

World Cup Fever!



Flag of Brazil - 2014 World Cup Host

NPR reporter Jason Beaubien sums up soccer this way. "Soccer touches some universal chord. It's a simple sport that transcends language that spans the world in a way that very few other human activities have."

The World Cup takes place every 4 years. The first World Cup was held in 1930 in Uruguay and consisted of 13 teams, all of which were invited to participate. The current format consists of a 32-team final tournament involving almost 200 teams from around the world. Soccer's global governing body, FIFA, estimates that 3.2 billion people, which is roughly half the world's population, tuned in at some point to watch the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. The audience for this year's World Cup in **Brazil** is expected to be even larger. This year's top contenders are returning champions, Spain, along with Argentina, Germany and host nation, Brazil. Tune in to find out who will come out on top!

Our ESL program at Reynolds has had a number of soccer superstars over the years. Current student, **Abdoulaye Fall**, of Senegal is one such player and is featured here.



Abdoulaye Fall

Soccer player, **Abdoulaye Fall**, hails from **Senegal, West Africa**. He started to play soccer at age 5, noting that an early start is critical in developing the skills to become a soccer star. Abdoulaye explained that soccer provides an easy opportunity to play since no fancy equipment is needed. As a result, soccer is popular all over the world. Abdoulaye was invited to play on one of the national teams when coaches saw him playing in a city tournament. His father was reluctant to support his participation at this time because there was no insurance or liability for players, but he allowed Abdoulaye to join under one condition – that he do well in school and show his father his good grades. Abdoulaye played on a senior team for about 6 years until he injured his knee and had to stop. His involvement in soccer did not end there, however. During holidays when many kids had nothing to do, Abdoulaye brought soccer balls to the field in the morning and played with the kids. The number of kids who joined Abdoulaye's group grew steadily. Finally, Abdoulaye got formal training to become a coach. Some of the players he coached over the years now play in the premiere league in France! When Abdoulaye won the green card lottery and came to the U.S., he volunteered to coach recreational soccer for the Richmond Kickers and worked with the U12 girls. Time and family responsibilities have gotten in the way of his local involvement in soccer, but he would like to return to it someday.

In 2002, Senegal reached the quarter final in the World Cup, but this year they did not make it, being ousted by rival Ivory Coast. Of the 5 African countries participating this year (Algeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria), Abdoulaye is rooting for Nigeria since it's a solid team with a good coach.

When asked what he would like others to know about his country, Abdoulaye said he would like people to understand that Africa is a continent, not a country, and that while safety is an issue in some African countries, that is not the case in most parts of West Africa. He said that the Senegalese people are very welcoming and people would not think twice about inviting you to stay in their house as a guest. He misses drinking tea together with friends in the summer as this is a time when people spend 1 or 2 hours together talking and socializing.

Sources

<http://www.npr.org/2014/06/08/318535258/the-world-cup-reminds-us-that-all-the-worlds-a-soccer-field>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_FIFA_World_Cup



The faces of ESL

Our ESL student population continues to bring a wealth of diversity to our college. To give you a better picture of this diversity, just look at the make-up of some of our summer classes. In one class of 18 students, 16 countries and 17 languages (some students speak more than one “first” language) are represented. In another class of 18 students, 16 countries and 9 languages are represented. In the 5 ESL classes offered this summer, we have students from 35 countries. You might be surprised to learn that in one of our classes, French, not Spanish or Arabic, is the predominant language! In recent years, we have had growing numbers of Arabic speakers from a variety of countries, along with French speakers, mostly hailing from African nations. The largest refugee group at this time is from Burma, currently known as Myanmar.

Tips for working with non-native speakers

If you’ve ever traveled to another country, you may have experienced what it is like to try to communicate with others, even if you have studied the language of that country. If you have been in that situation, you can probably also recall how much you appreciated people who were patient with you and who made you feel welcome and how uncomfortable you felt with those who were not so helpful and friendly. Here are some simple tips that can go far in building positive relationships with non-native speaking students.

1. **Make students feel welcome.** Smiles, gestures, head nods all indicate to hesitant students that you want them to succeed. Even though some students come from countries where direct eye contact is considered disrespectful, *most* students understand that this is common practice here. Not making eye contact may be interpreted as disinterest on your part.

In the classroom, invite students to tell you a little bit about where they are from but split the difference between over-recognizing the “otherness” of your non-native speakers, especially in the classroom setting.

“In other parts of the world, isn’t that right, Akram? people may assume all police officers accept bribes.”

...and not acknowledging possible cultural differences at all...

*“Of course, **all** 18 year olds are eager to leave home and live an independent life, as far from family as possible.”*

It is also important not to assume that an individual student is an expert on everything about their country. Asking students to share their knowledge with the class can be somewhat intimidating.

2. **Recognize that some non-native students will arrive with a deficit of knowledge about U.S. body language.**

Examples: head hung down & inability to meet your gaze might mean a student is honoring you by not making direct eye contact. A head wag, left-to-right, in some countries means “yes” while a head nod, up-and-down, means “no.” Some students won’t feel comfortable being physically close to you for any reason, even when you ask a student to come to your desk so you can point out an example on a test paper, etc. Other students will seem to invade your personal space, causing you to feel the need to back up.

3. **Be patient and be conscious of your volume, your vocabulary and your speaking speed.**

Use synonyms. It is not helpful to repeat the same phrase over & over again, louder. If a non-native speaker doesn’t seem to know the word “exponential,” try “increasingly large” instead.

Use a different part of speech. Maybe a student hasn’t heard “repetitive” but does know “repeat.”

Provide written support.

In advising situations, writing key words down or having some examples of common forms used can be helpful.

In the classroom, consider supporting your lectures or activities with a Power Point presentation containing key terms written out, or at the least, write troublesome words on the whiteboard.

Some sounds are particularly hard for non-native English speakers to distinguish. If you’re getting blank looks from non-native speakers, be aware that the sounds for t/d, f/v or p/b are really very similar!

Beware of using idiomatic language and slang. If non-native students haven’t heard a slang or idiomatic expression before, their brains will be working desperately to decode that one expression and thus they may not understand any other content you say afterwards. It is fine to use idioms or slang as long as you “define” each expression during your lesson.

Remember that just treating people as you like to be treated goes a long way!