**Peru**

**COUNTRY OVERVIEW**
CAPITAL: Lima
POPULATION: 28,302,603
ETHNIC GROUPS: Amerindian (45%), Mestizo (37%), Caucasian (15%), African American, Japanese, Chinese, and other (3%); Quechua and the Aymara make up the majority of Peru’s population
LOCATION: Western South America, bordering the Pacific Ocean; borders Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil
CLIMATE: Tropical to the east, and dry desert to the west; conditions vary from temperate to frigid in the Andes
RELIGIONS: Roman Catholic (90%), Other (10%)
LANGUAGES: Predominantly Spanish with Quechua, the native Peruvian language; Aymara and some minor Amazonian languages are spoken as well

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**
TEACHING STYLES – Many teachers are unmotivated to adapt their teaching materials or behaviors to meet the sociocultural needs of their students, but others will balance traditional methods with more interactive practices that engage the student in active learning. There is a significant difference in teaching method between teachers in private versus public schools. Whereas public school teachers may encourage students to focus on regurgitation of information, private school teachers are more likely to develop and reward analysis and discovery.

LEARNING STYLES – Traditional Quechua culture focuses on risk-taking as acceptable and encouraged. Students from these cultures may be reserved, shy and nervous, and may benefit from support and programs that boost their self-esteem and self-assurance. Teamwork is appreciated by many Peruvians with the goal of obtaining the best possible results through a combined effort.

INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING – Class size is decreasing due to a surplus of teachers and lower student enrollments. Classroom sizes of 40-50 students, especially in the urban public schools, are not uncommon. Private school class sizes hover around 25-30 and sections are often designated for accelerated versus mainstream students.

DISCIPLINE AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT – Teachers typically have little time to discipline students due to their large class sizes. Therefore, speaking with a child’s parents or giving a poor grade may be the only repercussion for student misconduct.

EDUCATOR-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP – Teacher and student relationships tend to be very friendly, but when there are larger classroom sizes it can be difficult to form genuine relationships with all the students. At the elementary level, students regard their teachers as nurturers and may give the teacher a kiss upon entering the classroom.

STUDENT-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS – Some competitiveness in schoolwork exists, with a handful of students vying for first place achievement. It is common for students to study for exams together and many will meet up after school to complete homework assignments, dividing and sharing the work.

POLITE/IMPOLITE TOPICS/BEHAVIORS – Peruvians generally welcome conversations about their historic and rich culture, as well as learning about the cultures of each other. They are also fond of talking about politics. Personal issues may be discussed, sometimes even when introduced to a new person.

**All information from the “CIA World Factbook” and “Understanding Your International Students: An Educational, Cultural, and Linguistic Guide” (October, 2010)**