

## **APPENDIX G: CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR LEARNING ABOUT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

### **Food**

1. How many meals a day do people usually eat in your country?
2. What would you eat and drink at each of these meals?
3. Where do you get most of your food?
4. What would you say is the favorite vegetable? Meat? Fish? Dessert?
5. What food would you serve a favorite guest?
6. Is your country famous for a special crop?
7. Please explain how to make one of your favorite meals.

### **Shelter**

1. Please describe what a typical home looks like in your country.
2. How many rooms does the average apartment or home have?
3. What furniture is inside a typical house in your country?
4. Are any homes air-conditioned or heated?
5. Are the walls painted, or is wallpaper used?

### **Clothing**

1. What do young children wear to school in your country?
2. What kinds of clothes do men and women wear to work?
3. What kinds of clothes do men and women wear to a party?
4. Is there special clothing to sleep in?
5. Do fashions change frequently?

### **Transportation**

1. Do many people walk to work or school, or do they use bicycles or other forms of transportation?
2. Do many people own automobiles?
3. How much money does a taxicab driver charge in your country? What are the tipping customs?

### **Cultural Values**

1. Is certain behavior allowed at home but not in public?
2. How are people punished for disobeying the law?
3. What's considered the most serious crime a person can commit?
4. Do high school students have religious education at school?
5. What is the attitude in your country toward the death penalty?

## Schools

1. Do you have a special preparatory school for university in your country?
2. How many classes a week do high school students have?
3. Is it difficult for high school graduates to find a job?
4. What status do college students have in the society?
5. Are there any differences in the quality of education between a public and a private school?

## Attitudes Toward Animals

1. Do families keep dogs or cats as pets in their homes?
2. Would you see an aquarium in some homes?
3. What is done for sick animals?
4. What wild animals are in your country?
5. What animals are useful?

## Social Structure

1. What is the size of an average family?
2. Do grandparents live in the same house?
3. What are the responsibilities of each member of the family?
4. Do married women work outside the home?
5. Who takes care of the children?
6. Is it customary for the family to gather around the dinner table and talk?
7. Do the children often fight among themselves?
8. How do people feel about divorce?
9. What is the acceptable way of meeting someone to marry?
10. When does a child leave home to be on his or her own?

## Children

1. How do parents decide on a name for their baby?
2. Do children have a certain share in work at home?
3. Do children start school at an early age?
4. Do boys and girls have the same education? Do they go to the same schools?
5. Where do children play?
6. Do children have a favorite game they like to play?
7. How are children expected to behave with adults?
8. Are parents strict in disciplining their children?
9. Who punishes children—the mother or father or both?
10. Please tell me a favorite story children know.
11. What songs did you learn at an early age?

## Social Groups

1. Do people of different social groups live in different neighborhoods?
2. How is prejudice against minority groups shown in your country?
3. How strong are class distinctions?
4. Do people speak different languages in different parts of your country?
5. Do women often visit local beauty salons?
6. Do children wear uniforms in your schools?
7. What is the most common religion in your country?
8. Do people discuss religion a lot?

## Leisure-Time Activities

1. Do you like American films? Which ones?
2. What types of movies do you like?
3. Who are your favorite actors or actresses?
4. What movies have you seen in your country?
5. What kind of music do you listen to?
6. Do you like American music?
7. Do you have a radio? A TV? Do you play music recordings?
8. Do most cities have libraries? Are they free?
9. What kinds of books do you read?
10. Do special community centers provide sports activities?
11. Are volunteer activities available? What are some common forms of charity?
12. What do university students do in their leisure time?
13. Do families share activities outside the home? What are these activities?
14. Are there many museums open to the public?

## Language Formulas and Gestures

1. How would you introduce me to your family?
2. Would I be expected to shake hands?
3. What would be the polite way for me to leave after a social evening at your home?
4. Would I be expected to bring a gift?
5. What do people say and do after they are introduced?
6. What do you say to another person when you see him or her in the morning? Evening?

## Holidays and Celebrations

1. Is one day a week set aside as a day of rest in your country?
2. What special holidays do you celebrate in your country?
3. How do you celebrate them?
4. Describe a marriage ceremony in your country. Describe a funeral.

## Community Units

1. Do most of the people in your country live in cities, small towns, or farms? Describe them.
2. Are there many factories in the cities?
3. What products are produced?

This list came originally from Dr. V. F. Allen, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. You can adapt it to fit your students.