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XI'AN GAOXING NO.1 HIGH SCHOOL

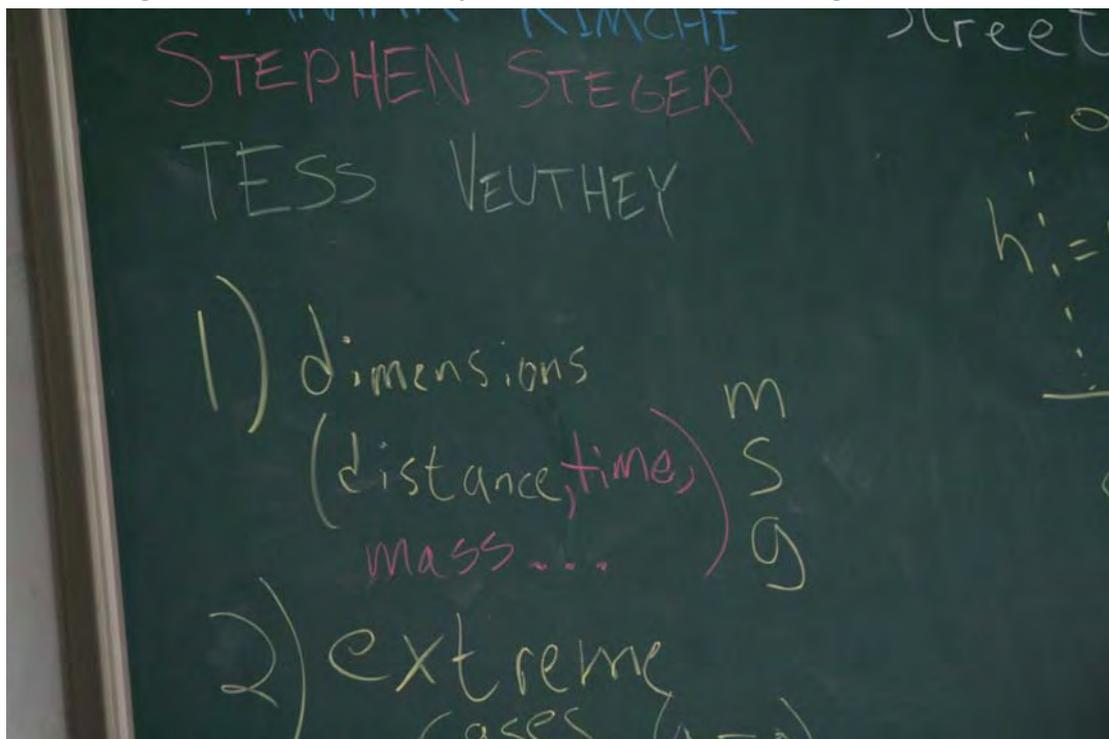
Guest Teaching

On the first day, we had class from 8-11:30. We started with Stephen's hand gestures lecture, accompanied by Itamar. Each slide shows the name and an image of someone performing each gesture, which include both common things such as the handshake, pat on the back, or high-five, and more specific (and less common) gestures such as 'talk to the hand,' the Bloods gang sign, and the chest bump. They seemed to like it a lot. The activity involved dividing them into 6 groups, each with an MIT student, and practicing the hand gestures together, preferably on each other (like the pat on the back). That was funny for everyone, but was mostly just hang out time and didn't seem to be too effective.



After that I gave about an hour's lecture of Sanjoy Mahajan's street fighting math. I started with the picture proof for adding odd numbers, which they didn't seem to like. Then showed the formula for area of an ellipse with dim analysis, which they thought was OK. I ended with dim analysis for final v of a falling projectile, $v \sim \sqrt{hg}$. Throughout, they were very active and really wanted to come up to the board to ask questions. Mostly these were not questions, but comments about how I could do things 'better' using formulas they memorized from previous classes. I tried hard to explain that the point was the simplicity of the dim analysis method, and that they should forget previous formulas (some of them also misremembered them anyway...!), but students were only halfway towards understanding it by the end of class. However, I definitely was able to engage them well, and I definitely left them

all thinking. It was not material they were used to, and that was good.



After that lecture, Stephen and Tess gave a short powerpoint presentation on MIT culture and hacks, which was interesting for the students, though not as engaging as the hand gestures (perhaps because they were already tired).

On the second day, we did an egg drop. Students brought eggs. Stephen and Tess talked about brainstorming, we all gave a demonstration of it, and then we divided them into groups and asked them to brainstorm ideas. Then they each presented for ~20 seconds on their proposed egg drop solution, and tried it out. Since we had the whole day to do it, teams had multiple chances to build new apparatuses and drop new eggs. Many teams never checked if their egg (nestled inside many layers of papers) broke until the very end, and were surprised to see it smashed when they finally opened the package... teams also did not keep track of how many pieces of paper they used. But it was a lot of fun for everyone.

**Extracurricular:**

We stayed at the Xi'an HangTang Youth Hostel located at 117 Xi Dajie near the Bell Tower, since staying with either of the other teams would have been complicated. Dorm rooms were 30 RMB a night with membership (40 RMB without). We rode rented bikes around the Xi'an city walls on our day of arrival – pretty fun! On the second day with the Xi'an HS team, I joined them for a HS-organized trip to the terracotta warriors (Which Tess and Stephen have already seen). It was great, with special VIP passes for the 4 of us allowing our taxi to go all the way to the main building, a special English speaking tour guide and access to special sections closer to the warriors.

XI'AN JIAOTONG UNIVERSITY

Guest Teaching

On the first day, we had class from 3-5 PM. As Jiaotong was currently having final exams, there were only about 6 students in the class, all of whom seemed very bright, and they all had great senses of humor. We started with Stephen's hand gestures lecture, accompanied by Itamar. Each slide shows the name and an image of someone performing each gesture, which include both common things such as the handshake, pat on the back, or high-five, and more specific (and less common) gestures such as 'talk to the hand,' the Bloods gang sign, and the chest bump. They enjoyed learning about it thoroughly. For a follow-up activity we would pick two of the students to create a scene in which they used a particular hand gesture. The students really got into the activity and many of the scenes were hilarious. We finished up the day's lessons with a short powerpoint presentation on MIT culture and hacks, which was interesting for the students, though not as engaging as the hand gestures.



On the second day, the Jiaotong OCW team wanted to take their students out for lunch. We went to a fantastic restaurant near the school, although getting there was tricky considering we did not know where it was and it was raining heavily. Only 4 students could go due to final exams. Lunch ended pretty late, so when we returned we realized that some of the other students might have arrived and left, and one of the students we ate lunch with had to go prepare for going home. Ultimately the end of class was general discussion with the remaining 3 students.

Extracurricular:

During our guest teaching days at Xi'an Jiaotong, we continued to stay at the HangTang Youth Hostel. We had two spectacular CETI team outings in which all three teams in the Xi'an area got together. The first night we met at the youth hostel and went out dancing at some of Xi'an's many clubs. The second night we sang karaoke at KTV Medusa and went dancing afterwards.



QINGHAI UNIVERSITY

General comments

Administration:

Before we arrived, our contact (Levin) was very responsive. He asked for summaries of our curriculums far in advance, kept up with our travel schedule so that students would be there to greet us at the train station, and later asked for a day-by-day schedule of activities. We also sent him our ideal requirements for teaching rooms and internet access, but we never got responses as to whether this would be possible.

We were greeted at the train station by a different teacher (Mr. Yang), whom we think had been the CETI contact in past years, and two students. One of them, Jackie, is a fourth year in metallurgy and speaks very good English. He has met some previous CETI teams, but he has never been a student in the program. We think he just works for Mr. Yang as an informal intermediary and translator. The other student was a first year in economics, and his English was not as good; he was leaving for an English workshop in a few days, so we never saw him again.

From talking to Jackie and Mr. Yang, it sounds like Yang had arranged the usual couple lecture halls for our teaching. We visited one of them on the first day, but the projector screen was broken (did not rise), so Mr. Yang said he would keep arranging things. We also visited a smaller classroom with just a blackboard, but we did not end up using it. While walking around campus, we saw a mechanical engineering workshop and asked about our request for a similar space for our toy design class. This had clearly not been brought up with Mr. Yang before, but he said he would ask the mechanical engineering department about access. We had also requested to be able to use a computer with internet access (which they did not know. They had also expected us to bring a laptop). They lent us one of the computers from Mr. Yang's office, which we were able to hook up in our room.

We met Levin later, and although he had not given us responses to our earlier e-mail requests, he was more communicative about the requests we made in person. He helped us get access to the mechanical engineering workshop, arranged a trip to Qinghai lake for us (with Jackie as our chaperone), and helped later communication with the Computer Science department regarding the OCW drive. Jackie was our most reliable point of contact with the Levin/Mr. Yang combo.

Students:

All of our students were from science or technology majors, and most of them were first or second year students. Their English ability ranged wildly. Some were very conversational and more outgoing (Scot's ex-students especially). Most of them understood us most of the time, but had more trouble speaking. Some of them only understood if we spoke painfully slowly and spoke very little, but they were still enthusiastic about working on projects. We had lunch with different groups of

students on several occasions. We think most of them lived on campus, but we did not see them regularly outside of class.

We noticed that the students with stronger English abilities tended to speak more, and, during group activities, they were usually selected to speak for the team.

We started off with around 50 students, which split into 20 students for Physics and Math, and 30 students in Toy Design. By the end of the 2 weeks, we still had 7 students in Physics and Math, and about 15-25 students in Toy Design depending on the session. A good number of kids left early to go to their hometowns. Having a team project generally seemed to help student retention in the Toy Design class.

Location:

The Qinghai province is famous and interesting because of the mix of ethnic groups that live here. Qinghai University is located 30 minutes west of Xining. The city is easily accessible via the #15 bus, which passes outside the gates every 5 minutes, but only runs until 8:30pm. A cab ride from Xining to Qinghai University (saying Qinghai Da Xue is enough) costs around 20 RMB depending on where you start from in the city.

Living outside of the city is somewhat inconvenient, but not annoying enough that we didn't go there almost every day. There are convenience stores, restaurants, fruit stalls, and laundry shops in and right outside of the school's gates, so basic needs are no problem. There is also a doctor on campus, but we did not need to venture there. The post office on campus does not sell the envelopes needed for international postage. The print shop's photocopiers did not work while we were there, and printing is more or less slow depending on whether or not the laser printer is working (the inkjet is... somewhat problematic); each sheet costs 1/3 RMB.

Xining city has enough sites to keep us busy for 2 weeks. Wandering around the city we saw some cool areas include Xining Square (Tibetan Circle Dancing every night), WenHua Lu (restaurants and bars), and the area around Qinghai Normal University (Qinghai Shi Fan Da Xue) also has lots of restaurants. We also visited Buddhist temples in and around the city (a nice Tibetan one on the south mountain, friendly Chinese Buddhists on the south mountain, and a bunch of huts and temples lodged in the mountain on Bei Shan Si). The big mosque on DongGuan Lu is not amazing, but maybe worth the visit. The Tibetan Medical Museum near the Botanical Gardens is cool (between the university and the city, on lines 1 and 34). Qinghai lake is around 3 hours away, and can be done as a day trip.

Accommodations:

The school arranged for us to stay in the foreigners' hotel on campus. We all stayed in one room, which split into a 3-bed room for Itamar and Stephen, a 2-bed room for Tess, and a shared bathroom. The big bedroom has a TV and something like a cable

box, but no DVD player. However, cables to connect the TV to a computer only cost 5 RMB. There is an internet drop in the big bedroom. The doors to the hotel close at 10, but there is always staff nearby, so coming home late is sometimes ok if they are told in advance. We were scolded and asked to come home before closing on multiple occasions (especially if it's around/after midnight). Coming home around 11 is ok. Unlike the dorms, where power goes off at 10pm, the hotel has power all night. Water shuts off around 11pm.

The hotel is conveniently right next to the main teaching building and a convenience store. Walking to either gate takes about 5-10 minutes.

Extracurricular outings:

Qinghai Lake

The school arranged for us to make a day trip to Qinghai Lake on Saturday of the first weekend. We left at 9am with Jackie, our student contact, and the driver in a private car. It took about 3 hours to get to a 'developed' area of the lake. We spent a couple hours wandering around the lake area, taking a bus to a beach with a rather fake-looking Tibetan stupa. The area was really nice, but not very authentic.



On the way back, we stopped on Sun and Moon mountain, where Stephen insisted on holding a baby yak. Other than that, we took some pictures, but did not climb around the overpriced temples on the mountain.



Repkong festival

On Sunday we left early in the morning for Repkong; we had heard from friends that Tibetan villages around there were having their annual piercing festival, where young men pierce themselves and a ‘medium’ goes into a trance to communicate with spirits. It took about 3 hours to get there, with a bit of a delay because we had to wait for a landslide to get cleared out. Bus tickets cost 30 RMB. After talking to a Tibetan girl at a restaurant in Repkong, we learned that 2 of the 3 villages we had heard of would not have their festival until the next weekend, so we went to the last one, Wutun. We arrived around 2pm, but the festivities had not really started. While waiting around, Itamar made friends with a local man, who was back home visiting from Shanghai, where he usually lived, and his Shanghainese girlfriend spoke good English. They invited us to rest at his brother’s house until the dancing started. While we were there, he showed us some thankas he painted, which he usually sells in Shanghai. We also visited the large Wutun monastery, which holds several huge Buddhas. Around 6 we returned to his brother’s house, and he invited Itamar to put on Tibetan clothing and join them in the dancing. When we got back to the village square, where the dancing was taking place, Stephen and Tess got to take lots of pictures of Itamar dancing, to the general amusement of all the villagers. Dancing ended around 8pm, at which point we took a private car home, which our host had arranged.



Curriculum Descriptions and Comments

Physics

Mon: introducing classes

Tues: dim analysis for projectiles

Wed: dim analysis for integrals

Thurs: dim analysis for drag

Fri: student groups do experiments with paper cones (based on Thurs' material)

Mon: dim analysis recap, some light overview, waves javascript applet demonstrations

Tues: waves and light

Wed: Fermat's principle, superposition, interference

Thurs: How rainbows form

Fri: why is the sky blue? + demonstration

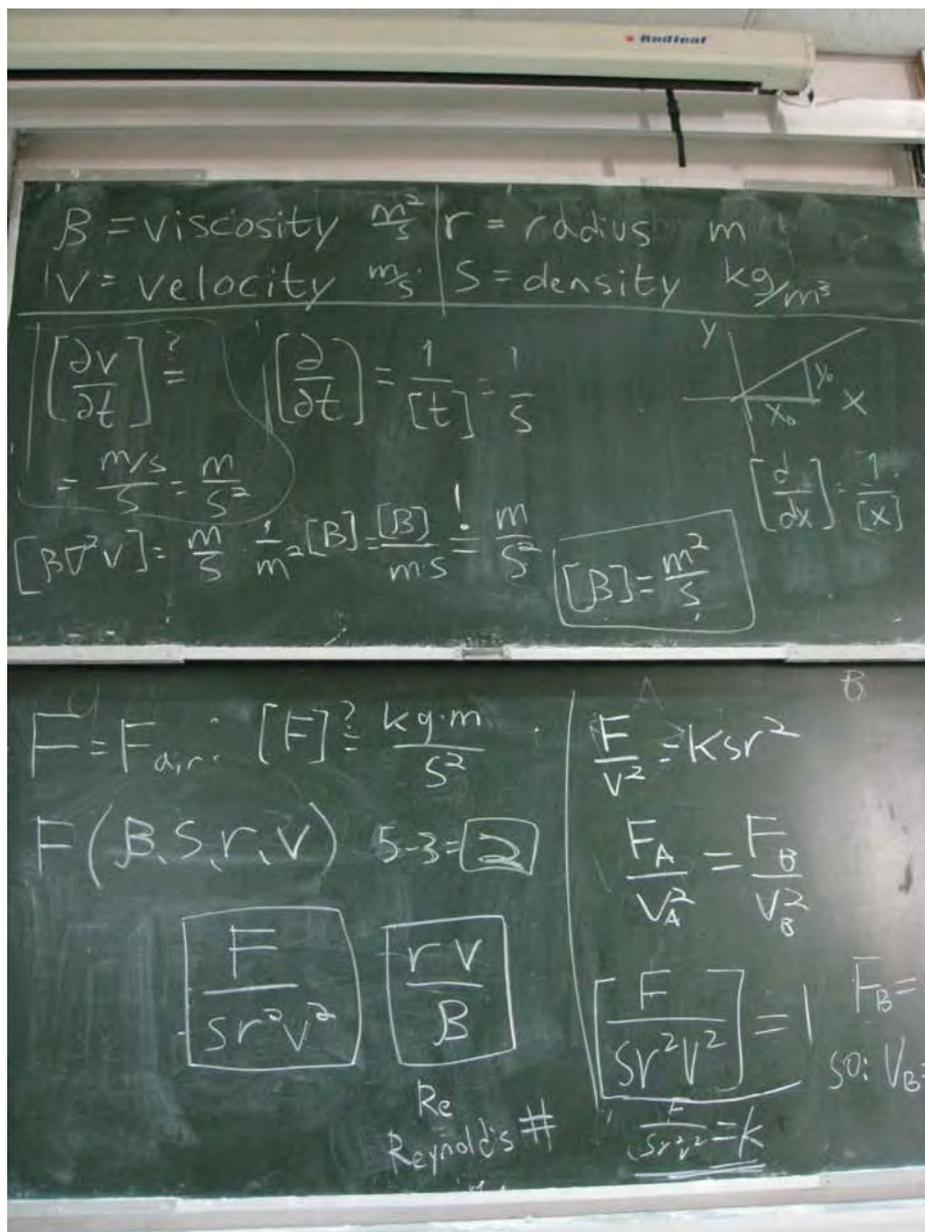
Monday: On the first day, I introduced my physics and math class by presenting a simple dimensional analysis problem: estimating the velocity of a projectile dropped from height h , with gravity g (as \sqrt{hg}).

Tuesday: On Tuesday, I had about 20 students show up to my class. We spent the first two days introducing dimensional analysis: what it means to use it as a method for estimating answers, and what algebraic operations one can do with dimensionful or dimensionless quantities. Throughout, I followed the material from Sanjoy Mahajan's 'street fighting math' lecture notes/textbook, available on OCW from his IAP class with that title (18.098/6.099). I also introduced general guidelines for the class

(namecards, asking questions is encouraged, etc...). The afternoon class was an attempt at recitation format, but students did not really get that concept, so it devolved into another lecture instead.

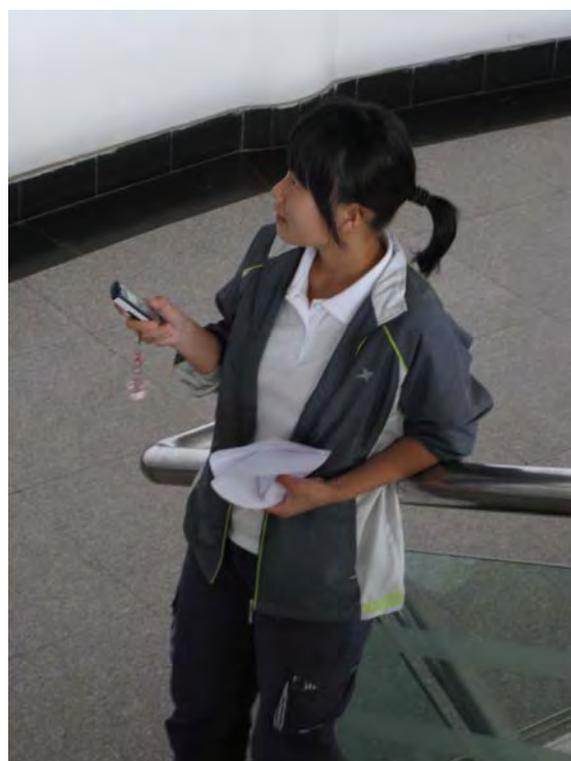
Wednesday: In the first two days T and W, I only introduced the basics of dim analysis, so much of what I was saying came from my general mathematics knowledge. I had felt that Tuesday's day was too easy (because the afternoon was a slow lecture, with me still trying to get them to ask questions), so on W I moved to Sanjoy's example of using dim analysis to evaluate the integral of $\exp(-ax^2)$ over all the line. The afternoon was another lecture, with no more questions by students than in the morning. I gave them a HW assignment to evaluate the integral of $\exp(-x^4/b)$ – ie, extremely similar to the problem we did in class. Together with this problem, I also asked them to give me a short evaluation of the class so far. They all said there were many words they didn't understand, so after W I tried to speak slower and verify more often that they understood words I said. In the afternoon we started doing Sanjoy's Drag problem.

Thursday: About half the students were able to do the HW assignment fully correctly. Other ones tried to make their answer look like the class problem's answer... I asked one of the students to do the problem on the board, and her presentation of the right answer was excellent. On Thursday we again had two lectures, presenting Sanjoy's Drag problem with dimensional analysis. This is a sophisticated and neat way to show that the terminal velocity of paper cones is independent of their radius. After the afternoon lecture, I gave students some time to begin making their own cones in preparation for the experimental day. I asked them to divide into groups of 3-5 people to create, do and write about this experiment.



Friday: was the experiment day. Students spent the morning making and testing their paper cones. They mostly brought their own material (paper, scissors, tape). We came up with creative ways to measure the height of the second floor, since students dropped some cones from there, using string I had brought. In the afternoon only the student groups that wanted more time came and did more experiments. Other groups worked on their own time over the weekend. During the morning class, an impromptu problem I gave them that used the method and results from Thursday's lecture (what happens to v if four cones are stacked) was answered in only one minute by another one of the girls in the class, who was also able to present her answer very well on the blackboard.



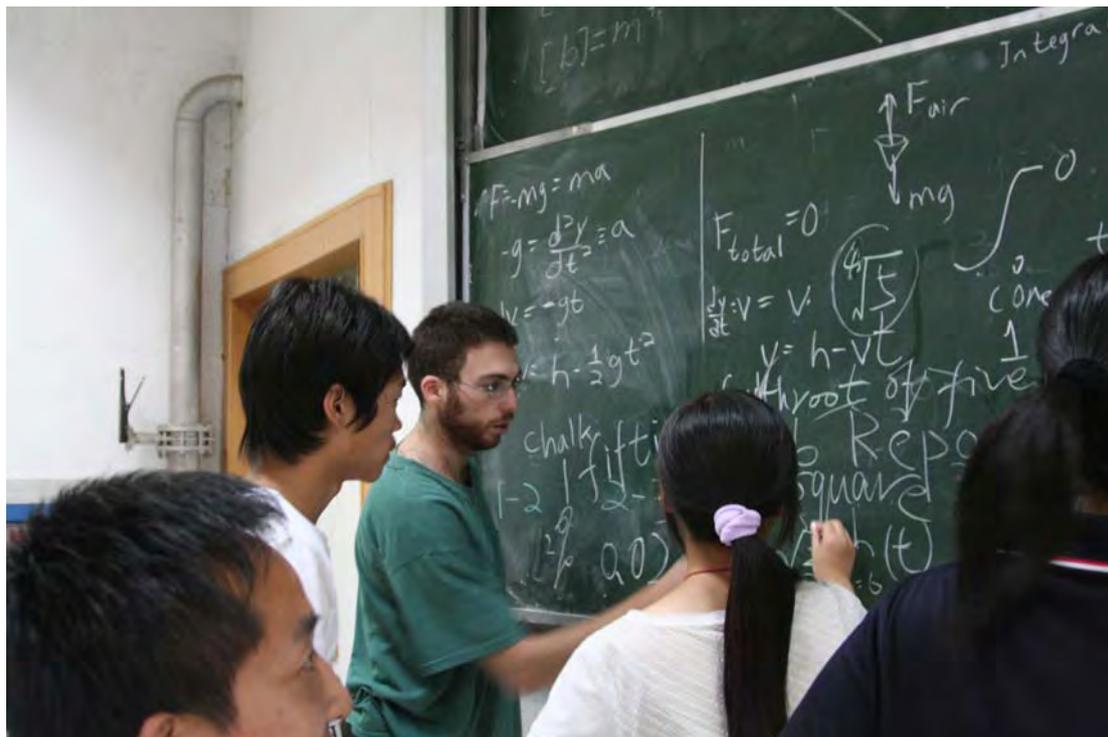


Monday: I talked more about what the lab report for Tuesday should look like, recapped the previous week, and gave them a difficult HW problem – Sanjoy’s HW problem of estimating a (r) for shapes rolling down a slope. None were able to get it right, so we just did it in class 2 days later. I only had about 8 students on Monday and for the rest of this week. In the afternoon I lectured a bit and showed some javascript style physics demonstrations I got from the internet onto my USB drive. Everyone was clearly zoning out for both parts, so then we just talked about American culture (they asked me questions – I talked). Students voiced their desire to not have any more afternoon classes, and since I felt that there were always fewer students who came in the afternoons, and they seemed to be much more tired and unfocused, I

agreed. So we had no afternoon classes TWRF, though every morning I asked if any of them wanted to come talk to me and ask questions in the afternoons (none did).



Tuesday: Introduced light. History of physics related to it, wavelengths and different light. Began describing Snell's law and then introduced the 'why' question and started talking about Fermat's principle of least time. I got 4 lap reports, from 9 people total (ie, there were 9 names in total; but it seemed like two of the reports handed in just had the name of the writer, and didn't have the names of the other students who did the experiment). I was not strict or mean about HW or the lab reports, so that relaxed attitude may have encouraged them to not put so much work into it – though I still felt that most of the kids did put effort in. The reports were pretty good - ... some groups did multiple trials and took averages. Some thought about extra problems (how shape or density affect speed), or about subtle differences that radius does make. One did the four stacked cones experiment. In general they were very complete in the wrong ways – described exactly how paper cones are made.... But didn't give the specific angles for the cones they used in the experiment. I asked them to give me data tables – their data looked fine (and real). I gave them comments on their reports and handed them back later.



Wednesday: a difficult lecture, about Fermat's principle of least time arising from superpositions of waves taking all possible paths interfering with each other. At least some students understood most of it, but some also did not. However, they did seem to find it very interesting. One student talked to me after class about whether I could connect these 'basics' behind light to 'rainbows' (which I promised I'd talk about) in both directions (ie, derivation and motivation).

Thursday: Rainbows! Connected the T and W lectures to how rainbows form. See 8.03 pset 10 with sols, from OCW. There were no good lecture notes on this – I had to follow the pset sols and my memory. I also connected it to Snell's law (which they knew), and ended with specific new things they can observe next time they see a rainbow: order of colors, double rainbow is flipped, inside of a rainbow is lighter (whiter) than outside. There were 4-5 interested questions at the end of that day, which was quite high.

Friday: Why is the sky blue? More about light, and Rayleigh scattering. (just google it – no lecture notes.) ended with the usual demonstration of shining a flashlight through water with some drops of milk to see Rayleigh scattering, which students liked a lot. Very easy to find the experiment and content for this lecture by googling; just remember that even basic things (like 'white light that comes from the sun is made up of all the colors') students may not know and you have to explain.

I felt that the 8 students who stayed through the end understood the bulk (80%) of the key material (not including the 'interference for Fermat's principle, etc) I taught. I think they were both better at English and better at math than some of the other

students I had originally. Still, most of those 8 were first year students.

In general, students were willing to ask questions at the end of class or at the end of a unit, but they never interrupted me to ask about confusing things. I had to repeatedly ask them if there are any questions, and I could only tell by the looks on their faces whether they did or did not understand what I had just said. In the first week I attempted to do recitation sections in the afternoons, but that did not work out – students never asked questions, even when there clearly were things they did not understand.

By the end of the two weeks, students were more likely to ask questions, but they still only asked them at the end of class, not at the many times I paused and asked for questions.

I think the critical pieces of teaching QU students were speaking loudly and slowly enough so that words were separated, and being aware of whether they understood or not every single sentence I said. In every lecture, I asked them if they understood some English word or other about 10 times.

When I introduced a new step in the lecture, I explicitly checked with them if they got it, tried to ask quick questions to the whole class (I used that method a whole lot) to see if they understood, and repeated it, usually more than once, if it seemed like some students were not following.

For physics content: students really liked doing the experiment with the paper cones, both for the hands on project appeal and also because it was cool for them to learn how to understand those simple (and counterintuitive!) things. They also liked the rainbow lecture and the sky-is-blue lecture and demonstration. I strongly suggest motivating every lecture or few with an interesting, immediately relevant problem.

Toy Product Design

Monday: What is Toy Product Design?

Tess and Stephen presented the first part of the first toy design lecture to help give the students a sense of what they would be learning in the Toy Design class. We defined the terms toy, product, and design. We did not hold an afternoon class.

Tuesday: What is Toy Product Design?, Play and Play Value

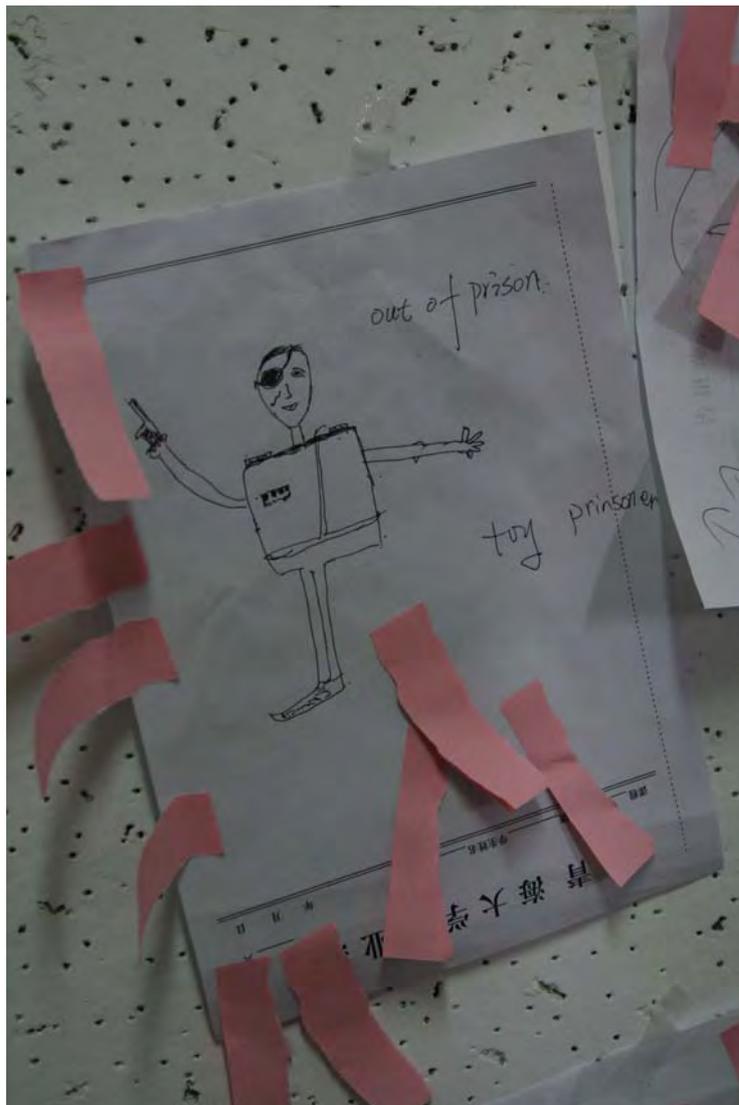
At the beginning of class we had the students decide to take either the toy design class or the math and physics class. We ended up having about 35 students initially in the Toy Design class. Afterwards, we finished the “What is Toy Product Design?” lecture. We then began the “Play and Play Value” lecture, and began to discuss who our customer is as a toy designer (the child, the parents, and the toy company), and what

are the main categories of play (sensory, fantasy, construction, and challenge). We also discussed play affordances (children using toys in ways we do not expect) and toy safety. In the afternoon we had students begin constructing nametags for themselves to get them in the habit of making things and also to help us remember their names.



Wednesday: Play and Play Value, Brainstorming

We started off the day's lecture discussing how to increase the variety and length of play of a toy, as well as discussing the emotional needs a toy fulfills. We discussed the distinction between invention and innovation, and creative ways of creating new product ideas (idea mapping, product association, crossing products) and implementing brainstorming techniques and idea selection methods. In the afternoon, we gave a demo of brainstorming techniques. We then had the students break into teams of 5 or 6 members for a brainstorming activity (coming up with inappropriate children's toys). We had 5 teams in total. Their names were High 5, Charming, Milky Way, Dinosaur, and Dream. The teams came up with as many ideas as they could and then selected the best ones to present to the class. There was some confusion in some of the teams, and many people were merely brainstorming existing things that should not be given to children rather than new toy ideas. Team Charming came up with the idea of a toy prisoner which cuts off its own leg when purchased. High 5 came up with an uncomfortable chair with a canopy of sharp teeth.



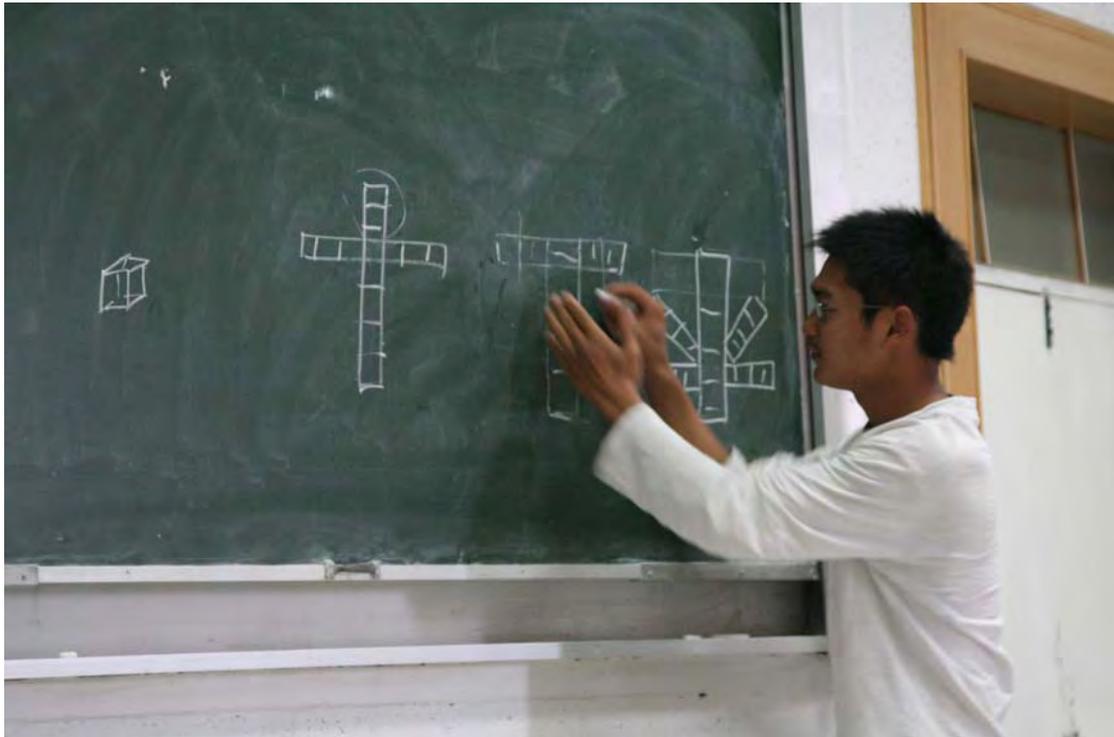
Thursday: Brainstorming, Theme Introduction

We discussed the results of the previous day's brainstorming activity, mainly stressing that the students needed to be much louder in announcing their ideas to their teammates and also that they should not judge the quality of the idea until after the brainstorm session. We introduced the project theme for the class, which was to design toys for 10-15 year old children that teach about or spark interest in China. The students seemed to be slow coming up with ideas in the morning, so we gave them additional time in the afternoon to come up with ideas. However, some of the students were still having trouble with the assignment. Some were still unsure of what exactly a toy is, and some were merely brainstorming objects that already exist in China. The students were told to select an idea, develop the concept further, sketch it, and present it the next day in class.



Friday: Sketching

The teams presented their toy ideas at the beginning of class. Some of the teams still had more than one idea, and other teams were still unsure of what they wanted to do. We discussed sketching techniques for product design, covering the basics of one and two point perspective and shading. The students were told to sketch their toy idea in two point perspective to be brought in on Monday. Each team's selected treasurer was given RMB 100 to purchase supplies for their project. We ended the afternoon session early so they could purchase supplies. Tess and I talked at length with some of the struggling groups.



Monday: Making Sketch Models

We discussed the purpose and methods of creating sketch models in product design. We spent a long time talking to the students about their teams' designs and the supplies that they had purchased. In the afternoon we gave the students time to begin building or go purchase more supplies. Mr. Levin took Stephen and a group of students to Qinghai U's mechanical engineering workshop, while Tess stayed behind with some of the other students. Stephen was introduced to a teacher there who would help him for the rest of the week. This teacher was very helpful but did not speak English. The workshop had a great number of machine tools (including drill presses, mills, and lathes), but not many that were useful to the students' projects. Instead, we decided to borrow hand tools such as screwdrivers, hammers, saws, pliers, a soldering iron, and an electric corded drill.



Tuesday: Graphic Design

In the morning we discussed the fundamentals of graphic design, such as balance and text, while stressing simplicity and clarity. We felt that this was important for many of the teams who were making board games or card games. In the afternoon the students were given more time to work on their projects.

Wednesday: Making Presentations

As part of the projects, we wanted each team to make a 5 minute PowerPoint presentation about their toy to be presented on Friday. The presentations should include a description of the toy, how it is played, what should be learned from it, and what were its materials and its cost. We discussed how to make a clear, good looking presentation, marketing strategies, and things we expected to see in their presentations. The students were then given time to start planning their presentations. In the afternoon they were given additional time to work on their projects and plan their presentations.

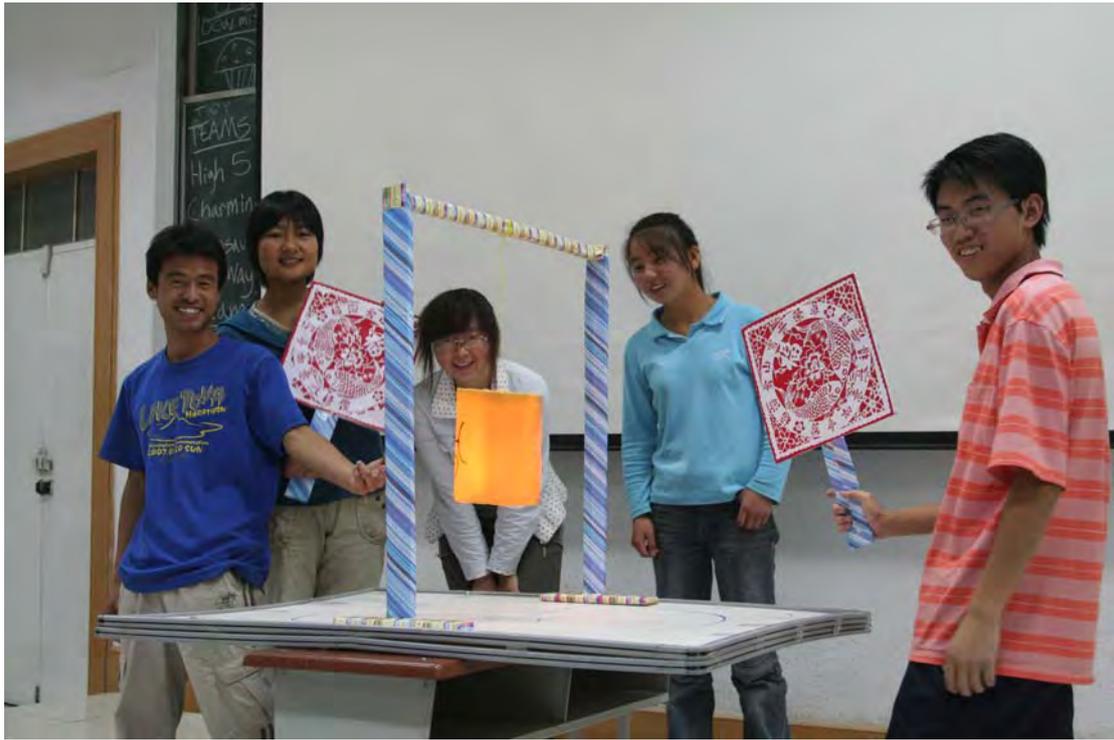
Thursday: No lecture

We decided not to hold lecture, instead giving the students time to work on their projects and presentations in the morning and afternoon.

Friday: Toy Presentations

Presentations began pretty late because some students did not bring their toys, thinking that presentations would be in the afternoon. Milky Way presented their board game “Travelling China” in which Superman and Spiderman move down the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers while players answer trivia about China. Dinosaur presented their game in which a motorized spinner stops and points to different zodiac animals. The player with the largest animal asks a question based on a category chosen from a box of bamboo sticks. He will either gain or lose points based on whether the other player answers correctly. Charming presented two ideas. The first is a card game which helps players learn the order of the animals in the Chinese zodiac, and has suites of paper cut, calligraphy, animal with Chinese character, and fun cartoon drawings. The second idea was a “Chinese Rubik’s Cube,” in which connected wooden cubes are rotated and manipulated to make different Chinese characters. In the afternoon, High 5 presented their game “Kong Ming Fan” in which a swinging, Chinese, paper lantern with candle inside is blown by opposing players’ fans (with paper cut decorations). If the lantern stays on the opponent’s side for more than 3 seconds, that player will win a point. If the candle is blown out, the player loses a point. Dream presented “Take a Stroll,” a game in which the player tilts a platform with a maze, trying to move a marble to different provinces in China. Overall, the presentations were very good, and the projects were a lot of fun to play with. After presentations, the students were allowed to play with the toys their classmates made, and Tess and Stephen played with all of them as well.







Culture

Monday: Introductions, class descriptions

The first day started off with lots of technical difficulties. First, our original classroom's projector screen would not rise, so they moved everyone upstairs to a similar classroom. Next, the computer in that classroom was really slow and did not recognize Stephen's USB key, on which we had all our lecture materials. To remedy this, the computer stall switched our computer with the one from the neighboring

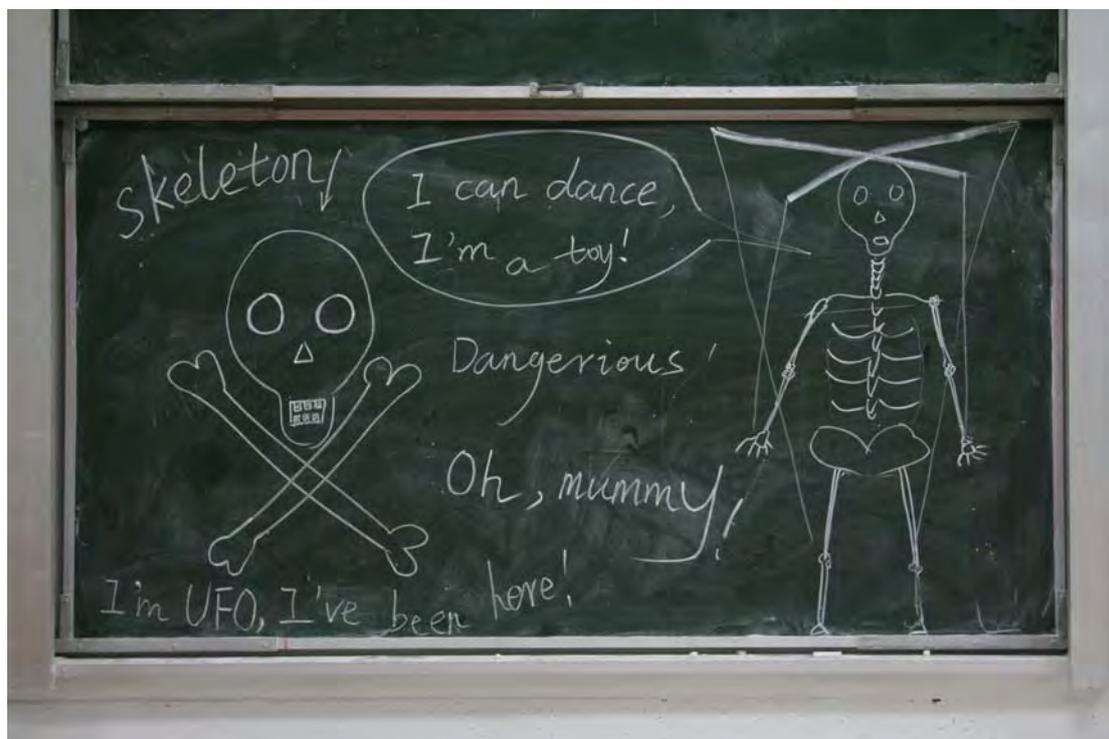
classroom, which worked better. Meanwhile, Mr. Levin was taking attendance, and we were about 30 minutes late starting things.

When things settled down, we introduced ourselves and gave a general overview of our program, including the schedule and short summaries of the science classes. Next, Stephen presented the first half of the first Toy Design lecture to clarify and illustrate what would be taught in that class. Itamar also expanded his description of the Physics and Math class by doing a quick blackboard demonstration of the power of dimensional analysis, one of the topics he intended to cover.

We decided to give students until the following morning to decide which class they wanted to take, so Mr. Levin translated our introductions (we think) and told the students about this. By this time it was already around noon, so we told them that there would be no afternoon class and ended the day.

Tuesday: MIT culture

We started by going over the powerpoint presentation from James, then we broke down into groups so that people could ask questions and we could encourage them to talk about their university experience more specifically. Students seemed rather shy, and definitely more interested in hearing from us than sharing about their time.



Wednesday: Hand gestures

Stephen delivered his American Hand gestures powerpoint lecture. Each slide shows the name and an image of someone performing each gesture, which include both common things such as the handshake, pat on the back, or high-five, and more

specific (and less common) gestures such as ‘talk to the hand,’ the Bloods gang sign, and the chest bump. The students were happy to perform the gestures in their seat, and were genuinely amused by Stephen and Itamar’s explanatory demonstrations. After the lecture, Stephen would pick two students out of the class to come to the front of the room and perform a short sketch demonstrating an assigned gesture. Since students are usually shy about this, we usually gave them 30 seconds to prepare a few lines. Depending on the students and the gesture, this was hilarious or just confusing.



Thursday: Friendship and dating

Stephen also led this class, for which he prepared a powerpoint presentations. This presentation included characteristics of Americans which are relevant to friendship and dating (‘friendliness,’ independence, punctuality...), typical American dating etiquette (who pays for the bill, asking people out...), as well as pick-up lines and brief descriptions of some less common forms of dating, such as blind dates and speed dating. Students also seemed to like this presentations, probably because of the awkward nature of the topic in China and curiosity about the differences in dating habits.

Friday: Debate I

Our three topics were:

1. Should Chinese students we allowed to date in high school?
2. Is the college entrance exam a good thing?
3. Is fast-paced development in China a good thing?

The class was divided into 6 groups, and each group was assigned one side of one of these topics. They had 10 minutes to prepare, after which we reconvened to listed to

each topic debate, which lasted about 6 minutes. Debating groups were asked to come to the front of the class and stand in 2 lines facing each other. Each group was given 2 minutes to present an opening statement, after which they were allowed to more casually respond to each other's arguments. Most groups seemed rather well prepared, and the competitive nature of the activity prompted some usually-shy students to speak up more and even interrupt each other.





Monday: Resume workshop

For this we prepared a very basic powerpoint based on a presentation found on the MIT Career Office website. We also passed out two example resumes. Itamar led this lecture, which covered the general purpose of a resume as well as tips on content, format, and style. While the students had no issue with content and format, explaining the nuances of different verb tenses was a little difficult. Students were not very animated during this lecture, but they still seemed to find it useful. We are not sure of its relevance for our group of students, since they are mostly first and second year students, who are not really thinking of going abroad anytime soon.

Tuesday: Slang I

We did not have a presentation, but we made a handout with a list of 85 words and their 'definitions.' This list (see Appendix) includes common words such as 'chill' and 'ripoff,' as well as some more niche words like 'badonkadonk' and 'propz.' Itamar also snuck in a couple Hebrew words for the fun of it (chutzpah and meshuggah). Stephen presented most of the words, with Itamar and Tess presenting additional examples and clarifications, especially when Stephen got carried away in his excitement. We only got through 62 words and decided to finish the presentation and also do a slang activity the next day.

Wednesday: Slang II

We finished presenting words on the list, then split the students into three groups for the activity. Students were supposed to collectively make a story incorporating words from the list. We stood in circles, and each student sequentially added one sentence to the story using one word from the list (in order). Most students struggled

with this mainly because they were shy and afraid to contribute; occasionally students would also misinterpret the words, use their ‘proper’ definitions, or use them in an inappropriate context. Despite this, students found the activity funny and were curious about learning slang words. We made sure to clarify that these words are slang and should not be used in formal contexts or even informal contexts with older people.

Thursday: Debate II

(see Debate I)

Our topics this time were:

1. Should dorms at Qinghai University be co-ed?
2. Should Chinese children have to learn English?

Friday: American social groups

We created a lecture with images of different cultural groups in the US and for each slide explained to our students the general stereotypes of that group. We made it clear that these were stereotypes, not accurate images or descriptions of the US populations. These included preps, nerds/geeks/dorks, jocks, theater kids, punks, rednecks, hipsters, mean girls, gangsters, band geeks, AZNs, FOBs, and others.

Summary of Culture Activities

Activity	Description	Response
MIT culture	Presentation and group discussions	Mild
Hand gestures	Presentation and demonstrations activity	Great
Friendship and dating	Presentation	Good
Debate	Group activity and public debate	Good
Resume workshop	Presentation	Mild
Slang	Presentation and story-making activity	Ok
American cultural groups	presentation	Good