

Student Profiles

Category: Get To Know Your Students

Time: 50+ minutes

Requirement:

1. 10+ participants
2. Projector
3. Laptops (smartphones may work)

Description: A picture description task where participants use guided questions and images to create a student profile concerning English.

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

1. Create a student profile and gain cultural knowledge on issues related to classroom participation
2. Present a student profile

Pre-Activity

Inform participants of the task: “In pairs/groups, you will be creating a semi-guided profile of a student. You will present this profile as a group. This activity will help gain some insights of what your students might be thinking and feeling in class concerning participation. After all presentations are given, we will have a discussion about why this is important and what we, as educators, can do to better plan our lessons and assess student performance.

Directions:

1. Assign pairs/groups. “In pairs/groups, designate one person to open your assigned QR code. This will lead you to a PowerPoint with directions. We will do an example of this activity together.”
2. At this point, you would ideally scan the QR code to model how it is done. However, since you will be projecting this on the board to model the activity together, it would be best to have the PPT prepared beforehand.

Example QR Code:



3. Please be sure to check the notes in the slides to find the answer of how the slides should be in order. Also be sure to understand the activity well before conducting it. Feel free to contact me if it is confusing.

Activity

1. After modeling the activity, give each group a different QR Code below.
2. The activity itself should not take too long to complete. Maybe allot 15 minutes?
Depends on you! Just remind participants that they are not only putting the slides in order, but they should have a story prepared to share/present. They should also be discussing their Discussion Questions.
 - a. Discussion questions may vary from ppt to ppt.
 - b. Discussion questions will be also shared - after the presentation of student profiles
3. After instruction is clear, participants may begin.
4. After all groups have completed, it is time for presentations. Each group can simply project their PPT for sharing. You may select which group to go first.
Rock-paper-scissors in Japanese is always fun.

PRESENTATION RULES:

1. Groups should use the slides to guide their story during presentations.
2. Each member in a group should contribute to the story-telling.

3. Groups should also share what they have discussed in response to the Discussion Questions
4. Allow the audience to ask questions or give comments, if any.

QR CODES TO ACTIVITIES

QR CODE



POSSIBLE STUDENT PROFILE



This is Yuzu. Yuzu has experience studying abroad. When Yuzu was abroad, they enjoyed learning. Yuzu was a very active learner. However, in Japan, Yuzu is a reserved student. Yuzu does not speak in class now because they do not want to stick out and potentially be perceived negatively by their peers. Thus, Yuzu wishes that their teacher would stop putting them on the spotlight - highlighting their experiences abroad and making comments about her English ability in front of the whole class.



This is Akira. Learning English phonics was not part of Akira's learning curriculum as an elementary student. Therefore, Akira is quite insecure about speaking English in class. Akira is afraid that their English pronunciation is too strong and unintelligible. Akira would like to do more group work in class to get to know their classmates a little more - building confidence. Similarly, Akira would like for the teacher to give them a little time before responding to questions or sharing answers in the class - especially when asked to provide an opinion.

	<p>This is Mako. After school, Mako would go to cram school/juku to study English. Mako's educational experience in Japan is exclusively teacher-centered where students are expected to listen rather than ask questions. This is why Mako is silent in class. Mako wishes their teacher knew that, in Japan, there is a heavy responsibility for the listener to understand what is being said. So, even if Mako doesn't understand something, it is likely that no questions will be asked.</p>
	<p>This is Kaede. Kaede received English education from their Japanese English teacher and ALT from the United States in their primary school years. Even so, Kaede was never taught how to be a communicative learner. Kaede feels like their English education prior to university did not prepare them to be successful in the EFL university classroom. Kaede wishes their teacher knew this and would provide communication tools to be an efficient learner in the class.</p>

Post-Activity: Discussion

1. What are your thoughts about this activity? What have you learned? What did you already know?
2. Has this activity changed your thinking or planning in any way? How does it relate to your teaching experiences in Japan?
3. How do you deal with silence in your classrooms?

Activity Rationale

1. In traditional Japanese education, students are rarely asked (if ever) about their opinion on a topic or subject matter. Thus, allowing students to discuss in pairs or groups would be best before sharing in their ideas to the entire class.

2. Sticking to the norms may be very important for some students in Japan. Being seen as different or 'better' in any way is an ingredient for becoming a target of social isolation or even bullying. As a teacher, be mindful about comments (even if they are positive) because it may bring unwanted attention - adding to learner anxiety.
3. Communication in Japan places emphasis on listener responsibility as opposed to speaker responsibility. It is the listener's duty to understand what is being said through inference. Moreover, it is important for listeners to assume a collective understanding of what is being said. Asking for clarification or showing that you do not understand what was just being said not only hurts the listener's image, but also the speaker's. This is key to saving face for both listener and speaker.
4. In traditional Japanese education, it is likely that students have had exposure to learning English from ALTs. However, the roles of ALTs are very limited and vary from school to school. In some cases, ALTs do not have any part in 'teaching' but rather acting as voice recorders for the classroom. This type of learning does not prepare students for success in the EFL university setting where teachers practice and place importance on communicative competence.