

Festival of Teaching and Learning 2023

Embracing International Student Learners

Barbara Edmondson, Zuzana Buchanan
and Sofia Elgueta Duplancic
English Language School



UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA



English Language School (ELS)

The ELS advocates for international students beyond the language classroom.



Let's look at that last quote again:

“Nobody knows I am an international student.”

Does it matter?

(How) do you identify international students?

Traditions that need to be reimagined

Traditionally: We don't have time to learn names, identify students' backgrounds, embrace cultural differences and encourage discussion.

Traditionally: We may think this is Canada, you are learning in Canada, you need to adapt to the Canadian culture and academic culture.

Traditionally: International Student Services (ISS) has ushered international students throughout their time at the U of A alone.

Reimagine!

- Take little steps to embrace diversity
- “Humanize” the classroom
- Involve local students in the process
- Create a more inclusive classroom
- We all take part in embracing a globalized perspective

Where international students struggle

The main themes or categories where international students struggle are:



















- a. Intercultural communication
- b. Canadian academic culture
- c. Learning and studying strategies
- d. Managing challenges
- e. Critical thinking
- f. Identifying and developing transferable skills

Intercultural Communication



Intercultural Communication: Getting to Know Each Other

- Update **eClass profile**
- Model **email signature** and [name](#)
- Invite international students to **identify** themselves using [mentimeter](#)
- Draw on students' **cultural perspectives**

	Shiho Hasegawa	 	shasegaw
	Gaku Hirose	 	ghirose
	Shotaro Kanaya	 	kanaya
	Akane Nishino	 	anishino
	Azusa Ochi	 	azusa
	Kristhel Anabel	 	kristhel



Intercultural Communication: Working Together

- Provide **clear guidelines** on how to participate in group work or a collaborative task
- Create opportunities for all students to **interact in and outside classroom**
 - preassign study groups
- Emphasize the importance of **communication**
 - Introduce a 'Communication minute'
- Help build a **learning community** in your classroom

Canadian Academic Culture



Canadian Academic Culture

- Strategically use the **course outline**
 - Include the land acknowledgement with a personal and explicit rationale for why we say it
- Draw attention to **academic integrity**
- Use the **U of A Library** wisely
- Model **Respect** - shared responsibility

Learning and Studying Strategies



Learning and Studying Strategies: Time Management

- **Model project management skills**
 - Use the **calendar**
 - **Divide tasks** into smaller chunks
 - Provide **approximate work time** for assignment completion
 - Provide **countdown** to major assignments (days)
 - Offer suggested **weekly reading amount** (pg/units)

Learning and Studying Strategies: Academic Skills

- Acknowledge **reading comprehension** is an issue
- Create a **reading culture**
- Encourage **note-taking** and **retrieval practice**
- Guide students through **writing process**

Critical Thinking



Critical Thinking

- Emphasize importance of **current events**
- Facilitate **inquiry**
- Support **reflective writing**
- Identify **biases**
- Scaffold/model **critical questions**

Managing Challenges



Managing Challenges

- Recognize **struggling** students
- Pay attention and point out **U of A services**
- Identify **exam strategies** and tips as you are teaching

Transferable Skills



Transferable Skills

- Identify the **acquired skills**
- Show and encourage students to **identify connections**
- **Feedback**
- Model **organization**
- Provide **portfolio-building** opportunities
- Identify the **take-aways**

Conclusion



There are 8000 international students like me at the U of A, paying enormous amounts for tuition and living expenses.

Useful Links:

English Language School

[EAP 137 Academic and Intercultural Communications](#)

If you identify international students who are struggling, you can suggest they take this credit course to help them adjust to Canadian academic culture.

Data collection: [Mentimeter](#)

Name pronunciation: [Namedrop](#)

Avatar: [Bitmoji](#)

Randomizer tool: [Pickerwheel](#)



Thank you