INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

CHALLENGES IN THE CLASSROOM
• **Coordinates services** for international students, scholars, and their dependents and serves as a *referral source* to university offices and academic departments.
• Provides students **direct support** with employment, immigration, personal, family, cross-cultural, financial, health care and insurance matters.
• Provides **advice on immigration** about students' rights and responsibilities as well as assistance with procedures required for school transfer, extensions of stay, work permission, and practical training experiences.
• **Maintains the records** of F-1 and J-1 students, scholars, and their dependents in the SEVIS database on behalf of UWF.
• Administers the study abroad program; manages international academic partnerships.
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT UWF

*Other - Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Bermuda, Bulgaria, Cayman Islands, Chile, Congo, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Finland, Grenada, Honduras, Israel, Jamaica, Kenya, Moldova, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Singapore, Switzerland, Trinidad, Uruguay, Vietnam
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT UWF

• F-1 Students
  • Degree seeking
  • Attend long term
  • Required to show English proficiency for admission
  • Attend UWF Orientation
  • Register with an advisor
  • May be athletes

• J-1 Students
  • Non-degree seeking
  • Attend for one year or less
  • Proof of English proficiency required at the graduate level
  • Do not attend UWF Orientation
  • May not speak with academic advisor before registering
UNIQUE CHALLENGES
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
CHALLENGES UNIQUE TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- Immigration status requirements
- Educational system differences
- U-curve of cultural adjustment (Culture Shock)
- Language barrier may still exist
IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS

• Students must maintain full-time status
  • 12 credit hours undergraduate
  • 9 credit hours graduate
  • Online classes
    • Only 3 credits count towards immigration requirements

• Employment
  • Can only work on campus

• Travel & Vacation
  • Cannot take a semester off
  • Visa & re-entry worry

• Possible Consequences
  • Arrested
  • Detained
  • Deported
EDUCATION SYSTEMS

• Registering for classes
  • Students may not be used to selecting their own courses
  • Exchange students may not have met with an Academic Advisor at UWF
  • Taking classes outside of major may be uncommon
  • Students may not understand the requirements of courses they register for

• Classroom structure
  • Lecture based with no student interaction
  • Rote memorization
  • Homework & attendance may be unimportant

• Class participation
  • Do not want to challenge authority
  • Seen as selfish
  • May reveal lack of language skills or knowledge in subject
  • May expect turn taking
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

• Common in some classrooms around the world
  • Talking amongst themselves in class
  • Showing up late
  • Academic Integrity goes unaddressed
  • Homework may not be recorded
  • Addressing professor by first name may be taboo
  • Professors may not have office hours
  • Teaching Assistants may be uncommon
## LOW VS. HIGH CONTEXT CULTURE

### Cultural Variations Between Low-Context and High-Context Cultures

(according to Edward T. Hall, 1976)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low-Context Culture</th>
<th>High-Context Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overly displays meanings through direct communication forms</td>
<td>Implicitly embeds meanings at different levels of the sociological context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values individualism</td>
<td>Values group sense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tends to develop transitory personal relationships</td>
<td>Tends to take time to cultivate and establish permanent personal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizes linear logic</td>
<td>Emphasizes spiral logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values direct verbal interaction and is less able to read nonverbal expressions</td>
<td>Values indirect verbal interaction and is more able to read nonverbal expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tends to use “logic” to present ideas</td>
<td>Tends to use more “feeling” in expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tends to emphasize highly structured messages, give details, and place great stress on words and technical signs</td>
<td>Tends to give simple ambiguous, noncontexting messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceive highly verbal persons favourably</td>
<td>Perceive highly verbal persons less favourably</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Challenges Specific to Chinese Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conception of Self</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Potential Impact on Academics/Campus Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collectivistic: higher value placed in own cultural group and individual modesty</td>
<td>Collectivistic: self-reliance, self-promotion, value freedom from imposed constraints</td>
<td>Limited class participation; not wanting to appear modest; less willing to risk behavior displeasing to group; will not respond to posted activities or even individual invitations of group members do not plan to attend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Framework</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Potential Impact on Academics/Campus Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Confucian system focuses on extensive memorization with no requirement to challenge or theorize on what student has memorized.</td>
<td>The American system emphasizes creativity, exploring new ideas, challenging existing concepts or theories.</td>
<td>Problems in responding to &quot;why?&quot; Unfamiliarity with group work; discomfort with self-expression. Skill in memorizing can collide with academic honesty policies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Social Relationships</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Potential Impact on Academics/Campus Life</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal and hierarchical. Most comfortable in context in which position and rules for behavior are known.</td>
<td>Informal, egalitarian. Social hierarchy is present but less visible and de-emphasized.</td>
<td>Confucian respect for professors can severely inhibit class participation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Harmony versus Confrontation</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Potential Impact on Academics/Campus Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In keeping with Confucian and Communist Party teachings, avoid open criticism, controversial topics, or confrontation. &quot;Saving face&quot; important.</td>
<td>Willing to discuss controversial topics, criticize, confront, advance personal view regardless of status of person being challenged.</td>
<td>Huge impact on class dynamics and interaction. Seldom willing to admit blame when confronted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rule of Law</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Potential Impact on Academics/Campus Life</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hold greater faith in personal relationships than in written policies or regulations.</td>
<td>Have great faith that laws, regulations, policies lead to fair outcomes and must thus be followed or changed through rule-governed processes.</td>
<td>Rules can be circumvented to achieve goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Academic Honesty</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>United States</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System rewards scores on standardized exams—how ever those scores are attained. Focus on product.</td>
<td>A belief in a meritocracy and a cherishing of original thought. Strict belief in citing sources. Focus on process.</td>
<td>Willing to risk violating policies on academic honesty.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Role of Silence</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Potential Impact on Academics/Campus Life</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San si er xing (think twice before you speak). Meditation is encouraged; prompt speech considered hastily. Student silence is sign of respect for teacher. More pronounced in situations where student's status appears ambiguous or if student feels unwelcome.</td>
<td>Silence in the presence of others is rare and uncomfortable. Focus on interactional competence in academic settings. Silence viewed as lack of preparation, competence or respect.</td>
<td>Seldom participate if not part of grade; seldom given time by teachers to give considered opinion (an absence of hang time or of an inclusive atmosphere to support students risking loss of face to participate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- Plagiarism
  - The idea of “owning” an idea can vary culturally
  - Students may be unaware of the consequences

- Cheating
  - Students may be focused on the grade
  - Value may be placed on relationships over rules

- Rules may be selectively enforced in home country
LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

- Student may:
  - Not recognize vocabulary
  - Have difficulty understanding professors
  - Feel uncomfortable participating in discussions or asking questions
  - Read at a slower pace
  - Not understand cultural context
SUGGESTIONS

TO HELP OVERCOME CHALLENGES
SUGGESTIONS FOR IMMIGRATION CHALLENGES

• Reduced Course Load
  • Must have prior approval from ISO advisor
  • Only allowed once

• ENS Course
  • Reading/Writing or Listening/Speaking
  • Counts towards immigration requirements
  • Not on UWF transcript

• Campus Resources
  • International Student Office
  • Writing lab, tutoring, etc.
LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY SUGGESTIONS

• **Speak slowly, clearly and evenly** to help the student hear and understand the words that you are saying. You **do not need to speak more loudly** – sometimes that can be more distracting.

• Formal English is usually easier to understand – **avoid slang** or informal expressions.

• **Restate** what the student has said to you so that student can correct any miscommunication. It is also useful to have the student rephrase what you have said so that you can also correct any misunderstandings.

• If necessary, **put communication in writing** so that the student can study what you are saying.

• Recognize that communication with a non-native speaker will take longer. **Be patient** and do not rush the process. This will allow the student to improve his/her communication and will also be less frustrating for you.
SUGGESTIONS FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

• Outline expectations on Syllabus
  • Remind them occasionally
    • Give examples of proper citations
    • Define when group work is allowed
    • Discuss consequences of academic dishonesty

• Offer resources
  • Writing Lab
  • The Learning Center
  • Online tutorial
    • http://library.uwf.edu/tutorials/
OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Use examples that are not US specific in class
- Ensure students intermingle in group work
- Encourage use of office hours
- Encourage students to ask questions in class
- Be clear about expectations
  - Provide step by step instructions
  - Give examples of papers, projects, etc.
Office of Diversity and International Education and Programs
474-2479
Building 71

International Student Office
Rachel Errington, Director
Rita Crider, Advisor
Erin Ward Stanley, Advisor

Intensive English Program
Noreen Baker, Director
ENS Class