normal behavior by my host family. I realized that I couldn't always do the things I really loved doing. As a result of my own experiences I asked the group one day to write down the twenty things they loved to do the most.

This exercise was adapted from Values Clarification, and I used it in the way in which I should have used the "Who are you?" exercise the very first day of class - silently. Of course, a few students asked me if they were just to write the twenty things, not believing that we were going to do something as simple as it appeared. Others wondered about

the word "love". Salvador said he didn't "love" to do anything, but he "liked" to do things "very much". I explained that the American use of "love" was somewhat overworked and was used in totally unromantic ways as in this exercise. For our purposes "love" and "like very much" meant the same thing. I would suggest that, if the reader ever uses this exercise, to change it to "Twenty Things You Like To Do Very Much".

When the class finished their lists and were wondering what I was going to make them do next, I asked them to write down alongside their original list the things they love to do which they could do on their homestay. After they had done this, I asked for a volunteer to put his lists on the board. Beat complied.

Beat's second list was quite deleted. I asked him why he wouldn't be able to ski (which was at the top of his first list) during his homestay. The obvious answer was that it was September and he was going to Washington, D. C.

I then posed the following situation and threw the discussion out to the class.

It is December.  
Your homestay is in Maine.  
Your homestay family lives near a ski area.  
None of the family members skis.  
Would you be able to ski?

After several sudden "Yes, of course" answers and then a few cautious "I don't know", we began to realize that things other than climate and location would dictate their activities during the homestay. We talked about the

responsibilities they would feel as Experimenters to their families and how perceptiveness and courtesy would play large roles in determining the success of their homestays. If a teacher wanted to carry the exercise further than a discussion, I would suggest breaking the group into pairs after both lists have been completed. Partners would exchange lists and write or tell their partners why they thought each item was deleted or retained. The other partner would respond to these reasons to determine if the two agreed or disagreed.

Our discussion on responsibility ended the use of this exercise for us. It seemed that we would belabor the points of responsibility, obligation and perceptiveness if we kept talking about them. The point I wanted to make had gotten across; from there it was up to the students to think about their behavior during a homestay.

### A SUGGESTION

After this ten week course was over I realized that there were many changes I could have made in this syllabus to improve it. I realized also that there was a wealth of material concerning cross-cultural understanding and values examination which I haven't included. There are scores of films and exercises which can be adapted to discussing cultural and value differences. I felt a little guilty for not having used more developed material in my class so that my students would have had the full benefit of many media. However, my guilt diminished after thinking a great deal and concluding that my Comparative Cultures sessions were very strongly oriented to the personal, almost intimate, level. Practially all the things we did were initiated by the students. Although I may have set things up, the ideas and impetus usually came from the group. The guilt pains disappeared when I realized any more information forced on the class through films or other sources might not have been accepted by them because it would have nothing to do with where they were that day, week or year.

In evaluating my own performance during this course, I credited myself with being attuned to my students' needs and desires and trying to provide them the structure in which they could answer many of their own questions. I also credited myself with the experience to be able to foresee developments and plan material which challenged the students. However, I think I fell down in an important area. I assumed that these students would be as interested in



examining values as I was and therefore, I plunged ahead with my ideas. Luckily, I was very fortunate to have a curious, loose group of people, rather on the serious side, who loved to talk. As a result we enjoyed doing the things we did. But if I had made the same assumption about another group of people, the course might have developed quite differently. To avoid that assumption in the future, I suggest to myself and to anyone who reads this report, asking the next class their definitions of two words: "values", "culture". There will be a wide range of answers, but that is what I would want to hear. My purpose in asking for definitions would not be to tell them what a native speaker deems are the correct definitions. Rather, I would want to hear their opinions to determine where they are in their thinking of culture and values which in turn would help me decide what course I would follow to reach the objective of examining values.

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