

Memorable Teaching Moments at Florida Atlantic University

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In 1985 during a study abroad course that I was teaching in Madrid, which was made up of graduate and undergraduate students, I was explaining that we were not only going to be studying the material in the course syllabus, but we would also be experiencing the Spanish culture in depth. As part of that experience we would be going to a “tapas bar” in the center of Madrid for a night out. One hand went up and the student asked, “Did you say that we were going to visit a topless bar in Madrid?” I smiled and carefully explained the difference.

On an official trip to China in 1994, I was invited to a state dinner of approximately 300 dignitaries by the faculty of the University of Nanjing. After dessert, several members of the faculty stood and sang a traditional Chinese song in front of the group as after-dinner entertainment. Then the host turned to me and asked me, as an honored guest, to sing a song in front of everyone. My mind was racing trying to figure out what I should sing when I sort of remembered the words to “This Land is Your Land” by John Denver. After I sang the first few lines, the entire Chinese audience joined in singing the words...and we completed the song together, to my great relief.

Two years before I retired from Florida Atlantic University in 2008, I was discussing the importance of historical context in an undergraduate management class when I innocently asked the class if anyone remembered where they were when John F. Kennedy was assassinated. A coed raised her hand and asked, “Dr. G., were you alive when Kennedy was shot?” A little shaken but not stirred, I answered, “Yes, I was...I said, John F. Kennedy, not Abraham Lincoln.”