

## Communication Strategies

<b>WHEN YOU ARE TALKING/ E-MAILING...</b>			<b>WHEN YOU ARE LISTENING...</b>
<b>S.C.O.R.E. (for clearer speaking)</b>	<b>Assure listener's understanding</b>	<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Assure that you are understanding</b>
<p><b>Simplify and Specify</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use short sentences (12 words or less)</li> <li>- Make time zones, locations, and deadlines clear in e-mails</li> <li>- Simplify complicated language. Avoid jargon</li> </ul> <p><b>Continually Clarify and Confirm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the student, "So what you are saying is..."/ "Could you repeat what I'm saying to <i>be sure I've said everything?</i>"</li> </ul> <p><b>Organize and Outline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number/letter ideas into main points</li> <li>- State purpose of your e-mail in subject line</li> <li>- Talk about one idea at a time</li> </ul> <p><b>Rephrase and Reframe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If saying something one way does not work, try a different wording</li> <li>- Use simple analogies, metaphors and stories when helpful in making a point</li> </ul> <p><b>Explain with Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explain the rationale when presenting an idea or making a request: "Here's why getting this step right is critical"</li> <li>- Provide visual examples by drawing images or showing images</li> </ul>	<p>Instead of saying "Do you get it?" say, "What questions can I answer?" or better yet, say "I want to be sure that <u>I told you</u> everything. Please repeat what I told you about filling out this form".</p> <p>Follow up important in-person conversations with e-mail messages.</p> <p>Supplement verbal speech – use visual aids and/or write down key words.</p> <p>Use synonyms if you are not sure a student understood.</p> <p>Speak in chunks of phrases with good-sized pauses between these chunks</p> <p><i>*Note: A smile or nod from an international student does not always signify understanding.</i></p>	<p>Finishing the student's sentence or interrupting</p> <p>Raising voice to be understood. Instead, speak clearer, more slowly, or choose different words.</p> <p>Colloquial terms, like "what's up?", or "cram for a test"</p> <p>Idioms like "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it"</p> <p>Acronyms like ASAP, FYI, TBA</p>	<p>Repeat back exactly what you understand the question to be: "So you are wondering how to apply for a new major in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, correct?"</p> <p>Good phrases to use when not understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Could you please repeat that?"</li> <li>- "Could you please explain that in a different way? I want to make sure that I am understanding."</li> </ul> <p>Smile and make eye contact.</p> <p>Give undivided attention to students during an interaction.</p> <p>Keep in mind that students are smart and poor English is not a marker of poor intellect. (Think: "could I do this in their language?")</p>

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### **ENGLISH USAGE THAT MAY BE CONFUSING:**

- Negative questions like, “Haven’t you paid the fee yet?” (In some languages, “Yes” means “no” as an answer to these questions.)
- Phrasal verbs: “hang on,” “blow up,” “catch up.”
- Modal verbs, “should,” “could,” “have to.” These carry levels of politeness or rudeness that students may not be aware of.

### **CULTURAL THINGS TO BE AWARE OF:**

- The order of names in other countries is not always the same as in the United States. Students often say their family name first in other countries, so instead, say “given name” and “surname/family name” for clarity.
- Spelling of names is not always important in some cultures, so be aware that you might see a name spelled several different ways.
- Compliments and humor are culturally based and can be problematic. Proceed with caution.
- Cultural references that are very American (like references to certain TV shows, or to holiday traditions like those at Thanksgiving) can be confusing to international students.
- When you refuse a request, it is best to emphasize, “This is the same answer for everyone - I cannot give anyone special privileges for this request,” or “I wish I could help, but what you are asking is impossible for me to do, due to official policies,” or “I would love to help, but cannot allow anyone to do this.” This makes it clear that you are not discriminating, but cannot fulfill the request.
- Students may have heard that some communication situations are less formal in the US and may overgeneralize the use of informalities. It is ok to correct this politely and respectfully and say something like, “Let me give you a better way to say that”.
- Non-native English speakers often understand much more fluently than they may speak.
- Not all non-native English speakers are international students, and not all international students are non-native English speakers!
- Students may speak English that is different than American English, but correct in their home country (EX: British English).
- Remember you may be the first American some students meet, or one of the only staff members they interact with. Students may base their ideas of Americans on their interaction with you. Be a good ambassador for America!

#### ***Information adapted from:***

- K. Berardo, (2012). “Framework: The SCORE Communication Principles,” *Building Cultural Competence: Innovative Activities and Models*. Eds. Kate Berardo & D.K. Deardorf (Sterling, VA, Stylus), 225 – 230.
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<http://www.uwec.edu/ASC/resources/upload/IntlStu.pdf>
- S. Molinsky and B. Bliss (1996) *Expressways 3*. Pearson Education ESL.
- University at Buffalo, “Communicating with International Students.” Film. <http://wings.buffalo.edu/intlservices/workshops.html>

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