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 ready 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.).