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Introduction

According to the United States Immigration and Customs Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, there were 966,333 international students enrolled in universities and vocational schools across the country as of July 2014, with another 232,988 students studying here via exchange programs. The number of international students in the U.S. has grown steadily over the last few years and is only projected to increase. As curriculum theorist Yangyi Kwon notes, “International students provide not only cultural diversity but also a new revenue stream from abroad,” which is very beneficial to schools here in the U.S, but also brings a unique set of challenges (Kwon 52). While the presence of international students helps to financially support U.S. educational institutions and enrich social and classroom settings by diversifying the student population, there is also an expectation that “universities should be aware of the factors that contribute to the successful adjustment and academic progress of these international students” in order to ensure that they are able to adapt to college life and learn right along with their American peers (Kwon 52). For a school like UW-Barron County, with a small but growing international and immigrant student population, this means examining both current practices, to find places for improvement, and recognizing the challenges that these students face while adjusting to life in U.S. higher education culture.

As part of my Senior Capstone Project, I have compiled this resource book to highlight some of the major challenges that international, immigrant, and ESL students encounter upon entering academic residency in the U.S, as well as some of the best practices to use for accommodating international students within a mainstream classroom. It is my hope that instructors will find the information contained within helpful, as UW-Barron County’s international and ESL student programs continue to expand.

Sarah Dodge, August 2015
Works Cited


In the past, I could assume that all or most of my students shared certain kinds of understandings or experiences. With classrooms increasingly made up of students from other countries, or from ethnically-identified subgroups within the U.S., I can no longer make any assumptions at all. This is a disconcerting realization for an instructor.

-- Carnegie Mellon faculty member

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As of 2005, there were over two thousand graduate and undergraduate international students at Carnegie Mellon, representing a broad range of cultural and educational backgrounds. This cultural diversity is an exciting development with tremendous pedagogical potential, but it also poses real and significant challenges to faculty.

This document was created in response to faculty requests for information and advice concerning teaching in an increasingly multi-cultural setting, and it is organized around issues raised by faculty themselves in a series of discussions conducted over the past several years. The information and suggestions presented here draw on the perceptions and experiences of Carnegie Mellon students and faculty, the combined experiences of the Intercultural Communication Center and the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, and current educational research.

Because it would be impossible to exhaustively catalog cultural variations or offer simple how-to solutions for what are complex issues, the intention of this document is to:

- raise awareness about the types of challenges international students face;
- provide examples of the kinds of issues that may affect students in your courses; and
- offer suggestions based on strategies members of our own faculty have successfully employed.

Although this document does not specifically address the challenges international faculty encounter in adjusting to U.S. educational expectations, the sections below may nonetheless illuminate some of the cultural issues involved, and help international faculty calibrate to a U.S. university.

We begin by addressing several background issues that may shape an international student’s vision of higher education. We then discuss a number of cultural variations that can have a profound impact on teaching and learning. Finally, we present suggestions for addressing these issues, gathered from faculty across the university.

Several things bear mentioning before we proceed. First, many international students are from the same ethnic background as students born and/or raised...
How “international” are Carnegie Mellon students?

- U.S. News and World Report lists CMU as the 7th most international U.S. university (2003-2004)
- 12.5% of the 2004 incoming class of freshmen were from outside the U.S.; 80% of these students were from Asia
- 47% of full-time masters and PhD students in 2004 were from outside the U.S.; 74% of these students were from Asia
- In addition to international students, CMU has a large population of permanent residents, aka “green card holders”: students born outside the U.S., who are in the process of establishing their permanent, legal residence in the U.S.
- The top 4 countries represented among our international students (graduate and undergraduate combined) are, in descending order: India, China, South Korea, and Taiwan

What is the ethnic make-up of our domestic students?

- 23% of CMU students who are U.S. citizens self-identify as Asian/Pacific Islander
- 5% self-identify as Black; 5% Hispanic; 42% White; 25% unidentified or other

Source: Carnegie Mellon Factbook, 2005

in the U.S. Thus, it may not be initially apparent which students are domestic vs. international, and assumptions based on physical characteristics or clothing styles may prove to be wrong. Second, among students born or raised outside the U.S., there is tremendous variation in English proficiency and familiarity with U.S. educational and cultural conventions: Some students have excellent conversational English but struggle with reading and writing; others may find casual conversation more difficult than formal English. Some students have spent considerable time studying in the U.S. before beginning college while others are studying here for the first time. Because international students do not all encounter the same challenges or respond to them in the same way, assumptions about one student based on experiences with other students can be wrong.

The same, however, can be said of U.S. students, who also come from highly disparate cultural and educational backgrounds. A student born and raised in the rural deep South is likely to have a very different set of cultural expectations than a student born and raised in San Francisco’s China Town, whose experiences and perspective may differ from those of a student from a mid-western suburb. Thus, appreciating and addressing cultural diversity in the classroom goes beyond meeting the needs of international students by creating a more dynamic and productive learning environment for all students, and a more rewarding teaching experience for faculty.
Recognizing that each international student’s experience is different, this section presents four background issues that shape students’ perception of their college education in the U.S. and thus can have a profound impact on their thinking and behavior.

**Decisions about Education**

For the most part, U.S. students actively participate in decisions about which college they will attend and what their major will be. These decisions are generally made with an eye toward the student’s interests and desires, although parents can exert considerable influence and financial considerations can also be determinative.

It is common in some other countries, however, for college and major to be determined by parents or family with considerably less—or no—input from the student, and with no expectation on the part of students that they should have input. In some countries, moreover, exam scores often determine academic options and choices, sometimes as early as age 13.

Thus, in some cases, international students feel pulled between their own desires and their family’s expectations, or between the expectations of two different cultural systems, one which may emphasize self-fulfillment and the other family responsibility. Furthermore, students may end up in a major for which they have little interest or aptitude.

Because of their experience with how U.S. students make decisions about their education, faculty may assume that all students have the same motivations or choices. They may, for example, not understand why one student persists in a major she does not seem to like, or why another refuses to major in a subject he clearly prefers.

**Financing A College Education**

In the U.S., undergraduate students and/or their parents are generally responsible for financing college, although government aid is also sometimes available to students (both U.S. students and permanent legal residents) in the form of grants, loans, and work-study. Paying for college undoubtedly creates stress for U.S. families; however, government resources provide a safety net for families...

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I loved my history courses, and really wanted to major in history, but there’s no way I could. Everyone in my family wants me to study engineering. It would be very hard for me to go back to India if I didn’t major in engineering.

-- Indian undergraduate student
whose financial circumstances change suddenly for the worse. Moreover, while families often accrue debt and make sacrifices to pay college tuition, there is a pervasive cultural sense (variable somewhat by community and ethnicity) that college is something students do for themselves, not for others; in other words, their success or failure is their own and does not necessarily reflect on their family or community.

Financial arrangements for international students vary widely. Some governments finance students to study in the U.S., but may impose strict grade stipulations and/or an obligation to repay the government with years of service after graduation. In other cases, parents may sacrifice everything to pay for a U.S. education, or may finance the education on a trial basis on the condition that students must return home if their grades do not stay above a specified level. In some cases, the academic success or failure of an individual student has social and economic implications for the entire family. Moreover, families that finance their children’s education out of pocket cannot rely on U.S. government assistance if their financial circumstances suddenly worsen. Both these factors can increase the anxiety students and their families experience.

As the result of their funding arrangements and/or family circumstances, international students may view their educational responsibility somewhat differently than domestic students. Some may view themselves more as employees working to fulfill a serious obligation to their government or employer than as consumers who may take or leave aspects of the education as they see fit. Others may feel intense pressure to succeed, and thus fight for every possible grade point to satisfy the very real demands of a sponsor, government or family.

**Transition from High School**

In the U.S., it is common for freshmen to find the intellectual demands and workload in college considerably greater than anything they encountered in high school. They often spend a period of time grappling with a difficult adjustment, and must develop strategies for managing time and setting priorities.

However, in some other countries, preparation for college entrance exams may be so rigorous and demanding that students learn early the kinds of disciplined work habits that many U.S. students struggle to acquire in college. While in some ways this may prepare them well for life at CMU, there is a flip
side: having pushed hard to gain admittance to a top-notch university, some students may come to college assuming that the pressure is behind them. They may even believe that it is impossible to fail at the college level. These students may be surprised to find a heavier workload and more academic pressure than they had anticipated.

**Breadth of Study**

There is an emphasis in the U.S. educational system on exposing students to a wide range of subjects and developing skills in diverse areas. Thus, achievement is measured in a variety of ways, and participation in a range of activities is rewarded. For example, admission into college or university is based on a combination of factors, including grades, SAT or ACT scores, interviews, recommendations, extra-curricular activities, work experience and essays. After arriving at college, moreover, most students are required to take a certain number of “general education” courses outside their major. At Carnegie Mellon, where multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity are encouraged, students may have even more exposure to subjects outside their major.

In contrast, the emphasis in some other countries is on gaining expertise in a focused area. College admission may be determined solely by a score on a national or university exam, and college students can expect to take courses only in their major, which they may begin to focus on as early as high school.

International students coming to CMU, therefore, may not understand why they must study subjects outside their major field. Furthermore, while they may have sophisticated abilities in their own field, they may lack skills and confidence outside that field. Finally, international students may expect their U.S. classmates to have the same academic focus and baseline knowledge in their major areas as would classmates in their home countries. They may be dismayed to find that this is not always the case.

We often avoid classes outside our academic majors, which are mostly in technical fields. In fact, we frequently complain about all those humanities requirements that we have to fulfill.

-- Thai undergraduate student

The most surprising thing for me is that the math and science abilities of U.S. undergraduates are very diverse. A few undergraduates learned advanced math, physics and computers during their high school years. But most students have inadequate training for scientific classes.

-- Chinese teaching assistant

It’s interesting to me how surprised many international TAs are when they learn that U.S. high school students applying to universities are expected to have a broad range of experience that includes jobs (both volunteer and paid), participation in clubs, sports, and other extracurricular activities.

-- ICC staff member
In this section, we juxtapose mainstream U.S. educational norms with those of some of the cultures represented within our student population, examining a number of specific cultural variations that can influence student (and faculty) perceptions and behaviors in and outside the classroom. We believe that by appreciating the extent and nature of these differences, faculty can better understand the challenges that they and their students face, and thus provide more effective instruction.

Classroom Culture

U.S. Educational System

- In U.S. classrooms, the professor’s role is not only that of the expert, but also that of a coach, facilitator and discussion leader.
- Students are generally expected to ask questions, indicate areas of confusion, and ask for examples to support their understanding. In some cases, students are encouraged to debate their peers, challenge their professors’ ideas, etc.
- Traditionally, there has been a stronger emphasis in U.S. education on individual performance than on group work. Generally speaking, competitiveness, assertiveness, and outspokenness are encouraged in U.S. classrooms.
- U.S. classrooms are often informal: students do not rise when the professor enters the room; students are often encouraged to address the professor by first name; students sometimes bring drinks or food to class, etc.
- While there are some general norms for classroom behavior across the U.S. (for example, students usually know to come in to the classroom and take a seat), classroom cultures are highly variable, depending on the teaching style of individual faculty members. Some instructors insist on a high degree of formality; others are very casual. Thus, U.S. students do not expect uniformity across classrooms, and learn to adapt to different instructional styles.
- American secondary schools are generally co-ed, so men and women usually have had ample opportunity to interact in an academic setting before coming to college.
Cultural Variations

Classroom Culture
Possible Cultural Variations and their Implications

• In many countries, the professor’s role is to impart expert knowledge and the student’s role is to absorb it. Within these systems it would seem presumptuous for a novice to challenge an expert. Thus, international students may be reluctant to question a professor or to argue against a published opinion.

• In some cultures, students are expected to maintain a respectful silence in class. They may not be accustomed to asking professors for clarification or elaboration, and may view such behavior either as disrespectful to the professor or personally embarrassing. When international students do not volunteer questions, faculty may assume that they understand material that, in fact, they do not. When international students do not volunteer answers, faculty may assume that they do not understand material that, in fact, they do.

• In some cultures, group dynamics are developed in a more systematic and sustained manner than in the U.S., with greater value placed on interdependence and collaboration than on individual performance. Students may find the teamwork skills of their U.S. counterparts rudimentary, or simply have a different set of expectations for how groups should operate. Students from some countries may, moreover, think certain forms of collaboration are acceptable which might be construed as cheating in the U.S.

• In many other cultures, classrooms are much more formal: students rise when the professor enters the room, address their professors by titles, and follow stricter standards of behavior. International students may thus interpret the behavior of U.S. students to mean that they lack respect for their professors or are not serious about their educations. This perception may cause international students to lose respect for their professors and/or peers.

• In many educational systems, young men and women are separated. Consequently, mixed-gender pair work or group work may be a new experience for some international students, who may initially feel embarrassed and self-conscious.

In my country, students learn one way: from teacher to student. In the U.S., students learn many ways. And teachers encourage students to learn with discussions, asking questions whenever you have them, and so on.

— Korean undergraduate student

In my country, there is a hierarchic relationship between teachers and students. Students must pay absolute respect to teachers. For instance, a student can’t interrupt the teacher asking questions.

— Chinese teaching assistant
Class Discussions

U.S. Educational System

- Most U.S. students have had experience with class discussions in high school. Thus, they are at least somewhat familiar with the discussion conventions (e.g. debate formats, small group work, etiquette regarding turn-taking, expectations for preparation and participation) that they will encounter in college classes.

- In the U.S., discussion classes, labs, studios and projects are valued as important parts of the learning process along with lectures, and students are expected to learn from one another as well as from the instructor.

Class Discussions

Possible Cultural Variations and their Implications

- Lectures are the standard mode of instruction in many cultures, and discussions may not have a place in the classroom. Thus, some international students may not see the benefit of discussions or group work, believing they cannot learn anything substantive from their peers. They may get frustrated and wonder why (as they see it) the teacher is not teaching. They may also not have learned the skills necessary for participating in discussions or debates, and may only feel comfortable participating in class when they can answer questions that require direct recall of what they have read or learned. When international students are quiet during discussions, faculty may assume that they are not interested or have not done the assigned reading.

- Even in cultures where discussions are a standard classroom activity, the unwritten rules for discussion may be very different than in the U.S. For example, in one culture, it might be acceptable to interrupt or talk more loudly to gain control of the conversation; in another, it may be considered polite to allow a short silence following any individual’s contribution; in another, students might expect to be called upon before offering their opinion. International students may, consequently, find the U.S. discussion conventions confusing or frustrating, and have difficulty entering in in a culturally appropriate way. While students from cultures with a less aggressive approach to discussion may get left
out altogether, students from cultures which encourage more aggressive classroom debate may be perceived as disruptive or rude to their U.S. professors and peers.

• For some international students, the formal English of lectures and writing is more familiar and easier to follow than the colloquial English of classroom discussions. Discussions also require students to adjust to the speaking styles and intonations of numerous people, not just the instructor. U.S. students may also casually reference cultural phenomena that are unfamiliar to international students. These factors may make it difficult for international students to follow the train of thought, and thus to join in.

Reading and Library Research

U.S. Educational System
• In an academic setting, students read under intense time constraints and are often synthesizing information from various sources. To get through a heavy reading load, students are taught that skimming readings is acceptable, at least some of the time. They are also taught to quickly discern the content of a book or article by focusing on table of contents, introduction, headings and subheadings.

• Students’ comprehension of readings relies not only on their language skills but also their ability to recognize the organizational structure and conventions of written English, and the markers authors use to signal when they are challenging previous research, switching tactics, asserting a new claim, etc.

• Students’ comprehension, moreover, relies on a broad cultural knowledge: they have to recognize not only the point an author is making, but also understand the allusions, illustrations, and analogies an author employs.

• Students are generally encouraged to approach readings critically, i.e. to assess the validity of the author’s claims, evaluate the evidence used, and consider implications.

• Students usually have some experience using libraries, searching for books or articles and referencing them in papers or reports.

We find that many international students, especially those from countries where language learning tends to focus on memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules, are confused by our interactive, participatory approach to language learning. They need explicit instructions to help them accept the idea that talking, debating, and interacting in English is a valid way of learning.

-- ICC staff member
**Reading and Library Research**

Possible Cultural Variations and their Implications

- Different cultures may approach academic reading differently. For example, students may come from an academic tradition where they are responsible for every line of a reading assignment, so they read slowly and meticulously. Students who come from educational systems that hold them accountable for the minutia in readings may have difficulty assessing the relative importance of information. They may have trouble knowing when – in a U.S. class – it is appropriate to skim. This, along with language difficulties, can make it difficult for students to keep up with a heavy reading load.

- Because of unfamiliarity with English writing conventions, international students may have difficulty recognizing both the organizational structures and writing conventions that would otherwise guide their reading. This not only makes it difficult to keep up with reading, but it may lead to misunderstandings of the text.

- Students from other cultures, moreover, will not necessarily have the cultural knowledge to accurately interpret certain texts. For example, if the author uses analogies or examples that draw on unfamiliar cultural referents, the point may be lost or misconstrued.

- Students from educational systems involving lectures and final examinations might approach readings with the expectation that they are to retain the information and synthesize it at a later date. They may not read with a critical eye or engage with the reading as a U.S. student (ideally) would.

- There may be different expectations in other cultures about how much reading a student should do on his or her own to complement assigned material. For example, in some cultures, graduate students are expected not only to do the assigned readings, but also to find and read related materials on their own to broaden their knowledge and help them prepare for final exams. A student from this sort of educational system might not recognize that in a U.S. course, one is expected to do only the assigned readings, unless further reading is required for a particular assignment.
• Some international students may come from countries or regions where access to libraries is limited, and they may not know how to use reference tools. On the other hand, they may have acquired good research skills within a different kind of library or reference system, and have difficulty transferring those skills into practice here. They may, moreover, have difficulty assessing the quality of sources (judging the merits of an internet site, for example). While this is a problem for U.S. students as well, it may be compounded by weaker language skills and unfamiliarity with U.S. library resources.

Writing

U.S. Educational System
• U.S. secondary education often includes a variety of writing assignments emphasizing personal expression, such as interpretive argument, opinion pieces and creative problem-solving, for which there is no correct answer.
• U.S. students are often graded on originality or asked to assert a novel claim in their written work.
• In written work, U.S. students are taught to state their main argument or interpretation directly and up front, then go on to support it with evidence. The focus in writing is to make one’s point obvious to the reader.

Writing

Possible Cultural Variations and their Implications
• In some cultures, secondary education consists primarily of objective tasks that focus more on knowing the “right” answer than on developing or expressing an opinion. Students from such educational systems may search for the one, correct answer in assignments meant to prompt personal expression. Alternatively, they may think that if there is no right answer, all answers are equally acceptable.
• In some cultures, the role of a student is simply to transmit knowledge, not to form opinions about it. The task of writing a critique or interpretation may, therefore, be unfamiliar and difficult. Students may also hesitate to make judgments about a piece of writing if they have not explicitly been given instructions to critique the authors.

I don’t have problems speaking English, but it takes me a long time to write a paper, and I often get negative comments from teachers on my writing assignments. The ICC Writing Clinic helped me to understand that my writing problems were often because I did not organize my ideas or build an argument in the way that native English speakers do.

—Columbian undergraduate student
In other cultures, students may learn a different rhetorical style than that employed in the U.S. For example, students may be expected to begin a paper with background information and justifications and conclude with a thesis statement or argument, not the reverse. To students from such cultures, the U.S. style of discourse may seem unpersuasive because the main point is presented before a suitable groundwork has been established. When international students apply their own cultures’ rhetorical conventions to written assignments in the U.S., their writing may appear to lack a clearly delineated argument or concrete proof of a thesis. While the difficulty of constructing a clear argument and marshalling appropriate evidence is by no means limited to international students, it may be exacerbated by differences in culturally-defined discursive styles and, of course, language ability.

In some cultures, acceptable communication styles may be more direct or less direct than in the U.S. In some cultures, for example, students learn that sophisticated and subtle writing hints at a point, but leaves it to the reader to piece the ideas together. For students from cultures which value a less direct style of writing, U.S. rhetorical style can seem overly explicit, unsubtle, and even childlike. Similarly, a direct speaking style can seem impolite or unsophisticated. In written work in the U.S., international students may be perceived as “going off on tangents” or avoiding the point; this may be misinterpreted by professors as a sign that the students have unclear thought patterns or did not prepare adequately.

**Academic Integrity**

**U.S. Educational System**

- Attitudes towards cheating and plagiarism, as well as understandings of what constitutes each, appear to be in tremendous flux in the U.S. today, such that it is difficult to easily describe contemporary cultural morays concerning academic integrity.

- Individual faculty members define what are and are not acceptable forms of collaboration in the context of particular courses. For example, students may be allowed to work together on homework, but not on take-home exams. The same rules do not necessarily apply to all courses, so students must find out what each professor expects.
• Contemporary students were raised with the Internet, where information flows without a defined sense of intellectual ownership. They may or may not grasp the concept of intellectual property, understand fully what plagiarism is, or recognize why universities consider plagiarism a serious offense.

• Students’ knowledge of documentation conventions also varies. While the majority of students know at least roughly how to cite sources, quote and paraphrase, etc., others have only a vague understanding. Still others are perfectly aware of what plagiarism is but engage in it nonetheless, from using passages from published sources without attribution to buying whole papers from Internet sources.

• Students recognize many kinds of “cheating” from glancing at a classmate’s answer sheet to stealing an exam from the professor’s office, and from “borrowing” an author’s idea to buying entire papers from internet suppliers. While students may consider some forms of cheating (on a small assignment, for example) acceptable and others (e.g. cheating on a major exam or assignment) unacceptable, national research indicates that a large percentage are likely to engage in some, if not all, of these activities at some point in their college careers.

• Despite the fact that cheating of various sorts is increasingly common, most U.S. students would expect to be punished if discovered cheating and would experience some embarrassment if they were caught.

**Academic Integrity**

**Possible Cultural Variations and their Implications**

• Plagiarism may be defined very differently in other countries, especially those in which less importance is placed on the Western concept that an idea can be “owned.” For example, in some cultures, students are encouraged to memorize and use long passages from well-known experts. In fact, in systems where the deferential incorporation of accumulated wisdom is stressed over intellectual property or the generation of new ideas, using the words of experts without citing them may be more respectful and appropriate than using your own words. U.S. standards and expectations regarding plagiarism, therefore, may not be immediately evident to all students.

(continued from previous page) in other words, teachers transfer their knowledge to students, who memorize the given information. Students are hardly (or never) asked to do extensive research based on what they learned, using resources other than the class materials. Thus, it is unnecessary for students to cite documents and thus such training is also unnecessary. Instead, students’ performance is usually evaluated based on exam results. Exams often focus on the exact information from textbooks so students’ ability to memorize and reproduce exactly what was presented to them is highly valued. Little emphasis is placed on how students have internalized what they’ve learned... Given such experience prior to coming to college, many international students might experience difficulty fully digesting the magnitude of academic integrity. They might know it in theory, but they might not take it seriously.

--- Japanese faculty member
• In cultures where a strong emphasis is placed on interdependence, “helping” your classmates do well in a course may be more important than competing with them. Students may not thoroughly understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable forms of collaboration in the U.S. context. For example, they may not perceive a difference between helping a friend with homework vs. helping him with a take-home exam.

• In some cultures, where interpersonal relationships and group solidarity are emphasized over abstract principles or institutional rules, “turning in” a classmate who cheats would be considered a more serious ethical breach than the cheating itself.

• Actions that would be perceived in a U.S. context as cheating (for example, copying a friend’s correct answer) might not strike someone from another culture as inappropriate (why not learn the material via your friend?). By the same token, some practices that are widely accepted in U.S. society are viewed as illegitimate in other cultures. For example, to some international students, U.S.-style review sessions seem to verge on faculty-authorized cheating.

• In some other cultures, a certain amount of cheating on exams may be expected, particularly if students perceive those exams to be arbitrarily and impossibly difficult. In these contexts, actions that are considered cheating in the U.S. might be considered just good common sense, and may perhaps not even be described as cheating.

• Students from cultures with different orientations towards cheating and plagiarism may not realize that the sanctions for such behaviors in the U.S. are harsh, and be shocked to find themselves facing severe penalties (failure, expulsion, etc.) for actions that were considered minor in their home cultures.

• Students may lack the language proficiency to paraphrase an expert; i.e. they may find it difficult to put textual ideas “into their own words”. They may also have trouble distinguishing common phrases or idiomatic expressions (i.e. language that is not necessary to attribute to a particular source) from words or phrases that are a specific scholar’s intellectual property (and thus require attribution.)
Many U.S. college students struggle to keep up with reading and writing assignments, and may reach a point where they perceive cheating or plagiarism to be the only way to survive academically. Because international students struggle not only with workload but also with language, they may reach this point of desperation even sooner.

Seeking Help

U.S. Educational System

In the U.S., students know they can seek help from professors or TAs outside of class, and a number of them make appointments with their instructors or visit them during office hours. Meeting with professors and TAs outside of class is not reserved for students having trouble with course material. In fact, it is often stronger or more motivated students who take advantage of faculty and TA office hours.

Students generally go to faculty and TAs with questions about a particular course or field of study, but know that there is a broader support system – health and psychological services, academic development, career counseling, student affairs, etc. – for help with other kinds of issues.

Possible Cultural Variations and their Implications

In some cultures, students are more accustomed to seeking help from peers than from the professor. This may be because the student feels self-conscious approaching an authority figure, because seeking extra assistance is viewed as inappropriate “hand-holding,” or because asking for help is associated with weak or desperate students, and is thus stigmatizing. While soliciting help from peers can be helpful under some circumstances, there are times when peers are not in a position to provide helpful feedback.

Students from some cultures may have difficulty refusing a request for help from classmates, even if the request creates ethical quandaries (for example, if a classmate asks to see one’s homework.)

In some cultures, students are used to simply dropping by their professor’s office whenever they like, without an appointment, to ask questions or

In class I did not know what’s going on. All that I could do to survive here was to reduce sleeping time, read the text again and again, ask ... other students, because I could not understand what professor said in class. One course was very hard for me to follow because it was all related with speech. Words were difficult and contents needed profound concentration. I got lost easily in class. I started using the English tutoring service at ICC. I have worked hard to learn new things and build up my confidence.

— Korean graduate student
discuss their work. Students from these cultures may be frustrated to find that faculty members have limited availability or require appointments.

- Students from cultures with a fair amount of gender segregation may feel awkward meeting one-on-one with a professor of the opposite sex.
- In many other countries, the support infrastructure that is the norm on U.S. campuses does not exist, and students may expect faculty to serve some of the functions that at U.S. colleges are performed by other offices on campus. Students may, for example, approach faculty with concerns that go beyond the usual academic boundaries, including advice on medical or visa issues.

Grading

U.S. Educational System

- In the U.S. education system, grades are usually given frequently throughout a course (e.g. on quizzes, exams, papers, projects, presentations.) Thus, students generally have a rough sense of their standing in a course as the semester progresses.
- Students are graded in a variety of ways within one given institution. Students do not expect a consistent grading system, and generally try to find out in advance how a particular instructor determines and weighs grades, whether he grades on a curve, gives extra-credit and partial credit, etc. Individual professors, moreover, set their own grading standards; some, for example, may grade student writing on the basis of content alone, and not mark down for poor syntax, grammar, spelling, etc., while another professor may put a greater emphasis on the writing itself.
- Grades are only one of many factors taken into account on job and graduate school applications, so while students feel considerable grade pressure, they have other ways (GRE scores, internships and volunteer work, etc.) to compensate for suboptimal grades.
Grading

Possible Cultural Variations and their Implications

- In some cultures, students only receive grades (or scores) on a final examination or a nationally standardized qualifying exam. Because of the focus on large, cumulative evaluations, many students may not see the utility of smaller assignments. They may, for example, prepare excessively (by U.S. standards) for the final exam without paying attention to assignments and other course requirements (class participation, for example) along the way.

- Many international students come from educational systems where grading is more standardized than in the U.S. These students may assume incorrectly that what is true in one course is true in another. Whereas U.S. students also find it difficult to navigate the requirements and grading criteria used by individual professors, international students may be even more confused if they expect a uniform system.

- Ambiguity or misunderstandings about grading criteria can sometimes lead to resentment between U.S. students and international students: U.S. students may believe that international students are not held to the same standards on writing assignments, for example, while international students may think that U.S. students (because of superior facility with language) are able to fake or finesse their way through.

- For reasons of maintaining family reputation, keeping a scholarship, etc. (see Financing Education), international students may be under considerable pressure to maintain good grades. With the stakes so high, some students may feel shame and desperation if their grades are not up to par, and may do everything possible to raise them, including appealing to the professor to raise a low grade. This puts stress on and creates dilemmas for faculty.

- Negotiating for grades, moreover, is culturally appropriate in some societies, not just for desperate students but for any student hoping to score higher. It may not occur to these students that the same behavior in a U.S. context can provoke considerable faculty resentment.
As the previous sections illustrate, international students have expectations based on their own educational and cultural backgrounds that may color their experiences in U.S. classrooms. However, the sorts of issues that arise as a result – confusion over proper citation conventions, reluctance to enter into a discussion, hesitance to ask for clarification, etc. – are often problems for U.S. students as well. Thus, many of the practices that can help faculty address the needs of international students are good general practices, and ultimately address the needs of all students.

The suggestions offered here are only some of the many possible strategies for teaching in multi-cultural classrooms. Because the issues faculty confront vary by academic discipline and the cultural composition of students, we encourage you to consult with the staff of the Intercultural Communication Center and the Eberly Center to discuss specific contexts, problems, or approaches. We also encourage you to share your experiences – positive and negative – with us.

**General Advice**

As we have seen, students’ actions may be based on different cultural understandings of what constitutes appropriate student and instructor behavior. When a student is quiet during a discussion, for example, he is not necessarily unprepared or bored; he may simply be behaving according to his own culture’s standards of classroom etiquette. When a student’s writing seems vague and indirect it is not necessarily an indication that her thinking is disorganized or her effort minimal; she may be writing in a style valued in her own culture. Of course, it is also possible that the student in question is, in fact, unprepared, bored, or has not done the requisite work.

**How is a faculty member to interpret the student’s behavior or evaluate his work?**

Perhaps the first step for faculty is to avoid making inferences about students’ intelligence, work ethic, or talents based on behaviors that might simply reflect their unfamiliarity with U.S. educational conventions. In other words, it is helpful for faculty simply to be aware of cultural differences and sympathetic to the challenges students face in adjusting to them.
However, being sympathetic to and aware of cultural differences does not require faculty to lower their standards or apply a different set of performance criteria for international students than for other students. Faculty have the right – indeed the obligation – to set and maintain standards for the behaviors they expect in class (active student participation in discussion for example) and the performance they expect on assignments (e.g. a particular organizational structure in writing.) Instead of lowering or altering standards to accommodate international students, consider using the following pedagogical practices:

a. Make your expectations far more explicit than you may think is necessary.
b. Model the kinds of work you want your students to do.
c. Represent the material you are teaching in multiple ways.
d. Give students ample opportunities to practice applying the knowledge and skills you want them to acquire, and provide feedback to guide the development of new skills.
e. Provide varied opportunities for student-student and student-faculty interaction.

**Make Your Expectations Explicit**

Students enter your classroom with expectations and interpretations shaped by their own cultural conditioning. Your expectations regarding appropriate classroom behavior, faculty and student roles, good writing, etc., may not be theirs. This is a product not only of cultural differences but of variations in the teaching styles of different faculty members. Even students who are familiar with the U.S. educational system have to adapt to the differing expectations of their various professors. Thus, it is helpful to all your students to spell out as concretely and specifically as possible – on your syllabus, in class, on tests and assignments, etc. – what your expectations are in regard to issues such as the following:

**Time Allocation:**

International students may not know where to put their time and effort in a U.S. course. They may, for example, spend enormous amounts of time reading a text in minute detail and neglect to analyze it or record their own responses. They may focus intently on preparing for a final exam, but ignore homework as-
signments preceding it. It may help your students if you provide some guidance as to how to use their time effectively. You may, for example, want to:

- Provide a percentage breakdown of the graded components of your course (e.g. assignments 5% each; midterm 20%, etc.) so that students are aware of how course grades will be determined, and can make time allocation decisions accordingly. For the same reason, you may also want to give students a point breakdown on exams (e.g. multiple choice questions, 2 points; essay questions, 10 points, etc.).

- Give your students a rough idea of how much time each assignment should be taking. For example, you might want to tell students to come talk with you (or your TA) if a problem set takes more than two hours, or if they are spending too much time on each reading.

- Make sure your students know that, according to university policy, a 12-unit class should equal 12 hours of work each week. If students are spending considerably more time than this, they should talk to you or the TA to determine what the problem is. If language and cultural issues are at the root, you may want to send the student to the ICC or Academic Development for help.

Grading:

A percentage breakdown of the graded components of your course not only helps students make reasonable time-allocation decisions (see Time Allocation); it also alerts international students to the fact that their course grade will be determined on the basis of multiple graded assignments (exams, papers, lab reports, designs, etc.) Seeing all the course requirements and their weighting can be particularly helpful for students from cultures in which only end-of-term examinations really “count”.

A detailed scoring guide or grading rubric, moreover, is invaluable for helping your students recognize the component parts of a task, and to see how their competence at these tasks will be assessed in grading. Constructing a good grading rubric is difficult. It requires being extremely clear in your own mind about what the learning objectives are for the course and for a given assignment, and knowing what skills and knowledge are required to accomplish those objectives. While creating a grading rubric can take time up front, it can also ultimately
save time by making grading easier. It can also discourage students from grade-
grubbing by showing them that grading is based on demonstrated competence 
in discrete areas, and reduce any suspicion – on their part or your own – that 
grading is completely subjective and arbitrary.

**Discussion ground-rules:**

Because students do not all come to the classroom understanding why 
classroom discussions are beneficial or knowing how to participate in one, it is 
helpful to:

- Explain (on your syllabus and again in class) why you think discussions 
  and group-work are valuable, and what you think students will gain by 
  participating.

- Explain how participation in discussion will be evaluated and how 
  much participation is expected. For example, you might inform 
  students that a meaningful contribution involves stating a claim and 
  using evidence from readings to support it. You might specify that 
  you expect students to speak up at least once a class period, or twice a 
  week, or three times a semester via e-mail or discussion board, etc.

- Clearly lay out the ground-rules for discussions in your class: i.e. wheth-
  er students should raise their hands or just speak out, how students 
  should challenge one another respectfully, how you expect them to ask 
  one another for clarification or illustration, etc. Some faculty members 
  have found it effective to ask students to discuss and determine these 
  ground-rules for themselves. This may be a good opportunity for inter-
  national students to engage in a dialog with their peers about cultural 
  expectations regarding classroom behavior.

- Encourage your students to speak slowly and clearly, and prompt them 
  to explain cultural references that other students might find confusing.

**Faculty/student roles:**

Because the roles faculty play may be quite different in other cultural con-
texts, it is especially important in multi-cultural classrooms to spell out clearly 
how you see your own role in the classroom, and what you expect from your 
students. You might, for example:
• Make it clear to your students when you and your TAs are (and are not) available for help outside of class (e.g. post your office hours, explain when you do and do not check and respond to e-mail, etc.)

• Explain what kinds of help you and your TAs are able and willing to provide (e.g. perhaps you are willing to read drafts of papers up to one week before the paper is due, or your TAs can go over problem sets during their office hours.) By the same token, make it clear what kinds of help you are unable or unwilling to provide (e.g. perhaps you are not willing to repeat lecture material for individuals who miss class, or are unwilling to address writing problems, note-taking conventions, or time management issues that would better be addressed by the ICC, Academic Development, or other resources on campus.)

• Give your students information about resources available to address problems (health and mental health issues, second language problems, etc.) that fall outside your purview.

• Explain to students whom they should contact (you? their TA? one another?) with particular kinds of problems and questions. For example, you might want to encourage them to get lecture notes from one another, but to talk to a TA with questions about grading.

• Make it clear how and why you think students should help one another (i.e. why group work is valuable, what sorts of diverse perspectives you believe students bring to bear on course material), and what kinds of collaboration you consider appropriate and inappropriate (e.g. is working collaboratively on a homework assignment acceptable? a take-home exam? a lab report?).

• Make it clear to your students that to ask for help reflects well, not badly, on them, and that it allows you to diagnose areas of student confusion and address them more effectively. You may want to credit students anonymously for raising questions or asking for clarification, as a way of validating these behaviors.

Classroom etiquette:

Not only do international students have their own ideas about what constitutes polite and rude behavior in the classroom, so do faculty. Some profes-

For a list of student support services on campus, see: www.studentaffairs.cmu.edu/mission.html
sors allow students to eat in class; others do not. Some find it offensive when students wear hats in class; others do not. Because this is not only culturally but individually variable, you may want to make your own rules and expectations clear regarding:

- Absences
- Coming to class late or leaving early
- Use of technologies such as laptops, cell phones, or tape recorders
- Eating and drinking in class, chewing gum, using tobacco products
- Forms of address (for example, what you would like to be called)
- Appropriate attire (e.g. long pants for labs, proper shoes for dance classes)
- Etc.

**Definitions and policies concerning cheating and plagiarism:**

While we might all wish students – domestic as well as international – knew, understood, and followed university policies regarding academic integrity, it is increasingly clear that they all do not. Instructors at CMU have found that the following things help address this problem:

- Explain the reasons for rules regarding academic integrity, discuss the reasoning behind citation conventions and explain how correctly citing and building on the work of others can help students establish their own credibility as scholars.
- Include definitions of cheating and plagiarism in your syllabus, explain university policies, and clarify what your own response will be to infractions.
- Explain what kinds of collaboration are and are not acceptable in your course.
- Ask to see assignments and papers at various stages of developments (for example, ask for early project proposals, first drafts of papers, etc). Not only does this discourage outright plagiarism, but it can help you discern problems students may have with paraphrasing, citing sources, constructing bibliographies, etc., while there is still time for them to

For help clarifying and communicating your course policies to students, contact the Eberly Center at 8-2896

For Carnegie Mellon’s policy on cheating and plagiarism, see: www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Cheating.html

For information about plagiarism-detecting software, see: www.library.cmu.edu/ethics3.html
learn from your feedback and correct the problem.

• Use software (for example, Turnitin) that checks for plagiarism. You can use this yourself to detect plagiarism, but you can also have your students use it to monitor their own work. For example, international students might use this software to see if they have inadvertently borrowed too much of an author’s own language to constitute paraphrasing.

• Explicitly teach documentation and paraphrasing conventions. Not only are these new skills for many international students, many U.S. students also do not get adequate training in high school.

Model The Skills You Want Students To Develop

Because students, regardless of nationality, do not always immediately understand what is expected of them in a college classroom, it is helpful not only to spell out clearly what you expect of them (see Make Your Expectations Explicit) but also to provide models of the kinds of work you want them to produce and the kinds of skills you want them to cultivate. Seeing illustrations of good work can help students identify skills they need to develop. You might, for example:

• Provide examples of outstanding student work (e.g. outstanding design projects, stage sets, engineering solutions, papers) and discuss with your students what makes them effective. This can help students (a) identify the elements of good work as they apply to particular assignments within particular domains, (b) become more conscious of these elements in their own work, and (c) understand what you, as an instructor, are expecting of them. Models of excellent student work can also help students think more broadly about an assignment, consider alternative approaches, etc.

• Model the kinds of discussion and debate behaviors you want students to develop. Some faculty members, for example, invite a colleague to class to debate an issue. Watching two faculty members engaged in an animated debate can help students understand how to participate in a respectful but intellectually challenging exchange. It also illustrates the dynamic nature of academic discourse.
Model the kinds of problem solving thought processes you – an expert in your field – use. For example, you might want to talk students through your own intellectual process as you contemplate a hypothetical research topic, engineering problem, or artistic task. By doing this in a very deliberate way, you model to your students the way you expect them to organize their thoughts (and work space, in studio courses), pose questions, consider various courses of action, make decisions, identify errors, consider implications, make corrections, etc.

Represent The Material In Multiple Ways

Research in cognition shows that students are able to understand concepts and retain knowledge best when they are engaged in active learning. In other words, students learn by doing, by finding their own ways of representing, making sense of, and using the material they are taught. Instructors can further this goal by employing non-verbal representations of concepts they explain verbally, or providing supporting information in other forms: websites, handouts, etc. Using multiple representations is a useful practice for all students, but is particularly helpful for international students, who may struggle to master the English they need to follow lectures, readings, and discussions. Non-verbal representations provide international students with opportunities to access course material that are not language-dependent. This can further both comprehension and retention. You might, for example, use some of the following strategies:

- Supplement verbal explanations with visual images that support the relevant concepts: graphs, slides, flow-charts, video clips, concept maps, etc. This not only engages students’ attention; it provides them with alternative ways of perceiving, interpreting, and organizing information.
- Provide tactile or auditory experiences (e.g. opportunities to use tools, hold materials, manipulate objects, or listen to sounds or music) that help to illustrate the topic. By engaging more of a student’s senses, you create more avenues for retrieving information for later applications.
- Supplement lectures with complementary information in other forms. Handouts, for example, can help students process course materials outside of class time, when they have more time to work through language issues. Instructors should be careful, however, not to overdo it. While reinforcing
concepts via different media and drawing on different senses (visual, auditory, tactile) can help students to understand and retain concepts, too many simultaneous representations can cause cognitive overload and add to, rather than decrease, confusion.

**Give Students Ample Opportunities To Practice Skills And Improve Performance**

International students do not always have experience producing the kinds of work U.S. faculty assign. When students’ first experience using a new skill (e.g. writing a personal response, participating in a class discussion, giving an oral report, or detailing the steps they took in a calculation) is for a grade, frustration and anxiety may limit their ability to learn from, never mind enjoy, the exercise.

One way you can help alleviate some of this stress is by spelling out very clearly what you expect students to produce (see Make Expectations Explicit). Another way is to give students opportunities to practice applying new knowledge and skills in low-pressure contexts. Some examples of this are listed below. It is important to remember, however, that even on un-graded assignments, students need feedback (from you, your TA, each other) in order to correct their mistakes, develop their own ability to recognize inadequate comprehension and flawed reasoning, and improve their performance.

- Assign un-graded, peer-evaluated, or pass/fail writing assignments to allow students to experiment with and get used to styles of thinking and writing that may, at first, be unfamiliar and intimidating. This permits students to calibrate to your expectations and develop new skills before the grading stakes are high. Such assignments also allow you to assign more writing (which students generally need) without necessarily increasing your own grading burden significantly. However, while such assignments do not necessarily require formal grades, it is important that students get feedback (from you or their peers) so that they correct and do not reinforce errors.

- Identify the core components or skills required to do a particular task, and give students opportunities to practice each independently, allow-
ing them to sequentially acquire the complete set of skills necessary to perform higher-level analytical, creative, or problem-solving tasks. For example, you might develop different exercises that allow students first to explain a concept they have been taught in their own words, then distinguish that concept from related concepts, then identify which concept is applicable in a particular situation, then apply it to a relevant problem, and finally critique the application.

- Put students into small groups to discuss a design, case study, experiment, etc., and give various members of the groups different, perhaps rotating, roles (for example, one person could be responsible for framing the problem, another one for reporting the group’s solution to the larger class, etc.) Interacting with peers may be considerably less stressful to an international student than facing the whole class, and can help the student develop the skills necessary to attempt participation at other levels.

- Break up lectures by giving students opportunities to practice applying a skill. You can, for example, ask students to work on answering a question or problem individually, in pairs, or in small groups. This has the advantage not only of giving students practice opportunities, but it also provides you with immediate feedback on what your students do and do not understand, so you can address areas of confusion.

- Give your students a set of questions to consider while doing their first several reading assignments. This will help them learn to distinguish key ideas from minutia, to cultivate the kind of meta-cognitive behaviors you want them to have, and to become more effective and critical readers in your discipline. You might also want to give students tips for reading efficiently. For example, you might encourage students to quickly scan an article before beginning to read, and to use tables of content, chapter titles, subheadings, charts and graphs, etc. to determine the organizational structure of a reading.

For help in designing effective assignments, techniques for creating more practice and feedback opportunities in large classes, or resources on providing students with effective feedback, contact the Eberly Center at 8-2896.
Provide Varied Opportunities For Interaction

While some international students may be hesitant to approach or question an authority figure, they may feel much less reluctance about discussing an idea with or debating a problem with peers. You might consider some of the following techniques and ideas in order to capitalize on the learning potential of peer-peer interactions as well as to encourage greater faculty-student interaction.

- Opportunities for small-group discussions or problem-solving, pair-work, etc. give students a chance to interact with one another, and to raise ideas they might not be comfortable bringing up to the whole class. The tasks instructors assign student groups should be defined and focused, however, so that students know what is expected of them.

- Be sure to monitor student groups to correct misconceptions and to make sure that everyone is involved and no one person is dominating the process.

- Be aware of the composition of student groups. Sometimes discussion or problem-solving is enhanced in groups that are heterogeneous in regard to race, ethnicity or gender: the group members introduce different perspectives and learn from each other. Sometimes, however, individuals in heterogeneous groups can feel isolated (as, for example, in the case of a sole woman in a group of men, or the only Chinese student in a group of U.S. students) and withdraw. Research suggests that there are times when students in homogeneous groups can function more effectively. Because there is not an ideal solution to the problem of group composition, you may want to try different arrangements and see what works best for particular assignments.

- Make a point of calling on quiet students to emphasize that their input is valuable and welcome. To reduce self-consciousness and anxiety (either because of language difficulties or simply unfamiliarity with participatory educational styles), you may want to give students time, individually or in pairs, to craft their answers before they are asked to share them with the class.

- Because some students may not completely understand the purpose of office hours, or may feel uncomfortable approaching professors outside...
of class, you might consider issuing a more formal or even compulsory invitation. Some faculty, for example, schedule time to meet briefly with all their students (individually or in groups) at some time during the semester. You might, for instance, schedule 15-minute meetings and require students to come with 2-3 questions about the class.

- Encourage students to e-mail you ideas and questions. This provides students who are not comfortable speaking in front of the whole class with ways to engage in a dialog with you about course material.

- To reduce the sense among some students that seeking help is a sign of weakness, you may also look for ways to validate and legitimize students who seek help. For example, in class you might anonymously reference insightful questions students brought to you during your office hours, mention insights that students gave you during a discussion outside of class, or thank students for honestly revealing areas of confusion – then review the problematic material.
All students, domestic and international, have many adjustments that they must make in their transition from high school student to college undergraduate. Faculty can help students make the transition smoother if they understand and anticipate where problems can arise, and use these understandings to develop appropriate instructional strategies.

If you have further questions on any of the issues discussed in this document, please contact the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence or the Intercultural Communication Center. We would be happy to talk with you about your experiences and to share our insights and resources with you.

Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence
http://www.cmu.edu/eberlycenter/
412-268-2896

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A Fish Out of Water? Unpacking Access and Privilege Through the Lens of International Intersectionality

Dirk Jonathan Rodricks

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A Fish Out of Water? Unpacking Access and Privilege Through the Lens of International Intersectionality

Dirk Jonathan Rodricks

Access and privilege, although universally applicable, are not nearly as universally familiar. The author shares his experience as a gay, Catholic, Portuguese-Indian, first-generation Third Culture Kid (TCK) from India and his journey to a higher education and student affairs administration program. First the author recalls his experience of being forced to check a series of boxes upon his arrival to the United States and the inherent assumptions and perceptions that ensued. Next, he shares his process of identity development as an international student and the challenges contained in reconciling those multiple identities within the predominantly White context of access and privilege in the United States. Implications for higher education and student affairs professionals conclude this scholarly personal narrative (SPN) by providing recommendations on how student affairs educators can give greater voice and support for people representing intersecting identities within the TCK context.

Internationalization is today’s new buzzword dominating higher education discourse about the future of student enrollment. Economic imperatives force higher education to embrace global initiatives that not only export education through programs like study abroad, but also generate income from overseas students (Jiang, 2008). The renewed focus on growing the number of international students in the United States poses an interesting challenge for its colleges and universities. Given the complexity of international identity abroad and the context of increasing intersecting identities at home, are higher education and student affairs professionals adequately prepared to support international students in the way they need us?

I arrived in the United States from India in 2001, shortly before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and over the past decade have had experiences that prompted me to ask my own questions: why do I culturally identify one way, but present as another? Why does that matter? Where do I belong? The past ten years have brought

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more questions and some answers. Pollock and Van Reken (2009) define this phenomenon as a “neither/nor world” and presents the following concept of Third Culture Kids (TCKs). TCKs have been described as people who have spent a significant part of their developmental years in a passport culture outside their home (or host) and move back and forth between the two (Useem, 1993; Langford, 1998; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009; Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004; Zilber, 2005). When placed in a third culture, these TCKs or Adult TCKs (ATCKs) “frequently build relationships to all the cultures, while not having full ownership in any” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009, p. 13). This phenomenon is similar to Kramsch’s (1993) concept of “third place identities,” which portrays a more positive view of the international student experience. He proposes that students may feel that their values and practices do not conform to their home culture but find more comfort in occupying a “third place.” The third place lies between the cultural practices of the home culture and the abroad culture in which they find themselves. In such a place, the individuals can develop self-affirming identities unencumbered by the ties and group memberships (e.g., nationality and ethnicity) (Grimshaw & Sears, 2008). Simply put, viewing international students as coming from one culture into another is an outdated view of not only the culture but also identity development. Both have very distinct terms and processes. This SPN will discuss the process of unpacking access and privilege in this third culture, while personally navigating a hybrid form of identity and its implications to student affairs research and practice.

My “Mayflower”

I am an Adult Third Culture Kid of Indian origin. I have spent my life not being enough for the world in which I was raised or for the world in which I belong to now. I grew up in a cosmopolitan urban metropolis in a country where ethnic identity is not defined exclusively by ancestral heritage or simply by religious affiliation, but a combination of both. This ethno-religious way of life (Laumann, 1969) dictates cultural and identity development for both the home (host) and passport (nationality) cultures respectively. For the majority, the cultural and identity development would be interchangeable where the family structure at home would mirror society at large. However, my home culture was defined by one religion whereby another dominated the national landscape (i.e., passport culture). I was born and raised in a blue-collar, Catholic family where my parents fought hard for the life they had come to make for our family; whereas, Hinduism dominates the Indian subcontinent permeating almost every aspect of society (Flood, 1996).

Growing up, life revolved around school, church, and family — we were to live for these three aspects. I remember growing up confused, constantly feeling something was not right, but failed to define what was actually missing. Academically, I was a straight-A student and that pleased my proud parents. The academically rigorous school system would become one escape as I began to use my talents
to deflect outwardly every day my inner confusion. On the other hand, I over-
extended myself (albeit successfully) in music and drama where I did incredibly
well to the delight of my family and friends. I represented the local parish at the
city and state competitions, seizing every opportunity. In doing so, I suffered
a “pervasive sense of helplessness, passivity, loss of control, pessimism, negative
thinking, and strong feelings of guilt, shame, self-blame, and depression leading
to hopelessness and despair” (p. 2). Pollock and Van Reken (2001) further ex-
plain victim mentality as a limiting delusion of choice where “an option to act is
offered, but circumstance arbitrarily eliminates that choice” (p. 107). I knew what
I needed to do, but my predicament made it difficult to make the right choices
and decisions. My success itself became fodder for the bullies at school and in
the neighborhood. Upper-class students ragged me repeatedly: “Pansy!” “Nerd!”
“Geek!” “Fag!” Their taunting baffled me. I knew I was raised differently, but
was my success a direct product of my turmoil? Was my deviance from the het-
eronormative master narrative substantially visible and significant?

To exacerbate my state of confusion about who I was, at age 17 I lost the one person
who taught me almost everything I knew as my values system: my mother. Her
passing introduced me to loneliness for the first time in my life. I firmly believed
that all my potential opportunity ‘died’ with her, yet another delusion of choice. I
expended my energies on ensuring that my family (particularly my younger sister)
was coping well, but I did little work to pull myself out of loneliness. I would go
to bed at night recreating each day as if she were in it, and I would wake up each
morning feeling lonely and stuck on auto-repeat—this was my coping mechanism.
This pattern continued for a year. By age 19, I was suffocating because I had no
idea who I was. I was angry and disillusioned with my Catholic faith. My loneli-
ness had disconnected me emotionally from the rest of my family. I was angry
with my father for being in a constant state of mourning. I resented my siblings
for being similar in personality to the bullies I had encountered at school. I in-
vested in superficial relationships over anything deep just to blend in—a coping
mechanism for self-preservation. I needed to get out.

I was an “it is what it is” person (Nash & Murray, 2010) tacitly accepting life on
society’s terms. Upon turning 20, I realized that it did not have to be that way.
“It is what we name it to be; it is who we are and what we believe and perceive”
(Nash & Murray, 2010, p. 41). No singular event was responsible for this change.
As I reflect back, it was more out of desperation. I could either succumb, or
do something. I chose to do something. Leveraging the years of family pride I
had banked for outstanding performance inside and outside of the classroom, I
tentatively gained my father’s support to pursue studies abroad. By the end of
that year, I packed my bags, said my goodbyes, and moved to a different country
in five days. This was my “Mayflower” and my chance at that American dream.
When I arrived in Boston, it quickly became apparent that I culturally identified one way and presented another. The new/transfer student orientation program seemed to speak to everyone else but me. I was “othered” instantly, a term coined in the context of post-colonial critique by Gayatri Spivak (1985). Spivak, an Indian literary critic and theorist, described it as “a process by which the dominant culture can define itself against those it colonizes, excludes and marginalizes […] the business of creating the enemy...in order that the empire might define itself by its geographical and racial others” (as cited in Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2000, p. 156). Over the course of the next 18 months, I began to understand that post-9/11, the United States would become a highly sensitized and hyperaware society. September 12th, 2001 would be the first day I discovered that I was actually a color, specifically brown, and that it mattered. I would learn that gradation in shade mattered, that lighter is Whiter, and each choice made irrespective of self-identification could be perceived in a manner beyond control (Patel, 2009).

In my journey to better understand the concepts of access and privilege, it was clear that I would need to unpack and confront them myself. The process would become a struggle that would continue for a decade. Two stark examples come to mind as I reflect on being compelled to reconcile the perceptions of others with my own perceptions of myself. I remember vividly (before 9/11), when I walked to an Indian-owned convenience store with an Indian friend of mine. I presented with lighter skin than he did. Upon entering the store, I was enthusiastically greeted in Spanish (“Hola!”) complete with eye contact and a head acknowledgement by the owner behind the cash register. Having finished our shopping, we proceeded to check out. While at the counter, my friend was ignored and I began to get served first…in Spanish. I gestured to have the owner finish with my friend, which he ignored. Having deciphered a side conversation while shopping, my instinctual reaction resulted in me speaking to the man in Hindi. After the brief shock registered, I was offered an apology that was in fact owed to my friend who was embarrassed by the entire turn of events. Furious for my friend, we left the store without our groceries.

About nine months after 9/11, I was at airport security returning from a national conference in Albuquerque, NM. The middle-aged White male at the ID check-point threw my passport back at me with absolute disdain, “Where is your American passport? I want to see that, and not this!” Hyper-aware that I presented as a Person of Color, I nervously tried to explain that I was not an American citizen and therefore was not in possession of an American passport, and that this was all I had. I remember the fear of impact from that disclosure while desperately wanting to be American on that day. I felt American: culturally it was the closest
thing I had experienced in almost 20 years to my home culture. The confusion at his question and my response represents the cultural dissonance often experienced by TCKs and international students (Pederson, 1995). Growing up in India, to be American was to be White. If I walked like a duck and quacked like a duck, was I a...? I am not White but I did become an angry Third Culture Kid stuck in limbo – not White enough to be American, not dark enough to be Indian. I spent the next few years “white-washing” myself: trying to blend in while abandoning everything about my home and passport cultures in favor of this new found ‘comfort’ third culture. I spoke only English, had only White friends, shopped at the White stores, and dated only Whites (Pyke & Dang, 2003, p. 156). Victor Frankl (1997) describes this in three stages. First, the period of depersonalization/readjustment, second, the period of deformation (anger), and finally, the period of disillusionment/bitterness. As I reflect, I realize that I was oscillating between those three stages, triggered each time by an event or circumstance. I was getting by, but entrapped, and barely holding on for survival.

From Entrapment to Empowerment

As I encountered more experiences and was guided by mentors who cared about my acculturation, I began to understand the language of difference. The lack of a vocabulary to frame my experiences and my responses (or lack thereof) was a stumbling block. The academic and co-curricular contexts at two private institutions of higher education, both with large international student populations, failed to meet my need. Fueled by these nagging questions of who I am, I naturally turned to my home culture for answers. Access and privilege may be universally applicable, but they are not universally familiar. Such was the case when I began to ask my father to weigh in on race and ethnicity so I could unpack my own access and privilege. It was clear that he could not fathom the reasoning for engaging in this kind of dialogue. On my own, I began to research as much as I could about my family, our history, and our origins as far back as I could. I discovered that I am (as far as basic name records go) eighth generation Mangalorean Catholic (an ethnoreligious group) that has origins in both the Portuguese (Goan) and the Pancha Gauda Saraswat Brahmin lineage (Prabhu, 1999).

The research revealed more questions than answers: why was I given a Dutch-Germanic name rather than an Indian one? How and why was English my first language? Why were Portuguese and Konkani (an ethnic dialect), which my parents spoke, ignored? Why focus on education, especially the arts—learning the piano at the age of six and taking speech and drama extracurricular classes? As I engaged in deeper understanding of race and culture in the United States, and met people like myself, the answers soon became apparent. It was my parents’ decision to focus on social class upliftment as they embraced the culture that would provide a better means to the end. It meant persevering with the home culture against the
passport culture, and hoping that at some point a third culture would emerge with success and achievement attained. I realized that each intentional decision made by my parents to raise me as a TCK afforded me privilege and provided me with access to opportunity that I would never have otherwise received.

Today, I identify as a bi-racial, bi-cultural, bi-ethnic proud ATCK and I am aware of my privilege that my informed understanding of that status affords me. I realize that I do not need to make apologies for who I am and how I was raised.

Implications for Educators

One size does not fit all: ATCKs have very different experiences, making it critical to develop support services strategically. According to Hill Useem and Baker Cotrell (1993), the average ATCK transfers colleges twice during an academic career, takes longer to complete a degree, or drops out to pursue other opportunities. While ATCKs are more likely to be multilingual, mature, and hold a broader multicultural worldview than their domestic counterparts, they may be less apt to engage their peers effectively (Shames, 1997; Kohls, 2001). Like many ATCKs, I needed support in creating a positive self-image and developing a sense of connection (Harrell, 1986). This is the essence of student development, and educators are therefore well-positioned to help provide this support. If it were not for my student affairs mentors, who realized I had a narrative distinct from other international students and encouraged me to be an involved student leader, I would have failed to develop a sense of belonging and quit within six months.

One recommendation for student affairs practice informed by my experience is to start at the point of application for admission. According to McCaig (1991), many individuals are unaware that they may fit the profile of an ATCK, but are able to identify with the feelings and challenges associated with the experience. Training admissions staff to recognize indicators in applications could be beneficial (Stultz, 2003). Admitted students should have year-round access to peer mentoring and academic advising to facilitate transition issues. Other support structures include encouraging student organization involvement, curriculum reflecting global perspectives, and programs focused on cultural identity development (Pollock 1996; Schaetti, 1996). Institutions can benefit through word-of-mouth recruitment and retention of this high-risk group by providing choices appropriate to their experience (Hill Useem & Baker Cotrell, 1993).

Ultimately, visibility is key. Increasing awareness will allow educators to better understand and be better understood by ATCKs. As educators become more familiar with the ATCK experience, the campus will likely begin to show respect for a different kind of diversity (Stultz, 2003). Research on this subject is still limited as it relates to access to and success in higher education. Educators need
to learn with ATCKs rather than about them. Educators can encourage and foster environments that educate, engage, and empower this unique student population. As I prepare to be one such educator, I am cognizant of what might have been had I never received these support services. I am heartened by the fact that my own personal narrative will enable me (and others) to open more doors and provide greater voice to TCK experiences.
References


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CHALLENGES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: ONE STUDENT'S NARRATED STORY OF INVISIBILITY AND STRUGGLE

A narrative study was conducted to investigate why a Chinese female international student keeps silent in her American classes. This study found that because of her silence, the participant internalized a deficient self-perception as a useless person in her group discussions and perceived that a deficient identity was attributed to her. Because the participant's American classmates' ideology of cultural homogeneity made her disempowered in her classes, the participant became the victim of the disempowering American higher educational setting. Therefore, this paper suggests that educators of American higher education should not attribute Chinese international students' silence to only their ethnic culture influences or personalities and should not overlook the possible disempowering nature of higher educational settings.

Beginning her paper with this question: "What is invisibility?" Garth (1994) argues that invisibility does not mean something is not existent; instead, invisibility is often caused by social structures that make individuals voiceless and invisible. Do some female Chinese international students willingly choose to be invisible and silent in their American classes? If not, what makes them invisible and silent in their American classes? Despite the general perception that American culture is characterized more by diversity than by homogeneity, the American ideology of cultural homogeneity implies an American mindset that because Eurocentric culture are superior to others, people with different cultures should conform to the dominant monocultural canon and norms. This ideology essentially reveals that because Eurocentric culture is representative of the dominant culture in American society, American society values the knowledge and cultures of the dominant group as the model for other cultures and attributes to those who are unable or unwilling to fit the dominant culture a deficient identity. Because American society is characterized by the American ideology of cultural homogeneity, ethnic and racial minority students are evaluated according to the dominant norms and are expected to "learn to operate successfully in the dominant-white-system" (Yeh & Drost, 2002; The role of the dominant culture in schools). If they fail to fit the dominant norms, based on a deficiency orientation, they may be assigned a negatively formulated identity (Jansen & Wildemeersch, 1996). Because American society generally values assertiveness and considers keeping silent an indication of incompetence or ignorance, to avoid being assigned a deficient identity, most of the international students try to be more assertive and expressive. However, because second-language learners' and users' opportunities to speak are sometimes socially constructed and restricted, not all the speakers can choose the opportunities and conditions in which they can interact with target language speakers. Although not all those who listen consider those who speak as deserving their attention (Peirce, 1994), the concern of why some Chinese female international students keep silent in their American classes often over focuses on such students' responsibility and places the responsibility of their teachers and American classmates in the background. True, such students keep silent and become invisible in their American classes partly because of their Chinese
cultural influence. However, what is greatly ignored is the possibility that such students do not speak and become invisible because they are silenced and disempowered by their American classmates. Therefore, a narrative study was conducted to explore a Chinese female international student's silent experiences in her American classes.

Conceptual Framework

Narrative is a powerful vehicle through which "other people's experiences can be understood and shared" (Kanno, 2003, p. 8) and "the existence and experience of inequality can be described" (Graham, 1984, p. 119). Because narratives provide a medium to "examine gender inequalities, racial oppression, and other practices of power that may be taken for granted by individual speakers" (Riessman, 1993, p. 5), I used the concept of narrative inquiry to conceptualize this study. Narratives can especially portray the experiences of those who have physically and symbolically crossed cultural and social borders and can give a voice to them (Anzaldua, 1987). Therefore, narrative inquiry, which is at the heart of how this study is conceptualized, provides a conceptual framework through which I explored the participant's invisibility and struggle in her American classes.

Data Collection and Analysis

A narrative study was conducted to explore why a Chinese female international student keeps silent in her American classes. During the data collection, I triangulated methods to collect data. Data collecting methods included multiple, lengthy interviews, informal conversations, references to the researcher's field journals and interview notes, and examinations of the participant's autobiographies. In face-to-face interviews, I conducted open-ended and semi-structured in-depth interviews. Because narrativity is a part of narrators' cognitive repertoire, narrators do not necessitate being taught how to tell their stories (Kemper, 1984). Therefore, I began the first interview with a free-flowing and exploratory open-ended format to gain an understanding of the participant's American experience and encourage the participant's stories to emerge. To get specific information for this study, the semi-structured interview format was used in the latter part of the first interview and the follow-up interviews. Although I might "lose the opportunity to understand how the subjects themselves structure the topic at hand" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 96), I also used a semi-structured interview for mat to explore a range of perspectives on the topic of silent experiences and to "balance between the need for allowing [the participant] sufficient narrative space to articulate [her] experience and the need for information that is of interest to the [researcher]" (Tsang, et al., 2003, p. 365). Before conducting the semi-structured interviews, I e-mailed the interview protocol (Creswell, 2003) to the participant so that she could have time to reflect upon her experience as an international student in the United States and then answer my interview questions. I also referred to the participant's personal documents as reference because they are an important means of acquiring detailed evidence in terms of "how social situations appear to the factors in them and what meanings various factors have for the [participant]" (Angell, 1945, p. 178). I asked the participant if she minded if I read her autobiographies. To encourage her to share her autobiographies with me, I informed her that the autobiographical writings provided by her would be kept confidential and would be used only for this study.
In qualitative research, data collection and data analysis are simultaneous processes (e.g., Creswell, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1988). Therefore, the data were analyzed immediately after the first interview and in an ongoing manner throughout the data collection period. According to Bruner (1986), there are two types of cognition in narrative inquiry: paradigmatic-type narrative inquiry (analysis of narratives) and narrative-type narrative inquiry (narrative analysis). In the stage of paradigmatic-type narrative inquiry, beginning by engaging myself in the raw data, I transcribed the taped interviews. Then I discovered the categories and themes of the data and "[moved] from stories to common elements" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 12). After the topics were collected, they were abbreviated as codes. Then the data analysis process was assisted by the use of the qualitative data analysis software, N-vivo, to classify related segments of text: key words, phrases, and concepts for analysis. Codes were changed, deleted, or added with the N-vivo editor. As more interviews were conducted, I continued coding the rest of the data, repeatedly comparing the new codes to established codes and revising old codes as necessary. After I finished coding the data and organizing codes categorically, I generated categories and themes from the codes. According to Polkinghorne, paradigmatic analysis can be used not only to find or describe the categories and themes from the data but also to record relationships among categories. After inductively finding the themes from the data, I used a flow chart to attempt to diagram the whole into all the categories and themes and their relationships to each other.

The final stage of data analysis, narrative-type narrative inquiry, involves presenting a meaningful structure for organizing incoherent data components (Dole, 2001). Because narrativization tells "not only about past actions but how individuals understand those actions, that is, meaning" (Riessman, 1993, p. 19), in this stage, I moved the process of analysis "from elements to stories" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 12) and presented the findings as narrative and descriptive wordings. To make sense of data, narrative-type narrative inquiry requires contextualizing analysis (Maxwell, 1996, p. 79). To understand the data in its context, I reconstructed field texts as research texts, which "grow out of the repeated asking of questions concerning meaning and significance" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, p. 170). I moved to the description of the data, and turned to interpreting and constructing the meaning of the data. Because narratives are produced from "what protagonist and narrator believe and feel" (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p. 26), a personal narrative is "not meant to be read as an exact record of what happened nor is it a mirror of a world 'out there'" (Riessman, p. 64) but a means by which narrators construct and make sense of her American experience. Therefore, I constantly asked myself the following questions: "Why this narrative--or any narrative--is felt to be tellable."/"Why the events of the narrative are reportable" (Labov, 1972, p. 370). How are the narratives organized? Why does the participant structure her narratives in this way in conversation with me? (Riessman). What connections does the participant make between separate events and how one experience leads to another? (Dewey, 1963). Where are the incongruities when the participant frames her story? (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Throughout this study, I went through the literature in the area I was studying to enhance my analysis. Conducting some ongoing reading of the relevant literature during my data analysis and writing period, I re-examined the concepts emerging from the data and interpreted them. Framing my ideas in relation to theory and literature, I compared the findings of this study to previous findings. I was also cautious about "distanc[ing] [myself] enough to formulate concepts of [my] own or to expand the work of others" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 157). By asking the following
questions, I examined whether my findings confirmed or differed from previous literature: What are some of the important issues in the literature? What past findings have a reference to my study? What has been overlooked in the literature? (Bogdan & Biklen). How do my perspectives disagree with what I read? How do they concur with it? In addition to explaining why my findings are important, I also proposed some questions that I did not find in earlier stages of my study.

Li-Ling's Story

Li-Ling grew up with her parents and five sisters in Hong Kong. The way Li-Ling was raised and educated in Hong Kong nurtured her into becoming a quiet and introverted person. According to Li-Ling, in her childhood, partly because her parents were busy working and did not have time to take her out and partly because she was not encouraged to speak up in class, she became introverted and quiet. After graduating from high school, Li-Ling worked as an administrative assistant for about one year. Li-Ling couldn't get into college in Hong Kong, and one of her friends who was studying in the United States encouraged her to apply to American schools, so she decided to come to the United States to pursue a bachelor's degree. In order to achieve her goal of becoming a dietitian, Li-Ling arrived on American soil seven years ago at the age of twenty.

During her first year, partly because she stayed with a supportive host family and partly because she did not encounter significant difficulties, Li-Ling was positive about her American life. After studying in the United States for one year, Li-Ling enrolled in a university, where she came to acknowledge the difficulty in interacting with American students. "The first year I came, I did not really think about it's hard to be in American society. I did not think about that," Li-Ling reported, "but after I went to college, I experienced how American students interacted with international students, and I knew it's hard for foreigners to be in American society. Even now I still think it's difficult for foreigners to be in American society." Li-Ling further added, "Mostly it's my classmates thought I am stupid, I got most frustrated from them. They made me did not want to go to class before." Li-Ling's comment made me recall that about half a year ago, she told me that she did not like going to school in the United States. At that time I was surprised at what she said because I had assumed that international students like her with sufficient proficiency in conversational English and studying in the United States for seven years should not have had difficulty in adjusting to American school systems. Because Li-Ling was the only international student in her class and her American classmates always ignored her, she felt that she was isolated in the class. The strong feeling of being considered to be stupid made Li-Ling struggle very hard to prove to other people that she is not stupid. During the interviews, her constantly claiming with emotional intensity that she is not a stupid person demonstrates that she desperately struggled to be acknowledged as an intelligent person.

In her senior year, Li-Ling applied for a dietitian internship. Because international students are not allowed to work off campus, lack of work experience discouraged her from enrolling in any internship programs. Furthermore, although Li-Ling knew getting involved in dietitian associations was a very important experience for qualifying for the internships, she did not join those associations because she did not want to experience isolation and being ignored anymore. Because Li-Ling could not get into any internship programs, she applied for graduate school at a
public institution of higher education in the Midwest. After half a year she finally enrolled in an internship program in Missouri. In her internship, Li-Ling worked hard, but she did not receive a good evaluation for her performance. When I asked her why, Li-Ling explained that because she was quiet and did not offer many suggestions to her co-workers, her preceptors therefore considered her incompetent. After a one-year internship, Li-Ling continued her graduate school studies. Since then she has begun to speak up in class a little bit because she dislikes feeling isolated and being considered incompetent anymore.

Narratives and Findings

Li-Ling reported that because her American classmates have the tendency to see American culture as superior to other cultures and believe their culture should be the model for other cultures, she had difficulty in making friends with them and experienced constraints on her identity, which she considered to be imposed by her American classmates’ attitudes toward her. The following excerpt of the interview with Li-Ling demonstrates that her classmates did not accept her and tended to evaluate her negatively (In order to make the transcribed data more intelligible, along with keeping the authenticity of the data, I did not edit the participant's words except for changing some tenses into appropriate forms):

Just in a group of Americans, it's hard to get into their conversations, get into their groups. I think this is the most difficult one. You know, like a group of American students, and you are the only foreigner in that group, then you become like isolated, and you become ignored; you cannot get into their groups or their conversations. I think this is very frustrating. Every time I needed to do something like this, I just did not want to do, or I just did not want to go to the meetings [group discussion meetings]. I think this is the most difficult one.

Li-Ling perceived that her American classmates considered her silence a sign of stupidity; therefore, she felt hurt and did not want to go to class:

(How did Americans treat you?) It depends. There are different Americans. Some Americans they think we are stupid, but some Americans they think we are brave or we are good because we are here by ourselves, and it's not easy to be in a different country by yourself. But some Americans they would think I am stupid. It just depends. Mostly it's my classmates they think I am stupid, and I got most frustrations from my classmates in class. That made me did not want to go to class before.

(Did you feel frustrated when you were misunderstood as a stupid person?) Yeah, and I could not get into their groups, and I was so quiet, and I was isolated, and that made me feel uncomfortable and hurt and unhappy, and I didn't want to go to the class.

Li-Ling further added that because she did not speak up in class, her American classmates not only perceived her as a stupid person but also misunderstood her silence as incompetence:

Just feel that they [American classmates] think I am quiet, stupid, and weird. They also think I am not capable because I am quiet. That's what I feel. Because I am quiet, that's why they think I am incapable.
The following portions from the interviews with Li-Ling indicate that because her American classmates always ignored and silenced her, she became quiet and almost invisible to them:

In the group discussions because I felt like I didn't, you know, contribute a lot, like in group discussions, I mean after discussions, write down something, report it out. I just felt that I did not contribute a lot because I did not say anything; I did not give my opinions. I felt like I was useless in that group. I could be very useful, but in that group I couldn't be a useful person. Because in that whole process, I did not contribute anything. I mean I could, but I couldn't in that group. I felt that because I couldn't actually contribute anything, it's just, it's because the situation made me to be useless. That situation made me useless, but I could be a useful person if the situation won't like that.

(What kind of situations can make you useful?)

In a situation where I can speak comfortable. I mean in a situation where the other group members are very respectful; they are willing to listen to you patiently; they take your suggestions, opinions. Then I could be very useful.

(Can you tell me what is important for Americans to understand about you?)

I am not stupid; that's important for them to understand me. I am not stupid. I am quiet doesn't mean that I am stupid. I am quiet doesn't mean my opinion is not valuable. And I need respect from people, and it's very important for them to listen to me, have some patience to listen to people. That's it.

(Do you mean they usually did not respect your opinions?)

Yes, I always felt that way.

(Do you feel your voices were always heard?)

No, no. They didn't hear me. They talked to themselves even when I wanted to say something, and they started to say something. They didn't hear me; that's like they ignored me. It's like I was invisible.

I think several times it's just difficult for us. For international students in an American society is difficult because hard for us to get into the groups and they [Americans] accept you. And it's just hard, and that's why. And they [Americans] think we cannot get into their group, it won't work out.

As Kastoryano (2002) argues, "Identities are not commodities and are therefore difficult to negotiate" (p. 4). It is not surprising that Li-Ling encountered constraints on her identity. The following excerpts from the interviews with Li-Ling reveals her difficulties in having her voice to be heard in her American classes:
If someone like me is quiet, they [Americans] always think that person is weird. That's why I said they think I am weird too. They think I am stupid and weird.

(Do you accept this kind of misunderstanding about you?)

No, not at all.

(Then why you did not try to change the situation?)

It's hard, hard to try. I don't know, you cannot make any changes.

(Why do you think they considered you a stupid person?)

Because I didn't usually talk, and I did not give suggestions in a group of Americans, because I didn't have a chance to talk, because whenever we discussed, they [Americans] always talked to each other. They didn't; I do not know. They didn't let you [me] talk or something. I don't know. They didn't ask you [me] questions. They just talked to themselves, and it's hard for me to get into the conversations.

(Do you mean in group discussions?)

Yeah.

(Did they ask your opinions?)

No. I think if they had asked my opinions, it would be better, but they didn't. They just talked themselves, and then I would be like isolated.

(At that time did you want to say something?)

I wanted, but they wouldn't listen. I mean I wanted to, but I didn't have. I mean once you are quite, and you say you want to say something, the students they don't listen to your opinions. And you [I] think, "Oh, I am so stupid," or maybe they think that "her point is not, her point is worthless. We don't have to listen to her opinions or her points."

(So at that time did you try to say something?)

I think I did. I tried.

(Then how did they react?)

They did not really listen to me. They just talked to themselves and listened to each other. They did not really.

(Did you try again?)
No.
(Why not?)

Because hard, it was hard to try again. They wouldn't listen.

(Do you mean it happened many times in your class?)

Yeah, yeah, every time, so whenever we had discussions, I don't know, I just kept quiet.

(If I said Li-Ling is a person without her own opinions, what would you say?)

Well, it just because they [Americans] didn't hear me, because they didn't let me talk, they didn't give me chance to talk. If you [they] let me talk, and I will talk.

(If they said because you did not actively talk to them?)

Well, now are you [they] listening to me? If you [they] are listening to me now, then I will talk. You [They] want me to talk now; I will talk now.

(If you have something to say, but they don't really listen to you, what will you do?)

I will still keep quiet.

(Why?)

Because they don't listen to me.

(Do you mean you can't change this kind of situation, and you can only keep silent?)

Yeah, maybe.

Because Li-Ling felt that many of her American classmates perceived her silence as a symbol of stupidity and incompetence, she tried to achieve a high GPA and talked to them confidently:

I can feel that if you don't talk or give your opinions, then they [Americans] think that you are useless, and they think you are stupid. That's why I study so hard to get good grades because I want to prove to them that I am good because I have high GPA, and I don't talk doesn't mean that I am stupid. Because I have high GPA, and that's the only thing I can prove to them, say, "Hey! I am not stupid because I have good grades." (laughing)

When I talk to American people, I want to talk in a competent way. You know, talk like I am a very grownup person, independent person. You have to be very, more competent person when you talk to Americans to prove that you are good. You have to be more competent when you talk to Americans. When you [I] talk to Asians or international students, I don't talk in that way. I don't have to talk in a very competent. You know, I don't have to talk to prove that I am
competent cause I don't need to prove to them that I am competent. International students are easier to approach, and they don't think you are [I am] stupid, so I don't have to, you know, to prove to them that I am competent or I am good. I don't have to. But in front of Americans, I have to, you know, to make myself to be good and to be competent in front of them so that I don't look stupid. I try to prove to them that I am not stupid; I am good.

As Rutherford (1990) argues, marginalized individuals often construct their identities by using "strategies of identification and processes of affiliation" (p. 90); under the pressure to conform to the expectations and norms of the host society, Li-Ling decided to make some modifications in her self-representation because she did not want to be isolated and misunderstood as a stupid person. The following excerpts indicate that to avoid being considered to be stupid, Li-Ling tried to accommodate herself to the American norms and expectations by being more assertive and expressive:

Because if you are so quiet, you will be like you are not a part of their groups; you are so quiet; you are so isolated. The feeling is not good if you are isolated, and other people will think you don't know anything. Because you don't speak out, you don't give out you opinions, the other people think you don't know anything; you don't talk. I try to improve already. I try to speak out a little, better than before, than I was in undergraduate. I mean just like the process, like gradually, it's not very dramatically.

I think because I tried to be more active, tried to talk to Americans, and tried to get to know them, and tried to let them to get to know me, and then tried to just develop relationships between them, and then it's getting better now.

Discussions

As Cummins (1996) argues, identities are "constantly being shaped through experiences and interactions" (p. 11); Li-Ling's earlier-established identity was challenged by the American context and her interactions with Americans. When Li-Ling was at home in Hong Kong, where she did not feel that people considered her stupid and incompetent, she did not try to prove to them that she is intelligent, nor did she feel the need to work hard to be accepted by them. After studying in the United States, Li-Ling had opportunities to interact with other international students, with whom she felt relaxed because she sensed that they also considered her to be fully competent. Because American society generally values assertiveness and considers keeping silent an indication of incompetence or ignorance, Li-Ling's American classmates regarded her silence as an indication that she is "stupid and weird." Moreover, in her internship, her preceptors misunderstood her silence as incompetence. Therefore, Li-Ling perceived that she was attributed to a negative identity. This given deficient identity also made her internalize a deficient self-perception as a useless person in group discussions. Li-Ling reported that although her early schooling in Hong Kong, which did not actively encourage classroom dialogue, and her unfamiliarity with American cultural expectations made her feel uncomfortable speaking up in class, she kept silent in class not always because she did not want to talk but because sometimes she was silenced by her American classmates. Because some of them deprived her of her right to talk, she became silent and invisible in her American classes. Had Li-Ling been given opportunities to talk, she would not have felt uncomfortable speaking and would have talked in
her American classes. However, because some of her American classmates did not listen to her when she tried to speak, she felt uncomfortable speaking and consequently became a voiceless participant in her classes. Struggling between the way her American classmates and preceptors positioned her and the way she wanted to position herself, Li-Ling developed a strong sense of self-perception and self-representation as an intelligent and competent person. By achieving a high GPA and speaking confidently, Li-Ling tried to make an impression on people that she is intelligent and competent in order to decrease the tensions between the two different positions. What led Li-Ling to pursue her social identity and self-representation as an intelligent and competent person? Hall's (1996) concept of power and exclusion provides the answer. Had Li-Ling not experienced the exclusion and misunderstanding in her class and internship, she probably would not have had these changes in her earlier-established identities. Therefore, Li-Ling's pursuit of some identities and resistance to other identities has explained what made Li-Ling silent and invisible in her American classes.

Implications for Educators of Higher Education

In addition to supplementing the knowledge base of international students' issue, this study also holds rich potential for enhancing college educators' understanding of why some international students keep silent in their classes and what college educators should do in helping such students' voices be heard equally in their classes. As Barritt (1986) argues, "By highlighting awareness and creating dialogue, it is hoped research can lead to better understanding of the way things appear to someone else and through that insight lead to improvements in practice" (p. 20). By opening dialogue between Chinese female international students and American students and educators of higher education, this study has two suggestions for educators of higher education:

1. Educators of American higher education should be aware of the unequal power relationships between international students and American students, especially in group discussions and projects. Most international students do not have the same oral English proficiency as American students do, so the unbalanced power relationships between the international students and their teachers and American classmates may make international students' voices harder to hear than the voices of American students. Because a student with a less-than-standard oral English proficiency may influence the performance of group projects and the presentation of group papers, international students can be assigned a deficient identity in class and may have difficulty in being included and accepted as group members. Therefore, although the participant is also a member of her group projects, she was often outside of the main body of her group. To change female Chinese international students' marginalized roles in group discussions and projects, college educators of American higher education should create a power-sharing class atmosphere in which international students can be included with American students and feel comfortable participating in group projects and discussions. For example, college educators of American higher education can assign moderator roles to such international students so that such students will not be only a part of the whole group but also the central part of the group.

2. The analysis of the narratives found that Li-Ling did not speak in her classes not all because of her personality but also partly because she was sometimes silenced by her American classmates. Therefore, college educators of American higher education should
not attribute Chinese international students' silence to only their ethnic culture influences or personalities and should not overlook the possible disempowering nature of higher education settings. College educators of American higher education should develop a supportive atmosphere that can encourage American students to examine their ideology of cultural homogeneity and develop American students' open-minded attitudes toward diversity.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study is an exploratory study that provides a basis for further research on international students' keeping silent in higher education. Based on this study, several potential studies that would extend, fortify, and relate to this study. To develop a grounded theory, this study could be supplemented by interviewing at least twenty Chinese female international students. A follow-up research study could be extended to include international students from East Asia. A potential study would be to explore the experience of Chinese international students who keep silent in other higher education, for example in Japan, with quantitative measures of their silence in higher education as exhibited in their interviews and survey.

Conclusions

Li-Ling's story provides an insight into the fact that international students may become the victims of the disempowering nature of American higher education. Supporting Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) argument that higher education settings can be disempowering discourse communities for minority groups, this study found that because of her silence, the participant internalized a deficient self-perception as a useless person in her group discussions and perceived that a deficient identity was attributed to her. Because the participant's American classmates' assumption of cultural superiority made her disempowered in her classes, the participant became the victim of the disempowering American higher educational setting. Therefore, this paper suggests that educators of American higher education should not attribute Chinese female international students' silence to only their ethnic culture influences or personalities and should not overlook the possible disempowering nature of higher education settings.

References


By Min-Hua Hsieh, National Taichung Institute of Technology, Taiwan
Strategies for Teaching International Students

There are some steps that instructors can take to better engage and support international students (as well as domestic students):

Classroom content/understanding

• American college students have a vocabulary of approximately 20,000 words that took them 18 years to acquire. It can be very challenging for international students to bridge this gap. Trying to understand content while taking notes can be very difficult.
• Talk slowly and clearly, give additional explanations for foundational concepts, clarify meanings of slang and cultural references (some students might not speak up, ask them to write down their questions and talk with them after class).
• Use consistent patterns for presenting information (explain learning outcomes, what do you know about it, how does it fit with rest of material).
• Allow time for brainstorming (some cultures stress reflection before speaking). Give them time to provide a considered opinion.
• Be careful and aware if your content relies on precision, one mistaken definition may disrupt learning an entire concept.
• Consider sending class notes/outlines ahead of time and/or allowing international students to record lectures.
• Hold individual conferences/meetings with students, send follow-up emails to provide information in writing, or encourage them to use office hours.

Group projects/participating in discussions

• Promote smaller conversations among students in the classroom, for example, talk to your neighbor for a few minutes, or use writing prompts to give all students time to compose their thoughts.
• Assign diverse groups rather than letting student select groups (but also be careful of isolating international students too much). Keep the groups stable over the quarter to allow relationships to develop.
• Encourage domestic students to help create a space for sharing of multiple voices and to support international students. Appeal to their future careers – they will benefit by having experience working with people from all over the world. Explicitly ask domestic students to list the benefits of having international students and brainstorm what they could do to support and welcome them.
• Provide examples from international student contributions and remind everyone the value of these contributions.
• Create group projects with a fair division of labor. Group projects with a written deliverable often results in unequal division of labor, especially when there are very different language skills. Focus group projects on the concepts and discussion/process, with the deliverable/outcome being something everyone can share (choose a position to defend, recommend a course of action, choose option A/B/C as a group, etc.)
• Provide groups with some basic information about communication and decision making differences. Create guidelines and ground rules for group projects.
• Look into the many resources about effective group practices (for example: best practice in effective group work).
Language/grammar/writing

- Don’t lower standards. However, certain English language mechanics are very difficult for non-native speakers. In addition, language skills often get worse when concepts discussed are more difficult.
- In your grading, distinguish between global writing issues (more important) and common errors (less important or harder to correct).
- Also, distinguish between assignments where the thinking/process issues are most important (and grammar is less important), and those assignments that need to be polished/summative/final where grammar issues are important.
- When grading papers, select just one paragraph or page to grade for grammatical issues and ask student to revise rest of paper, don’t edit it all for them.
- Visit these resources from The Writing Program: Working With International Student Writers and Guidelines for Responding to the Writing of International Students

Expectations for Learning

- Get to know your international students – how to pronounce their name, what brought them here, what are their interests and strengths.
- Be explicit about rules and expectations, especially unwritten rules (who to go to for help, guidelines for plagiarism, expectations for active learning/participation) show examples, model and walk through the rules.
- When using active learning methods, explain why and the expectations for students.
- Provide ongoing feedback on student progress, on how well they are meeting learning goals.
- Ask them to reflect on their learning process – which learning and study strategies are working and which are not? What do they struggle with and how could they adjust their strategies to be successful?

Academic integrity

- Academic integrity norms are different in some cultures. International students don’t necessarily understand how to paraphrase, or the mechanics of how to translate things into their own words.
- Communicate standards about academic integrity and walk through examples with students.
- This plagiarism test from Indiana University might be helpful to use with students.
- View additional resources about promoting academic integrity.
Teaching International Students
Strategies to enhance learning

Sophie Arkoudis
Teaching International Students
Strategies to enhance learning
Teaching International Students: Strategies to Enhance Learning was developed for the University of Melbourne by Dr Sophie Arkoudis of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education.

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Introduction

This document contains practical suggestions for teaching strategies that will assist the University’s international students. Some of the suggestions may seem self-evident as they represent widely accepted principles of effective teaching in higher education. Nonetheless they are worth reiterating.

The University of Melbourne endeavours to create environments which foster academic excellence and which encourage all students to engage with their learning communities (http://www.unimelb.edu.au/diversity/downloads/inclusive%20practice.pdf). The University has a culturally diverse student population, including students from Indigenous, international and recent immigrant backgrounds. This document focuses on the language and cultural issues that may be considered in teaching international students. While acknowledging that the term ‘international students’ is complex to define, for the present purposes of this document international students will be those who have had the majority of their previous study in countries where English is not the main medium of instruction in education.

Globally, more people than ever before are choosing to undertake an international education. The large-scale movement of students between education systems means that academics need to consider the learning and teaching implications of the increased numbers of international students in university classes. Notably, international students now form a large part of the diverse student community that exists at the University of Melbourne. Many of these students are originally from countries where English may be spoken as a second or third language, or where English is only learnt as a foreign language in school. It is important not to make assumptions about these students’ learning strategies because of their cultural background. Much discussion of international students has focused on stereotypes: a presumed reluctance to talk in class, a preference for rote learning and an apparent lack of critical thinking skills. Implied within this stereotyping is an ‘us’ and ‘them’ approach to the students and a deficit view of this group of learners, as people who perhaps ‘lack’ the desirable qualities for succeeding in higher education as we understand it. However, this is simply not true. International students are some of the highest achieving students at the University.

In the *Nine Principles Guiding Teaching and Learning in the University of Melbourne*, the fourth principle is ‘an international and culturally diverse community and learning environment’. Research has highlighted that the educational expectations of international students are as diverse as those of domestic students (Biggs, 2003; Ryan, 2005). These students can range, for example, in academic ability, English language proficiency, motivation, educational experiences, as do many of the local students. However, there are some conclusions we can draw about the particular challenges facing international students that distinguish their experiences from those of domestic students. These include the challenges of:

- learning and living in a different culture;
- learning in a foreign university context;
- learning while developing English language proficiency; and
- learning the academic disciplinary discourse.
A survey of international students’ experiences at the University of Melbourne (University Planning Office, 2005) noted that the students were generally very positive about their experiences in their courses. They highly valued the opportunities for personal growth and academic achievement. However, the students said that they encountered problems to do with initiation into their course, participating successfully in a Western academic environment, English language skills and engaging comfortably with the rest of the University community. While for some of the students, these concerns diminished over time, for others they remained ongoing concerns throughout their course.

Research has found that academics are aware of the learning needs of their students, but may be unclear about how best to address those needs (Ryan, 2005). The purpose of this document is to encourage the use of different strategies and approaches that have been informed by research in the area of international students’ learning in western higher education contexts. The key areas that are discussed in some detail include:

- Internationalising the curriculum
- Making lectures accessible
- Encouraging participation in small group work
- Adopting an educative approach to plagiarism
- Supporting students in developing critical thinking skills
- Explaining assessment expectations

In developing this document, interviews were conducted with academic staff from a variety of faculties and teaching contexts within the University. The strategies presented are informed by the experiences of those interviewed. Comments from international students have also been included. Helpful suggestions were received from numerous academic staff during the development of this document. Feedback was received from members of the Academic Programs Committee (APC), Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee (TaLQAC) and the International Students Consultative Committee, and their contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

The practical advice in this document has been written for academic staff wishing to explore different ideas in their teaching to address the needs of international students. This advice is offered with international students in mind but can be useful for all students.
Internationalising the curriculum

One of the more apparent influences of globalisation in universities has been the focus on internationalising the curriculum. How we interpret this idea depends on our discipline area, the extent to which the content can be internationalised and the process of teaching and learning. We also need to consider the attributes of all graduate students. Currently, the Graduate Attributes for the University of Melbourne emphasises leadership in professions and communities, fluency between cultures and active global citizens. It is desirable that graduates develop ways of effectively communicating with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, be aware of international perspectives and interpret issues within a global context.

This section will discuss two ways in which the curriculum may be internationalised. From a content perspective, topics and resources with a more international flavour may be selected. From a teaching and learning perspective, consideration needs to be given to how the content will be taught to enhance learning for students. Both of these aspects need to be considered in internationalising the curriculum. Strategies for each of these are presented below.

Internationalising the Content

For some disciplines it seems that academics already consider the content as international, usually because the discipline is practised in the same way across different countries. An example of this is cell biology:

Science has this arrogant belief that it’s an international entity. It certainly is a western international entity. And science as it is practised in other places, whether it is an Islamic country or China is still recognisably that western entity. To be science it has to be. I don’t know how you can internationalise the pursuit of truth.

Other academics internationalise the content by including material that offers different international perspectives:

What I do with my undergraduate Management subject is I specifically looked for videotapes, examples and cases that were not just North American, European or Australian. I cover a number of Asian countries, because most of our international students are from Asia. In my postgraduate subjects I get examples of companies that are multinational. My guest speakers are all from organisations that are global. Also every year I look for books that have an international or Asia-Pacific focus. That’s how I internationalise my curriculum.

Content can also be internationalised by connecting students to international research as suggested in The Teaching-Research Nexus (http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/downloads/TR_Nexus.pdf) and contextualising local issues within global concerns.
Internationalising Teaching and Learning

It is slightly more challenging to explore internationalising the curriculum in terms of teaching and learning. This perspective is more concerned with how the content is taught and the consequences for learning. From the interviews conducted with academics, three main issues emerged. Firstly, academics were concerned with developing intercultural perspectives and encouraging effective communication with students from diverse cultural backgrounds:

At the start of the semester I show the Australian Bureau of statistics snapshot of the population. I do this just in case any of the local students think that it is not relevant for them to hear about the experiences of the international students. Even if they don’t work overseas, they have to communicate with people from different backgrounds here in Australia.

Secondly, academics believe that they need be aware of students’ different experiences and expectations and cater for these in their teaching:

I think internationalising the curriculum is about the different educational experiences our students have and the way we actually go about teaching them and responding to their expectations of learning. The activities that we use, the expectations that we have and how we communicate those to them may impact on how well they are able to participate in class.

Finally, academics were concerned with developing students’ skills to be able to work anywhere in the world and the implications for this on learning:

We talk about issues of portability. The degree and the qualification have to be portable, so that any of our graduates can work anywhere in the world. We get the students to think about how the theories actually work and also the limitations of those theories in different contexts.

Some of the suggestions offered in this document can be used to develop approaches that internationalise teaching and learning. From University surveys we know that international students choose to study at the University because of its reputation and quality of teaching. They enjoy being in a learning environment where they are challenged and exposed to new ways of learning. There are also benefits for domestic students, as they engage with culturally and linguistically diverse students who offer multi-cultural perspectives on local and global issues. The challenges and benefits for academics are in optimising opportunities in planning and delivering curriculum to enhance international students learning and create inclusive supportive learning environments for all students.
Making lectures accessible

Understanding lecture content can be difficult for international students. Listening is an active rather than a passive skill, especially for the second language learner. They are processing the words, attempting to understand the main ideas presented and drawing on what they already know to make sense of the material presented in the lecture, in their second language. This is especially true for first year undergraduate and postgraduate international students, who are developing their English language skills and learning in a western university environment. There are strategies that can be used in the design and delivery of the lecture that can assist in making the conventional lecture more accessible for international students:

- Outline the main points of the lecture and make links to other topics covered in the subject or material to be covered in tutorials. Highlight key questions or issues that will be addressed during the lecture. Concept maps are useful as they offer a visual representation of the content and how it relates to other areas in the course.

- Provide a lecture outline with the main points to be covered to assist students to follow the lecture and guide their note taking. This can be put on the web for students to download and supplement the PowerPoint slides that are usually available to students.

- Explain any relevant background information that may assist students in understanding key concepts.

- Define any new or unfamiliar words or concepts, and provide opportunities for clarification.

Focusing on core concepts

Over the years I have really learned to think through what is the essential and optional in courses. Now in class I focus on the essentials and direct people to the optional. I think that a lot of the time in teaching at university it is very easy not to foreground to the students what you think is very important, because we tend to mix it up with a whole lot of other stuff. (Academic)

Recording lectures

I have had feedback from the international students that they value i-lecture because they can go back and review points of the lecture they did not understand. (Academic)
**Being on the lookout for jargon**

I try to reduce jargon in what I do, but in certain areas have to teach the jargon, as the students will be working in the industry. I also try to reduce the use of idioms and colloquialisms. I had students who came to see me and I had given them a document saying, “This is the silver bullet to the whole situation”. And the students from China said to me “what is this silver bullet?”

(Academic)

- If slang, jargon and culturally specific humour are used in the lecture, explain the meaning for students who may not understand it. This is important with first year students, although by third year this should be less of an issue.
- Summarise the important information at certain stages in the lecture.
- Use international examples or case studies where possible.
- Record the lectures using i-lecture, so that international students can listen to them again. This will assist students to clarify points that they may have not understood due to English being their second or third language.
- Conclude the lecture by summarising the main points and highlighting ‘take home’ messages.

> In my lectures I think critically about the level of detail I teach. I think about what is more important. *Is there a theoretical concept or an overview that the students would much rather have than being bogged down with the seventy-seven new words that we are introducing in today’s lecture?* (Academic)

**Explaining unfamiliar words**

The local as well as international students find it useful when I ask them whether they understand specific terms. It is interesting to see them gain confidence in asking for definitions. They do this because I let them know that it is okay to ask when they are not sure. (Academic)

At the start it was very difficult for me to understand the lecturers. It was good when they took time to explain ideas and they encouraged us to ask questions if we are not sure. (International student)
Creating opportunities for small group participation

It has been widely observed that international students may appear hesitant in contributing to group discussions. This is not necessarily because this is their preferred learning style. International students often report that they would like to participate but lack the confidence to do so. This could be in part due to their lack of familiarity with how to contribute to an academic discussion or their perceived lack of English language skills. Contributing to discussions can be seen as a risky undertaking if the students are not comfortable with their English language ability or are unfamiliar with the cultural conventions for ‘breaking into’ the conversation. Academics may need to create ‘safe’ learning environments where students feel that they can make a contribution. Creating opportunities for participation in class where students feel supported can be achieved by incorporating some of the following strategies:

**Preparation for small group discussion**

- As second language learners of English, students need to be given adequate time to prepare responses. One strategy that can be used is to ask students to prepare some responses for the next tutorial or seminar. Set key questions with the reading material so that students can prepare their answer before the class. This will give them greater confidence in contributing to any discussion.

- It is important to make expectations about student participation clear to international students. As we know, this is an effective strategy for all students, but it is particularly useful for international students because research indicates that they are often not aware of what participation in class actually means in an Australian tertiary context. Making academic expectations clear can help to clarify this to students.

- Create a teaching atmosphere early in the semester in which students interact with each other. This allows the opportunity for international and domestic students to talk and get to know each other.

**Giving students time to prepare**

I do expect international students to participate. I give them case studies that they prepare for discussion in the following class. Now because I am aware that some students are struggling to participate, I ask them to hand in their preparation. I do compromise, so that they are not disadvantaged, but I do expect that they will gain the confidence to contribute in future classes. (Academic)

**Using ice-breakers**

I spend a lot of time in the first class ‘breaking the ice’ and getting the students to establish a bond and start making friendships. By the end of the class I can hardly stop them from talking. And I do this in my lectures as well as small group teaching. (Academic)
Explicitly seeking international perspectives

At the start of the semester I collect student profile information, where I specifically ask them their country of origin. I memorise their names and their country of origin, so I can specifically invite the students to make comments. I think that memorising their names, knowing where they come from and calling on them in class, makes them feel that they are not just a number. I always encourage the students and I try to see something of value in what the student says that I can reiterate to the class.

(Academic)

Thoughtfully managing student group work

There is a lot of coaching I do in terms of warming up the teaching atmosphere. I think about the composition of the groups and make sure that there are students from different cultural backgrounds present in each of the groups. I organise the groups so that they are small. I give them a task which is quite explicit, and where each person in the group at some point must speak.

(Academic)

Encouraging contributions in class

- We know that one way of increasing participation is to memorise students’ names and invite them to speak. This can be a successful strategy if the lecturer has already established a ‘safe environment’ and if the international students feel that the group values their contributions.
- Ask international students how the issue would be considered from their experiences, keeping in mind that they do not represent the views of their culture or country.
- Briefly summarise the discussion from time to time, highlighting the key points, so that the students can follow the discussion.
- Pose questions or issues that students can discuss in pairs and then report back to the class.
- Remember to wait before moving on to another student, as it can take time for international students to understand the question, consider their response and communicate that in English.
- Structure group tasks so that international and domestic students are grouped together. Assign roles for each member of the small group, including discussion leader, timekeeper, note-taker, and person to report back. This allows everyone to have a role in the group.
- As is acknowledged in strategies for effective small group teaching, quizzes and pair work encourage interaction among students.
- Organising group activities so that diversity of experience and knowledge are necessary for successfully completing the task.
- Where possible, develop tasks that increase opportunities for domestic and international students to interact.
Adopting an educative approach to plagiarism

Misunderstandings about plagiarism can occur for international students because of cultural and language issues. Students need to know what constitutes plagiarism (see Assessing Learning In Australian Universities, www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning). For international students, plagiarism can be an intercultural issue. They may come from cultures where writing involved repeating the collective wisdom and there is little need to acknowledge the source of information. Plagiarism can also be an English language ability issue. While international students may be aware of what plagiarism is, they may lack the English language skills required to read information, extract the relevant points and then put it into their own words, so that they can avoid plagiarising.

- Highlight the reasons why referencing is used in your discipline and give students examples of correct referencing styles.
- Discuss issues concerning plagiarism with the students. Contact the Language and Learning Skills Unit or teaching and learning units within your faculty for expert support in this area.
- Model the use of referencing within your lectures and tutes.
- In the discussion of readings, highlight certain sections where the author has synthesised the main ideas and referenced them.
- Use examples of previous assignments to demonstrate how ideas can be presented and sources referenced.
- Develop tasks that ask students to evaluate and analyse ideas they have read, so that the focus is more on critiquing the readings rather than comprehension.

Courses related to plagiarism are very crucial, especially in Australia where this problem is dealt more seriously than other countries. (International student)

Explaining referencing

When the students begin their first assignment I spend some time in class explaining how to use referencing. I highlight how they should include references in their notes and where they got that information. I give the students a style guide to help them and ask them to refer to it all the time when they are writing. (Academic)

Supporting language learning

I tend to use the services of the Language and Learning Skills Unit and get them to come out and give a talk to all my students. The LLSU show students how to reference their work and also discuss why they need to acknowledge sources in their academic writing. (Academic)

I think we can do more. Rather than focus on what the students should not do in terms of plagiarism, I try to focus on what the students should be doing. I want the students to synthesise and evaluate what they read. We need to teach students how to do this and this needs to be more of a focus in teaching. (Academic)
Supporting students in developing critical thinking skills

Critical discussion in class
I encourage my students from day one to critically analyse anything that I give them. We go through many examples in class. I deliver part of the lecture and then I stop and say, “Okay think about this particular theory? Now what do you think is wrong with it and when would it not apply?” I try to get them to think about what the theory means, how we can analyse it and whether it applies to every situation. I model the types of questions they should be asking. (Academic)

Multi-level reading guides
I have found that for second language learners it is important to give them questions to accompany the set readings. It gives students the processing time that they need. I mix the questions up in terms of difficulty. Some of them are very literal questions and some of them are inferential so that they cater for different ability groups. (Academic)

It is often suggested that students from Confucian heritage cultures find it difficult to think critically. However, like most stereotypes, this is unlikely to be true. Research has found that students from CHC are capable of high-level critical thinking (Biggs, 2003). It is not the international students’ cognitive skills that are in question but their English language ability that influences their reading, understanding, interpretation and evaluation of the material that is demonstrated in either written or oral expression. As we know, developing critical thinking skills is equally challenging for domestic students.

Teaching critical thinking skills can be useful in assisting students to develop learning strategies to avoid plagiarism. Classroom activities that model critical thinking skills in our discussions, create learning opportunities for students to develop their skills and offer feedback can guide students’ development of critical thinking skills. These may include:

- Explain and demonstrate what critical thinking skills are required in your disciplinary area. Different disciplines define it in slightly different ways.
- Clearly the reading process can be difficult for students who have English as a second language. It may be useful to highlight the importance of the reading material to the content of the course. This will assist students to access the main ideas presented in the text.
When setting required reading, offer questions for students to guide their reading of the text. Stage the questions to include literal meaning (describe, define, explain), interpretive meaning (analyse, test, calculate, apply, demonstrate) and applied meaning (evaluate, compare assess). This will help the students to think beyond the literal understanding and develop their skills as strategic and critical readers.

- Develop students’ critical thinking skills through classroom discussions. Questions such as “In what situations would this work?” “Can you think of any situation in which this would not apply?” “How does this relate to other theories/concepts we have discussed?” can be used as prompts for students to present different points of view.

**Encouraging critical analysis**

I know that the international students from certain Asian countries may not be used to critical analysis. I acknowledge that they might find this difficult. I encourage them to come and see me if they have any problems or to email me. I have an open-door policy to support the international students. And they do come and see me. (Academic)

**Discussing different points of views**

Provided that you have a teaching style that involves a lot of participation in small groups, mixing between international students and local students, or international students from different backgrounds, then I think that they can have the experience of hearing different points of view. Negotiating between those different points of view is the heart of critical thinking. (Academic)
Explaining assessment expectations

Assessment may be one of the most important areas in which international students need to be given guidance. As international students bring different educational experiences, we may need to highlight what we will be valuing in the assessment process. This requires explaining the assessment criteria and our expectations, as well as offering constructive feedback to students (see Guide for Reviewing Assessment, www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/publications). Feedback is especially important to international students as it can offer them some direction on how they can improve their performance.

Assessment criteria

1. Explain in detail the purpose of the assessment and the subject content that will be assessed. Give students a copy of the assessment criteria and explain how marks will be allocated. This gives students a clearer understanding of what is required and clarifies expectations.

2. If English language is being assessed, indicate in the criteria that aspects of English language will be assessed and the marks allocated for this.

3. Outline the requirements of the exam and model the type of responses required.

Two weeks before the exam, I run cases and sample questions similar to the exam and I clearly explain to them what they will get points for in answering the questions and how they should answer it. I focus on the structure as well as the content. For instance, if I’m going to give any marks for definition, I will always say to the students that they need to give a definition. I emphasise that they need to have an introduction, body and conclusion and that I will give so many points for each part. (Academic)
Assessment and learning

- Where possible try to vary the type of assessment tasks used, to cater for different learning styles.
  
  *I try to provide a range of assessment tasks. So I will have a combination of group assessment, of individual assessment and multiple choices. I’ll also have participation in class as part of the formal assessment and the exam.*

- Assessment tasks early in the semester can help to identify students who may need extra support with their English writing.

- Involve the Language and Learning Skills Unit (LLSU) in your classes. Staff from the LLSU can assist in addressing the language learning issues for students in your classes.

- Plan learning activities that prepare the students for the assessment tasks. This is useful for all students and for increasing understanding of the requirements of the assessment for the subject. It also allows opportunities for group feedback.

Feedback

- Try to avoid feedback such as “this is not logical” or “this is confusing”, as these comments do not offer students advice on how they can improve. If the paper does not “flow logically” then offer a few brief suggestions to the students as to how they achieve this and direct them to the support services available at the university, such as the Language and Learning Skills Unit.

- Offer oral feedback to students in class after assignments have been returned, focusing on the main issues that arose from the assessment and identifying what students can do to improve their performance in the subsequent assessment for the subject.

Explicit criteria

Assessment is an interesting process because the information you want to get is both for you and the students. So you need some sort of assessment tool that’s explicit about criteria in order to work out where the strengths and weaknesses are in different dimensions, like content organization, language, following the conventions and so on. This is very good for them because they gain feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. That’s true not just for international students but all students. (Academic)

Giving written feedback

I tend to be very explicit in my written feedback while reading the assignment. I also write a paragraph at the end summarising the things that I want to praise and acknowledge, and try to express what I think may be limitations in the paper. (Academic)
**Assessment and learning**

I believe in teaching the assignment as well as setting the assignment. I teach students about the meaning of the assignment and what I am looking for through activities in class. (Academic)

TLU was very helpful in my first semester when I was seeking assistance for my assignment. It’s the first time I needed to write such academic style writing and the TLU gave me clear direction and explanation on how I should write. (International student)

**Linking content and language teaching**

The international students are so overwhelmed, especially when they have just arrived. I make a point of getting the Teaching Learning Unit (TLU) to come to my class rather than just waiting for the students to go there for help. That way, the students see the TLU is a part of the subject that I teach and this encourages them to seek support. (Academic)

The LLSU staff helped us not only on grammar correction, but also the technique in answering the questions and the structure of our essays. They give helpful advice and resources that release much of our pressure. (International student)

References:


NEWSLETTERS

Working With International Student Writers

Doug Hesse
University Writing Program

Note: The following essay sets a context for its companion piece, "Guidelines for Responding to the Writing of International Students: Principles and Pedagogy."

I've led over a hundred faculty workshops at DU in the past seven years, and no topic comes up more often than how faculty might best work with writers whose main language isn't English. While there's an occasional whiff of "What are these students doing in my classes?" the common motivation is genuine concern for these students and a desire to do well by them. What is "fair" in terms of grading? What are reasonable expectations of ability and improvement? How kinds of instruction or response work? What responsibilities do professors have, especially when they perceive endless needs and opportunities?

Because 9% of the DU undergraduate student body is international—a number likely only to increase, to our great enrichment—I suggest that all of us need to think systematically about how we'll work with multilingual writers. That is, rather than considering these students as occasional blips on our course screens, we should acknowledge that will routinely be in our classes, and we should adopt some basic principles and strategies— for both their good and our own.

Obviously, international students' writing can vary tremendously. I've had some who attended English-speaking high schools and did typical American writing assignments; their writing can be nearly indistinguishable from American students, in terms of content, strategy, and fluency. In addition, more careful admissions criteria and language screening at DU in the past two years has raised international students' abilities overall. Obviously, too, international students can come from cultural and educational backgrounds that produce learning behaviors and expectations that differ widely from those we assume for American students. I'm simply going to comment on writing matters, knowing it's tough to extract them from wider contexts.

I cast back to my own experiences studying a term at The University of Vienna. I was 20, already a highly successful student at the University of Iowa, someone who'd taken the full range of German language and literature courses, earning A's. And yet my writing in German was miserable; I'd spend hours writing papers I could have written in a third the time in English, and they'd come back strewn with corrections, each paper as problematic as the previous one. I remember the professor being encouraging and sympathetic. Surely, she'd have been justified to fail me—though the course wasn't graded—if the sole standard had been command of the language equivalent to the Austrian, Swiss, and German students in the course. Not many years afterwards, my
German proficiency withered, something inevitable no matter how highly that Viennese faculty might have honed my abilities.

As I think most of us recognize, even years of serious language study by serious students rarely yields second language fluency, certainly not in writing, and certainly not for students grounded in "nonwestern" languages. Fluency generally takes 5-10 years to develop. The Guidelines that accompany this piece, produced by four colleagues in the writing program, encapsulates research on second language writing into a few statements and some best practices. I'll not replicate its content here but will rather make a few points.

First, a majority of international students will not produce error-free prose. If you insist, for example, that all prepositions must be correct and that all aspects of a paper must be idiomatic, then you may as well just write an F on the paper without reading it, because it most likely will contain enough flaws to miff you. However, doing so would be misguided and, I suggest, irresponsible.

Second, each piece of writing has at least three dimensions. 1. Aptness of content and approach to the task. Has the writer been able to render the content, ideas, and analysis salient for a given task accurately and appropriately? Does the writer convey the understanding and insight necessary for the task? 2. Rhetorical fit. Does the writer address readers in the ways they need to be addressed, in terms of organization, types of evidence and discussion, voice and tone, deployment of content (neither explaining too little nor too much), and so on? 3. Conformity to conventions of edited American English. How well do the surface features of the text (grammar, usage, and punctuation—matters like subject-verb or pronoun agreement, for example, or syntactic structures) conform to prevailing conventions of standard edited English (taking care to distinguish true error from mere infelicity)?

Attending to all three dimensions is crucial in teaching not just international but all students. Because grammar, punctuation, and usage irregularities are the easiest to spot, especially if a reader is determined to spot them, those elements may draw most attention. But focusing only on surface features may miss strengths—and weaknesses—in the other two dimensions, and that would be a mistake. It's tempting, even convenient, to have a bottom-up approach to writing, that imagines first words and sentences must be in order, then paragraphs, then ideas and so on. Writing, however, is importantly top-down, driven by the task at hand. What I'm saying is that everything matters, especially in teaching and learning situations.

Furthermore, acceptable writing strategies (what I've called "rhetorical fit" above) vary among cultures and education systems. Students may come from traditions in which papers are developed in ways more oblique or meandering than American readers expect. Papers may contain higher percentages of quoted or paraphrased material—less of the student's own ideas and analysis—than we prefer. Standards of citation or attribution may strike us as lax. Simply lecturing on the characteristics of American academic writing doesn't tidily flip a rhetorical switch that has been years in development—though it's indeed reasonable to share such advice.

Third, as a consequence, read charitably. Read for content and rhetorical strategy as much as—or, actually, even prior to—reading for surface errors. If the prevalence of error really and truly interferes with comprehension, of
course, that's a huge problem. However, my own experience reading international student writing is that I can follow the majority of it; it may have logical shortcomings or lack of depth that some American writing has, but I can understand what the writer is saying. Of course, I can be distracted, even annoyed, along the way, but I try to dial that down a little and pay attention to other levels of the text. If a text resists my best charitable reading, then, of course, I have to convey that to the student, including with a grade.

A real warning sign is the inability to generate enough writing to approximate the length requirement of a given task. I'd worry much less about a student who, on a 500 word assignment, produces 500 words that have all sorts of errors but in a comprehensible text, than I would about a student on the same task who produces but 100 words, however error-free they are. The latter students' difficulty might be not understanding readings on which the assignment is based, or it might be not having a sufficient vocabulary or syntactic sense, but it's a problem. In any language learning situation, teachers primarily encourage students to produce words and sentences in the language. Premature correctness, often motivated by efficiency, can stymie that production. Of course, the rub in a university psychology or accounting course is that the term marches on, in ten week fashion. Stopping the clock to let a student develop generative productivity is rarely possible.

Fourth, be judicious in providing feedback. An awful lot of us professors exhibit a kind of savior/hero behavior when it comes to student writing. We see so many problems or so much promise that we want to—even feel obliged to—note everything. One problem with that approach is that it's unsustainable; we get tired and burnt out, perhaps even to the point of not making assignments at all. Furthermore, there's plenty of research that says, beyond a point, we're not doing students much good as we work ourselves to exhaustion or cynicism. Short, directed feedback, perhaps with editing just a page or so (and not the whole paper) can be even more valuable because it focuses students' attention. You can find some tips to responding to student writing in Writing Beyond Writing Classes: Resources for University of Denver Faculty, especially pages 18-34, also available in print from the Writing Program.

A somewhat related fear for some faculty is one I frequently hear phrased, "But I don't have enough expertise to teach writing." Generally, not true. What most faculty seem to mean is that they don't have explicit knowledge of names and rules; they're aware that there are things called gerunds and dangling modifiers and subject verb complements, but they don't know the terminology. I have two consolations. First, there is "performative knowledge" and "declarative knowledge." Anyone teaching at DU has the former, amply demonstrated in their own writing and reading. The proof is in the performance, not in the recitation of a rule. Second, "declarative knowledge," the ability to name or define is limited use in performance. I can tell you what a Higgs Bosun is, but I can't do a lick of meaningful physics. I can name the muscles involved in shooting a free throw, but Ty Lawson is going to have a much higher shooting percentage than I ever will. Having a terminology can be efficient in looking things up in reference books (such as The Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers, of which I'm a co-author and wrote a 100-page section for second language learners, by the way) or in solidifying an emerging structure. But rules aren't vaccines. Generally the knowledge you need to be useful to students is along the lines of "This is unclear" or "Here's my reaction" or "I'd write the sentence this way." In any event, no rule is going to help you master the use of prepositions in English—or any other language.

Fifth and finally, make your peace with grading. A paper by an international student that receives a B from me may look little like a B paper from a native speaker and writer. I'd expect the international student to be of B
quality in terms of what I called above “aptness of content and approach.” I'd expect it to be mostly successful in terms of “rhetorical fit.” But it may be only of C quality—perhaps even lower—in terms of conformity to edited American English, as long as those elements don't inordinately interfere with the reader's understanding the content as solid and the approach as satisfactory. Conversely, an error-free paper that is minimal in terms of content or flawed in terms of rhetorical approach is not going to get higher than a C from me, international student or native speaker.

Is this “fair” to native writers? We can debate the ins and outs. But this approach strikes me as pragmatic, ethical, and realistic. If we want to insist that an A is ever and always an A, for all students, then we probably should just massively ramp our admissions criteria and screening for international students, dropping the number admitted to 1 or 2% of the student body perhaps. However, I think there would be enormous costs of doing so, and I don't simply mean the loss of tuition income.

Now, I encourage you to see “Guidelines for Responding to the Writing of International Students Principles and Pedagogy.”

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Guidelines for Responding to the Writing of International Students

Brad Benz, Kamila Kinyon, Eric Leake, and Eliana Schonberg
Endorsed by the University of Denver Writing Program, January 2014

I. PRINCIPLES:

The purpose of this document is to suggest some best practice guidelines for helping DU professors work with non-native speaker (NNS) students. These practices, which adhere to the principles articulated in the Conference on College Composition and Communication's "Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers," can apply to all classes that involve writing in English, whether for formal or informal assignments, tests, or presentations. These guidelines focus on NNS, but may assist in the consideration of texts by native speakers as well.

It is helpful to begin with two general reminders:

• all DU students bring a variety of native languages and dialects to campus, including dialects of English other than written standard English;
• it can take between five and ten years to become fluent in a second language.

Moreover, because both rhetorical conventions and assumptions about originality differ across cultures, international students can enter DU classes with a different set of cultural expectations than native speakers of English. Thus, while grammatical errors can cause significant difficulties, these are by no means the only important issues to address in responding to NNS writing. It is good practice to evaluate the writing of native and NNS students by the same standards, including giving greater attention to larger rhetorical concerns.

II. PEDAGOGY: ASSIGNMENT CONSTRUCTION:

Constructing effective assignments for native and non-native speakers of English can have a substantial impact on students' success in a course. It is typical of many courses in the U.S. to emphasize current events or other issues from an American perspective, and assignment prompts may ask international students to approach topics that are not integral to their background and goals. NNS writers may be unfamiliar with genres of writing that are familiar to native speakers of English. Instructors should consider adjusting their assignments to include open-ended topics or topics of cross-cultural interest.
III. PEDAGOGY: GUIDELINES FOR READING & RESPONDING TO NNS PAPERS:

1. Read the paper in full before commenting, to see how it is organized on its own terms. Different cultures value different rhetorical strategies. (See Appendix A for more detail on cultural differences in rhetorical construction.)

2. Remember that NNS writers' texts typically employ a simpler style, with less variety in sentence construction, with shorter words and less specific words, and generally less variety in terms of diction and lexical sophistication.

3. Begin your commenting with larger issues, such as focus, argument, development, and organization.

4. Consider first the rhetorical and communicative possibilities of a statement before determining error, and consider whether commenting on minor grammatical and stylistic issues may be secondary concerns.

5. Do not correct all the errors in a paper. Rather, identify recurring grammatical patterns in the text, and give one or two examples. Then ask the student to locate and correct other examples of the same problem. It is important to get NNS students to fix their own mistakes. (See Appendix D for Common Errors.)

6. When faced with a possibility of plagiarism, keep in mind cultural differences regarding authority and attribution. (See Appendix C on Plagiarism and Culture.)

7. If the paper has multiple errors, prioritize feedback. Make sure to focus on those errors that most interfere with meaning. For example, sentence structure is central for making the meaning clear to a reader. The student should learn how to make these corrections first, before moving on to such issues as article usage.

IV. PEDAGOGY: ASSESSMENT AND GRADING:

There exist differing views regarding assessment and grading of international students in courses that also contain native speakers. Instructors and departments may choose to establish guidelines for assessment of international students' work that, in relation to goals for native speakers, are consistent in terms of content goals, but differ in terms of language use.

A. In-Class Writing and In-Class Essay Exams

The composing process for NNS students is more laborious than it is for native speakers. As a result, their texts are often shorter than those of native speakers, especially in a two-hour class session. NNS students naturally need more time than native speakers for completing in-class writing and in-class exams. Essay exams may pose a particular problem. Instructors should do what they can to accommodate NNS students' needs.

B. Consideration of Diversity in Evaluating the Final Product

In courses across the disciplines, instructors must use their best judgment to find grading practices that are fair to all students while showing understanding for the differing background of international students. As recommended by the CCCC "Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers," the evaluation of second language texts should take into consideration various aspects of writing, such as general effectiveness, topic development, organization, grammar, and word choice.
C. Embedding Assessment and Grading in a Process Approach

Instructors can better understand the assumptions and knowledge that international students bring to their texts by considering different stages of these students' writing process. Reflective commentary, for example, may give instructors insight into the genre knowledge and rhetorical knowledge that students bring to their texts. In providing revision-oriented comments, instructors can take on the role of helpful readers as opposed to the role of evaluators and correctors of student texts. The role of evaluator is more useful at a later stage, when students have had the chance to sufficiently work through their ideas.

APPENDIX: CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, PLAGIARISM, EDITING

A. Cultural Differences in Rhetorical Conventions:

There are varying methods of essay development across cultures, as each language and culture has rhetorical conventions unique to it. For example, not all cultures share the American emphasis on thesis statements, linear development, or the summing up through a conclusion. Students from some cultural traditions may tend to approach a topic from a variety of viewpoints in order to examine it indirectly and may also feel a greater freedom to digress or to introduce extraneous material. Cultural differences may be manifested in some of the following ways:

1. In a paper's organization (such as inductive or deductive reasoning patterns)
2. In a preference for a particular sentence style
3. In the forms of address or register (issues of formality)
4. In apparent lack of cohesive ties
5. In the amount and type of information that is included (such as the balance between general points and supporting information)

B. There are also differing conventions in speech styles across cultures. As a result, NNS students' class participation may affect the classroom dynamic. Whatever culture NNS students come from, be aware that speech styles differ, and take this into account when engaging NNS students in classroom discussions.

C. Plagiarism and Culture:

1. In the United States, ideas about plagiarism are driven by a particular understanding of what it means to write—including a value on individuality, independence, and notions of "authentic voice." Originality is another important concept in Western education systems.
2. Other traditions tend to emphasize close allegiance to a few acknowledged authorities, leading to convergence of perspective and social harmony.
3. It is useful to address the issue of plagiarism gently but explicitly with international students, whether during student conferences or office hours or through additional commenting on student papers. International students at DU are told that if they plagiarize, they could lose their student visa, so they're often very afraid of the word "plagiarism" even if they don't know how to not plagiarize.
4. Paraphrasing is an especially difficult skill as it requires the linguistic resources to rephrase original wording to suit a new need and context.
5. How to consult with students about using sources:
   1. It is useful to look at a student's sources side by side with her papers.
   2. See if the writer has done the following:
      1. Does the writer do a good job of weaving source information into the paper?
      2. Does she vary the way that she uses sources, drawing on summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation?
      3. Does he choose appropriate times to use direct quotes in his paper, or does he overuse them, failing to make an original argument in the paper?

6. Instructors should be mindful of the following recommendation, articulated in the CCCC "Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers": "We advocate that instructors take extra care when suspecting a second language writer of plagiarism, and take into consideration the student's cultural background, level of experience with North American educational systems, and confidence level for writing in English."

D. Common Errors:
   1. Subject-verb agreement
   2. Verb tense
   3. Verb form
   4. Singular/plural noun endings
   5. Word form
   6. Sentence structure

E. Idioms - turns of phrase, metaphors, slang, etc. It is very hard for NNS students to learn idioms. There are no structured grammar rules for them; rather, they are idiosyncratic and heavily culturally dependent, so it takes years of cultural immersion to learn most of them. ESL speakers who have spent years in the US and are otherwise fluent in English still often have trouble with them. Consequently, idioms should be a low priority when grading a paper unless the idiom is a major theme in the paper or the paper is nearly free of errors.

F. Other common grammatical errors that can also be considered idiomatic:
   1. Prepositions - Some prepositions make logical sense but others don't. For instance, "on the driveway" makes more sense than "in the driveway." Prepositions like this just take time in cultural immersion to learn since there is no real grammatical rule.
   2. Some articles - "a" and "the." It's quite common for NNS students to drop articles, especially if they don't exist in a student's native language. However, some articles follow grammatical rules and patterns while others do not. So, it is worth considering articles a low priority, especially if the dropped article does not follow a formal rule or grammatical pattern.
   3. Some count and non-count nouns - Count nouns usually follow clear patterns and are easily taught. However, non-count nouns often do not. For instance, how do you explain that 'money' is non-count (words like data, rice, glue, etc) and has no plural form? However, a word like "cat" is easily explained as a count noun. Again, those nouns that are not easily explained should take low priority. Only focus on them if the paper is otherwise nearly free of errors. Because there is often no clear rule or pattern to them, non-count nouns often have to be memorized by rote or simply learned through immersion.
The Chinese Mother’s American Dream

BY KARIN FISCHER

A

BEIJING

E BY WU and her parents sat side by side on the living-room couch in their apartment. The sun had not yet risen on this chilly December morning, and they would greet one of the most consequential moments in Abby’s young life in their pajamas. Today they would find out if she had been admitted to the college of her dreams, Wellesley, in far-off Massachusetts.

It was the culmination of so much: hours of studying for the SAT, draft after discarded draft of personal essays. And the decision, a dozen years earlier, to enroll Abby in an experimental school where she would have daily English lessons, taught by Westerners.

With equal parts anticipation and apprehension, they logged into the website for Wellesley applicants.

Scenes like this are playing out across China with growing frequency. This fall more than 275,000 Chinese students will start classes on American campuses, nearly triple the number from any other country. But even as American colleges have come to rely ever more on these students’ tuition dollars, they may know very little about the people writing the checks. Back in China, some half-million parents are holding their breath.

The decision they made to send a child across the globe in search of a better education and a better life is one fused with hope and fear, spurred by motivations that are complicated and sometimes contradictory. It may be about the draw of the United States or dissatisfaction with China, aspirations for the future or pragmatism about the present, a child’s desire or a parent’s resolve. It may be about all of that.

In many ways, mothers and fathers in Beijing and Shanghai face the same concerns as their counterparts in Minneapolis and Dallas, fretting about whether their kid is choosing the right college or an impractical major. But for Chinese parents, the choice of an American education for their child — and almost always their only child — is not just a financial investment. It’s a political maneuver, a personal sacrifice, a bet on greater opportunity abroad.

It’s the American dream of the Chinese parent.
When Anne Liu gave birth to her daughter, she chose the name Abby. With a name beginning with "A," she reasoned, she'd be first on every list. (Abby also has a Chinese name, Yuhan.) Anne wanted only the best for Abby. "You treat your daughter like a princess," her boss at Deloitte told her, and it was true. Ballet, piano lessons, ice skating, Abby did it all.

She could afford to. In recent decades, China's economy has been fast expanding, with annual growth rates averaging near 10 percent. When Anne graduated from university, in 1995, she made just $800 a year, or less than $20, a month. Soon, though, she had a round hired with multinational corporations. Today she has a position and publish research with a Chinese company that hopes to compete with the ride-sharing service Uber on navy's crowded streets. Her husband works in satellites communications. Together they can comfortably afford to send a third of their salaries on Abby's education.

The economic boom is the result, in part, of a calculation made by China's leaders after their deadly crackdowns on democratic protests, mostly students, in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. To ensure their political hold, they would open the doors wider to greater individual prosperity. Anne was a college freshman back in the spring of 1989; demonstrations broke out on her campus, in Xi'an, too. In time, though, she has come to believe that a "stable country is most important." "If everyone can now have the middle class," she says, "then this is quite good."

But that bargain benefited Anne, what it will mean for her daughter is less clear. As China's economic growth has cooled in the past few years, the competition for jobs has heated up. Unemployment rates for recent college graduates hover near 20 percent, or more than one million jobless. Some worry that those educated but idle young people could become disaffected and fuel public unrest.

While Anne and her husband have good jobs, they are, she says, a "normal family." In other words, they lack the political connections that, even today, can help secure a position. Like many Chinese parents, they want to ensure their child's education is a priority. "In China, parents will leverage their connections, particularly in government or state-owned companies. "In China, a lot of the good opportunities are not open to just the normal family," Anne says.

So when the Chinese school system comes to consider an option that might guarantee their daughter a more certain future: studying abroad. This isn't unheard of. In a recent survey, three out of four prospective Chinese students cited career prospects as their primary reason for seeking a foreign degree. Anne had come to know Americans through her work; she liked them and admired their universities. If Abby earned a degree from an American college, this might give her an edge in China's job market — or, more likely, in Anne's estimation, be the first step toward a life overseas, where the possibilities seemed bright and abundant.

But figuring out how to go about it can be tricky. It's easy to discount just how much of a mystery the American college-admissions process can be to the Chinese parent. For one thing, the emphasis on evaluating the student applicant — personal statements, teacher recommendations, extracurricular activities — contrasts with a system in which a single score, on the national college-entrance exam, decides all. With its dizzying array of choices, American higher education can seem like a buffet overstimulated with dishes, many unfamiliar. Do you reach for the stir-fried noodles because it's the "quality" dish? Or do you go with something unknown that might prove to be more to your taste? Getting advice can be tough. Few high schools have guidance counselors, and many families instead pay agents, who sometimes charge exorbitant fees for little service.

In Anne's case, she initially turned to her sister, a medical researcher in Washington, D.C., who recommended the Johns Hopkins University. That option didn't appeal to Abby, a spirited 17-year-old who studies French, loves Dickens, and aspires to work in public health. She also rejected out of hand the large state universities that have been magnets for droves of Chinese students. A running joke in Beijing is that if you want to improve your Mandarin, spend four years in Michigan or Illinois. "In China, parents most often do their own thing," she says. "They just want to make sure their kids get a good education."

Many Chinese families engage private companies to help them navigate the American admissions process.
With the support of her parents, both university instructors, Wang Beili (above, left) has attended a special school for students who want to go to college overseas. At right, her father studies English vocabulary while preparing for his day.

Continued From Preceding Page

limits. Abby wanted to go to America to get to know Americans.

Liberal arts colleges have been slow to gain traction in China, where families focus on rankings and value degrees in preprofessional fields like business and engineering. But for Abby, who has visited dozens of colleges in three trips to the United States, Wellesley was the top choice — she liked the bucolic campus, the small classes, and the opportunity to sample all sorts of courses before choosing a major, something unheard of in China. Most of all, she liked the students at the women's college; they seemed confident, the way she wanted to be. She would go to Wellesley.

As the decision day grew closer, though, doubts crept in. Were her essays, written in a second language, strong enough? After taking the SAT four times, she raised her score to 2310, but would it be sufficiently high to secure her a spot in Wellesley's freshman class?

The night before Wellesley was to announce its first round of acceptances, Abby tried to work on applications to other colleges, a hedge against rejection. She couldn't concentrate. In bed she tossed and turned.

Wellesley was to post its early-admission decisions at 5 p.m. on the East Coast, 6 a.m. in Beijing. An hour before, Abby gave up even frigging sleep. Her parents joined her on the living-room couch. Although they attempted to reassure her, she sensed they were as nervous as she was.

Finally, the clock on her laptop flashed 5 p.m., and she logged in. Congratulations... the page began, and she was too excited to read any further. She hugged her parents. "I feel like what I've been doing for the last 17 years has been worth it," her mother told him, in the months since her acceptance. Abby has been imagining herself at Wellesley. She is considering taking a politics course, and to join the ballet-dancing club, hopes to get along with her American roommate. She's been thinking ahead — four, six, eight years, after she earns her B.A. and maybe a graduate degree or two, thinking about what will do them.

Like her mom, Abby has always assumed that she would go abroad and stay, that her future, if not in the United States, then somewhere else than China. That was the case, after all, for the last generation of Chinese students, her aunt included, who went over never to return home. Now she is not so sure.

Recently she was listening to an episode of This American Life about China. "The Chinese don't have a great self-image," a reporter was saying. They see themselves as a weak group, one with many problems. She's been pondering that.

"Students my age are starting to feel that our country is really great," Abby says, "we should do something to contribute to our country, not only think that the Western world is great. China has really, really progressed recently. It is going to need a lot of people like us, who have gone to study in Western countries, to come back and do something good for the country."

"My country may need me."
HERS WHAT Americans think about the Chinese students who've been crowding their camp-
uses. They all drive fancy cars, and they all speak English.

As with most stereotypes, there's some truth to it. American colleges offer relatively little fi-
ancial assistance to international students, and universities, which is where the real growth from
China has been. Indeed, though many institutions are leery of admitting overseas recruit-
ment has been a budgetary bright spot during and after the recession. Chinese students' abil-
ity to pay is part of their appeal.

Many of the students who initially went abroad were the children of China's economi-
cal and political elite — even President Xi Jin-
ping's daughter is a recent Harvard grad. These students continue to head overseas, but at the same time, more and more of those seeking foreign degrees now come from the country's export industries, and they are not.

An increasing number of Chinese students
attend American colleges from cities like Shanghai, China's largest city, which is familiarspoken in English and not unfamiliar to most Westerners.

Another of those cities in Ningbo, a thriving port and business hub roughly the size of Chi-

Therefore, schools within cities offer a Western curriculum, have become even more popular across China, en-
couraging students who plan to go to college overseas.

Wang Beini is in the Ningbo AP center's third class. She got the idea of studying abroad in middle school, when a teacher showed her a class a Gina-style address to Yale University. Beini liked it enough that she watched it after class, again and again. "Most

Then there was another reason, however, that Beini and her parents began to think seri-
ously about studying overseas. In Chinese education, you live and die by the test, the gaokao, the crucial college-admission exam. It is the sole determinant of not only university acceptance but also how she will study and work in the future. Beini, at any cost.

But before the gaokao, there is a first turn,
the junior high, which governs which high school a student can attend. Beini isn't ex-

The AP center didn't require the jun high for ad-

In June, a little more than a month away, Mengru would travel to Hong Kong to take the SAT for the first time. The exam is not offered in mainland China, except at a handful of intern-

Thus, the pressure was only beginning. At 16, she was in her first year of high school, in Chian. She had three more years, longer than the SAT. She might have taken the class, and then she found out that the SAT was a necessary part of applying to American colleges. In fact, this would be Mengru's schedule, day in day out, for the next two years.

It's ironic. Many parents in China want their children to go abroad because they value critical thinking and broad learning. But in prac-

The American admission process seems to encourage more test prep.

Some students in China are starting even

earlier than Mengru. That's particularly true of families who hope to secure their children a place at an ivy or another of the elite pri-

colleagues, which do not significantly dis-

Mengru's, in addition, for yet another reason was that, unlike many students who plan to go abroad, she was still enrolled in the rig-

Mengru was XX's daughter, and they both had a special relationship. They were not only close friends but also had similar interests in science and technology. Their mother, Xi Jinping, was the Chinese president and a well-known strategist in politics.

She was preparing for not only one but two exams. The AP exam and the SAT.

Mengru wanted to go to Harvard, one of the top universities in the world. The school was highly competitive, and she knew that it would be a challenge.

She had studied hard and practiced extensively, but she knew that the exams were only the first step. She had to work hard to get good grades in her classes and do well on the AP and SAT.

Mengru's approach to parenting was a con-

In contrast, Mengru's parents were concerned about her well-being and tried to balance her academic goals with her personal life. They believed that it was important for her to have a healthy perspective on her goals and to enjoy the process of learning.

Mengru's story is not unique. Many Chinese students face similar challenges as they pursue their education in the United States. Their parents are under pressure to succeed, and they often feel the same pressure.

The goal of studying abroad is to gain a better understanding of the world and to develop the skills needed to succeed in a global economy. However, the process can be stressful and demanding, and it is important for students to have support and guidance from their families and mentors.

"Students my age are starting to feel that our country is really great, and we should do something to contribute."
Continued From Proofing Page

Du Mengru (center), a high-school student who plans to attend college in the United States, sits down to lunch with her family. Mengru’s mother, Xuefang, once dreamed of studying abroad herself, but it never worked out for her.

"To help her to realize her dream, to help her achieve what she wants, that’s the most important."

Mengru to the United States on a whirlwind college tour, to campuses in two weeks. They signed up with a college consultant called Elite Scholars of China. Run by an American couple, it arranges in-school counseling and interviews for students applying to top American colleges.

Jiangli tried to learn as much as she could, attending parental information sessions offered by the consultant and getting pointers from friends and co-workers whose children were already abroad. "Have read a lot of books to improve her English, one suggested. "Finding mather's the SAT, mother said.

Jiangli had an edge over many parents as an English speaker, because many college have yet to translate their websites into Chinese. They also may not highlight the information most important to families in China. The Chinese mother does not care about a college’s financial aid or its football team. She does want to know if your graduates get jobs and if you'll pick her kid up at the airport.

Chinese social media has moved to fill this informational gap. In the chat rooms of online networks like Sina's Sina and WeChat, mothers and fathers planning to send their children to America constantly share strategies and information — not all of it current. As a result, today's Chinese parents simultaneously know both more and less about studying abroad than ever before. They are fluent in the pecking order of American universities, able to quote line and verse from the U.S. News rankings or the Fiske college guide.

But online, rumors can take hold. In one much-discredited rumor, a company guaranteed admission to top colleges for a price. To get into Harvard cost five million yuan, or more than $800,000. Boston University was a relative bargain, at about $194,000.

It's also worth remembering that because of China's one-child policy, almost everyone is a first timer to the college-application process. There are no older siblings to turn to for guidance. The first shot in the only one for both parent and child, and there are no do-overs.

It's not uncommon to hear stories about students showing up for college—connecting appointments with meticulous spreadsheets. Weighting pros and cons of dozens of universities, compiled by a fatherly parent. One student explained: "My job is to do well on the SAT. His mother handled the college research.

Amid such parental high anxiety, it's no surprise that children should feel the strain. Mengru was. "I'm really trying so hard," she confided in a small voice one spring day. She wrote inspirational messages to herself on her desk. "Stay positive, sunny." "As I cannot go back, I go ahead instead." "Sacrifice, victory." But the motivational messages were not enough. Finally, Mengru asked her parents if she could see a therapist. Alarmed, they agreed.

With weeks left before the June exam date, a decision was made — Mengru would take a month-long break from school. That way she could focus all her energy on the SAT. Her days would be filled with prep classes and tutoring sessions and practice exams, without the distractions of schoolwork.

Jiangli was shaken. "I give her a lot of push and pressure," she says. "I regret that I did that." She feared that she had failed Mengru. "I just want my child to be happy," she says.

Like many other Chinese parents, Jiangli is trying to do her best by her daughter, holding her close even as she prepares to send her away to a country Jiangli has never seen, except in TV movies. They are, these half-million mothers and fathers, betting that their children's future, China's future, lies in America.
Definitions of “Immigrant Students”

The use of the term “immigrant” to classify students often depends on the objectives of the organization or agency working with this population. For instance, in its No Child Left Behind Act, Title III, section 3301(6), the U.S. Department of Education defines immigrant children and youth as those who: a) are age 3 through 21, b) were not born in any state, and c) have not been attending one or more schools in any one or more states for more than three full academic years. This definition establishes the criteria for states to receive federal money for educational services offered to students and, notably, it prioritizes those who have been in the country for less than three academic years.

When organizations want to emphasize the length of time that a person has spent in the United States, the terms “first-generation,” “1.5 generation,” or “second-generation” immigrant may be used. A first generation immigrant is someone who was born outside the United States and arrived in the United States as an adult. A 1.5-generation immigrant was also born outside the United States but arrived in the United States as a child. A second-generation immigrant is the child of a first- or 1.5-generation immigrant.

When the conditions that brought a person to the United States are to be emphasized, organizations might reference the person’s immigration status as either a refugee or immigrant, documented or undocumented. Documented immigrants are those who meet the criteria set forth by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The most common avenues for people to immigrate legally to the United States are through family or employment-based sponsorships. Undocumented immigrants are those who have come to the United States through illegal means. Refugee is a subcategory of immigrants and refers to persons who have arrived in the United States in order to escape warfare or persecution in their country of origin. The Minnesota Department of Education does not track the legal status of its students, although students’ educational backgrounds are surveyed to assess their proper placement in school and to ensure access to the appropriate services.

To call attention to specific needs of immigrant students, organizations might also label students as “English Language Learners (ELLs),” “Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE),” or “Migrant Students.” English Language Learners, also known as Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, may include those whose first language was not English or those who live in households where English is not the primary language used. Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) refers to those who had little or no formal educational training in their country of origin or those whose education was disrupted by warfare or other causes. Migrant students are those who work or who are part of families that work in agricultural industries that require them to move regularly along with the growth cycles of the crops. The constant moves create disruptions in the students’ schooling that require mitigation.

Each term mentioned above focuses on a specific characteristic of an immigrant so that policies and programs can cater to the particular needs of the students; however, to obtain the most comprehensive information about the needs of immigrant students and available programs for them, a broad definition of the term “immigrant student” is applied in this report. In effect, the immigrant students discussed in this report includes those who are new arrivals to the United States as well as those who were born in
this country to foreign-born parents; students who are in the United States with proper documentation and those without the necessary paperwork; and ELLs, SLIFEs, and migrant students. Students’ firsthand experience with the migration process or having parents who were not born in the United States is viewed as a potential signal that such students could use additional support because these circumstances might cause students to have limited access to information about the postsecondary education system.

Challenges That Affect College Access and Success for Immigrant Students

A review of the literature was conducted to determine challenges that could affect college access and the educational success of immigrant students. In addition, the directors of college access programs of ten organizations in Minnesota were asked to describe challenges that they have observed for the immigrant student populations with whom they work. While some of these issues, such as the language barrier and the model minority stereotyping, are unique to immigrant populations, other issues are also applicable to students of lower socioeconomic status or those who are the first in their family to attend college. The explanations provided below, however, concentrate on the particulars that apply to students who might fall within those demographic categories but who are also immigrants.

Language Barrier

Along with math, English language proficiency is a major criterion for judging a student’s level of college readiness on college entrance exams like the ACT and SAT. Limited English proficiency can affect students’ chances of gaining acceptance into their school of choice, or it can cause students to take remedial courses that are both costly and additional investments of time. Respondents to OHE’s survey have noticed other consequences of limited English proficiency for students, including acculturative stress, increased chance of dropping out of high school, and enrollments in Adult Basic Education courses or English as a Second Language courses.

There are several factors that influence how quickly the language barrier could be surpassed. The director of the Intervention for College Attendance Program at Saint Paul College notes that the learning curve depends on the language background of the student—languages that are not Latin-based tend to result in a steeper learning curve for students. For instance, students who come from an oral tradition where a written form of the language does not exist have to be oriented first to the written tradition. The director also reports that the time needed to obtain English language proficiency is prolonged when students do not utilize English within the home, such is the case when there are grandparents living within the household who do not speak English. She also observes that the technology that allows immigrants to connect with others from the same country of origin has also meant less incentive for immigrants to practice English regularly.

Model Minority Stereotype

The belief that all students from Asian backgrounds have demonstrated excellence in education is part of the model minority stereotype. This stereotype does not acknowledge the diversity within the Asian student populations; while certain Asian groups like Chinese and Japanese have a longer history of being in the United States and in its higher education system, students from Southeast Asian countries like Laos, Cambodia, and Viet Nam who arrived in the past 20 years could still need assistance to increase
their representation in higher education (Lee, 2009). The model minority stereotype can result in resources being diverted from the Asian student populations because of the misconception that they are all fairing well within the educational systems.

Limited Social Capital

Social capital describes the human connections that allow individuals to obtain resources more easily and efficiently (Portes, 1998). Immigrant students suffer from limited social capital when they do not have parents who are well connected in the community, or when they lack college-educated role models who could provide first-hand accounts of the college application process and tips about navigating through the system. Stevens (2009) details how parents who have a college education are better able to advocate for their children’s college admission, either by leveraging their status as alums of a particular school or taking actions based on their first-hand experiences within the college system. Immigrant students who are the first in their families to attend college do not receive the social capital that college educated parents can offer to their children. The limited social capital is therefore tied to limited access to information about higher education. As reported by respondents to OHE’s survey, issues such as the cost of college, the college application process, options for college, the importance of college, and the college experience tend to be unfamiliar to immigrant students.

Conflicts Between Home and School Cultures

One of the functions of schools is to socialize students to the social customs and conventions of society, and this is reflected in practices that are taught to students at the K-12 level (Feinberg & Solstice, 2009). Newly arrived immigrant students might find some of the practices conflict with the social practices from their country of origin. For instance, individualism and independent thinking are values emphasized in American schools through the push for students to acquire critical thinking skills; however, in many Asian countries collectivism and deference for tradition and elders are traits that are underscored more (Hofstede, 1984). Students from such cultural traditions might find it difficult to contribute to classroom discussions because they view the teacher as having the last authoritative word on an issue. Another example, given by a respondent to OHE’s survey, involves different interpretations of cheating—in the United States, cheating is an unacceptable practice; but in another culture, it might be tolerated because it is seen as a survival skill. Another conflict between home and school culture observed by a staff member at the Minnesota African American Women’s Association is related to Somali girls experiencing too much pressure from their parents to pursue female-dominated career paths that are low-paying or that are not compatible with the students’ interests and abilities. Cultural norms might contribute to such advice from Somali parents, but the organization also believes it is due to limited understanding of the options available to females in the United States, and it is working to provide that information for both students and parents.

Biases in the Education System

Lack of college readiness can manifest in many forms, including low scores on admissions exams, limited participation in extracurricular activities, or limited enrollment in advanced courses during high school. These factors affect students’ chances of being admitted to a competitive school or for winning scholarships. While an individual’s personal characteristics could determine the level of college
readiness upon high school graduation, many scholars and practitioners who work with immigrant populations take the view that the current education systems favor white, middle-class students. Standardized exams, which are often used because of their supposed ability to objectively measure students’ abilities, have been shown to contain cultural references that might be unfamiliar to immigrant students (Rudert, 1993). In that instance, it is not so much the students’ abilities that are insufficient for college success but rather flaws in the evaluation of their potential through the use of the standardized 16 Minnesota Office of Higher Education tests. Another example of a bias is the focus of schools to assimilate immigrant students to American society rather than embracing the existing language and cultural knowledge held by the students. Valenzuela (1999) argues that assimilation policies erode the social capital that immigrant students already have.

Family Pressures

Immigrant families are likely to rely on their school-age children to serve as translators and cultural interpreters because of their more in-depth knowledge of English and American culture relative to the parents. In large households, older children may play the role of child care providers so the parents can work long hours. Immigrant students might also need to work to help support family members in the United States or those still in the country of origin. These responsibilities can make the decision to move far from home for college or to engage in school life difficult for the students.

Difficulties Financing Higher Education

The cost of higher education is on the rise, and finding ways to finance it can be difficult for any student, but is particularly challenging for undocumented immigrants who usually do not have access to financial aid from the government. Some states, including Minnesota, have recently begun to offer some financial assistance to undocumented students who meet certain criteria. Under the Minnesota Dream Act, also known as The Prosperity Act, qualified students can receive in-state tuition rates, financial aid from the state, and funds from colleges and universities.

Respondents to OHE’s survey mentioned that beyond difficulties with tuition costs, some immigrant students also find it expensive to pay for required tests used in the admissions process or for schools’ application fees. An important service that organizations working with immigrant students can provide, therefore, is to inform students about processes to obtain a waiver from such fees when available.

Organizational Best Practices

The ten organizations that have college access programs for immigrant students shared with OHE insights about practices that have facilitated the delivery of their programs. The best practices that were frequently mentioned by the organizations are summarized below. Figure 9 provides a list of the specific practices of each organization.
Provide Outreach Beyond Students

Many program providers surveyed for this report have found it necessary to provide outreach not only to immigrant students but also to their parents and the immigrant communities. The provision of information about the higher education system to parents helps to overcome the roadblocks that parents might have unwittingly created for their children, such as steering their child towards a certain career path or delineating too many household responsibilities that divert the child’s attention from schoolwork. In some cases, it is possible to reach the parents directly; but in situations where parents’ busy work schedules or limited English proficiency prevent organizations from working with parents directly, organizations have had to work with liaisons within the immigrant communities to relay the information. This strategy is often utilized as well in communities with a strict social hierarchy where information is more likely to be accepted from elders or trusted members of the communities than from outsiders.

Build and Strengthen Partnerships

Partnerships are vital for the operations of many organizations surveyed. One crucial set of partners is the parents of students. Another set includes students’ peers who can share their experiences and act as role models for the younger generation. In particular, student groups at colleges and universities make effective partners in demystifying the college experience for college-bound students. Collaborations with other agencies are also an important mean for organizations to work around the limited resources available to them; the sharing of information and resources among agencies allows organizations to learn from each other and to disperse some programming costs.

Recruit Dedicated Team Members

Whether paid or unpaid, organizations report that having team members who genuinely care about the populations with whom they work is vital to an organization’s operations. Trust-building is an important task when working with immigrant populations, and team members perceived to be undedicated could jeopardize the relationships with immigrant communities. Dedication to the success of students and knowledge of the languages and cultures of immigrant populations were mentioned as valuable characteristics for team members.

Facilitate Travel To and From Events

Attendance at events can sometimes be low due to logistical issues like students and parents not having transportation. To overcome transportation obstacles, the Minnesota African Women’s Association has given out bus passes and gas cards to those who carpool. The organization has also relied on staff to bring participants to events, although the organization would like to have a van for this purpose instead of relying on the staff’s personal vehicles. Organizations have also found it helpful to integrate information sessions into events organized by immigrant communities in order to minimize the need for students and parents to devote additional time and expenses to travel to another location.
Utilize Holistic Programming

College preparation goes beyond practical considerations like completing applications and meeting deadlines. Organizations recommend programs that help students to understand the application process and college experience; realize the importance of higher education; and to build leadership, academic, and social skills throughout secondary school. Civic engagement projects are examples of holistic programming that allow students to develop leadership skills and feel a sense of empowerment while providing needed services in the community. Another example of a holistic program is working with students to improve both their oral and written skills rather than focusing exclusively on one or the other since improvements in one area strengthen the other.

Pay Attention to Cultural Cues

The content and presentation of information for immigrant communities must be linguistically and culturally relevant. This entails providing translations of informational materials in languages used by the immigrant populations, ensuring that definitions and examples within those materials are relatable to the target audience and being strategic about how the information is delivered. For instance, organizations have found it beneficial to place information in newspapers in languages read by specific immigrant groups or to recruit immigrant community leaders to disseminate information.

Increase Enrollment in Advanced Classes

Many organizations surveyed for this report agreed that developmental or remedial courses taken in college are expensive and time-consuming for immigrant students. To minimize the need for such courses, they recommend trying to enroll immigrant students in advanced classes during high school in order to maximize readiness for college-level courses upon graduation. In particular, encouraging immigrant students to partake in the Post Secondary Enrollment Options program in Minnesota can allow the students to obtain college credits while in high school, thus reducing the financial burden of a postsecondary degree and shortening the amount of time towards degree completion.

Simplify the Financial Aid Application Process

The application process for financial aid can be daunting for students for several reasons, including their unfamiliarity with the process itself, the complex forms that must be completed, and in-depth questions about parents that are difficult to answer, especially for students whose parents are undocumented. Organizations have found it necessary to help students navigate the application process as well as to provide general financial literacy education so that students are aware of the options available to them for financing higher education.
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

GOAL: We must help our international students adjust emotionally and socially to life in the United States.

What’s it like to become proficient in another language?

Despite what the ads for various language-learning products say, “There is no real way to speed up language development, which takes time” (Leki 101). International students can experience extreme frustration and even despair over the presence of repeated mistakes in their speaking and writing. “Will I ever learn this?!?”

Part of the reason it takes time to learn a language is that learning to read in any language has a fundamental physiological effect on the brain. Psychologist and professor of child development Maryanne Wolf explains that in situations where the symbols used to express language are different, the process can be even more complicated:

For example, at the neuronal level, a person who learns to read in Chinese uses a very particular set of neuronal connections that differ in significant ways from the pathways used in reading English. When Chinese readers first try to read in English, their brains attempt to use Chinese-based neuronal pathways. The act of learning to read Chinese characters has literally shaped the Chinese reading brain. Similarly, much of how we think and what we think about is based on insights and associations generated from what we read. (Wolf 5)

Thus not only what we read, but how we take in what we read may be different. Our international students sometimes must experience physiological brain changes in order to become proficient readers of English. That takes time! If these students are feeling pressure to get through college fast, they may become very frustrated with slow progress in English learning.

What can it feel like to be in a class not in your native language?


For non-native English students, the time it takes to do readings and assignments for class and the time to takes “to process language intake” can add extra burdens and stressors. Non-native English students may be aware, even in the moment, that they are missing important information being delivered orally. That awareness that they may be missing important information can add stress (Leki 55).

Reading in a second language is not merely a simple matter of translating word for word, but some students may try to do that. International students vary in their study skill development just like native-English speaking students do. If a student pauses to look up every word, it can cause an enormous strain on time. Idiomatic expressions (phrases that don’t translate word-for-word anyway) found in readings or class notes can be frustrating. Students must be taught how to read in each discipline and with the texts an instructor requires.
What unique stressors may our international students experience?

- **Concerns over maintaining their visa status**: Navigating government policies and regulations about their stay here or “fear of returning home if [a] U.S. visa is due to expire” (Dussourd) can be draining.
- **Loss of humor/joking in their lives** because of language isolation: Jokes and plays on words require sophisticated language knowledge that may take years to develop in English.
- **Pressure or desire to adapt to U.S. or local culture versus a desire or pressure from home to maintain home culture**: With or without knowing it, host families, staff, families and friends back home, and students themselves can create pressure to adapt to a new culture and its practices or push the importance of maintaining home culture and practices.
- **Sadness over loss of fluency in native language**: It can happen quickly. This loss can be something small, like suddenly being unable to remember a word in one’s native language, or something larger, like someone from home commenting on how the student’s native language is sounding “different” now that they are in the U.S.
- **Challenges of navigating so many American names**: “Jackson and Jefferson, as arbitrary phonetic tokens, may be as difficult for an NNES [non-native English speaker] to keep distinct as Jian Shao and Jung Shiao might be for English speakers” (Leki 60). Keeping American student names, professor names, and cultural/historical reference names distinct in the minds of a non-native English speaking student adds stress.
- **Financial stress**: “International students who face financial crises do not have recourses that U.S. students do in such situations” because of visa issues and limitations (Dussourd). Thus, financial stressors experienced by family back home or unmet needs locally can cause additional stress.
- **Perception of “one chance only”**: Some countries do not yet embrace the idea of returning adult students and university is perceived as only for traditional age students. This can add stress to students who believe they must decide now what career path they will have for life. While we may tell them they can return to university someday, that may not be possible or may not be seen as (culturally) possible for them.
- **Worries over family reputation**: In some countries, “Academic success [is] linked to [an] individual’s and family’s reputation and status” (Dussourd). Academic struggles of any nature can cause worries of embarrassment for family back home.
- **Inability to study what interests them**: Students may not be able to take the courses they would normally choose to take because of language barriers. For example, a student might love history but because of his/her reading level in English, opt not to take history courses. It can even affect what major students choose, which can affect their emotional state as well (Leki 56).

Add that to **culture shock** and **social/linguistic isolation** and you have a long list of stressors that can affect international students, derailing their path to success.
How to Help

Tip: Be friendly! (Yes, it can be that simple.)

Students’ academic and social success have been connected to the “friendly relationships that students develop with peers and teachers,” even if those relationships only occur in the classroom and are not long lasting. (Leki 261-2)

Tip: Ask them to paraphrase what you just said.

Everyone who learns another language has experienced moments when they don't really understand what the speaker is saying, but they smile and nod, perhaps out of frustration or embarrassment. It can be difficult to admit that even after hearing something three or four times, you didn’t understand it. When working with international students on an individual basis, if they smile and nod at your directions or suggestions, ask them to state in their own words what they need to do. Example: “So, we’ve covered lots of ideas about how to study for the next test. Can you tell me, in your own words, what you’ll do differently?” If they can, you'll know for sure the smile and nod were genuine markers of understanding; if not, you can further clarify in other words.

Tip: Make sure they know that you value their growth as speakers and writers of English.

In short, we can’t just smile and nod either when we don’t understand our international students. 😊 Ask them to repeat ideas or questions, even several times. Suggest they use different words or write out a word to help you understand it. Once you know what word they meant, repeat it so they hear a clearer pronunciation. Try these activities when working with international students individually, primarily, but be wary of saying “yes” to an in-class comment if you didn’t understand it.

International students may sometimes believe that they will work on their English skills after they complete their degree, seeing improvement of their English as secondary to obtaining the knowledge and degrees required to obtain a job (Leki 120). If students perceive the goal of the degree as attainable without improving their English skills, they will have little reason to invest in their English improvement (Leki 120). If you see a student showing confusion, ask after class if there are any questions or how things are going.

Some students may be hesitant to ask a “busy professor” for assistance outside of class. A brief e-mail or comment after class may be all the encouragement they need.

Tip: Be aware of who “we” are.

Some research suggests that instructors frequently use words like “we,” “our,” and “us” when referencing cultural values, historical events, or discussing policies from various arenas. In one qualitative study, international students were “witness to, if not always the subject of, instances of ideological reinforcement, where what were presumed to be unassailable and shared values in the United States were thoughtlessly pitted against the interests or values of others” (Leki 227). When we
lead a discussion, lecture in class, or prepare text questions, assignment prompts, or any handout, we should consider any such pronoun use or assumption of shared values, policies, or knowledge.

**Tip:** Help students be proactive.

While study groups and group work may be socially beneficial, non-native English speakers may worry about how they will be perceived, how their contributions and perspectives will be received, and how much work they will have to do in advance to prepare. While native-English speaking members of such groups can “afford to wait until the actual meeting to start processing or learning the material,” non-native speakers must prepare more fully in advance or risk feeling lost or non-contributory (Levi 217-218). If you know you’ll be doing small group work in the next class, announce it in the last class so that all students can prepare appropriately.

**Tip:** Help them know they can reach out for help.

As with any student, international students need to be made aware that there are resources available to them and that it is socially acceptable to reach out to those resources. Some cultures may have different views of reaching out for assistance to a stress counselor, for example, but faculty/staff voices can be powerful influences in helping such students see this assistance as a normal and natural part of college and life. If you see an international student who appears stressed, ask if they have gone to see the stress counselor and/or the international staff in Student Affairs.

**Works Cited**


EXPECTATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

GOAL: We must help international students adjust to the academic expectations and style of higher education in the United States.

Whether our students come from Crivitz or China, “for all students, there is a transition from previous learning culture into the higher education context. For students arriving from a different linguistic, cultural, or physical environment, the transition is not necessarily different in kind” even if they are concurrently experiencing a second transition into a different culture and language. (Spiro, Henderson, and Clifford 610)

In some ways, international students are more prepared that our native-born students are to face a change in the style of their education because they have already experienced “a spreading of wings” with regard to place and language. “Their expectation is that this will be matched by intellectual expansion, too.” (Spiro, Henderson, and Clifford 610)

Problematic Assumptions

We must be careful not to make sweeping assumptions about the educational experiences international students have had before arriving in our classrooms. International students’ educational experiences may be more similar to our native-English speaking students’ experiences than we imagine for various reasons:

- Education within a country can vary widely and some international students may have had access to more “westernized” educational opportunities than is the norm.
- Recent researchers “emphasize the rapid pace of change in education in China” (Edwards, Ran, and Li 392) and “surveys of international students from Europe and Asia signal the shift as increasing numbers of students report their encounters with learner-centered classrooms” (Smithee, Greenblatt, and Eland 13).
- Assumptions about “westernized” styles of learning may not apply to all of our native-English speaking students either; for example, some of our native-English speaking students have not been trained to challenge authority or do more than rote memorization.
- Indeed, some studies have suggested that American students are trained to be “passive receptacles of authoritative wisdom” while some Asian educational systems strive to develop “intellectual independence” in students (Leki 99).

Safer Assumptions

At the same time, there are different assumptions at work. Some of our international students (and some of our native-born students) may struggle with certain concepts or approaches to teaching:

- There may be a perception that “learning within groups of students lacks the legitimacy of instruction from teachers” (Edwards, Ran, and Li 390).
Critical analysis and problem-solving skills may not have been emphasized as much as rote learning/memorization so challenging a text or an instructor may be difficult or seen as unacceptable (Spiro, Henderson, and Clifford 612).

The value of homework may not be readily apparent. Final grades based exclusively on final exams may lead some international students to assume homework is optional or not highly valued (Dussourd).

The value or normalcy of a broad-based liberal arts education for students in their first two years of college may be a new idea for some international students. In some countries, high school provides a rigorous broad-based liberal arts education and university is seen as solely focused on one’s chosen field of study.

The role of the professor may be perceived quite differently. Students in some countries spend considerable time with professors outside of class, but that time may be spent learning the information given to them, not questioning that information or forming their own analyses (Smithee, Greenblatt, and Eland 20).

Multiple-choice tests may be a new concept for some international students. “The idea of being given the answers and choosing” from among them may run contrary to prior experiences where students were required to restate from memory the answers given earlier in the class (Smithee, Greenblatt, and Eland 22). Additionally, multiple-choice exams with subtle word distinctions between two versions may add cognitive load to the work of an international student (Leki 69).

Helping international students adjust to higher education practices and academic expectations of the US

Tip: Strike a balance between support and challenge.

Be cautious not to provide so many extra supports to international students that they become disempowered, passive, or less likely to try hard. As students move from a position of dependence on the teacher towards the practice of independent learning, “a culture of informal support that expanded, rather than reduced, the role of the teacher . . . infantilises [sic] the learner and induces dependence, rather than its reverse” (Spiro, Henderson, and Clifford 613). In one study, “the most valued learning relationship that emerged was not with the teacher but with fellow learners” (Spiro, Henderson, and Clifford 614). Thus, developing in-class group dynamics and encouraging the development of study groups out of class may accelerate the learning process.

On the flipside, too few supports can leave international students unclear on assignments. Strongly recommended practices across the literature include

- transparency on assignments and expectations
- regular and clear feedback on performance
- opportunities to enable students to learn from each other
- opportunities for students to share readings, responses, learning processes with each other
Tip: Know what they may not know.

Even non-native English speaking students who earn the required scores on standardized tests such as Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) may not always be “equipped to deal with the academic demands of courses” (Edwards, Ran, and Li 389). They may struggle initially with listening-speaking and grammatical correctness in writing. On our campus, international students who begin in ESL classes here go through a multiple measures portfolio-based placement assessment. However, some new international students appear ready right away to take “regular” classes.

In speaking and listening, different languages have different structures and culturally based preferred modes of expression. A language may use more questions or imperative/command statements than English does and this style/mode of communication may transfer into English. If you feel that transference is interfering with the course material, talk with the student about it. If, for example, a business course requires more direct speech patterns and a student seems hesitant to engage in them, ask privately or investigate if there may be a culturally bound language structure issue at work.

When should you be concerned about the writing of a non-native English speaker? Typically, articles and prepositions (a, an, the, and words like of, about, and beyond) are among the last parts of a language to be mastered, particularly for some learners of English. “Use of nonstandard verb forms indicates a more serious linguistic interference” (“Teaching”) and may require students to seek additional help from an ENG 099 class tutorial or writing tutors; it may also signal a need to adjust the level of course in which they are enrolled. In those situations, consider talking with the International Programs Director about placement.

Tip: Focus on meaning and correct patterns of errors.

When working with students whose native language is not English, be sure to focus first on the meaning, as long as the grammar does not interfere so much with its transmission that you cannot understand it. Non-native English speakers tend to focus on grammatical correctness above all else and may be afraid that grammatical errors are more important than content and ideas (“Teaching”). Help them redirect their primary focus to ideas.

When correcting mistakes in student writing or speech, focus on patterns of errors (“Teaching”). Correct a few mistakes in one section, explain briefly why it is incorrect, and force the student to find the other examples. Alternatively, note at the end of a paper what general types of errors you see and refer the student to the available resources, including the online writing lab through UW-Waukesha.

Tip: Use Readability measures to evaluate your handouts.

Free online resources such as https://readability-score.com/ can help you assess the level of reading required by students in handouts that explain assignments. Be aware that discipline-specific terminology that you explain in class may skew these results. Generally, aside from this terminology, try
to write assignment instructions that will reach the majority of your students regardless of their first language.

**Tip: Take an “educative approach to plagiarism” (Arkoudis).**

Some international students “come from cultures where writing involved repeating the collective wisdom and there is little need to acknowledge the source of information.” Additionally, plagiarism may occur when students feel inadequately prepared to understand the language of an author (Arkoudis 13).

In some cultures, for a student to paraphrase a writer or to critique the thoughts of a writer is seen as inappropriate and as dishonoring that writer (Badke 8). In their home country, they may have been told that “they are not qualified to criticize and evaluate” because they have not yet obtained a university degree (Badke 10).

At the same time, this is a teachable and learnable concept. Thus, it is important to discuss the value of source citation and model its use in class. Plagiarism is discussed in orientation for international students, in ESL classes, and in composition courses on campus. It is important that you discuss what constitutes plagiarism within your discipline and then hold all students to the same standard/expectation with regard to source use.

**Works Cited**


IDENTITY & LANGUAGE

GOAL: We must help our international students build a recognized identity within the English-speaking academic community, not just as international students.

While proficient English speakers may see international students and those acquiring English as diverse additions to our classrooms, campus, and community, these students are struggling to join the academic community and forge a new identity here as students in an American university. “Part of the struggle for linguistic minorities entails the move towards being heard as an ‘insider’ in a particular context.” (Miller 152) That means that while we might want them to add their ‘outsider’ perspective to our discipline, we must help them move to ‘insider’ status within that discipline.

Identity is a process of constant evolution and never completed. We all have multiple identities. Identity is “achieved, used, occasioned or produced in interactional work” (Miller 151; emphasis added); so when a person’s language is insufficient for a social or academic situation, identity formation is frustrated. The emerging sense of self can be stagnated. In that sense, when our international students feel that they cannot communicate adequately, they struggle to see themselves as university students. That sense of self is important for academic success.

In the classroom, in our offices, and in the cafeteria, for our international students “it is not enough to be seen and heard in such interactions.” Like any native-English speaker, they “must also be recognized and accepted as group members, having [their] ‘word-deed-value combinations’ acknowledged as legitimate by others.” (Miller 152)

Naturally, our international students’ first identity here is usually the common ground of being from somewhere else. They identify with their ESL classmates and/or other international students as other language learners. ESL instructors and all staff and faculty who come in contact with them listen with “sympathetic ears” and they may begin to gain a false sense of confidence in their English proficiency (Miller 156).

At the same time, they will always be aware of their identity as non-native English speakers and/or as international students. That reality raises important issues of...

Identity and Stereotype Threat

In 2012-2013, the Virtual Teaching and Learning Center’s common read was a recent work by Claude Steele. Steele explains how research shows that we all are affected by the concern that we will be judged according to known stereotypes: “By imposing on us certain conditions of life, our social identities can strongly affect things as important as our performances in the classroom and on standardized tests, our memory capacity, our athletic performance, the pressure we feel to prove ourselves, even the comfort level we have with people of different groups—all things we typically think of as being determined by individual talents, motivations and preferences.” (Steele 4)

“Whenever we’re in a situation where a bad stereotype about one of our identities could be applied to us—such as those about being old, poor, rich, or female—we know it.” (Steele 5)
Thus, **drawing attention to a student’s unique identities** within a classroom setting may cause that student to be negatively affected by stereotype threat. “Identifying with the majority of students” is often a goal for international students; “being the object of amazed incredulity” because of difference can be “a barrier to any sense of belonging to the group” (Miller 162).

**Identity and Best Practices for International Students in “Regular” Classes**

“It is important to avoid unnecessary singling out (and possibly embarrassing) students in our classrooms” (Hendrix). One suggestion is to normalize certain practices.

**Tip: Overcome first-day name difficulties for all students in the class.**

If you have international students whose names may be difficult to pronounce, have all students in the class write their names (first and last) on the board the first day and pronounce them so that the difficulties of pronouncing various types of names is addressed rather than singling out the difficulties of some names from other languages/cultures (Hendrix).

**Tip: Offer an early (and brief) non-threatening speaking opportunity in class.**

To help all students gain a public voice in our classrooms, it is recommended that “all students be given an opportunity to speak in a non-threatening environment, during the first weeks of the term” (Hendrix). A short activity even with assigned partners first and then in front of all students may help all students be more likely to speak in class or ask the professor for help outside the class.

Keep in mind that even speaking to one other person is ‘public speaking.’ “The risks in terms of identity (and face) are considerable” when speaking English in public. The student is placed in a position of “vulnerability and powerlessness [which] makes the development of confidence problematic.” (Miller 161) At the same time, being heard in these public spaces is essential to the needed renegotiation of identity so that international students believe they are members of the academic community here.

**Tip: Think carefully about small group work and membership.**

When international students are allowed to select groups for group work, they may tend towards others with whom they feel an identity already formed (eg. other international students). “Lack of trust in English-dominant students or [to] keep their dignity as ESL students” may lead them to choose to distance themselves from native-English speakers (Yang 154). However, this decreases their opportunities to “improve conversational abilities in English and to become socialized into the local academic community” (Yang 155).

Those who argue in favor of requiring international students to work with native-English speakers argue that it ensures they have more opportunities to hear and speak in English. However, some researchers argue that “there are considerable pedagogical benefits in being able to rehearse in your own language what you’ve just been discussing or listening to” (Edwards, Ran, and Li 395). In areas where the instructor believes new discipline-specific vocabulary must be learned or cultural contexts are necessary,
assigned groups may be best to ensure a mix of students of differing language backgrounds; in other instances, students who share a language other than English may find it helpful to practice new knowledge in a mixture of the two languages.

Edwards, Ran, and Li say that “more open debate among colleagues about issues such as the use of language in group learning situations would raise awareness of a wider range of possibilities” (398), so let’s talk more about this in the hallways and in meetings!

Tip: Teach how to discuss and how to ask questions in class.

International students from some cultural backgrounds may be unfamiliar with “participatory communication modes” in the American university classroom such as in-class discussions, disagreement with instructor or peers, brief responses to readings, etc. (Yang 157). All university students “need to be instructed on how to work cooperatively and make the best benefit of group work” as well as in-class discussions (157).

Tip: For in-class presentations, assign verified practice and emphasize communication, not perfection.

Various research studies show that “speakers in US culture are normally seen as effective when their delivery is extemporaneous” (cited in Hendrix) but non-native English speakers typically write extensive notes for any presentations and read those notes out of fear of grammatical incorrectness or insufficient language (Hendrix; Yang 153). Assigning all students to required practice sessions, including recorded and/or verified practice in front of others, and emphasizing the need to communicate ideas rather than concern with grammatical perfection may help in these situations (Hendrix).

Tip: Slow down in-class discussion for all to process better.

How can international students participate in rapid-fire class discussions? An instructor can ask other students to “slow down” or “break that down so that everyone understands your ideas” which can aid all students, particularly international students. Be sure not to draw attention to the specific needs of non-native English speakers when doing this practice.

Tip: Build in thinking/ translating time for answers to questions in class.

Asking all students to ponder your question for a moment before responding helps every student, not just non-native English speakers; doing so definitely encourages the inclusion of non-native English speakers in the conversation. Discussions may be more productive if students are encouraged to write brief responses first and/or to pause and collect a thought before responding. All students need to be trained to do this.

Tip: Watch for assumed knowledge and identity group.

Use of words like “we” or “our” can be problematic in a classroom with individuals of diverse backgrounds. Encourage students to watch their own (and your!) use of these terms. Clarify references
to American history and/or cultural references. Do so without drawing attention to the presence of international students.

**Tip: Be consistent.**

Extending deadlines or providing additional time must be done for all students in the class. Avoid allowing electronic translators or dictionaries as they may have other resources available. Again, to help international students achieve the goal of an identity as university students in the United States, normalizing practices is essential.

**Works Cited**


