

# International students and classroom activities

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# Outline

1. *Introduction: International students at Drexel*
2. *Educational genealogies in contrast*
3. *Academic culture & language practices*
4. *Scenarios*
5. *Teaching tips*
6. *Wrap up/resources*

# Goal

*More information*

*More understanding*

*More skills*

# Introduction

# Introduction

*International students at Drexel*  
*(Students on F1 visa)*  
*In contrast to “Generation 1.5”*

# International Graduate Students

- 723 total international graduate students  
319 PhD  
404 Masters

## Top Countries

324 China

162 India

30 Turkey

# Fall 2011 Freshman class

*376 International freshmen  
(12% of 3017)*

*194 China*

*39 India*

*33 Vietnam*

*14 Korea*

*7 Taiwan*

*89 all other countries*

# Entry requirements

*High School GPA*

*SAT (starting in 2012)*

*English language tests*

*TOEFL (79/120), IELTS (6.0-6.5/9)*



# International undergraduates

*Larger numbers & will grow*

*New population*

*Predominantly from China (Asia)*

*Majors: Business, Engineering, A&S  
(Biology)*

*Different language of schooling*

*Different academic culture*

*Different social culture*

# Different language of schooling

English language: English language as a subject=  
knowledge “about” English

Test preparation for TOEFL  
(Study for a performance piece)

# Different academic culture

- Roles of teacher and student
- What counts as knowledge
- What counts as performance of knowledge

# Different social culture

Collectivist vs. Individualist society  
Authority oriented vs. Anti-authority

Important cultural concepts:

“Face” “Place”

This generation: One child family policy

New money

Society in rapid change

# Two Academic Traditions “Genealogies”

Western  
Socrates

Eastern  
Confucius

# Western Academic Tradition

Roots in Classical Greece through  
Enlightenment

The Socratic dialogue as key spoken form:  
through questions to student, student  
“discovers” truth

In writing, language as transparent conduit for  
ideas; writing as “tool” –the  
“objective” gaze

# Western Academic Tradition

Privileges talk, dialog, discussion

The teacher as guide

20<sup>th</sup> Century: Dewey: Linking to student's own experience; application of information to new settings; new meanings

# Confucian Academic Tradition

Central metaphor of education as a path  
 (“tao”, the way), with teacher as mentor/  
 role model and student as follower

Student must learn to master (through  
 imitation of excellent models) and only  
 THEN imitate

Metaphoric language adds depth, resonance,  
 multiple meanings



# Confucian tradition of modelling

Example: Tai Chi

Morphology problems in linguistics

Proofs in calculus?

(Vygotskian idea of scaffolding and creating  
“inner speech” which internalizes the  
language of the teacher

# Role of teacher (Confucian)

Provide good models

Provide careful instruction with close attention and correction of students

Know when and how to foster independence (later stage)

# Role of teacher (Western)

Select and sequence information

Ask probing questions that get students to think and discuss critically

Make information “relevant” (link to students’ backgrounds and experience)

Help students take responsibility for learning

# Classroom practices (Western)

## Interactive discussions/lectures

- Select and sequence information

- Ask probing questions that get students to think and discuss critically

- Make information “relevant” (link to students’ backgrounds and experience)

## Student to student interaction (group work)

- Help students take responsibility for learning

# Students from Confucian educational backgrounds entering Western classrooms

1. May not understand the purpose of classroom discussion and feel it is waste of time
2. Feel they have no reason to give own opinions or experience because they are novices
3. Embarrassed about their language
4. Teacher has abdicated his/her responsibility by assigning group work

# 4 Scenarios for discussion

# FAQs

# Tips for effective teaching



# Final thoughts/Conclusion

- Story of the doctor from *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu

# Further resources

# Cultural adjustment issues

- May experience culture shock (anger, depression) or other adjustment issues
- May mitigate culture shock by sticking with familiar group
- Miss family; generally stay here over breaks (Thanksgiving, December holiday break)
- May face problems such as finances, crime or scam; family problems at home
- High performance students: Used to doing well academically and may be completely stressed by low grades (“face”)

# Global competence

- *Engage in* = participate effectively in diverse groups
- *Reflect upon* = become more conscious about U.S. practices in global (& local) context
- *Demonstrate open-mindedness* = become interested and open to changing norms...
- of diversity at the local, national, & international levels

# U.S. student knowledge of US academic culture

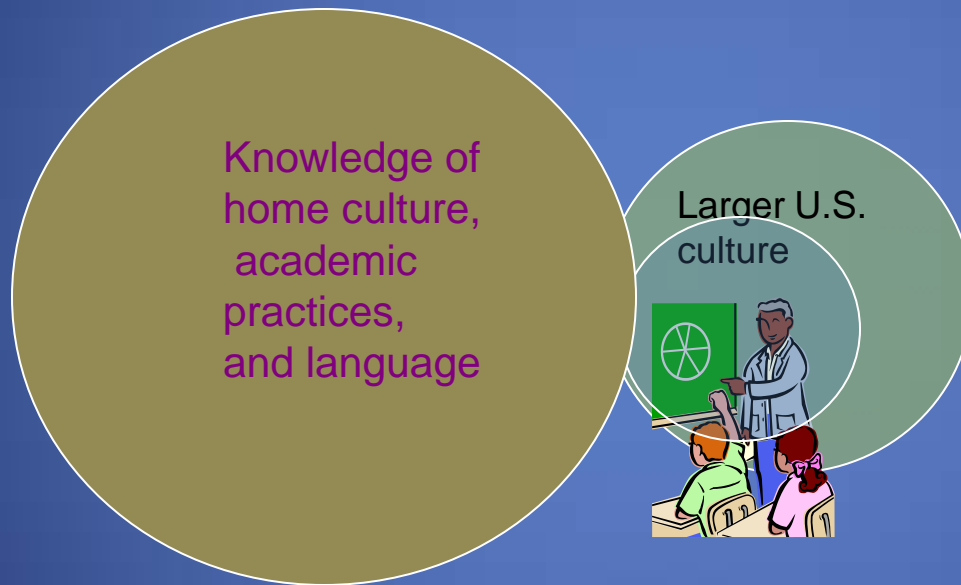
Larger U.S. culture



# International student knowledge of US academic culture



# International student multiple knowledge bases



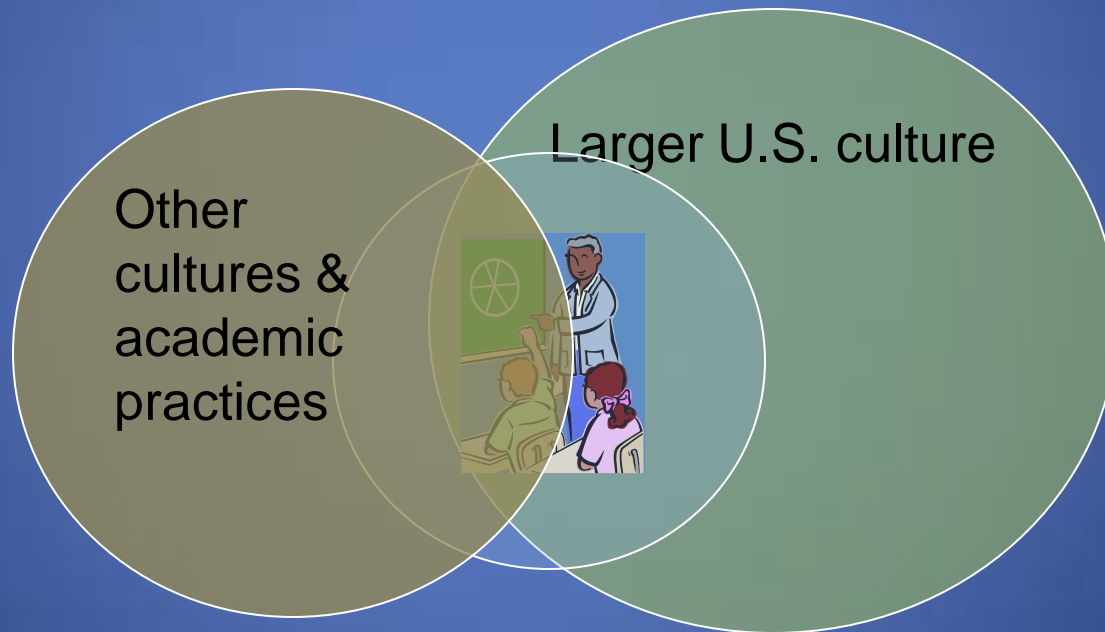
# U.S higher education practices

Larger U.S. culture





# U.S higher education practices



Engage EXISTING competencies  
Develop NEW competencies  
for all students

# Engage EXISTING competencies of international students

- Study & work habits, achievement focused
- Study practices, including memorization
- ....and ability to work effectively in groups
- Respect for teachers and work of academia
- Deep experience of home culture & language & long educational tradition

# Engage EXISTING competencies of U.S. students

- Knowledge of university academic practices as extension of secondary schools
- Extensive knowledge of English language, both spoken and written and “ways of talking”
- Knowledge of U.S. culture(s), including popular figures, events, referents
- Experience of work and a workplace
- Ability to individually “make something happen” (take individual leadership)

# Develop NEW competencies for international students

- Knowledge and experience of U.S. academic culture
- Increased English language proficiency for academic and social purposes
- Knowledge and experience of U.S. wider culture, norms and expectations

# Develop new competencies for U.S. students

## GLOBAL COMPETENCE

Engage in, reflect upon, and demonstrate open mindedness toward all issues of diversity at the local, national and international level