



**Strategies for Teaching International Students Series**  
**PART 3: How Instructors can Contribute to International Students' Success**

Instructors can play an important role in supporting international students, both in the classroom and outside. Instructors are often uniquely positioned to spot students who are struggling, and to intervene if possible, or to alert an advisor that the student may need additional support. Here are a few ways that instructors can support all students in their classrooms, including international students:

Strategies	Teaching Suggestions
Take time to figure out who your students are.	Consider having your students complete a survey or poll at the beginning of the year, and include questions about their cultural or national backgrounds, as well as their language/communication experiences and strengths.
Recognize the diverse perspectives, knowledge, experiences, and skills international learners contribute to the classroom.	Wu, Garza, & Guzman (2015) emphasize that international students “enrich the cultural diversity of campuses with their home culture and ethnic experiences” (p. 2). Consider the diverse perspectives and experiences your students have coming into the classroom, and develop ways to leverage and build on those experiences in your lectures and activities without asking students to act as the sole representatives of their entire culture or ethnicity. For example, asking open-ended questions during class discussions can be one way to encourage students to offer their own perspectives.
Provide regular opportunities for students to interact with their peers and with you.	In class, have students work in pairs or groups, and provide peer feedback opportunities on major projects. Use group-building strategies like “numbering off” to ensure that your domestic and international students have opportunities to form relationships and participate in intergroup dialogue (Gareis, 2012; Glass, 2012). Encourage students to come to office hours, and if possible, build time for one-to-one meetings with students (i.e., on major projects, on their progress in the class, etc.).
Provide frequent, timely feedback on writing and other work in class.	Endeavor to provide feedback in a timely manner (within a week if possible), so that students have an opportunity to integrate your comments into their next assignment. For more feedback strategies, see our <a href="#">“Effective Feedback Series.”</a>
Be strategic in your feedback, and focus on what relates most closely to your course objectives.	While multilingual international learners can benefit from feedback on error patterns or consistent mistakes in their writing, grammar should not be the focus of feedback for international students. Instead, like their domestic peers, they can benefit immensely from feedback on their ideas, content, support, and structure. Additionally, some international students may be unfamiliar with the directness of US academic writing, and thus may need help with developing a clear focus in their writing. Consider prioritizing comments in the areas mentioned above when giving feedback, and if you do mark papers for grammar, try to distinguish between errors that obscure meaning in the paper and errors that may be distracting but are ultimately unrelated to your course goals.
Build in opportunities for reflection and assessment	Build in opportunities for students to reflect on their learning, and for you to assess how well the class is understanding your content. For example, you could have students complete a quick “clicker” quiz or a “minute paper” at the end of class.



Provide numerous opportunities for students to ask questions.	Some international students may feel uncomfortable expressing confusion during class. It can be helpful to open several lines of communication, and to encourage your students to ask questions in the way they feel most comfortable. For example, you could create a specific discussion board on Canvas for questions, and encourage students to message or email you if they don't feel comfortable sharing their question with the class.
Intervene when you notice a student is struggling.	When you notice a student may be struggling in your class, reach out to them through email or on Canvas. Sometimes, just showing that you're concerned about them can help a student feel more comfortable asking for support. Additionally, you can point them to (or remind them of) helpful resources like <a href="#">Services for International Students and Scholars</a> .

Adapted from: CTE, n.d.; Freedman, n.d., Purdue Libraries, n.d.; Sato, 2015; UMCLRT, n.d.; & UWCTL, n.d.

### Additional Resources

- [The International & Academic English Program](#)
- [The Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs](#)
- [Services for International Students and Scholars](#)
- [Writing Assistance Services, SASC](#)

Please also refer to our “[Strategies for Teaching Multilingual Learners Series](#)” for more suggestions and strategies specifically regarding international students from non-English speaking countries.

### Citation

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