Tips for Supporting International Students

Different Perspectives on the Classroom

All cultures have ways of transmitting knowledge to young people, but what form that takes will vary. Different cultures have different answers to questions like these. We will look at each of these in this guide.

- Should students talk in class and share their opinion, or listen quietly to the professor?
- Is it OK for a student to challenge an idea that a professor has presented?
- Is a student expected to do original work or to provide the appropriate shared knowledge?
- What are students supposed to do when working in groups?
- What are the goals of assessments and what kind of assessments are usual?

To help all your students, consider setting down in writing your expectations for student participation and student work in your class. Different professors have different perspectives on these matters, too, and it helps to share yours with your students.

While these tips are far from a complete primer, hopefully they will offer some helpful directions for your work.

Positive Classroom Atmosphere

In some cultures, the professor is viewed as the authority and it is inappropriate for students to speak up in class or challenge the professor's ideas, though in the US, we view these things as a sign of engagement. Also, some students may be afraid to make a mistake in public or to draw attention to themselves in general, which may also be related to cultural values.

In order for students to feel comfortable sharing their perspectives, it's important to have a supportive classroom environment. Some ideas for this:

- Invite students to share their ideas and perspectives and support them when they do, providing guidance as needed, but be mindful when a student needs more time/practice when doing activities like speaking in class
- Give students multiple opportunities and different modalities for engaging with the work and with each other (large group discussion, small groups, online, projects, activities like think-pair-share, where students both write and discuss, etc.)
- Develop together with students guidelines for a respectful classroom

Plagiarism

Different cultures have different perspectives on intellectual property. US culture tends to be highly individualistic and so in the US, taking another person's work or ideas is similar to stealing. In other cultures, previous work is viewed as a shared resource for all and there is not the same emphasis on achieving and standing out as an individual. Also, some in some cultures, it is expected that they will help their friends to a degree that individuals in the US would not, such as sharing an old paper for them to use or providing significant help on assignments.

- Expectations regarding original work need to be made very clear.
- Having a drafting process is very helpful.
- Keep an open dialog with students so that if they are struggling, they don't feel they need to resort to plagiarism.
- Refer to support resources like Think Tank and the Writing Skills Improvement Program.
- Provide guidelines for collaboration, such as this one from the University of Rochester Writing Center:

The Writer's Role	The Reader's Role
Ask the reader to review your paper and offer feedback based on the peer review form from the class or instructor.	Read the paper and respond to peer review questions on the form provided by the writer. The reader might either talk through the review with the writer or write down responses on the peer review form (avoid writing on the paper; avoid making specific changes).
Read a paper aloud—perform the paper—so that you can better hear it from a reader's perspective.	Act as a silent audience for the writer.
Listen as the reader reads your paper to you; note when your reader stumbles or appears confused, and keep track of areas you might like to change.	Read the paper aloud—perform the paper—for the writer.
Explain your paper to the reader to flesh out your ideas.	Ask questions to better understand and to help the writer better understand and develop the paper's ideas.
Ask the reader a specific question about a part of the paper: "How well does my example demonstrate my point?" "How clear is this paragraph?" "How well has the paper addressed counterargument?"	Respond to the writer's specific question, but let the writer solve any problems that you identify.
Ask the reader for one or two suggestions about a problematic part of the paper.	Offer one or two suggestions about a small part of the paper.
Seek out different audiences for your paper: ask for general responses from readers with different perspectives.	Offer a genuine response from your unique perspective.
Ask the reader to point out particularly successful or problematic areas of the essay.	Talk with the writer about why you found particular parts to be successful or problematic, but let the writer work out how to address problem areas.

Assessing Student Work

When setting up assessments and grading frameworks, consider some of these principles:

- Are the requirements and goals of the assignment clear to all students?
- Is the task clearly stated, or are some elements only implied? For example, if a student is given a topic to "discuss," is it clear what that discussion entails?
- Are all students being assessed fairly on the same criteria? If you find you want to grade different students differently (for example, not counting spelling and grammar for non-native English-speaking students so they're not so severely penalized), consider revising rubrics for all, or requiring referrals for all students to support units like Think Tank and the Writing Skills Improvement Program.
- Are the assessments aligned with course outcomes? Do the follow the assessment principles of validity and reliability?
- Do the assessments provide positive washback for classroom learning?
- Are rubrics/grading frameworks set up so that students are neither unfairly punished (significant deductions for minor errors) nor unfairly rewarded (minor deductions for significant errors)?
- Did students have a chance to practice with the types of assessments being used? Different cultures handle student assessment differently and it's good to provide practice activities so students are familiar with the format.

Student Support

Some ideas for increasing the accessibility of materials for students includes:

- Posting lecture slides and helpful documents for all students.
- Keeping office hours and encouraging/incentivizing students to come.
- Helping students connect with resources on campus; some include:

Advising Resource Center	An online portal to many student academic resources. In addition to convenient links to many policies that you need to know about, the ARC has an advisor directory, a grade calculator, and a list of student services.	http://advising.arizona.edu/
International Student Services Office (ISS)	International Student Services provides services to over 3,000 international students at the UA, as well as international visitors, sponsored student organizations, and prospective students and their parents. Both drop-in quick advising and scheduled advising appointments are available.	https://global.arizona.edu/international-students/advising
Cultural and Resource Centers, Dean of Students	Whether students are interested in leadership opportunities via student government, joining a club or Greek-letter organization, exploring multiple identities through the Cultural Centers, Women's Resource Center, or LGBTQ Affairs, or are returning to	https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/getting-involved

	college after military service (VETS Center) or preparing to serve (ROTC), the Dean of Students Office helps them find their community here at the UA.	
Think Tank	Our mission is to empower UA students by providing a positive environment where they can master the skills needed to become successful lifelong learners. Some free to UA students, some fee-based.	http://thinktank.arizona.edu/
Academic Recovery Program (within Think Tank)	(See Pathway to Academic Student Success, Wildcat Track, and Online Rebound)	http://thinktank.arizona.edu/college-survival/academic-probation
Pathway to Academic Student Success (PASS) (within ASA)	College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, Eller College of Management, Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, Pre-Physiology Major; The PASS Program offers individual meetings with a peer mentor and an eight-week workshop series. Students will develop an individualized plan to enhance the skills necessary to becoming a successful UA student. Any student on academic probation for the first time is automatically enrolled in PASS or one of two other college-based programs. Fee-based.	http://pass.arizona.edu
Wildcat Track (within Think Tank)	College of Fine Arts, College of Nursing, College of Letters, Arts & Science; The Wildcat Track program includes visits with a Learning Specialist and connections to other THINK TANK services to assist students on their path to becoming a successful UA student.	http://thinktank.arizona.edu/college-survival/academic-probation
Online Rebound (within Think Tank)	College of Humanities, School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape Architecture, UA South The Online Rebound program consists of modules that students complete over the course of the semester. The Program is designed specifically to assist students in developing and refining the skills necessary to becoming a successful UA student.	http://thinktank.arizona.edu/college-survival/academic-probation
Cultural Learning	The Learning Communities provide an opportunity for students to participate in a culturally enriching	http://asa.arizona.edu/learning-communities

Communities (within ASA)	experience. Students who identify as African American/Black (360) or Asian Pacific American (EDGE) or Native American/American Native (FYS) can choose to participate in one of our three learning communities.	
Writing Program	The Writing Program offers foundational courses for all students. International students seeking advice on these foundational courses can contact the Writing Program for help.	https://english.arizona.edu/writing-program
Writing Skills Improvement Program	WSIP provides training, mentoring, and guidance to all UA students, faculty, and staff to improve academic, professional, and personal writing abilities and also offers professional editing. In addition, WSIP serves community teachers (middle- and high-school) and students (high-school). Some free to UA students, some fee-based.	http://wsip.arizona.edu/
Center for English as a Second Language	CESL provides English-language instruction in full-time and part-time programs as well as providing professional development and mentoring for ESL/EFL teachers and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. Fee-based.	http://www.cesl.arizona.edu/
Disability Resource Center	DRC is the campus department designated by the University to determine and provide access to University classes, programs and activities for disabled individuals on main campus, UA South, Phoenix campus and UA Online.	https://drc.arizona.edu/
Responsible Conduct of Research	Fostering a culture and expectation of responsible and ethical conduct of research is a critical component in the advancement of knowledge through research and scholarship. It is also a key element in the maintenance of public trust in the research enterprise. Given that ethical issues emerge when conducting research and scholarship across disciplines of all kinds, UA is committed to providing high quality instruction in responsible conduct of research to the entire campus community.	http://rgw.arizona.edu/research-compliance/rcr
Strategic Alternative Learning	The SALT Center inspires students with learning and attention challenges to succeed in higher education. Through the provision of	http://www.salt.arizona.edu/

Techniques (SALT)	comprehensive academic support services, the SALT Center encourages student engagement, self-awareness, and growth. The SALT Center aspires to be the leading international model of success in higher education for students with learning and attention challenges. Fee-based	
Student Advocates for Improved Learning (SAIL)	A peer-mentoring based program focused on sharing based practices for learning and retaining knowledge and for conceptual understanding. For all UA students.	http://academicaffairs.arizona.edu/sail-student-advocates-improved-learning
Counseling and Psych Services (CAPS)	Counseling & Psych Services (CAPS) offers psychological counseling and psychiatric services to students to help them cope with personal problems so that they can successfully achieve their educational goals.	https://www.health.arizona.edu/counseling-psych-services
Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC)	The Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) was created to promote the causes and concerns of the graduate student body, to create and foster programs beneficial for growth and interaction, to disburse funds for the benefit of professional development, and to serve as the representative body and voice at the University of Arizona, the University of Arizona Administration, and the Arizona Board of Regents on behalf of graduate and professional students. This goal is achieved through the election of representatives, officers and hired personnel.	http://gpsc.arizona.edu/