

## **Suggestions for Teaching International Students/ Students in General**

### **First Day**

- Have students fill out index cards with information that will give you some insight into your students' interests and needs.
- Provide an opportunity for students to introduce themselves and share basic information.
- Review the syllabus carefully on the first day. Make sure that the major information is clear: grading policy, attendance policy, test and homework policy, etc
- Encourage them to come to your office during your office hours for problems with the class, assignments, tests, etc.
- Recommend that students come to class prepared so that they can participate and ask questions about material that is unclear.

### **Activities**

- Give each person a chance to speak. Everybody needs to make a comment. One comment; one question
- Provide opportunities for pair and group work.
- Reach out to international students when it is possible without making them feel uncomfortable.
- Call on your international students as you would others in the class unless you see that these students are having difficulty understanding your question or you are having difficulty understanding their questions and answers. If comprehension is a problem, speak to the student after class and recommend that the student come to see you for help.
- Be inclusive. Be considerate when you are using idioms, slang, and technical terms, and define as needed.
- Assume that your students are diverse in terms of their sexual orientation, religious, and ethnic beliefs. Don't tell jokes or use examples that could offend anybody in the class.
- Provide review sessions before major exams and encourage your international students to attend.

- Post your lectures on your website
- Always include a written version of assignments. Check comprehension of the assignment.

**Board work:**

- Plan your board work. Try to imagine how the board will look for the class.
- Outline the day's topics, remind students about assignments, emphasize major points of a lecture or discussion, summarize ideas raised in class discussions.
- Include headings and other methods to highlight important information.
- Try to write legibly- large print, moderately spaced.
- Use the black / white board and handouts as much as possible. Write key words and phrases on the board to support your spoken comments.

**Evaluation:**

- Grade early and often so students know how they are doing and they can get help if there is a problem before it's too late. Comments that explain their grades are particularly useful.
- Vary evaluation formats: essay, multiple choice, project. Provide samples of questions in preparation for a test.
- Use evaluation criteria that separate content from language whenever possible.

**Communication Process and Issues**

- Be aware of the fact that communication is two way: speaker and listener. You need to break down what international students are saying. Use the feedback technique to be sure you understand what you are told or asked.
- Beware of the fact that an international speaker usually requires more time to process information.
- Repeat frequently.
- Provide WAIT TIME.

- Multiple factors can interfere with effective communication: linguistic ability, pronunciation, culture, and environment.
- Be patient when students speak. It sometimes takes them time to remember the right word. Americans talk all the time. International speakers with language barriers can't be quick enough to talk. They need to organize their thoughts before they speak.
- Don't embarrass them when they make grammatical or pronunciation mistakes."
- Be more open-minded towards international speakers' accents."

Become familiar with different accents from different countries. (Use YouTube or websites. (Same speech recorded by people from different countries. Listen to speech samples to be aware of where they come from )

- Use the feedback technique. If you aren't sure you understand the student's questions or response, ask: " Are you asking me? or Are you saying....."?"

**Questions:** Use the 4 steps for fielding questions:

1. Respond in some way in three seconds
2. Repeat the question for the rest of the class to be sure you understand the question and to be sure the other students heard the question.
3. Answer the question as clearly as possible.
4. Check to make sure you satisfied the student with your answer.

**Office Hour:**

- Make the office visit as useful as possible. Get to know your students: Open the visit with small talk questions to find out how they are doing in general. (Examples: How do you like Drexel? How are your classes going? Are you adjusting to the food and weather in Philadelphia?)
- When you are ready to " get down to business", you might ask questions like these: What do you like about this class? What have you learned? What do you hope to get from this class? What problems are you having in class? Why do you think you are having this problem? What have you tried to do about it? Are you able to take good notes? Do you know anybody in the class who would help you? Are you checking the professor's websites? Are you reading the text before coming to class?

- How are you studying for this class? Do you ever practice writing complete answers to questions? Do you know what to expect on the next test? How are you going to prepare for this test?
- If the student comes with a question about a grade or a comment, try to make sure the student leaves with an understanding of what s/he did that was wrong so s/he doesn't make the same mistake.
- It's important that your student leaves on a positive note with a plan for improvement.
- If it is warranted, recommend that your students take advantage of the resources on campus:
  - ❖ English Language Center ([www.drexel.edu/elc](http://www.drexel.edu/elc)) Ext. 2011.
  - ❖ Writing Center (ESL tutors are available) ([www.drexel.edu/writing](http://www.drexel.edu/writing) center)
  - ❖ Office of Equality and disability ([www.drexel.edu/edt](http://www.drexel.edu/edt))
  - ❖ International Students and Scholars Services ([www.drexel.edu/iss](http://www.drexel.edu/iss))

If you have questions about any of the suggestions, email me: Alexis Finger  
<fingerag@drexel.edu>.