A GUIDE FOR WORKING WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN EDUCATION





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INTRODUCTION TO WORKING WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN EDUCATION



PURPOSE

As an R1 Christian university with an increasingly diverse population, Baylor values learning to work well with others from different backgrounds. Those of us working in the Global Gateway Program are Baylor faculty members who've spent many years working with international students both in the U.S. and abroad. (See *Who We Are.*) This guide presents recommendations for addressing various challenges that faculty working with international students may encounter. Our hope is that this guide will enable you to better relate to your international students and give you tools to help them be successful at Baylor.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

We've divided this guide into two main sections: *General Tips for Working with International Students*, and *Scenarios* and *Solutions*.

- Under Tips, you can find quick solutions for various issues related to working
 with international students: interaction, classroom behavior, and crosscultural awareness. Additional resources are provided in the final pages of
 this guide.
- Under Scenarios and Solutions, the information is organized by issues that
 may be especially challenging in the context of working with students from
 around the world. They are loosely grouped into the same three categories:
 Interacting with International Students, In the Classroom with International
 Students, and Cross-Cultural Awareness.
- For easier reading, "international student" is often replaced with "student" or "learner" throughout this guide. The term "all students" applies to both domestic and international students. We realize that many of the tips are good teaching strategies for any student.

You can use the index to navigate quickly to the section you are most interested in reading.





GENERAL TIPS FOR WORKING WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

TIPS FOR INTERACTING WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- **Get to know your students.** Learn how to pronounce your learners' names. To work well with students from other countries, become an international learner yourself. Learn something about other cultures, particularly those you find in your classroom. Knowing where your students come from and understanding something about their cultural values and assumptions will help you teach them how to thrive in the U.S. university system.
- Make time to really listen to your students. Try to look beyond their words, grammar, accent, or
 any behavioral issues when assessing assignments or situations. It's not easy to study abroad and
 do university-level work in a foreign language. Mistakes and misunderstandings are inevitable, but
 professors who demonstrate understanding show their students that they care about them and value
 their perspectives.
- Imagine yourself studying at the university level in another country while communicating in a foreign language. Then, ask yourself how well you could accomplish what you're asking your students to do.

TIPS FOR THE CLASSROOM

- Understand that your students may come from educational systems that vary greatly from those
 found in the U.S. Things like group work or responding to the teacher may seem strange and
 uncomfortable for many students. Consider allowing students to experience pair work before having
 them engage in small-group work.
- Provide information both orally and in writing. Be sure to write down or spell names or keywords.
 Consider providing class notes or making any visual presentations available to students after class (e.g., video, PPT, handout, etc.).
- Give specific and frequent transitional cues so that students can follow the organization of your lecture.
- Be aware of what words you're choosing. Clarify culture-specific language and/or references (e.g., JFK, the Big Apple, the Great Depression, etc.), religious references, and Baylor-specific references. Explain or avoid idioms (e.g., piece of cake, all ears, break the ice, etc.). Consider how to communicate your point through synonyms and restatements.
- **Foster a safe learning environment** in your classroom where students feel they can speak up or respond. This also will help build their confidence.
- Be patient when asking questions. Give students time to think about a question before responding to it. It may take some students a few seconds longer to process what you've asked, think about an answer, and form a correct response. In some cultures, it's considered offensive to provide an immediate answer to a teacher's question because it suggests the student has given little thought to his or her response.
- Make your class participation expectations very clear. Be aware that many students come from cultures where learners do not actively participate in class and questions are discouraged.
- Call on students to respond to oral questions if you notice that they don't volunteer to answer. In some cultures, volunteering to answer questions is seen as an attempt to show off.
- **Don't be surprised** if a student doesn't reply immediately to a seemingly easy question. In some cultures, teachers only ask learners hard questions; therefore, if you ask a student from such a culture an easy question, he or she may think you are attempting to trick him or her.
- Help build camaraderie between domestic and international students. Give learners periodic
 opportunities to interact informally with one another.
- **Encourage communication and interaction**, especially when students don't understand something or appear to be struggling. Send students an email or speak with them before or after class to reemphasize that your door is always open. (Be sure they know what "door is always open" means!)
- **Help students** set up an appointment to see you during office hours early in the semester. Tell them in advance what you want to discuss during the appointment, and use the time to address any concerns.
- Communicate explicitly how students can contact you (e.g., email, office hours, etc.).



TIPS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS

- Check your assumptions. It's easy to jump to conclusions based on our own cultural
 assumptions without being aware of doing so. Be careful not to interpret student behavior based
 on these assumptions.
- Keep in mind that although the U.S. promotes individualism, many students come from collectivist societies, which affects many aspects of academic study. For more information, read "Collective Cultural Mindset vs. U.S. Individualism" in the Scenarios and Solutions half of this guide.
- Show grace the first time a student plagiarizes, and use the experience as an opportunity to help him or her learn source citation expectations in the U.S. When a student turns in work with plagiarism, don't automatically assume this is an issue of academic integrity. Sometimes another culture has a different understanding of intellectual property, and students borrow and incorporate material as they were taught. They don't understand the West's preoccupation with individualism or giving credit to individuals for ideas. In their culture, ideas may be common property. For more, read "Critical Thinking and Using Outside Sources" as well as "Plagiarism and Other Academic Dishonesty" in the Scenarios and Solutions half of this guide.
- Make instructions simple and explicit. If possible, provide examples of what you expect. When a
 student fails to follow directions, don't assume that he or she is lazy or disrespectful. Sometimes
 assignments have culturally understood concepts and expectations which students may not know
 about or understand.
- Understand that when students communicate with you, they may appear more straightforward and/or demanding than they intend due to their limited English repertoire.
- Be aware that rote-learning, not analytical problem solving, is the norm in some societies.
- **Be aware** that not all cultures interpret time or punctuality the same way. It may be necessary to explain how those in the U.S. view time and emphasize that your class will start at the set time.
- **Realize** that hygiene practices vary around the world, and international students may take time adjusting to U.S. practices/expectations.
- Be aware of gestures that are offensive in certain cultures (e.g., thumbs up often used in the U.S. is equal to the middle finger in countries like Iran, Greece, and Russia).
- **Realize** that international students may not understand your jokes, which often rely on word play and cultural understandings.

SCENARIOS AND SOLUTIONS

INTERACTING WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Asking Questions

Possible Scenario: International students may have difficulty communicating questions about class lectures or assignments in emails or appointments with the professor.

Students may feel it is inappropriate or not permissible to ask a professor questions. In many cultures, the professor is an authority figure and should not be questioned. Professors in these cultures do not interact with students on a personal level.

- Encourage students to send you emails with their questions or needs. Most students can express their ideas better in writing rather than engaging in an impromptu conversation.
- Remind students it's okay to speak up or ask questions in class or after class, and that many times, other students may have a similar question.
- If students are too shy to ask questions in class, encourage them to write them down in their notes or come up with a unique system for you to use with them (e.g., using index cards or post-it notes).
- Be sure students know when you have office hours and where your office is located.
- Allow students to consult a translator or dictionary when meeting with you if needed.
- Recognize word choices may come across as rude or disrespectful but are probably a language
 mistake rather than intentional rudeness. Perhaps a student used a translator or dictionary, and the
 word didn't translate as we typically use it.

Tips for Appointments with Students

 Re-state the question or problem the student had to be sure you both understand the reason for the appointment.

 Write down solutions or suggestions instead of just telling them to students.

 Send a follow-up email with any links, resources, or information that you discussed in your meeting.

Take the time to visit with students one-on-one.
 Invest in them.



Building Rapport with International Students

Possible Scenario: Professors may have difficulty knowing how to interact with international students.

Faculty sometimes feel they have little in common with their students; however, sometimes the opposite can be true. It's just a matter of finding these commonalities.

Learn about your students' names:

- It's okay to ask more than once how to pronounce a name.
- Ask students if they have a preferred name.
- Be aware that many cultures put the family name first.
- Let students know how you prefer to be addressed.

In-Class Interactions:

- It's okay to ask basic questions or share your own experiences to create some commonality with all your students.
 - · Where are you from?
 - My aunt used to live in Italy.
 - · What's your favorite food in your country?
 - Have you ever studied in the U.S. or at an international school?
- It's okay to explain or do things "out of the norm" in order to help clarify information.
 - · Act things out.
 - · Draw pictures.
 - · Use other words to describe things.
 - · It's okay to help students with pronunciation mistakes.
 - Make it a goal to learn something new about the student's language or culture.
 - Chat with students before or after class; send an email; reply to an assignment or discussion with something more personal or in response to something your student shared.
 - Be aware of cultural holidays or traditions your students may celebrate such as the Lunar New Year or Ramadan.

Students, especially those in their first year, can be overwhelmed going through culture shock and may often feel lonely. Helping them know someone is in their corner and available to them always goes far. Often learners come from cultures where teachers and students do not have such personal or friendly relationships. The student-teacher dynamic is usually very formal and reserved. Teachers may even be unapproachable. Consequently, you'll likely need to communicate to students that it's okay to reach out, communicate, and get to know their professors. In the end, remember to simply be welcoming.



Class Participation

Possible Scenario: International students might not be participating in class.

Students may be hesitant to participate in class for a variety of reasons. For instance, they may come from educational systems that are lecture-based or that do not give students a voice in the classroom. Perhaps learners may be self-conscious of their abilities to communicate effectively in English. Another possibility is that students may be accustomed to using a different communication style than that utilized in the U.S. and may be unsure how to interject themselves appropriately. Finally, students may be worried if, or how, their professors and peers will receive perspectives that differ from those commonly held in this country. As a result, professors should be patient and encouraging when it comes to the participation of students in their classes.

- Allow students time at the start of a term to get accustomed to you and their classmates before requiring students to speak out loud.
- Let students know that, in the U.S., teachers place great value on students contributing their thoughts and opinions.
- Recognize that students may be accustomed to a different communication style than that used in the U.S. Therefore, it may be useful to explain how to interject oneself into a class conversation at Baylor.
- Consider giving all students incentives for their daily participation.
- Call on students if you notice they are hesitant to participate.
- Be prepared to wait for students to provide an answer when called on. In some cultures, offering
 an immediate answer in class is considered inappropriate because it suggests the student hasn't
 carefully considered the teacher's question. Be willing to endure the uncomfortable silence for
 upward of one minute.

Facilitating Communication

Possible Scenario: International students may sometimes not be aware when native English speakers cannot understand them.

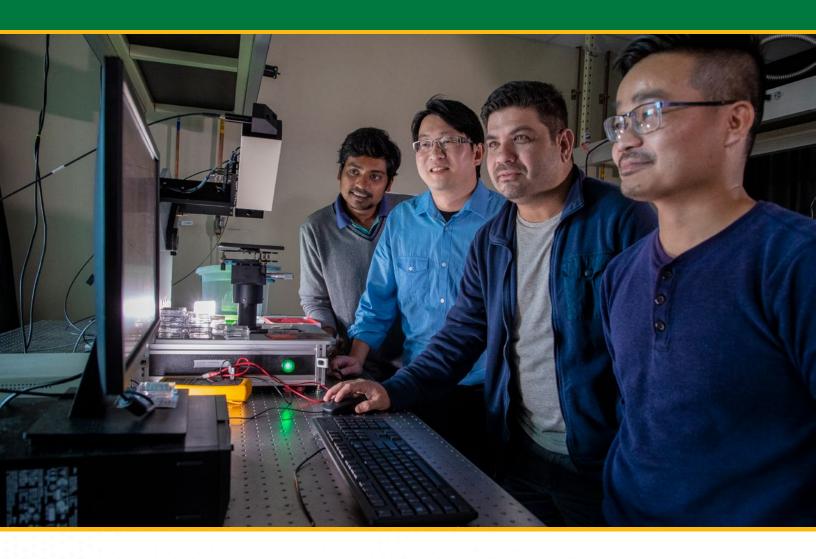
Many students come from countries where they have used English extensively in their academic studies and they feel confident in their English-speaking ability. However, the reality is that local, native-English speakers may not always understand. Some students' native language patterns are so ingrained that they carry over into their English pronunciation, and others use a perfectly acceptable international English, such as Singaporean English, Indian English, or Nigerian English.

Communicating to these students that you can't understand them can be a sensitive issue. Some students may be defensive and think that it is the local person's fault for not understanding what they are saying, or they may need some convincing that people don't understand them. Others may already be aware of their weakness in this area and be embarrassed.

- Don't act like you understand the learner's pronunciation if you really don't. It might be a face-saving situation for them, but in the long run, you are not helping them. Students need to be told gently but directly that you don't understand them. If learners need more convincing, have them record themselves with a closed-captioning tool, such as Kaltura, and then direct them to read the captioning results.
- Approach the student privately to discuss the issue. Start with encouraging feedback about their
 work in your class or their language ability overall. Then clearly state that you and others are having
 a hard time understanding their pronunciation. Try to give specific examples of a situation or a
 specific phrase they used that you didn't understand.
- Encourage students to slow down when they are speaking English, especially if they are speaking a different international English.

Encourage students to utilize the resources available at Baylor. The Baylor Speech-Language and Hearing Clinic evaluates and offers help with accent reduction as a free service for Baylor students. International graduate students can take the course *Teaching in English for International Teaching Assistants* (GBL 5201) to improve their pronunciation. This course is provided by the graduate school. Many other resources are available on the Internet, such as *Rachel's English* and *English with Jennifer*.

I remember visiting Singapore and being so frustrated by simple interactions with the locals. I thought, "We're both speaking English, so why am I having so much trouble understanding you?" The rhythm and intonation of Singaporean English was so different from the patterns of my American English that I often had to ask the person to repeat themselves. Our international students often feel the same way. The English they learned in their home country might use very different pronunciation from our Texas version.



Evaluating Teaching Efficacy

Possible Scenario: International students may not always demonstrate an understanding of the lesson.

Even if a student smiles and nods at you, he or she may not actually understand some, or all, of what you're saying. In many cultures, it's impolite to show confusion or ask questions because doing so implies the speaker is not a good communicator.

- Call on individual students to respond to questions to see if they've grasped your content.
- If you have a sense that the student does not understand the material, encourage him or her to schedule an appointment with you and make them aware of other resources.
- Be aware that all students are often reluctant to take advantage of office hours. Telling them that they
 must come to see you sometime in the early part of the semester allows you the opportunity to see how
 they are getting along and to clear up any misunderstandings before serious problems arise. Inform
 them in advance about what you want to discuss during the appointment, and use that time to address
 any concerns.
- Show students how to request appointments early in the semester.

Perceived Rude or Offensive Behavior

Possible Scenario: International students may be unaware of culturally offensive behaviors in the classroom.

Students also may bring some unique cultural behaviors, interactions, or personal hygiene habits to your classroom. There may even come a time when you need to address a particular issue with the student because it's distracting to other students or to you as the instructor. Like any personal student issue, this should be handled delicately and privately.

- It's important not to single out the student in class or cause him or her to lose face.
- Ask learners to meet you in your office or another place on campus in order to share your concerns privately.
- You can preface conversations about these issues as being an opportunity to learn about U.S. norms in an attempt to help these students avoid exhibiting potentially embarrassing behaviors in class.
- When exploring differences, you might explain step-by-step what the expected behavior is in this
 country. For example, although people in the U.S. avoid belching in public, if they inadvertently do so,
 they usually say, "Excuse me."
- If you feel uncomfortable approaching a student about these matters, you can reach out to the Center for Global Engagement (CGE) or the International Student Academic Support (ISAS) office.







IN THE CLASSROOM WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Academic Reading Load

Possible Scenario: International students may struggle with reading comprehension and heavy reading loads.

While many freshmen struggle to master the heavy reading load expected at the university level, students from other countries face additional reading challenges.

- Students may lack the background or cultural knowledge necessary to understand the texts.
- Language proficiency affects how well students read; therefore, misunderstanding grammatical structures or the nuances of words can interfere with comprehension. In addition, students find it difficult to understand figurative speech or to identify irony, sarcasm, or other slants to the text.
- Building an academic vocabulary in a second language is a lengthy process. Furthermore, many languages do not have English cognates, and every academic discipline has its own jargon. This creates enormous challenges for students.
- Some students are not only reading foreign words but are also coping with a completely different writing system (think Chinese vs. English), or they may be reading in a direction that seems "wrong" to them (think Arabic or Hebrew vs. English).

If students are struggling with a heavy reading load:

- Share your own tips for surviving the academic reading load.
- Explain expectations: Do students really need to read and understand every word?
- Provide reading comprehension support: class discussions, your own highlighting of key ideas from the texts, vocabulary lists, and so on.

Be intentional and ask all your students how they are coping with the reading load in your classes. Help them understand what you need for them to grasp from the readings—Main ideas? Details? New vocabulary or terminology? Other? If they know what to read for, they can read to complete the task rather than try to understand everything. They need to know when to skim and when to read in depth. In addition, provide reading comprehension support in your courses, such as class or group discussions, vocabulary lists, class Q & A sessions, or class time used to summarize key ideas and vocabulary.

Following Directions

Possible Scenario: International students might have difficulty following directions.

Some students who are new to the U.S. university system do not realize the major roles that assignments play in learning and course grades. These learners often come from educational environments in which final exams are the be-all and end-all, and/or they may hail from countries that embrace rote-learning over analytical problem solving. As a result, these students may consider assignments little more than busywork and disregard assignment directions. In other instances, students may simply fail to read instructions carefully, or they may consider these instructions to be recommendations more than expectations.

- Emphasize the importance of following directions.
- Encourage students to start assignments far enough ahead of deadlines that they do not need to rush to complete these assignments.
- If students do not follow directions, determine if a language barrier caused this behavior.
- Consider requiring students to redo assignments if they do not follow directions.

Taking Good Notes

Possible Scenario: International students may not be taking any notes or are taking poor notes in class.

Some students do not understand the value of taking notes and will rely solely on their memory. If you notice this happening, you can speak to learners privately about how important it is to take good notes in order to have access to the information you have shared. Explain that what you say in class shows them what you think are the most important points from the reading, and more than likely, what information they need to perform well on a test.

Students are often learning to take notes for the first time because they were never expected to do so in their home country. In this case, they may be confused about how to discern what is important enough to write down. They also may not know common symbols or abbreviations they could use to take notes.

 Consider providing a note-taking outline for the first few lectures so that learners can see how you are organizing your lessons. This will help them notice the clues of what to listen for and what is important to write down.

 Consider providing a printed copy of your lesson outline or slides used in the lesson, or you could provide these on Canvas.



Understanding Directions

Possible Scenario: International students might have difficulty understanding assignment directions.

When working with second-language learners, one should keep in mind that these individuals face linguistic challenges of understanding and following spoken and written directions. Although native-U.S. students have a lifetime of academic experience reading and following directions written to relatively specific academic norms, non-native English speakers haven't benefitted from these experiences. From the words that are used, to the density of information, and the format of the directions, all of these factors will either hinder or help students to complete tasks to the expectations of their professors. Therefore, professors are encouraged to take steps to help learners in this area.

- Use simple language in both written and spoken directions.
- Use action verbs to begin each step in multi-step directions (e.g., read, write, conduct, etc.).
- Bullet or number multi-step instructions. Avoid grouping them together in one or more paragraphs.
- Use 1.5 or double spacing between multi-step directions.
- Guide students through assignment directions in class, and then ask specific questions to determine if students understand these instructions.
- Encourage students to ask you questions about any directions they don't understand. Invite anyone who is hesitant to speak up during class to see you before or after class or during your office hours.
- Boldface and underline to emphasize specific details; however, be aware that the use of *italics* and certain font styles can be difficult for second language learners to read.
- Place assignment directions in a single location. If doing so isn't possible, inform students where they
 need to refer.

Understanding Grades and GPA

Possible scenario: International students may seem unconcerned about a poor grade, or they have difficulty understanding the grading system or GPA.

The grading system in the U.S. may look different than the one with which international students are familiar. For example:

CHINA				
Scale 1	Scale 2	U.S. Grade Equivalent		
85-100	5	А		
75-84	4	В		
60-74	3	С		
0-59	2	F		

INDIA				
Scale 1	U.S. Grade Equivalent			
70-100	А			
50-69	В			
35-49	С			
0-32	F			

NIGERIA		
Scale 1	Scale 2	U.S. Grade Equivalent
A/AB	70-100	А
B/BC	60-69	B+
C/CD	50-59	В
D	45-49	C+
E	40-44	С
F	0-39	F

UNITED KINGDOM				
Scale 1	U.S. Grade Equivalent			
70-100	А			
65-69	A-			
60-64	B+			
50-59	В			
45-49	C+			
40-44	С			
0-39	F			

https://applications.wes.org/country-resources/

Many countries weigh the majority of a course grade on the final exam or project, so smaller homework assignments or quizzes may seem unimportant to your students.

- It's important to point out any grading scale you may have in your syllabus to help students see the percentage-letter correlation.
- Take time to clearly explain your grading system and any grading categories and weights you have described in your syllabus. If a student receives a low score on an assignment, send them a reminder or screenshot of the syllabus that explains the grading.

One student thought he was doing okay with a 68 percent. I responded, "You're not doing okay if you have a 68 percent." His response was he almost had an A, so he felt good about it. I realized in his country, the percentage-letter correlation was quite different with a much larger range that represented an A. What he thought was a "good" score was really failing, per U.S. standards.

Understanding the Lecture

Possible scenario: International students might have trouble understanding the lecture.

Many students are better readers than listeners. Therefore, it's extremely beneficial to communicate your content both orally and in writing. Use the projector, whiteboard, handouts, or other visual aids to provide additional support to your students. You might even want to make your own class notes or slide presentations available to students. Also be sure to write new or complicated terms and names on the board so learners know how to spell them correctly.

Giving very clear organizational signals is beneficial to all students. Sometimes using clear cues comes naturally. For example, in a discussion of the five reasons for the beginning of a war, it would be natural for you to use first, second, next, another, etc. However, many professors also use other cues that are not as explicit for students from other countries to notice such as now, okay, or let's move on. Try to incorporate the more obvious transitional cues to make the organization of your lecture transparent.

- Give specific and frequent transitional cues so that students can follow the organization of your lecture.
- Provide information both orally and in writing. Be sure to write down or spell names or keywords.
 Consider providing class notes or making any visual presentations available to students after class.
- Be aware of which words you're choosing. Are you using sports metaphors, idioms, or cultural references that students may not understand? Consider how to communicate your point through synonyms and restatements.
- Be aware of how you're speaking. Are you enunciating every word, speaking audibly, and using standard pronunciation?

The next two tips may be the hardest to do but can potentially be the most effective. First, try to step into the shoes of international students and consider what barriers they may be facing as they try to understand your lecture. Idioms and slang often cause confusion. For example, you might say, "Give me a ballpark figure." Since many countries don't play baseball and don't have "ballparks," this type of sports idiom causes interference for students from other cultures. Second, if you do choose to use idioms, try to follow them up with a paraphrase or synonym to help international learners grasp the meaning. For instance, in the previous example, you could follow "ballpark figure" with "an estimate."

Recently, a student from China told me that he didn't understand his professor when he told him that an assignment was due on Monday, pronounced by the native Texan as Mun-dee. While most native speakers can figure out that 'Mun-dee' means Monday, this creates an unnecessary barrier for international students. Trying to speak as standardly as possible will help all your students.

Using Canvas or Other Classroom Materials Appropriately

Possible scenario: International students might have difficulty using Canvas or other classroom materials appropriately.

Learners, especially first-year-students, may not understand all the nuances of each class's resources and set-up in the first week of class. The concept of working through a module or navigating Canvas to find all relevant materials may not be a natural process for them. Many students come from an educational background where they were simply given all materials and not much was left for them to find, purchase, or work through on their own.

- Have a handout available for students with screen shots or step-by-step directions about where to access materials for your class.
- Remember that students often only click the "Assignment" tab on Canvas and don't work through a module as the teacher may intend for them to do.
- If your course uses supplemental materials, be sure students understand where to find the lectures, lecture notes, homework questions, assignments, etc. You could create a list or directory that tells them where to find different types of materials for the class.
- In the first few weeks, check if students need any help acquiring the correct materials.
- If you have a large class and have a TA or SI, they could also help follow up with students about the materials for class.
- If your course is online and some of your students are in their home countries, be aware there could be a variety of other issues with the materials you require them to use for your class. This could include copyright issues with a particular publisher, Internet or networking issues, firewalls, or even something as simple as a lack of dependable electricity.

One international student indicated he was very confused about how and what to study for weekly quizzes for a class. He had the syllabus calendar that listed the topics, but he didn't seem to know where any of the materials were located to review. After looking at Canvas with him, I learned that he didn't know there were many lecture videos and PowerPoint lecture notes posted. He was only looking at his assignments rather than clicking on the Home page and navigating the sections that actually said Lecture Videos.





Using or Understanding Campus Resources/Help

Possible scenario: International students may not be aware of campus resources or don't understand how to utilize them effectively.

Students may not be aware of the numerous resources available to them for their studies or personal issues. Some students may feel additional materials are inconvenient, embarrassing, costly, or problematic in other ways, which limits their use of campus resources.

- Be sure students know where campus offices and/or departments are located. Don't simply give students a website to visit.
- If that department uses an appointment system, like Navigate, be sure students know how to book an appointment.
- Connecting students directly to the specific person or department that they need is also useful.
- Having resources posted on Canvas and/or as a one-page handout may be helpful as a quick reference.
- Work with some services, like the University Writing Center, to make it a requirement that the student go to that office for help.
- It's beneficial not only to students but also to you to know which offices or people are available to help secondlanguage learners. You may have allies on campus that you didn't even know you had. Additional resources are available at the end of this guide on pages 26-27.

An international student was concerned because she couldn't attend the **Supplemental Instruction** (SI) sessions for her courses. She thought she had to be there the whole time the session was being held. After connecting her to the SI director, the director explained to the student that the SI sessions were more casual, there were resources on Canvas for the SI, and that the SI also had office hours. The student was elated to realize that she could still be involved and get the additional help she needed.



Working in Pairs or Groups

Possible scenario: International students may not know how to participate in pair/group work.

For many students, the expectation to work with a partner or in groups during class is a new and/or intimidating experience. This may be because learners come from lecture-based educational systems in which students do not engage in interactive, peer-to-peer classroom learning, and/or it may be because learners are self-conscious of their abilities to communicate in English. Additionally, students from other countries may be concerned how, or if, their perspectives or viewpoints will be received by their peers in the U.S. Given these likely scenarios, instructors should be patient and encouraging when requiring students to work in pairs or groups.

- Conduct an activity at the start of the semester to help students get to know their classmates.
- Explain pair and group work norms and expectations and the importance of these in education.
- Start the semester with pair work and then expand to group work later.
- Have students work on a relatively simple (and if possible enjoyable) assignment the first time they
 work in a pair and also the first time they work in a group.
- Assign points for pair and group work, and let students know how you will be evaluating their interactions.
- Reassure students that you are more concerned with the quality of their ideas and/or work rather than any grammar or vocabulary errors that may occur.





CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS

Collective Cultural Mindset vs. U.S. Individualism

Possible scenario: International students may submit identical or very similar assignments and/or use outside sources without attribution.

Many students come from collectivist cultures where work is shared and the success of the group trumps the success of the individual. When students from these cultures come to the U.S. to study, the adaptation process often proves challenging. One area in which these cultural differences frequently manifest is in the completion of homework assignments. While domestic students learn early on in their academic careers that collaboration for understanding and discussing homework material is acceptable and encouraged, they understand copying and sharing answers is inappropriate. The same is true for using outside information without attributing the origins of this material. In collectivist societies, information, like labor, is shared. In contrast, presenting other's thoughts without proper citation in individualistic cultures, such as that in the U.S., is recognized as plagiarism.

- Make it clear that group answers are not acceptable for most homework assignments in the U.S.
- Emphasize that although using information from outside sources is acceptable, students must indicate whose ideas they are expressing and where they found these ideas.
- Explain that even when paraphrasing, summarizing, and/or synthesizing other's ideas, students should cite their sources.
- Present students with examples of plagiarism.
- Make students aware of the consequences of plagiarism not only in your class and at Baylor but also in the U.S. Be sure to direct students to the plagiarism and Baylor Honor Code statements in your course syllabus.

Critical Thinking and Using Outside Sources

Possible scenario: International students may struggle with critical thinking as well as knowing when and how to use outside sources.

Students have difficulty knowing when and how to use outside sources and will often research writing assignments that were meant to be reflective and written entirely from a student's own knowledge. Related to this, when outside sources are involved, students need help learning to think critically and almost need permission to add their own opinions to what they've read. Too often, students err on the extremes:

Encourage students to think critically about what they read and to incorporate more of their own thoughts into their writing. Explain that academic writing requires a balance between borrowed ideas and students' own thoughts. Nonetheless, be aware that even though you provide these recommendations, students will likely still need help writing in an academic style.







Plagiarism and Other Academic Dishonesty

Possible Scenario: International students may plagiarize or manifest other forms of cheating.

While some students may truly lack academic integrity, often what looks like plagiarism or another form of cheating may, in fact, be a cultural issue of one sort or another. That is to say, the "cheating" may be a mistake or a failure to understand the expectations of Western academia.

- Dig deeper before accusing a student of academic dishonesty. Talk with the student.
- Make sure your own expectations are clearly understood by all students.
- Make assignment directions explicit.
- Give students an opportunity to correct plagiarism, especially if this was unintentional.

Students often struggle with the Western concept of individual ownership of ideas and thus the need to document all borrowed material to give credit to the "owner." They plagiarize often and unintentionally. Sometimes this is a mechanical failure, not knowing when or how to use quotation marks. Or it may be because, in their culture, ideas belong to everyone, and students can use any of these ideas freely and without acknowledgement. In cultures like this, everyone knows that no ideas really belong to individuals because we all build on what has gone before. Thus, a student's name on a paper means that this collection or arrangement of ideas was put together by that student, but it doesn't mean the ideas originated with him or her. (Students aren't expected to have their own ideas but are expected to regurgitate the experts' ideas.)

Talk about plagiarism from a cultural perspective to help students see the vast differences between cultures and the implications. It's not enough to define plagiarism and say, "Don't do it." In particular, talk to students about the different cultural understandings of intellectual property.

In the U.S., we consider many ideas private property—these ideas may be borrowed, but they must also be acknowledged, or we consider it stealing. Also, while Western culture has a concept of common knowledge, it is very difficult for an international student to understand where these boundaries are. Teach them to cite more than a native speaker might. If in doubt, cite!

Understanding Religious or Other Cultural References

Possible scenario: International students may not understand religious and/or other cultural references in the classroom.

- Try to step outside yourself and consider what religious or cultural background you are assuming the students have. For international students, it is often quite different from domestic students.
- Take a little time to explain the use of religious terms as well as famous people or events from American culture and history (e.g. FDR, 9/11, the Gulf War, Elvis Presley, etc.)

While viewing a sample Baylor lecture, I noticed the following situation. In a discussion of "justice," a professor gave the definition from the Oxford English Dictionary and then immediately quoted Deuteronomy 10:18 to examine what it says about justice. An American student has the cultural background to process this information, but what about an international student? They have several obstacles here. What is Deuteronomy? They may have never read a Bible, or if they have, they may not remember that Deuteronomy is a book in the Bible. They would also probably not understand why a Biblical reference is even being brought into the discussion at all. Without a professor explicitly explaining this cultural background that most American students have, this entire section of the lesson would confuse rather than help the student understand the concept of justice.

By no means are we advocating that you stop any religious references in class! Instead, take a few extra seconds to explain that the references come from the Bible and that Christians view it as the authority for how we are to live life and love others.

An international student was referred to the ISAS office by her political science professor because the learner was struggling with the language in this course. She asked me if I could explain who/ what "I-K-E" was. The teacher had written these letters on the board (in all capital letters) but she couldn't catch who or what IKE was. After a little more discussion about the context of the class, I realized the teacher was talking about Dwight D. Eisenhower, also known as Ike. Of course, she didn't have any reference to this U.S. history context, and with the additional use of all capital letters, she thought it was an acronym for something. As we continued in our meeting, she also brought up LBJ. She thought this was a reference to another president but didn't quite know how he fit in. So, trying to keep up with notes and the lecture made it challenging because she didn't have those small cultural background pieces to put together.





CONCLUSION

Thank you for your interest in this guide. We hope you have found this information useful and/or insightful. Our ongoing desire is to share our wisdom and experiences with you, our Baylor colleagues, while we simultaneously learn and benefit from your expertise. By doing so, we believe all of us will grow more knowledgeable of, and appreciate more, the extremely valuable resource we have at our fingertips, our international students. In the final pages of this guide, we list other resources you may find helpful as you continue to work with your international learners. We would love to carry on this conversation with you or your colleagues, so please feel free to contact us at any time.





Who We Are

Christine Fabiszewski started teaching in the Global Gateway Program in January 2019. She became the English for Academic Purposes Division Director in August 2020. She has an M.A. in linguistics from the University of Texas at Arlington and a B.A. in Greek from Calvin College (now Calvin University). She has worked as a linguist in Africa and has taught ESL at the Center of English Language (Dallas), at Baylor University, and at the University of North Texas. A lover of languages, Christine has studied many and has lived abroad in Ecuador, Nigeria, Mexico, France, and Chad. She enjoys working with international students and helping them improve their English skills. Christine has been active in the Waco Christian Writers Workshop (CWW), attending workshops, presenting, leading critique groups, and serving on the CWW board. She has also worked as a free-lance editor and enjoys writing.

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Matthew Piech is a full-time lecturer in the Global Gateway Program. He came to Waco in August 2019 from the Texas Panhandle where he was the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) English as a Second Language (ESL) Program Coordinator at Amarillo College. He has worked as an adult educator in Florida, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, all in the field of ESL. Prior to this, he worked as an Education Program Specialist in Adult Education for the Arizona Department of Education. He has an M.A. in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from Emporia State University, an M.A. in Adult Education and Distance Learning from the University of Phoenix, and a B.A. in English from Arizona State University. He also has two A.A.S. degrees from Pima Community College: one in business administration and the other in international business communication studies. Mr. Piech studied intermediate-level Spanish abroad at El Centro Lingüísticos y Multiculturales in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico.

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Tanya Vernon has been teaching in the Global Gateway Program since Fall 2019 and oversees training for international teaching assistants in the graduate school. She majored in vocal performance and English at Mississippi College and studied abroad for a year at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. After graduating and working at a law school for two years, she went to work for a humanitarian aid organization in Hong Kong and taught English in Tianjin, China. She returned to the U.S. for graduate studies and earned her master's degree in applied linguistics from the University of Texas at Arlington with an emphasis in TESOL. Tanya has taught in intensive English programs at Texas A&M University, the University of Texas at Arlington, and Dallas Baptist University. She has also been a foreign expert at universities in Kunming and Xi'an, China, as well as for a petroleum company in Tianjin, China. Studying both German and Chinese in their respective countries has given her a unique understanding of living and studying abroad.

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Debra Wainscott started teaching in the Global Gateway Program in its inaugural semester in January 2019 and has been the specialist in the International Student Academic Support (ISAS) office since Spring 2020. She has an M.A. in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from The University of Texas at Arlington and a B.S.E. in elementary education from East Texas Baptist University. For more than 20 years, she has taught and worked with international students at many different education levels, including a normal college in Guangzhou, China, and a K-12 international school in Qingdao, China. In between living in China, she worked at East Texas Baptist University as the assistant director in the international education office, working with both incoming international students and outgoing study abroad students. Upon returning from China the last time, she taught English to non-native English-speaking adults in Knoxville, Tennessee.

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Baylor Academic Resources

International Student Academic Support (ISAS)

Students can get academic help with classes, especially for language difficulties.

Navigate

Students can schedule appointments with a tutor, mentor, advisor, or ISAS representative and to check their class schedules or find information about their advisors or majors.

University Writing Center (UWC)

Students can get help with any part of the writing process for essays, research, etc.

Paul L. Foster Success Center

Office of Access & Learning
 Accommodation (OALA)

Students can request accommodations for academic requirements if they have a documented learning disability. (Non-native English speakers typically don't qualify for language-related accommodations.)

• Center for Academic Success and Engagement (CASE)

Academic Mentoring

Students can meet one-on-one with a mentor to help with study skills, test-taking strategies, time management skills, etc.

Learning Lab

Students can use the open walk-in time to get study skills help from a mentor. No appointment needed.

Supplemental Instruction (SI)

Students can attend an SI session for several of their general classes. The SI will provide additional instruction and lessons outside of what the professor teaches. Students must sign up to attend weekly review sessions.

Tutoring

Students can get one-on-one tutoring for classes.

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Other Success Center Programs:

- University Advisement
- Majors Exploration
- McNair Scholars Program

Global Bears

Students can access information and updates about their visa, status, and all things international-office related.

BearWeb

Students can access registration, drop/add courses, degree plans, grades, etc...

Baylor Bookstore

Students can purchase their books or school supplies. The Baylor Bookstore is useful, especially for offering e-books for students who may be living outside of the U.S. Sometimes students may encounter copyright or publishing issues if they try to purchase these materials on their own.

Baylor Library Guide for International Students

Students can access many links or resources like viewing newspapers in their native language, listening to audio books, or getting help for writing citations.

Speech-Language & Hearing Clinic

Students can make appointments to work with speech pathologists to improve their English pronunciation.

Other Baylor offices provide links to additional outside resources, which may prove useful:

- Faculty and Staff Resource Toolkit from the Center for Global Engagement
- Supporting International Students from the Academy of Teaching and Learning

Technology Help and Resources

- Notification and Time Zone Settings in Canvas
- Kaltura
- Respondus LockDown Browser
- Office 365

Other Resources

Communicate: Strategies for International Teaching Assistants (Smith, et al. 2007) is a textbook for training international graduate students in teaching skills and pronunciation in order to be more effective in the U.S. university classroom. The back of the book contains word lists of common terms organized by the major fields of study among university graduate students. These lists could be a starting point for international students to use to develop their academic vocabulary. (Smith, Myers, and Burkhalter, 2007.)

· Rachel's English

Students can access helpful videos and tips, particularly for pronunciation. Some resources are free while others require a membership.

English with Jennifer

Students can access helpful videos and tips. Some resources are free while others require a membership.

Corpus of Contemporary American English

Students can use this tool for building their academic vocabulary and seeing how words are used in various contexts.

Oxford Learner's Dictionary

Students will find not only easy-to-understand definitions but also recordings of standard pronunciations.

