

Conversation Partners Program

University of Missouri - Columbia





INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Conversation Partners Program at the University of Missouri-Columbia! We are glad you decided to add to your education by talking with someone who speaks another language by helping them learn English and improve their English speaking skills. We hope you will be satisfied with the results of your decision. This handbook is designed to help you and your partner have a successful language and cultural exchange.

The purpose of the Conversation Partners Program is to pair visiting students, scholars, journalists and government officials with native English speakers. Through one-to-one discussions, the English speaking partner helps the international partner learn about American culture and the English language, while the international partner teaches the American partner about his/her culture. In the classroom environment, one can only learn so much English. This program is designed to enhance the other component of learning: practical application.

This program is an excellent way not only to help your partner improve their English or learn English, but also to improve cultural sensitivity and awareness. With this handbook, we have tried to evaluate the common challenges and successes that exist in our program so you know some pitfalls and high points before you start. In this way you can avoid mishaps and learn from other people's success. Of course, we could not write about every situation that may occur, so if you have any questions or concerns, please contact **Tuyana Chimitova** at tc5g9@mizzou.edu.

Thank you again for your participation!

Sincerely,

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HISTORY OF CONVERSATION PARTNER PROGRAM & ASIAN AFFAIRS CENTER

Asian Affairs Center

The University of Missouri's Asian Affairs Center (AAC), created in 1998 by the Office of the Provost, reflects the University's formal recognition of the cultural, strategic and economic importance of the nations of the Pacific Rim. The AAC has a mandate to build upon MU's substantial Asian programs, university and alumni linkages, and teaching and research connections in the region to benefit citizens, government entities and businesses in Missouri and in the region.

Conversation Partners Program

Rollo May, a well-known American existential psychologist, put it succinctly when he said, "**Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing.**"

To assist in this type of communication, the Asian Affairs Center began the Conversation Partners Program in 2004. We sought native English speakers to volunteer and partner with our visiting Asian students and scholars, so they could develop confidence in using the English language and establish friendships. Since then, the program has flourished. We get more and more requests each year for American and international partners. We have found that the success of Conversation Partner Program was due to the essence that it truly is a "Friendship Program." When two people of different cultures meet every week for one hour, they come to know one another and become very close.

If you wish to apply to become a conversation partner, you may submit an application online (<http://asia.missouri.edu> look for "Conversation Partner" on the right side).

Eligibility

To serve as a native English speaking partner:

- You must be over 16 years of age
- You must have enough free time to meet for at least one hour one time per week
- You must be a native English speaker

To serve as a foreign partner:

- You must be an Asian Affairs Center participant

*Note: It is NOT necessary to speak another language to be an English partner. However, you must have some English education to be an Asian partner.

BENEFITS FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING PARTNERS

- **Learn another culture's customs and traditions:** Often in America, we forget how new our country is and how rich other older cultures can be. Although you will be an invaluable resource to international partners as they learn “real” American culture, learning someone else’s culture can be fascinating.
- **Develop a cross-cultural perspective:** It is beneficial to have a cross-cultural perspective whether it is for personal reasons, for the work force, or during a collegiate education. This is especially true when working with or learning about other cultures. We believe this program enhances one’s ability to have a worldly, holistic perspective.
- **Make a new friend!** We have found that the success of Conversation Partner Program was due to the essence that it truly is a “Friendship Program.” When two people of different cultures meet every week for one hour, they come to know one another and become very close. We have partners who go hiking together, see movies, and even shop together. Some of our partners remain in contact even after the international partner returns to their country.
- **Learn about and possibly try food from another country:** Although almost every country in the world has a McDonald’s, another country’s food is often much different than the American adaptation of that food (i.e. real Chinese food vs. American Chinese food). International partners often share some of their food or recipes with American partners, an easy and delicious way to learn an invaluable piece of culture.
- **Have an international recommendation in the future (i.e. for job applications):** In the Asian Affairs Center program, Asian partners are often scholars, governmental officials or journalists; they are often very important people in their native country. During a job search, it can be beneficial to have an international recommendation, especially from a high ranking person of another country.
- **Have a contact in another country:** If you ever travel to Asia, you’ll already know someone there! It never hurts to have contacts around the world, whether you visit that country or just need help while writing a paper about their country in the future.

BENEFITS FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

- **Gain a “real” cultural understanding:** Although you may be constantly exposed to American culture here, it can still be easy to stay within a community of your native culture, making it difficult to learn about American life and culture. By having a conversation partner, you will hear, see and experience American life through the eyes of an Asian AND an American.
- **Practice conversational English:** As you know, English in English class is usually spoken slowly and simply. In real conversations, people talk in a variety of ways. Different people speak differently: slow, fast, soft, loud, and possibly with an accent. By having a conversation partner, you will be exposed to how English sounds in everyday conversation.
- **Hear correct pronunciation:** By working with an English partner you will have the opportunity to hear the correct pronunciation of words and work on accent modification.
- **Learn “real” American English, including slang and idioms:** Americans often use slang or idioms. As you are probably quite aware, knowing slang and idioms is necessary to understand conversational English. Since these topics may not be frequently taught in English courses, you can learn this “real” speech with your partner.
- **Make a new friend!** Coming to America can sometimes be a lonely experience. It is normal to feel a little isolated and confused. The Conversation Partners Program is a good way to make a new friend quickly and add some social, fun time to your schedule. We have found that the success of Conversation Partner Program was due to the essence that it truly is a “Friendship Program.” When two people of different cultures meet every week for one hour, they come to know one another and become very close. We have partners who go hiking together, see movies, and even shop together. Some of our partners remain in contact even after the international partner returns to their country.
- **Get travel recommendations and insight into Columbia:** Of course, another major benefit to having a Conversation Partner is the partner’s knowledge of Missouri and the U.S. It is likely that you will travel some during your time in the U.S, and your partner can be a good resource for travel information. In addition, your partner may share some fun regional activities known only by the local residents.

BEGINNING THE PARTNERSHIP

Once you are assigned a partner, you have several options on how to begin your relationship:

1. Every semester there is a Kick-Off Event. This gives you a chance to meet your partner, learn a little more about the program, and receive a handbook.
2. Email or call each other and plan a time to meet.
3. Have the AAC coordinator schedule a time for you and your partner to meet with an AAC representative for your first meeting.

Whichever option makes you and your partner feel more comfortable can be managed for you by the Asian Affairs Center. If you prefer to meet in a different way, just let the program coordinator know. In the past, we have found the first meeting is the most difficult to schedule and the most awkward. **If you choose to schedule it on your own and have problems** (perhaps you cannot find a time, have too much of a language barrier, or hear no response from your partner), **let the coordinator know ASAP.**

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE MEET?

Being a conversational English partner with an international student can be a rewarding experience. You are helping an international student in a very practical way and have an opportunity to learn about another culture.

In the course of the conversation partnership, you and your partner will have an opportunity to get to know each other very well. Your conversation times will be **intentional and purposeful conversations on a variety of topics** facilitating an opportunity for relationship building. Below are some suggestions for possible conversation topics that should be of interest to your international friend and help build the relationship.

Note: **In many countries the topic of politics and religion are not generally discussed.** If you sense your partner has reservations about these topics, avoid them.

1. Choose a quiet public location for your first meeting. Generally, the first meeting is the most awkward. We suggest you meet in a quiet public place the first time so that you can hear each other talk and get to know one another. Examples of good first meeting locations include in front of the Asian Affairs Center in downstairs North Memorial Union, coffee shops, or a bench outside.

2. Ask your partner if he/she has any specific topic or questions before you suggest yours. Some newly-arrived international students are loaded with questions about issues or culture that address very present needs. Let these be expressed and discussed ahead of topics you have chosen.

3. Discuss topics that are part of your partner's life experience before you discuss topics of a more conceptual nature. It is much easier for language learners to discuss their family or life history than to express abstract ideas. Events are more easily communicated than concepts. The ability to discuss concepts such as love, the meaning of life, or philosophies of life comes later in the language learning process.

4. Bring a pen and paper. It is helpful to use a pen and paper to spell out unfamiliar words, draw a diagram, make a list or even draw rough pictures. Visualizing what is said greatly aids retention and understanding.

5. Consider using props to make your time interesting. Props could include family pictures, a world map, student newspaper (a good source for common idioms and slang), magazines, comic strips, store catalog, phone book (how to use yellow pages), menus, a local map, driver's handbook, applications, fliers, or posters.

6. Take a field trip. Some things are better done than discussed. Most internationals would find a question-and-answer trip to the grocery store helpful. Your partner may have questions about foods, labels or where to find certain products. Visit the post office to talk about stamps, change of address cards, and types of mail service (priority, airmail, customs declarations, etc). Go to a movie together, helping your partner to understand dialogue and idioms. Go to a drug store and show him/her common headache, cold, and stomach ache remedies by writing down brand names. Go to an ethnic restaurant from your partner's country and let him/her help you order. Practice using a map to find locations. Visit a museum together and discuss your city, state, or national history.

CONVERSATION TOPICS

Topic: Holidays

Objective: Learn about special days throughout the year and how they are celebrated by law or custom.

Preparation: Bring a current 12-month calendar (optional: make a list of holidays celebrated in each country; optional: invite each other to celebrate a holiday).

Conversation Ideas:

- 1.) Compare and contrast common holiday observations (New Year, Valentine's Day, etc.) each month.
- 2.) Discuss other special days, such as Independence Day and legal holidays, religious celebrations, etc.

Topic: Travel and Transportation

Objective: Learn about geography and gain insights into tourism.

Preparation: Bring an atlas or maps of the world, USA, Missouri and the partner's country to the session. (Optional: share travel photos or brochures)

Conversation Ideas:

- 1.) Ask your partner to show on the world map which route he/she traveled to get to the USA and explain his/her preparation for entry to the USA and admission to MU.
- 2.) With a Missouri/U.S. map, point out the location of MU and popular places to visit in the state and neighboring states.
- 3.) Tell each other which places (countries and/or states) you have toured or visited.
- 4.) Make suggestions for spring break or plans for vacations during other school breaks.

Topic: Food

Objective: Learn about daily meals and special menus for celebrations, and possibly try new foods and exchange recipes.

Optional Preparation: Eat at a campus dining place together, meet at an ethnic restaurant and sample new dishes, exchange a favorite recipe or home cooked dish from each other's country, go to a cultural festival or host each other for lunch or dinner at home.

Conversation Ideas:

- 1.) Discuss what food is served during a typical/traditional breakfast, or other meal times.
- 2.) Find out what special foods are prepared on holidays, birthdays and weddings.
- 3.) Talk about rituals, etiquette/manners, eating utensils, and other things associated with food.

Topic: Family

Objective: Learn about family structures (nuclear/extended), values and domestic lifestyles.

Preparation: Bring a family photo or album to the session.

Conversation Ideas:

- 1.) Share favorite memories about your family, relatives and close friends.
- 2.) Talk about your home, parents' professions, family vacations and upbringing.
- 3.) Tell each other about any pets (dog, cat, fish, bird, etc.) you or your family owned.

Topic: Rites of Passage

Objective: Learn about customs to commemorate important milestones people reach in their lives.

Optional Preparation: Share photographs of occasions that you each have celebrated or attended, or invite each other to witness a special event.

Conversation Ideas:

- 1.) Compare and contrast birthday traditions, coming-of-age celebrations, marriage and wedding customs and death and funeral rites.
- 2.) Inquire about special food, clothing, rituals, beliefs and superstitions associated with each occasion.

Topic: Customs

Objective: Learn about interesting cultural behaviors, etiquette, beliefs, etc.

Preparation: Read about your partner's country.

Conversation Ideas:

- 1.) Discuss and or demonstrate American vs. your partner's cultural behaviors for greeting, visiting, tipping, dating, etc.
- 2.) Ask whether your partner is experiencing culture shock and how she/he is adapting to life in the USA.
- 3.) Answer questions your partner may have about American values or behaviors.
- 4.) Discuss various stereotypes and enlighten each other about realities.

Topic: Education

Objective: Learn about educational systems, teaching methods and transmittal of knowledge.

Preparation: None

Conversation Ideas:

- 1.) Find out what each partner is studying/doing at MU and why she/he chose her/his major or career field.
- 2.) Talk about primary and secondary schooling, the ages when children begin their education, the length of school day and year, teaching methods and important lessons, and preparations for college.
- 3.) Inquire about how your partner learned English and about the USA
- 4.) Tell how Americans typically learn about the world and other languages
- 5.) Share successful tips regarding how to study.

Topic: Jobs

Objective: Learn about employment opportunities on campus, after graduation and abroad

Preparation: Bring the classified ads page from a newspaper or go to

<http://classifieds.columbiatribune.com/jobs/search.asp>

Conversation Ideas:

- 1.) Share financial tips for college (scholarship opportunities, part-time jobs, possible tuition waivers, money management strategies, etc.) Note the tuition difference for in- and out-of-state students and international students
- 2.) Talk about your part-time job/internship/assistantship/fellowship experiences
- 3.) Discuss how your partner is preparing for his/her occupation after graduating from MU, or, if not a student, discuss current occupations
- 4.) Compare and contrast what information may be included in a resume (and whether personal data, photographs, etc., are necessary)

Topic: Communication

Objective: Learn about language, expression, gestures and communication styles

Preparation: E-mail each other and note the type of language (conversational tone, mechanics, etc.) used in this communication medium. Also, bring a current newspaper or magazine to the session

Conversation Ideas:

- 1.) Share or demonstrate greeting and departure behaviors and rituals

- 2.) Discuss language and translation challenges, alphabets and writing (script or characters), pronunciation, vocabulary building, etc.
- 3.) Talk about how various emotions are expressed and which of them are culturally and socially acceptable
- 4.) Compare nonverbal communication (movements of hands and body, symbolism of clothing and accessories, etc.)
- 5.) Look at newspapers, magazines or other media to observe what each culture may value

Topic: Numeric Systems

Objective: Learn about different currencies, weather temperatures, clothing sizes and other measurements.

Preparation: Look up your partner's country's currency and measurement systems

Conversation Ideas:

- 1.) Ask your partner to bring coins and bills from his or her country and explain the exchange rates and monetary value
- 2.) Talk about the weather, climate extremes and seasons
- 3.) Discuss metric vs. U.S. measures, cooking, etc.

Topic: Sports and Recreation

Objective: Learn about national pastimes and each other's interests and hobbies

Optional Preparation: Bring a deck of cards or favorite board game to the session and play together, bring supplies needed to do a craft project, go to the gym and work out together, or go to a sporting event.

Conversation Ideas:

- 1.) Discuss what people enjoy doing as pastimes when not working or studying
- 2.) Introduce each other to favorite hobbies and crafts
- 3.) Discuss the rules of popular national sports

Topic: Arts and Entertainment

Objective: Learn about fun activities and gain insights to cultural values

Optional Preparation: Go to a movie, go to a cultural festival or listen to music from your partner's country

Conversation Ideas:

- 1.) Discuss storylines and characters, cultural values/themes, popular actors and stereotypes portrayed in movies and television shows
- 2.) Compare and contrast music and dance styles in the U.S. and in your partner's country. Ask about popular singers, bands and other entertainers
- 3.) Talk about the symbolism of artistic design and other creative expressions

*(This section adapted from the Rutgers English Conversation Partners Program
<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cifss/predeparture/Concepts.pdf>)*

MORE THINGS TO DO TOGETHER!

- **Check out MU's Website:** <http://stufftodo.missouri.edu> or <http://calendar.missouri.edu/> to find out what fun things are going on around campus!

- **Attend multi-cultural hour!**

- Multi-cultural hour is a program on campus. This program meets each week, and people from different countries (including the U.S.) come to discuss cultural differences and issues on campus. Refreshments are served. This may be a fun activity to go to with your partner. To see the times and places, check out the Asian Affairs website at <http://asia.missouri.edu>.

- **There are some free museums on campus:**

- <http://binghamgallery.missouri.edu/>
- <http://maa.missouri.edu/>
- <http://anthromuseum.missouri.edu/>
- <http://www.craftstudio.org/>
- <http://www.umssystem.edu/shs/art.html>

- **To see what is going on in the community, check out the community calendar at:**

<http://calendar.columbia.mo.us/calendar/> or
http://www.visitcolumbiamo.com/web/things_to_do/event_calendar.php

- **On the following website, you can find something to do any time of any day**

<http://www.visitcolumbiamo.com/web/welcome/index.php>.

- **Go see a movie!**

Hollywood - Stadium 14

(573-817-0770)

Stadium & Hwy 63, Columbia, MO, 65201

Goodrich Forum 8

(573-445-7469)

1209 Forum Katy Parkway, Columbia, MO, 65203

Rag Tag Cinema

(573-443-4659)

23 N & 10th Street, Columbia, MO 65201

<http://www.ragtagfilm.com>

- **Try bowling!**

AMF Bowling Center

508 N Providence Rd

Columbia, MO

Phone: (573) 442-4729

T A Brady's Snack Rack & Bowl

911 E Rollins St (Brady Commons Basement on MU campus)

Columbia, MO

Phone: (573) 882-2870

- **Take a trip to Jefferson City to do some ice skating** (Tip: Sometimes the rink has irregular hours, so call first to make sure they are open.)

Ice Arena-Washington Park

711 Kansas Street

Jefferson City, MO 65109

(573) 634-6580

- **Play Billiards!**

Booches Billiard Hall

110 South 9th Street, Columbia, MO 65201

(573) 874-9519

Columbia Billiards

114 South 9th Street, Columbia, MO 65201

(573) 449-0116

Rack & Roll Billiards

3919 South Providence Road, Columbia, MO 65203

(573) 442-9251

Willies Pub and Pool

1109 East Broadway, Columbia, MO 65201

(573) 499-1800

T A Brady's Snack Rack & Bowl

911 E Rollins St (Brady Commons Basement on MU campus) Columbia, MO

(573) 882-2870

- **Learn more about Columbia together!**

Walters-Boone County Historical Museum

3801 Ponderosa Street

Columbia, MO, 65201

573-443-8936

- **Twilight Festivals** (573-442-6816)

Every Thursday in June and September, the downtown area comes alive with street bands, carriage rides, an evening concert series and a kids camp.

- **Rock Bridge High School Planetarium,**

Available for tours during regular school hours. Monday-Friday 9:00 am -3:00 pm. Contact Roy Morris at 573-214-3148 to make tour arrangements.

-Laws Observatory University of Missouri Columbia,

Open every Wednesday from 8 pm- 10 pm. 223 Physics Building, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO • 573-882-3335

- Reptile display

Conservation Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO • 884-7279

- Disc golf course

1900 Blue Ridge Rd. (Albert-Oakland Park), Columbia MO
• 573-474-5331 • 573-445-7415

- Columbia Police Department (Community Services)

600 East Walnut, Columbia • 573/874-7405 • For tours, call 874-7405

- Columbia Farmers Market

1701 West Ash St., Columbia, MO
573-449-GROW
columbia_farmers_market@yahoo.com

Saturday, 8 a.m.-noon; Monday & Wednesday 4-6 p.m. Mid-March through November (ends the Saturday before Thanksgiving).

- If you STILL can't find anything, visit one of these sites:

- <http://calendar.columbia.mo.us/>
- http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/ParksandRec/Activities_and_Programs/leisure-times.html
- <http://www.kmiz.com/community/>
- <http://www.concertseries.org/>
- <http://www.hearnescenter.com/calendar.html>
- <http://www.stephens.edu/news/stephensevents/>
- <http://www.cectheatre.org/>
- <http://www.kidsintheact.org/>

Tips for American Partners

Two important needs of newly arrived international students are friendship and language assistance. By being a conversation partner, you are helping an international student in a significant way. Here are some tips for being an effective conversation partner:

1. **Speak slowly and clearly.** For a newly-arrived international student, it is best to speak at a reduced rate of speed and make an effort to speak distinctly and articulate all syllables. After a while, you'll develop a feel for what rate of speech is comfortable for your partner. If your partner has difficulty understanding you, speak slower and more clearly, but do not speak louder. Speaking louder is a common thing for people to do when they are not being understood, but it is generally not helpful to an international student and may even be insulting.
2. **Use formal English more and idioms less.** International students have learned standard or formal English and may have little acquaintance with idioms or slang expressions. Once an American confused his Libyan friend by saying he would "pick him up" the next day at 2:00 p.m. The Libyan student could not understand why his American friend would lift him off the ground at a certain time the next day. If your partner seems confused, use "That is not necessary," rather than, "You don't have to do that." Say "two forty-five," rather than "quarter to three."
3. **Both of you should give feedback to check the accuracy of your understanding.** It is helpful if you occasionally repeat or summarize what your international friend has told you, such as, "So, you have one brother in college and two sisters still in high school." This will assure your international friend that he/she has been understood and reveal any misunderstanding. It is also good for your international partner to give you feedback to help you know if he or she has understood you. You may gently encourage your partner to summarize what you have said after your conversation. If you ask directly, "Did you understand what I said?" you may get a smile and a nod, but that does not mean you were understood. Asians, for example, often agree or will say yes simply as a means of being polite.
4. **Be patient and allow more time for responses.** If your partner is a newly-arrived international with limited experience in speaking and listening to native English speakers, accept the fact that it may take longer to communicate than it does in conversation with native English speakers. Don't be afraid of silent pauses. Many internationals are translating your question into their own language in their head, then formulating a response in their own language, and then translating that response into English. This mental process takes time, and you should patiently wait for responses rather than assume your partner doesn't understand you. Sometimes it helps to have a cup of coffee or drink to fill in these delayed response times (e.g. naturally take a drink of coffee while you are waiting for a response). Avoid the tendency of many Americans to complete your partner's sentence for them; this does not give them the practice speaking English that they need.

5. Try to balance speaking and listening. It is easy for the American partner to do all the talking in your meetings. Make an effort, however, to balance your speaking time. Listening comprehension is important for your partner to practice, but most often, the greatest need is practice speaking. Avoid yes/no questions. Try to ask open-ended questions such as, “Tell me about your first years in school. What are elementary schools like in your country?”

6. Remember that you are a cultural mediator. Language and culture are much intertwined, and much of your conversation time may be spent discussing and explaining American culture to your partner. As you do this, be sure to take the opportunity to understand your partner’s culture. Learn about your partner’s culture and customs. This will build your relationship, encourage your partner and expand your understanding of the world.

7. Be a resource person to your partner. Many newly-arrived internationals have no idea of resources available to them as university students. Your partner may be unaware of health-care services, legal services, access to sports facilities, etc. Help your international friend connect with these available and often free resources. Sometimes it may be helpful to go with your partner to show them the facilities or introduce them to a people in charge. International students must go thru orientation which covers a lot of MU resources.

8. Know your limits. Any problems that deal with your partner’s basic finances, immigration issues or legal issues should be directed elsewhere. Contact the program coordinator, who will get your partner the resources they need.

Tips for International Partners

1. Matching is not always exact: Sometimes your conversation partner will be a perfect match, but other times your partner may be younger than you would prefer or have different interests. We try our best to match people, but sometimes we do not have the perfect partner available to match with you. Try to enjoy your partnership and learn from these differences.

2. American culture might be less respectful to elders than Asian culture: Sadly, in America, elders are not as formally respected as they are in your home country. If your partner is younger than you, it will not be uncommon for them to use casual language and act as if you are friends of the same age. If you feel deeply offended by this, please contact the program coordinator.

3. Make your partner repeat what he/she says: Don't feel bad making your partner repeat what he/she has said. Sometimes it might be easier to ask for the meaning of specific words you don't understand. Your partner is there to help you!

4. Tell your partner what you want to do during your time together: Since your American partner has likely lived in Columbia for awhile, some things that may be interesting to you may seem normal to your partner. Feel free to let your partner know where you want to go and what you want to do. In addition, your partner may be an excellent resource for finding things to do that relate to your interests.

5. Teach your partner: Although the main goal of this program is to increase your conversational English, we hope you will also teach your partner about your culture. Often, learning about another culture is the most important reason that American partners volunteer for this program.

6. Know your limits. You should not address any problems your partner may have that are extremely serious, such as financial or emotional problems. Please contact the program coordinator if you are concerned about your partner, so we can help him/her find the resources he/she needs. However, if cancellation becomes a habit or your partner frequently does not show up, let the program coordinator know.

7. Try not to get upset about cancellations: Many partners are college students or have careers, and these things can sometimes get in the way of your meeting times. Try not to get upset about occasional cancellations.

General Do's and Don'ts

- DO** meet your partner one time per week for at least one hour.
- DO** change the place that you meet every once in a while to include some kind of activity.
- DO** let each partner talk equally. Make sure neither partner takes up all the time speaking.
- DO** arrange a regular time to meet and then be flexible when necessary.
- DO** meet at locations that are comfortable for both partners (one partner may not have a vehicle).
- DO** make some preparations for your meeting time. Each partner should have at least one or two conversation ideas in case they are necessary.
- DO** speak slowly and clearly. This applies to both partners; once you have a better understanding of each other, you can become more natural.
- DO** give feedback to check accuracy of understanding. This is for both partners as well.

- DON'T** use your time as an academic or tutorial service, or your partner as a tutor.
- DON'T** use this program as a dating service; gender is not always a factor in matching.
- DON'T** get worked up about busy schedules. Since both of you are busy, sometimes both partners will have to be flexible.
- DON'T** speak louder when there are misunderstandings. Just because someone doesn't speak your language doesn't mean they are hard of hearing.
- DON'T** use idioms or slang unless you are ready to explain them.
- DON'T** use this as an opportunity to convert someone to your religion or way of thinking.

WHAT DO I DO IF THE PARTNERSHIP IS NOT WORKING OUT?

Everyone knows of marriages that seemed “doomed” from the start or roommates in the dorm who never seem to get along. Occasionally Conversation Program partnerships seem the same way – difficult if not impossible to make work.

If this is the case, report it immediately to the program coordinator. S/he will help you resolve the situation or find a new partner.

The following are the types of problems that should be reported as soon as possible:

- The conversation partner does not return e-mails or phone calls
- The conversation partner does not show up for scheduled appointments
- The international partner does not try to practice his/her English and does not attempt to talk with you, or the American partner does not actively participate in the conversation
- The conversation partner seems very unhappy with you as a partner
- You have been deeply offended by comments made by your partner

Remember that it often takes a few meetings for an international partner to develop the confidence and courage to try to speak in a very difficult language. It may also take time for American partners to get used to overcoming communication barriers. A positive, accepting attitude will be necessary in the early stages.

ENDING THE PARTNERSHIP

Unfortunately, all partnerships must come to an end. This is normally due to the American partner’s graduation or the Asian partner’s return to his/her home country. Depending on each individual relationship, this can be a sad process. It is likely that you will have become friends with your partner, and it will be difficult to say good-bye.

Here are some tips for smoothing the transition:

- Make sure your partner knows at least a month ahead of time that your partnership will be ending. Even if one of you is just leaving for summer or winter break, it is a good idea to let your partner know in advance.
- If your partnership is ending, give your partner your permanent contact information. For example, e-mails through the university system expire soon after graduation, so make sure your partner can still reach you after that.
- Sometimes it is a good idea to plan a good-bye dinner or celebration. This can help give the relationship some closure. Also, it is usually appropriate to give each other a small gift.
- If you stay at MU or in the community after your partner leaves, contact the Asian Affairs Center about a new partner. It is difficult for us to keep track of everyone, especially American partners, so if you want to continue with the program, please let us know.
- Unless you feel very uncomfortable doing so, it is a good idea to write to your partner about once every month or two after he/she leaves. You never know when it could be helpful to know someone in another country! This is a good way to help long distance friendship’s continue to grow.

RESOURCES

*** If you would like to learn more about your partner's culture, try one of these readings!**

Kohls, L. Robert.

Learning to Think Korean : A Guide to Living and Working in Korea.

Yarmouth, ME : Intercultural Press, c2001.

MU ELLIS

DS902 .K516 2001

Hall, Edward Twitchell, 1914-

The Silent Language.

New York : Anchor Books, 1990, c1981.

MU LAW DISPUTE RESOLUTION

HM258 .H245 1990

Althen, Gary.

American Ways : A Guide for Foreigners in the United States.

Yarmouth, Me. : Intercultural Press, c1988.

MU JOUR

E158 .A46 1988

Avery, Peter, 1923-

Teaching American English Pronunciation

Peter Avery and Susan Ehrlich.

Oxford [Eng.] ; New York : Oxford University Press, 1992.

MU ELLIS

PE1137 .A94 1992

Hu, Wenzhong, 1935-

Encountering the Chinese : a Guide for Americans

Hu Wenzhong and Cornelius L. Grove.

Yarmouth, Me. : Intercultural Press, c1999.

Edition 2nd ed.

MU ELLIS

DS721 .H71114 1999

Yip, June Chun, 1962-

Envisioning Taiwan

Fiction, Cinema, and the Nation in the Cultural Imaginary

June Yip.

Durham : Duke University Press, 2004.

MU ELLIS

HM621 .Y56 2004

Lee, Sang-Dawn, 1959-

Big Brother, Little Brother : the American Influence on Korean Culture in the Lyndon B. Johnson / Sang-Dawn Lee.

Lanham, Md. : Lexington Books, c2002.

MUELLIS

E183.8.K6 L425 2002

Consuming Urban Culture in Contemporary Vietnam

Edited by Lisa B.W. Drummond and Mandy Thomas.

London ; New York : RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.

MU ELLIS

HN700.5.A8 C65 2003

The World Guide.

Oxford, U.K.: New Internationalist Publications, c1997-

Edition

English language ed.

MU ELLIS *HC59.69 G843*

ONLINE RESOURCES

Korean Culture: http://english.tour2korea.com/02Culture/main.asp?kosm=m2_1
http://www.koreanculture.org/06about_korea/symbols.htm

Life in Thailand: <http://www.thailandlife.com/questions.html>

Thai Culture: <http://www.travelforum.org/thailand/culture.html>

Chinese Culture: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/asia/china/>
<http://www.chineseculture.net/>

Vietnamese Culture: <http://www.vietspring.org/>

Taiwanese Culture: http://202.39.225.132/jsp/Eng/html/about_taiwan/culture.jsp

American Culture: <http://www.lifeintheusa.com/>

* Additionally, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page has a page about all of these countries as well.

Appendix A-Places to Eat in Columbia

***Having trouble deciding where to eat? Look at this with your partner**

Addison's American Grill 709 Cherry Street (573) 256-1995	CC Coffeehouse 1203 E. Broadway (573) 441-1061	Columbia Billiards 114 S. 9 th Street (573) 449-0116
AngeLos 4107 South Providence Road Columbia Greek-Moderate	CC's City Broiler 131 S. 10 th Street (573) 875-2282	Cucina Sorella 22 N. 9 th Street (573) 443-5280
Alexander's Steakhouse 301 North Stadium Boulevard-Columbia American-Expensive	Cajun Café and Grill 2300 Bernadette Drive #17 Columbia Cajun-Inexpensive	Dino's Steak House 1802 Paris Road Columbia American-Inexpensive
Bambino's Italian Café 203 Hitt Street (573) 817-2378	Cherry Street Artisan 111 S. 9 th #10 (573) 817-3274	Eastside Tavern 1016 E. Broadway (573) 256-1500
Bangkok Gardens Cherry Street (573) 874-3284	Cherry Street Wine Cellar 700 Cherry Street Columbia American, Italian, Spanish-Moderate	El Rancho 1014 E. Broadway (573) 875-2121
Blue Cactus Café 3915 South Providence Road Columbia Mexican-Moderate	The Chez Coffee House 100 Hitt Street (573) 443-2440	Ernie's Steak House 1005 E. Walnut St. (573) 874-7804
Blue Moon 200 East Nifong Columbia American-Inexpensive	Chili's 41 Conley Road (573) 442-6067	Everett's Restaurant and Lounge 1601 Rangeline Street Columbia American-Expensive
Booche's 110 S. 9 th Street (573) 874-9519	China Chef 27 Conley Road #A Columbia Chinese	Fat Otter's Street Pub 119 S. 7 th Street (573) 449-0132
Boone Tavern & Restaurant 811 E. Walnut (573) 442-5123	Chinese Wok Express 422 E. Broadway (573) 443-5099	Felini 700 E. Broadway (573) 256-5025
Bread Basket Café 220 S. 8 th Street (573) 256-2003	CJ's 704 E. Broadway (573) 442-7777	Field House 1107 E. Broadway (573) 442-5213
Bread Basket Café 2101 West Broadway Columbia American-Inexpensive	Classy's Restaurant 1013 E. Broadway (573) 256-1604	Flat Branch Pub & Brewing Company 115 S. 5 th Street (573) 499-0400
Broadway Diner 22 S. 4 th Street (573) 875-1173	Coffee Zone 11 N. Ninth Street (573) 449-8215	Forge & Vine Grill, Wine Bar and Terrace 119 S. 7 th Street (573) 443-6743
Buster's Eatery and Lounge 1112 East Stadium Boulevard Columbia American-Inexpensive	Colosseum Bistro 402 E. Broadway (573) 256-2087	Formosa Restaurant 913A E. Broadway (573) 449-3339

Forum Smokehouse 1412 Forum Boulevard Columbia American-Moderate	Kayotea 912 E. Broadway (573) 449-0971	Otto's Corner Bar & Grill 38 N. 9 th Street (573) 443-6996
Garfield's Restaurant & Pub 2300 Bernadette Drive Columbia American-Affordable	Les Bourgeois Vineyards Wine Garden Bistro In Rocheport (573) 698-2133 Full service bluff-top dining year-round at the wine garden and bistro restaurants downtown Rocheport (about 15 miles from Columbia)	Outback Steakhouse 1110 Interstate 70 Drive Southwest Columbia American-Expensive
Grill One 5 15 S. 6 th Street (573) 499-1515	Lou's Palace 1020 E. Walnut (573) 449-0971	Panera 102 S. 9 th Street (573) 442-4455
Gumby's Pizza 1201 A E. Broadway (573) 874-8629	Lucy's Corner Cafe 522 E. Broadway (573) 875-1700	Papa John's Pizza 1205 E. Broadway (573) 442-7272
Hardee's 200 S. Providence Road (573) 442-3198	Main Squeeze Natural Foods Cafe 28 S. 9 th (573) 817-5616	Pasta Factory 1020 E. Broadway (573) 449-3948
Harpo's 29 S. 10 th (573) 443-5418	Mandarin Express 1201 E. Broadway (573) 874-2530	The Penguin Piano Bar 1025 E. Broadway (573) 449-8005
House of Chow 2101 West Broadway Columbia Chinese	Mandarin House 2300 Bernadette Drive Columbia Mandarin-Affordable	Quinton's Deli and Bar 124 S. 9 th Street (573) 815-1047
India's House 1101 E. Broadway (573) 817-2009	McNally's Irish Pub 7 N. 6 th Street (573) 441-1284	Quizno's 804 E. Broadway (573) 449-8822
International Café 209 Hitt Street Columbia (573) 449-4560 Greek, Mediterranean-Inexpensive	Midway Family Restaurant 6401 Highway 40 West Columbia Family American-Inexpensive	Ruby Tuesday 2010 Bernadette Drive-Columbia American, Mexican-Affordable
Jack's Gourmet Restaurant 1903 Business Loop 70 East Columbia American-Affordable	Murry's Steaks 3107 Green Meadows Way Columbia American-Moderate	Rui Yu Lin Restaurant 503 E. Nifong Blvd. Columbia Asian-Chinese
Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwich Shop 1019 E. Broadway (573) 815-0043	Ninth Street Deli 28 N. 9 th (573) 874-7199	Sake 16 S. 10 th Street (573) 256-7252
Jimmy's Family Steak House 3101 South Providence Road Columbia Family American-Inexpensive	Nothing But Noodles 29 S. 9 th Street (573) 815-1122	Shake's Frozen Custard 304 S. 9 th Street (573) 256-1884
Johnny's Beanery 212 East Green Meadows Road Columbia American-Inexpensive	Old Chicago 1710 Interstate 70 Drive Southwest Columbia American, Italian-Affordable	Shakespeare's Pizza 225 S. 9 th Street (573) 449-2454
		Shakespeare's Pizza 3304 Broadway Business Park Court (573) 447-1202
		Shiloh Bar & Grill 227 S. 6 th Street (573) 875-1800

Snapper's
12 S. 7th Street
(573) 256-4901

Sophia's
3915 S. Providence Rd. Columbia
(573) 874-8009

Sparky's Homemade Ice Cream
21 S. 9th
(573) 356-3898

Starbuck's
304 S. 9th Street Suite 103
(573) 442-5802

Sub Shop, Inc.
209 S. 8th St.
(573) 449-1919

Subway
30 s. 9th St.
(573) 874-1467

Sycamore
800 E. Broadway
(573) 874-8090

Taj Mahal
19 N. 5th St.
(573) 256-6800

Tellers Gallery & Bar
820 E. Broadway
(573) 441-8355

Thai Kitchen Regency
1111 E. Broadway
(573) 499-0385

The Sapphire Lounge
1201B E. Broadway
(573) 815-7550

Tonic
122 S. 9th St.
(573) 256-6633

Tony's Pizza Palace
17 N. 5th St.
(573) 442-3188

Trattoria Strada Nova
21 N. 9th St.
(573) 442-8992

Tropical Liqueurs
515 E. Broadway
(573) 442-8098

Uprise Bakery
816A E. Broadway
(573) 256-2265

Village Wine & Cheese
929 E. Broadway
(573) 442-1010

W.G. Grinders
33 N. 9th St.
(573) 474-6337

Willie's Pub & Pool
1109 E. Broadway
(573) 449-1800

The Wine Cellar & Bistro
505 Cherry St.
(573) 442-7281

Wise Guys Pizza
7 N. 6th St.
(573) 817-2000

Yen Ching
600 Business Loop 70-Columbia
Asian-Chinese