

A Quick Guide to Cultural Differences

The most important thing to keep in mind about nonverbal communication is that they do not translate across cultures easily and can lead to misunderstanding. Even within same culture we can find many different personalities and communication styles, so while this guide can be very helpful to overcome cultural barriers, it may not apply to everyone.

COMMUNICATION TYPE	BEHAVIOR	INTERPRETATION	TIPS AND STRATEGIES
Non-Verbal Communication	Eye Contact	Students from many Asian cultures show respect by avoiding direct eye contact towards authority figures.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recommend the Classroom Participation Workshop during the 2nd week of the semester offered by ISC. 2. At the beginning of the semester, you might want to establish classroom expectations. 3. Model appropriate behavior in the classroom. 4. Follow the student's lead if you're unsure about physical contact. 5. Muslim students may seem impolite when they decline a hand shake, but please do not take this personally. However, they still may acknowledge you by slightly bowing.
		In Latin America, avoiding eye contact is usually a sign of disinterest, unless taking notes or looking at a screen.	
	Physical Contact	Most Muslim students avoid shaking hands with the opposite gender. This is because Islam prohibits non-essential touching and physical contact with a person of the opposite gender, with the exception to immediate family members, as a sign of modesty, humility and chastity.	
		Some Latin American students tend to be more comfortable with physical contact, i.e. shaking hands and hugging.	
Verbal Communication	Asking Questions	Some Latin cultures interpret being called upon as a sign that the teacher thinks they are not paying attention.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recommend the Classroom Participation Workshop during the 2nd week of the semester offered by ISC. 2. It is very helpful if at the beginning of the semester the professor establishes what is expected of the student. How a student participates depends on the Professor. 3. Make your class more interactive and engaging for all students, consider large group and small group activities. 4. You may want to speak with students after class to encourage them and help them understand the importance of participation. 5. Faculty should model proper communication and paraphrase the students' response politely. 6. Any written feedback should be followed up with verbal feedback and encourage them to continue their good work.
		Most Asian students are shy and might hesitate to ask/answer questions in class, even if they are interested in the subject.	
		Both professors and students interpret asking questions differently, some relate not asking questions to poor participation, while others may see it as rude or intrusive.	
	Class Participation	Some Latin cultures tend to be curious, so if the topic is of interest, you can expect multiple questions from the same student. If discussion starts, the student will very likely participate without raising their hand this doesn't mean the student is being rude, just that they are interested.	
		For Asian students, getting directly called on may intimidate the student, reduce future participation, and potentially have a negative connotation for the student.	
	Directness	Some international student who do not have an understanding of American English nuances may seem impolite or aggressive.	
Writing feedback on progress reports, can be interpreted differently by students, one may be offended and another may take it as a compliment.			

		For most Asian students, being humble and polite is their traditional value, but they might seem unconfident or apathetic, especially when receiving compliments.	3. Encourage students to thank their peers during peer review.
	Interrupting	For some Latin and European students, talking over each other is normal. Whereas Asian students will likely wait until there is complete silence before making their contribution.	1. Facilitate discussions that encourages each student to participate in the class dialog.
Student/Instructor Relationship	Materials	Some Asian students are used to the “banking” teaching method and expect most of the work/materials to be provided by the professor.	1. Utilize online resources such as Web Access or other websites for classwork. This will train students to be more independent in keeping track of their classwork.
	Dialogue	Most Asian students come from cultures and education systems where the relationship between the instructor and student is more formal than in the U.S.	2. Provide sample resources that may be useful for class, and teach how to do research on their own.
		For some Asian cultures, dialoguing with and questioning the professor might be against societal norms and perceived as rude in the student’s home country.	3. It is very helpful if at the beginning of the semester the professor establishes what is expected of the student. How a student participates depends on the Professor.
	Initiative	International students may be more used to a teacher-centered than student-center education style.	4. Suggest to the students alternative methods to reach to professors such as meeting before/after class, or through email.
	Office Hours	Some international students may feel uneasy about utilizing office hours, since contact with professors outside of the classroom might not have been customary.	5. Give extra credit opportunities to students who utilize office hours.
The concept of faculty office hours may be new to students.			
Student/Student Relationship	Group Work/ Cheating/ Plagiarism	Some international students may not be used to the idea of having to arrange time outside of regular class meetings to work on group projects	1. Get students to introduce to each other and encourage them to exchange contact information.
		For some students it would be challenging for the students who are not social to arrange meeting outside of class.	2. A thorough explanation on the consequences of plagiarism at the start of the semester might be beneficial for most international students.
		Plagiarism might not be a serious offense in some countries out of the U.S. because intellectual property is not a strong value, such as in communist or former communist countries.	3. Introduce outside resources/assistance to students if they require help understanding all the citation rules such the Library.

REFERENCES

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Immigration comics present: STEP →

THE F-1 STUDENT VISA PROCESS EXPLAINED

U.S. IMMIGRATION FEB 27 2013
130 APT 215
MAR 19 2013
TO CLASS UNTIL

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM JORGE CHAM © 2008

1 DREAM OF STUDYING IN AMERICA, LAND OF OPPORTUNITY!
technically, America is the continent...

2 FIND OUT HOW MUCH OPPORTUNITY COSTS
tuition is HOW much??

3 FUTILELY WRITE TO PROFESSORS
new mail from another foreign student!
delete

4 TAKE STANDARDIZED ENGLISH TEST (years of listening to American Pop culture finally pay off!)
"a cow is a farm animal."

5 TRUST YOUR FUTURE IN HANDS OF QUESTIONABLE LOCAL MAIL SYSTEM

6 GET ACCEPTED!
i love my country!
but i can't wait to get out!

7 WAKE UP AT 4am, FORM LINE AT U.S. CONSULATE

8 GET IN, WAIT IN ANOTHER LINE

9 GET INTERVIEWED
so, what's your PhD about?
uh...

10 WAIT SOME MORE

11 VISA GRANTED!
i am a worthy human being!

12 SAY GOODBYE TO RELATIVES (THE ONES YOU LIKE)
will you come back to visit?
if i can afford it.

13 GET EYE SCANNED, FINGERPRINTED, SUBTLY INTERROGATED
so, what's your PhD about?
uh...
are you a terrorist??

14 FIND OUT UNIVERSITY IS ACTUALLY IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.
howdy, y'all!
welcome to America!

15 GET USED TO CULTURE, PAY TAXES, ESTABLISH FRIENDSHIPS

16 FACE FACT YOU ARE NOW OVER-QUALIFIED FOR MOST JOBS IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY
what is it you do again?

17 GRAPPLE WITH IDENTITY ISSUES.
who am i?
what is "home"?

18 REALIZE THE PLACE YOU NOW CALL HOME DOESN'T FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT YOU
what do you mean i can't get back in the country!?

Cañada College

PCC  Personal Counseling Center

The Personal Counseling Center offers brief confidential individual counseling, crisis intervention, mental health and substance abuse assessments, and community referrals. The goal of counseling is to support students in identifying and managing personal concerns, helping students to learn more about themselves and to make positive life changes. Talking about issues and concerns in a safe and confidential environment can enable students to become more successful in college and life.

How to make an appointment to speak with a personal counselor:

1. Call or walk in to the Wellness Center and request an appointment. You will be asked for contact information as well as your availability. The Wellness Center is located in building 5 on the 3rd floor. The phone number is: 650-306-3152.
2. Send an email to Gena Rhodes, Ph.D., coordinator for Personal Counseling, at rhodesg@smccd.edu.
3. Go on the Cañada College website to the Personal Counseling page at <http://canadacollege.edu/pcc/>. Fill out the appointment request form and submit online.

After you have requested an appointment through one of these three ways, you will be contacted by a personal counselor to schedule an appointment. We make every effort to respond within the week. If we do not have a time open that works for your schedule, you will be informed and put on a waiting list.

If you or another student are in crisis and have an urgent need for help, come in to the Wellness Center during our open hours or to the Welcome Center to see a counselor in building 9.

If you are experiencing a crisis when the campus is closed, call:

Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention: 650-579-0350

San Mateo Crisis Center: 650-579-0350