

Teaching Support Workshop handout – March 6, 2023

Possible cultural variations and their implications

Silent or quietness

- Respect authority. The tendency is to not address professors by name; calling professor by name is considered rude in many cultures.
- The expectation of professors is to impart knowledge and the student's role is to absorb it. Asking professors questions might be viewed as being disrespectful.
- Lectures are the most common mode of instruction in the home country.
- Not asking for help; or self-advocate for extension on assignment etc.
- Students are unfamiliar with colloquialism and pop culture references.

Speaking native languages with peers to seek comfort; speaking English with students from the same country is often considered “weird” and “uncomfortable.”

In-class engagement

- **Discussions**
 - Pair international students with domestic students; pair and share model.
 - Have different discussion methods: e.g., written discussion in Canvas, or in person in the classroom.
 - Be aware of how different cultures discuss things; interrupting others can be considered very rude; some cultures make sure there is a short silence first before contributing their ideas.
 - Consider assigning and rotating discussion roles.
- **Group Work**
 - Pair international students with domestic students
 - Be aware that mix-gender group work maybe a new experience for some international students.
 - Clearly explain why group work is necessary and lay clear ground rules.

Office Hours

- Be more intentional with outreaching to international students for office hour (go the extra mile).

Assignments

- Invite students to submit draft for review.
- Be inclusive in assignments and tasks so they are relatable to international students.

Tutoring and Academic Coaching

- Share tutoring opportunities with students; if needed, one to one tutoring.
- There may be stigma associated with one-to-one tutoring, consider forming 'group study' opportunities.
- This could be a [Learning Studio Peer Tutor](#) for an already established subject or an international Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages graduate student. If you are interested, please reach out to the [ELC Director](#).
- Recommend/require students to make an appointment with an academic coach to elevate study skills, implement academic strategies, and more in Learning Strategies or peruse Student Success Tips and Resources (found [here](#)).

Reading and Writing

- International students may not be aware about skim reading; they read slowly and meticulously.
- Students read to retain info, not with a critical eye.
- Some students view writing as knowing the write answers, rather than having their own opinions.
- Some students are not familiar to having a resourceful library.
- Recommend/require students to sign up for a [Writing Center](#) tutor, trained to work with multilingual, international students.

More Practical Tips

- Proactively understand cultural composition and variations in your class as soon as possible. E.g., connect with the English Language Center to understand students' English level.
- Not lumping all international students into one box; there are variations and exceptions within each national culture.
- Unless students volunteer, do not assume and not call out students of a certain nationality.
- Be more explicit than necessary with your expectations.
- Model the skills you want students to develop.
- Present information in multiple ways (graphs, slides, flow charts, video clips, concept maps, etc.).