The Changing Nature of the US University Classroom
Agenda

• Demographic trends behind internationalization
• Examine some of the challenges Chinese and other internationals face at US universities
• Explore the cultural source of adjustment issues
• Consider pedagogical approaches that support international student learning
• Listen to what international students say about helpful instructional strategies
## Enrollment Trends—2013

Source: Institute for International Education, IIE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>235,597</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>+21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>96,754</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>S. Korea</td>
<td>70,627</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>-2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>44,566</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>+30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>27,357</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>+2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>21,867</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>19,568</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
University of Tennessee Enrollment Demographics  
Source: Open Doors, IIE, 2013

• Undergraduate
  1. China  81
  2. Saudi Arabia  19
  3. S. Korea  15
  4. Canada  12
  5. U.K.  8
  6. India  7
  Total of all: 202

• Graduate
  1. China  359
  2. India  87
  3. S. Korea  49
  4. Iran  34
  5. Bangladesh  20
  6. Nepal  16
  Total of all: 769
1 million international students
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 8/05/2014

- 365,000 undergraduate
- 265,000 graduate

- Top majors: Business, Engineering, Computer Science
- Nearly 350,000 international students pursued STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)

- 2004: 600,000 students
Why so many Chinese?

• 9 million Chinese high school graduates sat for gaokao in 2011; Chinese universities had space for 6.75 million
• for 300 million Chinese considered middle class
• US higher education seen as prestigious
Percent Change Between 2008-09 and 2019-20 in Total High School Graduates, by State

WICHE, 2013

- 12% decrease in White graduates
+ 41% increase in Hispanic graduates
+ 30% increase in Asian/Pacific Islander graduates
- 9% decrease in Black graduates

45% of nation’s public HS graduates will be non-White by 2019-2020

WICHE, 2013
Making up lost numbers and dollars, but also fulfilling earnest strategic plans to globalize campuses
Integration of International Students on Campuses: The Dream vs. Reality
Non-participation in the classroom

Lack of engagement in campus life

Academic dishonesty

Ill-suited academic skills

Limited English skills vs. increased linguistic demands on students
The Academy vs. Students

Administrators
Staff
Faculty

Students
It’s more than Language: Understanding cultural differences impacting Chinese learners in the classroom.
• Westerners define learning cognitively: thinking, school, brain, discovery, understand, question authority

• Asians define learning morally: learn assiduously, study as if thirsting, be diligent, persevere, respect teachers
Cultural Differences that Impact Academics and Campus Life

- Conception of Self
- Rule of Law
- Educational Framework
- Social Relationships
- Role of Silence
## Conception of Self

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>China</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collectivist</td>
<td>• Individualist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Value placed in own cultural group and</td>
<td>• Self-reliance, self-promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual modesty</td>
<td>• Value freedom from imposed constraints</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conception of Self

Potential Impact on Academics and Campus Life

- Limited class participation
- Not wanting to appear immodest
- Less willing to risk behavior that is displeasing to group
- May not respond to posted extra credit assignments/activities
Use Native Speaking Classmates as a Resource

- Incorporate problem-based learning and group work
- Create mixed study groups; assign group projects
- Build rapport among groups members: interviews, dinners, activities
- Provide incentives for native speakers to serve as tutors
# Rule of Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese (and Saudis)</th>
<th>Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hold great faith in personal relationships than in written policies or regulations</td>
<td>• Have great faith that laws, regulations, and policies lead to fair outcomes and must be followed or changed through rule-governed processes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rule of Law and the Teachable Moment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Impact on Academics and Campus Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Rules can be circumvented to achieve goals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic Honesty: Choosing Our Metaphors

Two views:

1. Plagiarism as crime against academy, with institution as protagonists, linked to generalities of Asians as non-thinking rote (and inferior) learners

2. Socially and culturally constructed reaction to fundamental differences in values about role of individual in creating knowledge
How do you communicate the rules of the game?
## Educational Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>China</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• May focus on extensive memorization</td>
<td>• American system emphasizes creativity, exploring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without as much emphasis on critical</td>
<td>new ideas, challenging existing concepts or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>response or new application</td>
<td>theories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Educational Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Impact on Academics and Campus Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Problems in responding to “why?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unfamiliarity with problem-based learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unease with self-expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Great facility in memorization aids in taking standardized exams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effective Pedagogy to Support Learning for all Students

1. Universal Design
2. Linguistic accessibility
“The common assumption...is that it is the internationals who bear the onus for poor communication, and therefore it is the internationals who must undergo transformation in the North American model. An alternative perspective, in contrast, recognizes that communication is a reciprocal process.”

– David Rubin
1. Universal Design

Be Transparent, Explicit, and Intentional
Consistent Patterns and Sound Pedagogy Facilitate Comprehension

Consistent Patterns:
- Phrasing questions
- Tapping into schema

Sound Pedagogy:
- List the lesson’s outcomes for the day
- Spiral material

Comprehension
More consistent patterns in class will facilitate comprehension

• Consistent patterns of phrasing questions

• Consistent patterns for tapping into schema
  What do you know about it?
  What don’t you understand about it?
  What would you like to learn about it?
Sound Pedagogy Always Facilitates Comprehension

• List the lesson’s learning outcomes for the day
• Spiral material:
  1. Begin each lesson by reviewing previous class content.
  2. Introduce new topic, begin with schema Q’s
  3. Teach new material
  4. Consolidate learning through group work
  5. Review what was just taught interactively
2. Make Lectures Comprehensible

1. Speak just a bit more slowly and clearly.

2. Be mindful of potential confusion from phrasal verbs (e.g., make up, put up with, take over)

3. Be mindful of the challenges in processing reduced forms (e.g., wantchə, couldjə) and linking (e.g., That’s a matter of opinion)

4. Provide instructions in writing for assignments and in-class activities.

5. Display key words to facilitate comprehension.
## Social Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Formal, hierarchical</td>
<td>• Informal, egalitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most comfortable in context in which</td>
<td>• Social hierarchy is present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>position and rules for behavior are known</td>
<td>but less visible and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>de-emphasized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Relationships
### Social Relationships

**Potential Impact on Academics and Campus Life**

- Confucian respect for professors can severely inhibit class participation
## Role of Silence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>China</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Prompt speech distained</td>
<td>• Silence in the presence of others is rare, uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student silence is sign of respect</td>
<td>• Focus on interactional competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clear mind, reflect</td>
<td>• Brainstorming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More pronounced in situations where student’s status appears</td>
<td>• Silence viewed as lack of preparation, competence, or respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambiguous or student feels unwelcome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Role of Silence

Potential Impact on Academics and Campus Life

- Seldom participate if not part of grade
- Seldom given time by teachers to give considered opinion (lack of hang time or support for risk taking)
Ways to Enhance Interaction

Empathize with your students’ journey and ask domestic students to lend support
Enhance Interaction

1. Plan Interaction
2. Create Environments that Foster Interaction
3. Support Interaction
4. Engage with Subject Matter
5. Develop Reflective Processes
6. Foster Communities of Learning

1. Plan Interaction

- Faculty can incorporate interaction as part of the course design
- Tying it both to learning outcomes and assessment
- Forming mixed groups at onset of course and made permanent throughout the semester

Source: Finding Common Ground
2. Create Environments that Foster Interaction

- Set the tone: welcoming, supportive atmosphere (introductions, ice breakers)
- Put both groups at ease and set expectations
- Begin class by having groups review notes from previous class meeting

Source: Finding Common Ground
3. Support Interaction

- Help students understand the value of cross-cultural interaction
- Help them understand the value of peer learning
- Impart skills for effective interaction: attending skills, tuning ears, patience, showing interest

Source: Finding Common Ground
4. Engage with Subject Matter

- Goal: diverse perspectives on subject
- Ask international students to seek data from own country on subject
- Have students do peer reviews on each member’s projects
- Team-based learning: taking tests collectively

Source: Finding Common Ground
5. Develop Reflective Processes

- Require students to confront differences in each other’s cultures, attitudes, perspectives with goal of arriving at negotiated meanings
- Reflect on learning process and metacognitive skills
- Use questions to trigger reflection

Source: Finding Common Ground
6. Foster Communities of Learning

- Students with stronger sense of belonging will demonstrate more collaborative tendencies and be happier in academic setting
- Participants identify actions to take to foster cross-cultural peer interaction (Zunigra, 2007)
- Create online discussion groups
- Peer assisted study “schemes”
- Invite groups or class to home for dinners

Source: Finding Common Ground
Students Recognize and Appreciate Efforts by Faculty to Enhance Learning
Post lessons in advance

“The professor will give the lecture slides before and assign the reading material for us to read, so I read it and go over the power point and it’s good... [It’s hard] to follow the professor in the lecture. . .when I don’t go over the material before the class. . .But I work hard, so I go over the material first and I catch up.”
Allow more time...for all students

• Allow dictionaries
• Permit re-writes
• More time for tests
Accommodate discussion

“I have good ideas, but sometimes Americans just say it out first. It seems [to them] like I am spaced out, but I am not.”
Make time outside of class

• “If I have questions, I will ask after the lecture. Sometimes before the end of class, [professors] will ask if there are any questions and no one raises his hand. They will say, okay, that is the end of the lecture, and I will run up and say I have a question, and they will say ‘what were you doing a minute ago,’ but they are joking.”
Use culturally-neutral examples
Be mindful of the culture-bound nature of idiomatic expressions

- Go the extra mile
- Bite the bullet
- Everything but the kitchen sink
- Fit as a fiddle
- Face the Music
- Drummed out
“I understand the lectures and most of the reading materials, but during the tests I just don't get it and I don't know why. I just don't know what the professors want. I know I'm supposed to highlight the main point when I read, but I don't know what the main point is!”
One time an Indian student was asking a question and maybe because of his accent the professor could not answer very well, and he asked the student again and again — and I heard many people laugh, so I didn’t feel very comfortable speaking [after that].
Post notes in advance
Provide more time
Allow revisions to work
Be available outside of class
Model assignments
Create right environment
Institutional Investment

- Pedagogical & cross-cultural training
- Hire bilingual advisors and counselors
- Expand academic and campus life support services
- Create courses to celebrate diverse heritage
Questions
The Changing Nature of the US University Classroom

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