

**Asian ELL (English Language Learners)  
International Students' Learning Adjustment**

by

Siheng Wang

Submitted to OCAD University in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Design in Inclusive Design

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2022

## **Abstract**

Studying outside one's home country can be exciting while posing many adjustment challenges simultaneously. Like me, a lot of Asian ELL (English language learners) international students are both thrilled and struggling. Linguistic and cultural barriers cause a lot of challenges and stress that significantly affect our overseas study experiences. Aiming to help instructors better support their Asian ELL international students in classrooms, I have conducted a focus group to collect empirical descriptions of some adjustment issues of studying abroad and I offer advice for teaching interventions. Six participants from three Asian countries have participated in four activities. Through each activity, participants were gradually stimulated to open their minds, share experiences and ideas, and make new suggestions. The findings showed that all the student participants were supportive of the various teaching interventions to support Asian ELL students, but their feelings about a few specific approaches varied. They also came up with many new teaching intervention proposals.

*Keywords:* adjustment challenges, Asian ELL international students, linguistic and cultural barriers, teaching interventions, pedagogy, student supports

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PROBLEM STATEMENT.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SCOPING REVIEW APPROACH.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SCOPING REVIEW FOUNDING .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Language barriers.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>The role of instructors.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Instructor and student's perceptions.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Instructor support.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Peer support.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Mental health.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>KNOWLEDGE GAPS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>SCOPING REVIEW LIMITATIONS.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>METHOD .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>DATA ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>Innovation processes and key activities.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Activity 1: Icebreaker.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Activity 2: Matching Game.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Activity 3: World Café.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Activity 4: New Proposal.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<b>PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>LIMITATION.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>MATCHING GAME.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WORLD CAFÉ.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>Controversy.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Common ground.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Other issues.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<b>NEW PROPOSAL.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>For preparing teaching materials.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>For arranging classroom activities.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Other expectations.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Different opinions on how to form teams.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>32</b>

## **LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES**

Figure 1. Other policy relevant indicators: inbound internationally mobile students by continent of origin	Page 4
Figure 2. Top 10 Places of Origin for International Students in the U.S.	Page 4
Table 1. Matching Game coding 1	Page 20
Table 2. Matching Game coding 2	Page 22

## Background

Prior to COVID-19, the number of international students worldwide was increasing. Figure 1 displays that in 2019, more than 6 million students were studying abroad, compared to about 2 million in 2000 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021).

**Figure 1**

*Other policy relevant indicators: inbound internationally mobile students by continent of origin*

Country	Indicator	Total inbound internationally mobile students, both sexes (number)						
	Time	2000	2001	2002	2016	2017	2018	2019
World		2097652.702	2234597.68	2461406.089	5086012.415	5375469.545	5681621.53	6063665.215

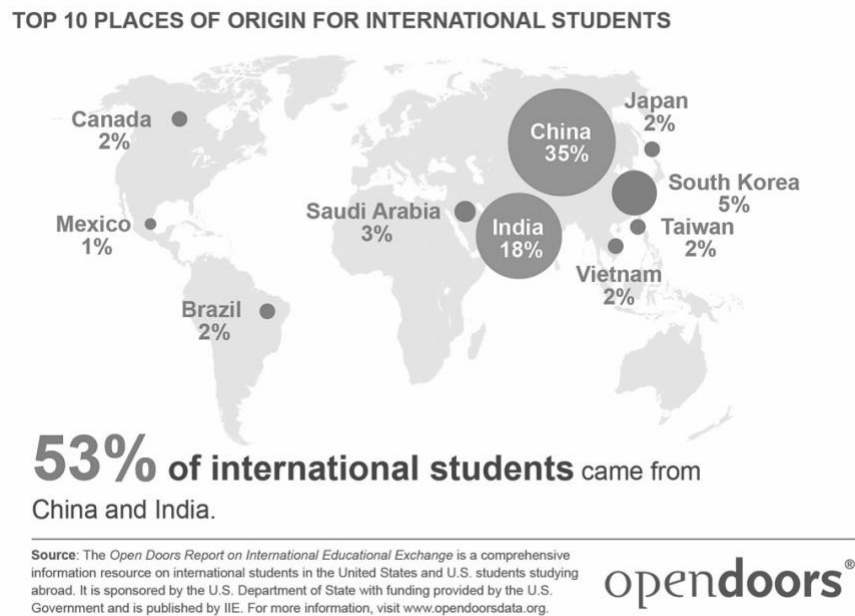
*Note:* Data are from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

<http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=3804#>

Among these international students, Asian students are the majority. In the US (Figure 2), for example, in 2020, most international students came from Asian countries such as China, India, and South Korea, of which China accounted for the most at 35% (Open Doors Report, 2020).

**Figure 2**

*Top 10 Places of Origin for International Students in the U.S.*



*Note.* Source from the Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange.

<https://opendoorsdata.org/infographic/top-10-places-of-origin-of-international-students/>

These international students are attracted to English-speaking developed countries by the reputations of prestigious universities, the good living environment, and the excellent social benefits of the destination countries. They positively influence many aspects of the destination countries including increasing academic prestige, cultural exchange, and financial revenue (Wu et al., 2015). However, international students usually confront significant pressure and challenges when they leave familiar environments and adapt to new contexts with remarkable differences. Many of them encounter physical, mental, academic, and cultural difficulties (Li, 2020). Language barriers, culture shock, isolation, lack of access to familiar foods, difficulties with homestays, etc., were common adaptational issues. We even see suicide cases every year as extreme consequences caused by these stress and challenges. In a video program called "Your Child in the United States," Voice of America explores both the achievements and problems of Chinese students in the US, through interviews with teachers, students, scholars, and other experts. This program lists a significant number of Chinese international students' suicide cases at several prestigious American universities from 2012 to 2016: MIT, Johns Hopkins, California State University-Fullerton, University of Chicago Booth School of Business (Xu, 2016). In these cases, the specific causes of suicide were diverse, but all were related to mental health issues resulting from various adaptational challenges. By better understanding international students' struggles, university faculties can recognize overseas students' needs and effectively offer supportive campus resources and services. Instructors can help students fit into classes by offering inclusive teaching methods and materials (Wu et al., 2015).

To better understand their situation, research on international students began a century ago. As early as 1915, the Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students (CFR)<sup>1</sup> started an annual census of international students. In 1921, the census<sup>2</sup> became a joint project of the CFR and the Institute of International Education (Du Bois, 1956). Foreign exchange programs increased in the 1950s, and studies focused on overseas students' social and psychological obstacles (Ward et al., 2020). Since the 1980s, stress related to acculturation began drawing researchers' attention (Berry, 1980; Furnham & Bochner, 1986). In recent years, researchers have been more interested in reducing international students' stress

---

<sup>1</sup> The Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students (CFR) was founded in 1911 by Dr. John R. Mott, head of the World Council of Churches.

<sup>2</sup> It is known as the Open Doors Report today.

and boosting their overseas lives (Ward et al., 2020). Bista & Gaulee (2017) described that many international students' challenges had remained the same over the last several decades. Still, more complicated and new challenges are appearing along with technological changes, economic growth, and global emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Problem statement**

### **Scoping review approach**

To serve a global and multi-angle topic, I have selected search tools including both Chinese and English search engines. During the process of this project, I combined the search results from academic and non-academic search engines to get voices from different backgrounds. Since most of the relevant studies are based in the UK and US, I deliberately used the Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database to find some Canadian-based studies. The three academic searching tools were Dorothy H. Hoover Library, Google Scholar, and CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure); the three non-academic search engines I used were Google, Bing, and Baidu. In summary, I included previous peer reviews, news reports, website articles, books, and related data. The searching keywords I used were international students, Asian international students, language barriers, and international students' challenges.

A wide range of research has been done on the various aspects of adaptation for international students such as policy adaptation, adaptation after graduation, and social relationships. However, I want to explore a topic closely related to academic adaptation, which is the essential challenge I encountered as an international student myself. For this reason, I have excluded literature on other aspects of adaptation research. While international students may face challenges at all educational levels, I have limited my scope to postsecondary schools due to the constraints of this project.

**Inclusion criteria:** international students' study adjustment; social adjustment is included when related to the study life.

**Exclusion criteria:** immigrant students<sup>3</sup> adjustments, younger international students (before the undergraduate study), general talk about or only focus on sociopolitical context, physical health, financial challenges, discrimination, immigration decision, and plan after graduation.

I have chosen two literature reviews to cover the early research of two destination countries with the biggest number of international students: America and the UK. From De Araujo's article (2011) Adjustment Issues of International Students Enrolled in American Colleges and Universities, I have screened out 21 studies from three databases: PsycINFO, ProQuest Education Journals, and ProQuest Psychology Journals (date range 1991-2010) and reviewed; and in Providing a Positive Learning Experience for International Students Studying at UK Universities (Lillyman & Bennett, 2014), I have reviewed 87 articles. For studies in recent ten years, I have individually reviewed 22 studies involving study adjustment. In addition to the US and the UK, I have included research about other popular destination countries such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. What is more, I have referenced one book, one government website article, three websites for statistical data, and three online videos to complement the study. Even though the search may not have identified all the items relevant to the topic, the studies included are likely to be representative of the current knowledge base.

### **Scoping review founding**

Through this scoping review, I summarized some topics that essentially involved Asian ELL students' learning adaption which were language barriers, the instructor's role, instructors and students' perceptions, the instructor's support, peer support, mental health, and support from teaching institutions. I have also gathered common challenges to learning adjustment among international students and collected prior proposed support interventions to prepare materials for my focus group activities.

### **Language barriers**

The studies that surveyed international students in major destination countries showed direct links between English fluency and academic adjustment.

---

<sup>3</sup> In this article, immigrant students refer to individuals enrolled in education institutions who hold permanent resident cards or have citizenship. It is different from international students who refer to individuals enrolled in education institutions who hold temporary student visas.



I found seven studies in the US that indicated that English fluency is a key variable associated with international students' adaptation. In Swagler and Ellis's (2003) study, fear of speaking English affected Taiwanese students' adjustment. Their participants mentioned some unpleasant or humiliating experiences. For example, being treated impatiently by a restaurant waiter or being told: "...talking to you is like talking to a 4-year-old..." Yeh and Inose (2003) considered international students' reported English language fluency as one of the predictors of acculturative stress, which refers to various negative outcomes for international students caused by challenging experiences such as uneasiness, insecurity, depression, anxiety, loss, etc. (Wu et al., 2015). Likewise, Poyrazli et al.'s (2004) findings displayed those students have lower acculturative stress levels when they have higher English ability levels. In turn, Poyrazli and Grahame (2007) reported that higher levels of depression and anxiety are linked to lower levels of linguistic skills. Kwon (2009) indicated that "international students who attended English as second language programs were more likely to feel intimidated or isolated in English speaking classes" (p. 1032). Specifically, when international students realize that they need to take a language course, they feel the gap between themselves and students who do not need to take a language course and develop feelings of inferiority and anxiety. Some studies described writing as the most challenging part for Asian international students. Campbell & Li (2007) believed that Asian students have difficulty in writing assignments and reports because they do not have sufficient prior knowledge of academic conventions practiced in the host country. Swathi et al. (2017) summarized some relevant features associated with international students' writing difficulties: grammar, vocabulary, organization, the flow of ideas, critical thinking, and plagiarism.

In the UK, comparable findings were reported. For both academic success and psychological adjustment, English competence is essential (Poyrazli, 2003). Erichsen and Bolliger (2011) pointed out that unfamiliarity with the language can lead to confusion, misunderstandings, anxiety, stress concerning participation and presentations, and difficulties with the course and program content. It might be the most significant variable of learning outcomes (Karuppan & Barari, 2011).

Similarly, International students In Australia encounter language difficulties because of a lack of confidence in English competence and foreign accents (Park, 2016). Seventy-six percent of the non-English speaking students enrolled in one department at an Australian university were judged to require intensive English language support based on a writing sample, compared with only 20 percent of native English

speakers (Ramburuth, 2001). Due to vocabulary and speed, freshman international students at an Australian university had language hurdles to understand lectures, mostly when tutors spoke too fast or gave too little input (Ramsay et al., 1999).

In Canada, Li's (2004) investigation showed that language proficiency was a significant challenge that accompanied a group of Chinese international students when they transferred from a Chinese high school to one in Canada and from a Canadian high school to a Canadian university. There are some tips on Global Affairs Canada's (2019) website to help international students succeed at school in Canada which include six aspects:

1. Ethics and conduct at school.
2. Working in groups.
3. Writing essays.
4. Delivering presentations.
5. Plagiarism.
6. Getting help when you need it.

From my angle, most of these items are related to language skills. For example, working in groups relies on language skills while exercising language skills at the same time. Writing and presentation are directly related to language skills. A significant obstacle to getting help from others is language skills. Overall, most of the tips are about helping international students to conquer language barriers. School ethics and conduct and plagiarism may not seem to be directly related to English fluency, but they are also complicated because of language barriers. A study by Holmes (2004) in New Zealand described a negative fact that working hard did not result in international students achieving their ideal scores. Discussion skills and listening comprehension limited their performances and achievements. Challenges came from various factors, including professors' accents, idioms, humor expressions, and examples in lectures. Their reading speeds were several times slower than their New Zealand classmates, and they needed to read materials multiple times.

Although language obstacle contributes a lot to the adjustment hurdle, only a few studies I have found attempted to design supporting activities or practices. Drawing upon cultural-historical theory and community psychology, Ma (2020) indicated some approaches for coping with language barriers which

arose through qualitative research, including interviews and focus group trials, and found out that Chinese international students recognized their English skills, became interacting actively, and showed positive emotions when positioned in practices that:

1. Provided structural guidance and active mobilization: participant A had a more positive experience with the role play and secondary drawing activities because the researcher invited her to participate, and the guidance helped her to have a clearer understanding of the tasks, goals, and requirements of the activities.
2. Involved shared intersubjectivity and contradictions: Shared intersubjectivity began to build when the researcher asked the participants to draw a picture together with the theme of "the world" in the second drawing activity. The researcher intentionally invited the focus participants to come up with their own ideas. In this process, contradictions also emerged. For example, participant A's description of the panda as a carnivore caused a contradiction among the participants because many of them did not believe that pandas eat meat. This contradiction led to further discussion of pandas, which in turn expanded the shared intersubjectivity.
3. Offered support within their ZPD (Zone of proximal development): ZPD is defined as the "distance between the actual developmental level determined by individual problem solving and the level of development as determined through problem-solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable" (Vygotsky, 1978) or the "area of immature, but maturing processes" (Vygotsky, 1998b). In contrast to the positive performance in the second painting activity, during the first painting activity, the researcher did not invite or push participant A in any way, so she just listened to the other participants' conversations and did not participate in the discussion. During the quiz competition, the researcher quickly read the quiz questions without considering whether they were fully understood by the target participants. Also, no support was provided to help the target participant understand the questions or participate in the competition. As a result, participant A barely communicated and interacted with the other participants and was bored during the quiz competition.

This investigation gave me the initial motivation to find out more interventions that positively affect Asian ELL students' overseas study life as well as test them in trials. Inspired by both Ma (2020)'s research

approaches and findings, I started to design my study to collect feedback on teaching interventions and propose more possible supports. Unfortunately, due to time and resource constraints, I have not been able to complete trials to further test these teaching proposals.

### **The role of instructors**

Several articles I found discussed the instructor's different roles in students' home countries and the destination countries. The teacher-centered class is considered the mainstream in most Asian countries, compared to the student-centered class in western countries. In a teacher-centered class, the teacher functions as a classroom lecturer, presenting information to the students, who are expected to passively receive the knowledge being presented. In a student-centered class, the teacher is still the authority in the classroom, but functions as more of a coach or facilitator; and students play a more active and collaborative role in their own learning (SHARE Team, 2020).

In Korean universities, students recall the exact knowledge being taught in the classroom to get high marks (H. J. Lee et al., 2017). In the US, classroom activities lack Asian international students' participation because the students use silence to show respect to the instructors (Ing & Victorino, 2016; Kim, 2008). They concentrate on listening to lecturers rather than participating out loud to compensate for the shortage of expression (Kim, 2008).

The teacher-centered style is typical in East Asian countries where students barely question the knowledge that the teachers deliver (Dong et al., 2008). However, teachers' authority levels still differ in different countries. Clarke and Xu (2008) found that South Korean students contribute and oral interact less than Chinese students. And similar findings were reported in their study in 2010 (Clarke et al., 2010). In math classes, Xu and Clark (2013) also found that South Korean teachers have more authority than teachers in China and Japan. For instance, rather than allowing students to use their own solution methods, South Korean teachers usually stress a specific approach to get the answer.

The education I received in China was mainly teacher-centered. I think this style is effective when teachers are good at arranging reasonable learning tasks for students. Due to a high degree of trust in the teacher, students will firmly carry out the learning tasks set by the teacher to achieve a certain learning effect. The negative effect on me is that sometimes I still used to wait for the teacher to arrange all the study

compositions, instead of taking the initiative to make a study plan for myself. I also felt at a loss what to say when I first entered a Western-style class where students spoke more than the teacher.

### **Instructor and student's perceptions**

Because of cultural and individual differences, teachers and Asian ELL students in western classrooms easily misunderstand each other, due to language, culture, characters, learning habits, and other aspects as well as the interweaving of these elements. Studies showed that teachers' assumptions about international student behavior are often incorrect since those teachers bring western educational ideals to understanding Asian students. Lack of language competence and cultural knowledge is the reason behind many Asian ELL international students' difficulties.

Robertson et al. (2000) found that instructors in Australia attributed international students' lack of involvement to be cultural rather than linguistic, while the students reported language weaknesses and sensitivity to their ability are the leading causes. Professors indicated that international students like studying and sitting with co-nationals, lacking class participation, and not asking questions, whereas the students explained that they sat together to ask questions about the lecture or assignments if necessary (Tompson, 1996). In Robertson et al.'s (2000) research, international students described challenges related to language, anxiety, and lack of confidence that impeded participation. They complained that their instructors talked too fast and used idioms. In contrast, the instructors criticized students' lack of critical thinking and weak writing skills. Although there are lots of controversies between instructors and students, those findings showed the possibility that both parties could improve.

### **Instructor support**

Previous studies have indicated the support that teachers can provide for international students. Huang (2012) found that instructors could provide additional factual information that is culturally sensitive, with space, time, and learning cues to engage students in classroom activities. Hughes (2010) pointed out teachers need to provide detailed information about library arrangements, services, and information services. Evans and Morrison (2010) demonstrated that one way to reduce students' anxiety in the classroom is to brief them and provide pre-reading material. Tange and Jensen (2012) suggested teachers take time to explain complicated theories and guide students through the learning process.

1. Write emphasis and assignments on the board.

2. Use slower speech and avoid jargon.
3. Give background information.
4. Show examples that students from different backgrounds could understand.
5. Recognize cultural shock symptoms.
6. Clarify expectations and provide sample works.
7. Check the understanding of announcements and give some time for reflection when asking questions.

### **Peer support**

It seems that in addition to the teachers and the Asian ELL students themselves, native English-speaking students are also an important factor in the adjustment of Asian ELL students.

Parks and Raymond (2004) found that taking classes with Canadian native speakers causes Chinese graduate students to review their English skills and improve their learning strategies. Chinese students recognize their lack of participation and communication with team members, and they realize the necessity of taking reading notes to help them engage more in class. Nevertheless, learning strategies are not a complete substitute for improving language skills. To improve English fluency and achieve higher academic success, Asian ELL international students are often encouraged to interact with native English-speaking students when they start to study in Western countries. Unfortunately, they are not always accepted by the latter because of being erroneously considered less competent due to racism. As a minority group without fluent English skills, international students' ability to make friends in Canada is negatively affected (Schutz & Richards, 2003). By contrast, Trice (2004) found that students from Western Europe who speak proficient English have much more social contact with American students. They deal with fewer cultural and language barriers and less discrimination so that more likely and accessible to establish relationships with Americans.

### **Support from teaching institutions**

Some universities provide English-language courses, tutoring, and supplemental courses to assist international students with their studies. In Kaspar's (1997) research, students who enrolled in a content-based reading/writing ELL course performed better on final course examinations and a writing test than students in a control group. They also got higher grades and passing rates in the first-year study and had

better graduation rates than the control group. The instructional methods used for both groups were the same, but the content-based course included readings from five disciplines, while the control group's readings were not related to these disciplines' content.

Beasley and Pearson (1999) mentioned an Australian initiative that content and learning specialists work together to offer support classes. These support classes involve critical analysis, examination strategies, study skills, academic reading, and writing. In their investigation, students who attended these classes consistently and sometimes significantly had higher grades than those who did not participate. Over six years, the overall course failure rate declined from 13% to 1.5%.

### **Mental health**

An investigation from Yale University indicated that in 130 Chinese international students, 45% had suffered from symptoms of depression, and 29% had showed anxiety. (China Central Television, 2018). The factors that affect mental health are comprehensive and complex. Many of these factors are not directly related to study and include homesickness, isolation, stress, depression, cultural shock, etc. (Alloh, Tait, & Taylor, 2018; Cowley & Ssekasi, 2018). Nonetheless, I hope to find some ways to mitigate these negative experiences for ELL international students in the classroom through pedagogical interventions by understanding the factors that produce mental discomfort and stress. Looking into previous studies, the critical influential variable still seems largely present in language barriers. In the US, studies showed that among other factors, Eastern and Southern Asian students' depression and mental health symptoms are correlated to English fluency (Andrade, 2009; Dao, Lee, & Chang, 2007; Yakunina, Weigold, & McCarthy, 2010). Chan (2009) found that international students often feel embarrassed about their non-fluent English and feel being negatively or critically judged. Findings from Smiljanic's (2017) investigation indicated that the TOEFL exam's speaking sections' lower scores are related to more acculturative stress, which is correlated with anxiety and avoidance.

### **Knowledge gaps and research questions**

In all the research themes I have discussed above, language barriers and cultural differences are indicated as the most significant causes of ELL international students' learning adjustment challenges as well as their larger issues with mental health and wellness. However, limited studies have mentioned practical solutions or supportive approaches. To make a small contribution to filling this gap, my research

emphasizes helping instructors better support their ELL international students' linguistic and cultural inaccessibility in classrooms by proposing some teaching interventions.

The questions that guide my study are:

1. At OCAD University, do Asian ELL international students' English fluency and cultural backgrounds affect learning adjustment in the classroom?
2. What support services can the university instructors offer to help Asian ELL international students with their learning adjustment in the classroom?

### **Scoping review limitations**

This scoping review points out the importance of English proficiency in learning adaptation and its connection to other cultural factors. However, language obstacles have different dimensions, such as causes, manifestations, effects, and support services. This review does not delve into language barriers themselves.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Method**

During my research, I employed a focus group as my essential investigation approach. The focus group was utilized to collect empirical descriptions about adjustment issues of studying abroad and to offer advice for teaching interventions. The participants participated in four activities: Icebreaker, Matching Game, the World Café, and New Proposal. All activities were conducted through Zoom's virtual meetings with the use of Google Jamboard as an aid.

The Icebreaker was designed to allow participants to get acquainted with each other and begin to reminisce about their study abroad experiences. In the Matching Game, I asked participants to match pre-set instructional interventions with hypothetical outcomes influenced by Lee and Ma in order to understand their attitudes toward these interventions. After that, in the World Café conversation, I asked participants to share their reasons for making their choices in Matching Game. They had discussions in breakout rooms and were able to refine their opinions after being stimulated by others' insights when they returned to the main room. These discussions gave me more details of participants' thoughts on specific teaching



interventions. At last, the New Proposal was a feedback phase to let participants create new interventions for instructors to reduce their students' adjustment difficulties.

### **Data analysis**

I used quantitative and qualitative mixed approaches for my data analysis. I processed the data obtained in the Matching Game using quantitative methods. I tabulated the data collected in the Matching Game twice. The first table was designed to count the number of times each teaching suggestion was matched for different effects. The capital letter options represent the positive effects, while the options corresponding to smaller letters were for the negative effects. The distinction between upper and lower case letters is to make it easier for me to count the total number of votes received by positive and negative options respectively so that to use these two groups of figures to form the emojis in the second table. In the second tabulation, I used the happy and unhappy face images to represent the occurrences of the supportive and opposing attitudes drawn from the first table. The two emojis show clearly how popular and unpopular each intervention was.

For the World Café phase, I color-coded the conversations in two breakout rooms and the main room to explore participants' various and variational ideas towards specific teaching interventions. Through the coding, I found some topics that participants focused on and categorized the discussions according to those topics. Participants' thoughts were assumed to change in response to mutual insight stimulation. And indeed, some slight changes in participants' ideas did turn up in the comparison of data from the Matching Game and the World Café phases. I divided participants' different ideas into categories of controversy, common ground, and other issues.

For the New Proposal phase, I thematically categorized the new teaching proposals from the participants. The themes included: preparing teaching materials, arranging classroom activities, other expectations, expectations that repeated the teaching proposals from the Matching Game, and different opinions on how to form teams.

### **Innovation processes and key activities**

Through the Icebreaker, besides getting to know each other and feeling close to the facilitator, the participants' minds warmed up by recalling their overseas study memory. The experience they had shared became empathic elicitors among them. When they were asked to estimate the effect of those teaching

interventions in the Matching Game, those interventions inspired and stimulated them before stepping into the later creating session. The World Café was a further stimulating activity to let participants share their initial thoughts and listen to others' ideas. Their premier ideas were iterated during the exchange and collision of thoughts. Finally, in the New Proposal activity, they had opportunities to get their ideas into shapes and provide new suggestions.

### **Activity 1: Icebreaker**

**Objective:** To let the participants get to know each other, fit into the environment, and be comfortable with talking about themselves. To help the participants open the valve of their memories stimulated by each other's experiences and participated in later focus group activities with a more active state of mind.

**Process:** I introduced the project and myself, then asked 6 to introduce themselves and represent 1-3 positive or negative experiences of studying abroad.

### **Activity 2: Matching Game**

**Objective:** To collect participants' thoughts about proposed learning supports and stimulate their minds for deep discussion.

**Process:** Google Jamboard was used to implement the Matching Game. I created several Jamboard pages in advance, each containing the same 15 teaching suggestions for instructors and eight predefined outcomes that could result from the implementation of these teaching suggestions. Four of the eight hypothetical outcomes are positive, including A. reduces anxiety, C. increases confidence, D. reduces stress, and F. improves learning efficiency; the other four are negative, including b. increases anxiety, e. increases stress, g. decreases learning efficiency, and h. no help.<sup>4</sup>

I got some of these 15 teaching suggestions from previous research by other scholars. For example, inspired by the activity design in Ma (2020)'s study "Supporting Practices to Break Chinese International Students' Language Barriers," I came up with the first teaching suggestion "the instructor provides structural guidance and active mobilization for classroom activities, such as clear purpose, rules, time limit, etc."; and No.8 proposal "the instructor brings in case studies that students from diverse backgrounds could understand" was inspired by the research Cultural Differences in Online Learning (Xiaoqing Liu et al, 2010).

---

<sup>4</sup> Upper case letters represent positive options, and lower-case letters represent negative options.

The other proposals are based on my own study abroad experience. Having studied in three different English-speaking countries (Australia, New Zealand, and Canada), I wanted to know how other international students' relevant experiences were similar to and different from mine. For instance, I brought up the No.12 proposal because I wanted to know other students' thoughts about how to form teams.

I asked the participants to match the suggestions with the hypothetical outcomes. Each participant worked on a separate page. Participants could either pair up by drawing lines or by writing the letters of the options after the teaching suggestion. A teaching suggestion could be matched with multiple hypothetical outcomes. Four participants finished this phase in the workshop, while the other two who left during the Matching Game sent me their results through email after the workshop. One participant left because she had to take a class, and another went offline suddenly for unknown reasons.

### **Activity 3: World Café**

**Objective:** Create an environment for idea iteration. Explore participants detailed thoughts on specific teaching interventions.

**Process:** I assigned four participants to two Zoom breakout rooms to have a conversation about their choices in the Matching Game. Then they were all invited back to the main room. One of the participants from each breakout room was asked to summarize their previous discussion, and the other was asked to fill in the blanks.

### **Activity 4: New Proposal**

**Objective:** Let the participants create new teaching intervention proposals.

**Process:** After the mutual stimulation of the previous activities, I assumed that the participants' brains were in a more active state and asked them to come up with new teaching proposals. Four participants wrote down their suggested supports on pre-set pages on the Google Jamboard, while the other two who left earlier sent me their suggestions through email after the workshop.

## **Participants**

There were six Asian ELL international students who participated in this focus group. All of them were current undergraduate students from OCAD University. Four of them come from China, one is from Bangladesh, and one is from South Korea. Their majors include Digital Futures, Creative Writing,

Photography, and Graphic Design. Their English proficiency varied, but all were able to take instructions, provide feedback, and participate in discussions.

### **Limitation**

The limited number of participants in this study and the fact that the participants are all from the same university in Canada made the sample size and diversity insufficient to represent the situation of Asian ELL international students in different English-speaking countries. Two participants left during the Matching Game reduced the effectiveness of the discussion in the World Cafe, and the originally planned two rounds of group discussion were cut down to one round, which made the participants less stimulative to each other. Due to insufficient familiarity with the Zoom platform, I failed to record one of the two breakout rooms. Although the participants eventually returned to the main room and summarized this part of the discussion, some details of this part were lost.

Although the sample size and diversity of this study are not ideal, it still yields valuable findings that reflect the needs of some Asian ELL students and their attitudes toward specific interventions by their instructors. I believe this study can be conducted in multiple rounds to increase the sample and thus iteratively integrate the findings from each round. The more studies are conducted, the more representative common needs and controversial points of this community will be explored, and richer teaching proposals will be created, resulting in systematic pedagogical guidelines for teachers.

## **Findings**

### **Matching Game**

In summary, the matching results showed that most students advocated for all the 15 proposed teaching guidelines. All these teaching suggestions were matched with all four positive pre-set results at least twice. Sometimes a single positive option was matched up to six times, meaning that all six participants selected the specific option. Only a few teaching suggestions were matched with one or two negative choices, and each negative choice was matched no more than twice.

In Table 1, the numbers below the letters A to H display the times each option was selected. This statistic shows how many student participants supported or opposed each teaching proposal during the Matching Game which reflects their experience-based judgments about the proposals' effectiveness. For

example, it shows that the first teaching suggestion received a relatively high number of votes among the four positive choices (A, C, D, F) and zero negative votes. So, if an instructor could “provide structural guidance and active mobilization for classroom activities, such as clear purpose, rules, time limits, etc.”,

**Table 1***Matching Game coding 1*

<b>Proposed supports</b>	A	b	C	D	e	F	g	h
1. The instructor provides structural guidance and active mobilization for classroom activities, such as clear purpose, rules, time limit, etc. (Some students lack confidence due to language and cultural barriers, so they need to be encouraged to participate in classroom activities).	4		3	5		4		
2. The instructor provides additional factual information that is culturally sensitive, with space, time, and learning cues to engage students in classroom activities.	2		4	2		6		
3. The instructor gives pre-reading material before classes.	2	2	2	1	1	4		
4. The instructor explains complex concepts verbally and visually to guide the student through the learning process.	3	1	2	4		3		
5. The instructor writes emphasis and assignments on the board.	3		2	4		3		1
6. The instructor uses slower speech and avoids jargon.	3		2	4		4	1	
7. The instructor gives background information on culturally specific concepts	3		2	3		2		
8. The instructor brings in case studies that students from diverse backgrounds could understand. (Outside of Euro-centric history)	2		5	3		4		
9. The instructor recognizes cultural shock symptoms and lets the students feel being given attention and supported (e.g., feelings of sadness, loneliness, anger, depression, shyness, insecurity, or other emergencies of adaptational difficulties in class).	4		4	3		2		
10. The instructor clarifies expectations and provides sample works.	4		2	4		4		
11. The instructor check understanding of announcements and gives some time for reflection when asking questions.	2		2	2		2		1
12. The instructor lets non-native English speakers team up with English native speakers.	1	2	2	1	2	3		
13. The instructor recommends English-language courses, tutoring, and supplemental courses the institution provides.	2		2	3		4		
14. The instructor provides English learning materials related to the major (e.g., vocabulary for inclusive design).	2		3	3		6		
15. The instructor recommends support classes involving critical analysis, examination strategies, study skills, academic reading, and writing which the institution provides.	4	1	2	2		5		

four participants believe it would help ELL Asian international students to reduce anxiety and improve learning efficiency, three participants think it could increase students' confidence, and five of them agree that it could decrease stress. The second motion received a unanimous vote on option F, which means all six student participants agree that “the instructor provides additional factual information that is culturally sensitive, with space, time, and learning cues to engage students in classroom activities” will increase

learning efficiency; and four of them believe that it will increase students' confidence. Another proposal that received unanimous support for a specific option is proposal No.14. All six participants agree that the instructor providing "English learning materials related to the major. (e.g., vocabulary for inclusive design)" would increase learning efficiency. One proposal that received a relatively high number of votes (five) is proposal No.15. Five participants voted F for proposal No.15, which represents their agreement that the instructor recommends support classes involving critical analysis, examination strategies, study skills, academic reading, and writing which the institution provides will increase learning efficiency.

Most of the proposals received three or four votes on more than two positive options, meaning most participants endorsed them. Even when some proposals received only two or one vote on some positive options, they received fewer or no opposing votes.




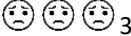








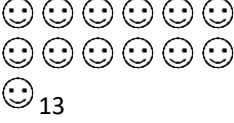



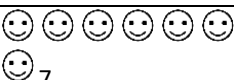
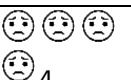
In terms of negative options, proposal No.12, which is about the instructor letting non-native English speakers team up with English native speakers, received the highest number of negative votes (four votes), with two for increasing anxiety and two for increasing stress. Proposal No.3, about giving pre-reading material before classes, received the second high votes (three votes) for negative options, which also refers to increasing anxiety and stress. Besides, proposals No.4, 5, 6, and 11 got one vote each for negative options.



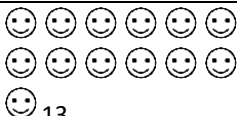

In contrast to votes received by each option in Table 1, Table 2 is designed to show graphically and directly the popularity and unpopularity of each instructional intervention. The happy faces indicate how many times capital letters A, C, D, and F (positive options) were selected, while the unhappy faces display the number of times the lower-case letters b, e, g, and h (negative options) were selected.

According to Table 2, the most welcome teaching proposal is No.1, with 16 votes for positive options and zero votes for negative options, which means all these student participants really want their teachers to "provide structural guidance and active mobilization for classroom activities, such as clear purpose, rules, time limits, etc." The second most endorsed ones are No. 2, 8, 10, and 14, with 14 votes for positive options and zero votes for negative options. The proposals supported by the participants include providing additional factual information that is culturally sensitive, with space, time, and learning cues to engage students in classroom activities; bringing in case studies that students from diverse backgrounds

could understand (outside of Euro-centric history); clarifying expectations and provides sample works; and providing English learning materials related to the major (e.g., vocabulary for inclusive design).

**Table 2***Matching Game coding 2*

Proposed supports	Positive choices	Negative Choices
1. The instructor provides structural guidance and active mobilization for classroom activities, such as clear purpose, rules, time limit, etc. (Some students lack confidence due to language and cultural barriers, so they need to be encouraged to participate in classroom activities).	 16	0
2. The instructor provides additional factual information that is culturally sensitive, with space, time, and learning cues to engage students in classroom activities.	 14	0
3. The instructor gives pre-reading material before classes.	 9	 3
4. The instructor explains complex concepts verbally and visually to guide the student through the learning process.	 12	 1
5. The instructor writes emphasis and assignments on the board.	 12	 1
6. The instructor uses slower speech and avoids jargon.	 13	 1
7. The instructor gives background information on culturally specific concepts.	 10	0
8. The instructor brings in case studies that students from diverse backgrounds could understand (Outside of Euro-centric history).	 14	0
9. The instructor recognizes cultural shock symptoms and lets the students feel being given attention and supported (e.g., feelings of sadness, loneliness, anger, depression, shyness, insecure or other emergencies of adaptational difficulties in class).	 13	0
10. The instructor clarifies expectations and provides sample works.	 14	0
11. The instructor check understanding of announcements and gives some time for reflection when asking questions.	 6	 1
12. The instructor lets non-native English speakers team up with English native speakers.	 7	 4

13. The instructor recommends English-language courses, tutoring, and supplemental courses the institution provides.	 11	0
14. The instructor provides English learning materials related to the major (e.g., vocabulary for inclusive design).	 14	0
15. The instructor recommends support classes involving critical analysis, examination strategies, study skills, academic reading, and writing which the institution provides.	 13	 1

For negative feedback, seven of the 15 teaching proposals received negative votes, but each received significantly fewer votes for negative options than positive options. For instance, proposal No.12 got the most four unhappy faces, but it also got seven happy faces. This shows that the participants have different feelings and opinions about forming teams between native and non-native English students in class. However, most of the students still believe that such a way of creating teams is more beneficial than harmful. Proposal No.3, about giving pre-reading material, received three unhappy faces and nine happy faces, representing more advantages than disadvantages. We can tell that Proposal No.3 and proposal No.12 are the most controversial in this phase.

### **World Café**

Due to time constraints, the entire World Cafe session was limited to a few specific teaching proposals, some of which were not saved due to technical problems with recording. But these limited discussions reflect the participants' priorities and the importance and sensitivity they attach to these teaching suggestions. For those teaching suggestions that were not discussed in this session, the data from the precious Matching Games also represent their attitude.

### **Controversy**

In this workshop, one of the points of contention was encouraging non-native English students to team up with English native students. One participant said: "...that's kind of dividing students into separate groups and people from Canadian like Canadian student would be like, Whoa, you're non-Canadian. You don't speak English. So, we are going to let you speak more. And it's just; you're creating us a barrier just not helpful, like people are getting self, like really self-aware like, whoa, I'm a non-English speaker. So now I have to practice my English. It's just unnecessary...." She said it causes anxiety and



stress, creating a barrier by pushing people to identify themselves into two groups. Another participant said that it increases anxiety but also enhances confidence "because this could be one of the chances they can talk to new people." I am surprised by this feedback because, as an Asian ELL international student myself, I think teaming up with native-English students is a great chance to practice English and learn different ways of thinking. I also agree that it might increase anxiety and stress because of the concern of not being accepted by the local students. We have to admit the fact that ELL international students are indeed a minority group whose weak oral English skills have diminished their ability to make friends outside of their home language (Schutz and Richards, 2003). However, I think native-English team members also reduce Asian ELL students' anxiety and stress in some cases because they may be more aware of teacher expectations and assignment requirements and are more familiar with local resources.

Another intervention that brought significant different ideas was about giving pre-reading materials. Three of the four participants shared that pre-reading materials increase anxiety or stress because instructors already give students too many materials to read, while one of them said it improves learning efficiency at the same time. Most participants reflected that they couldn't finish all the assigned readings. One participant said that the lecture sometimes was just repeating the reading materials made it feel like a waste of time. Only one participant described it would be helpful as it would give her time to check the dictionary and helped her to understand the coming class. I share the last participant's feelings because the pre-reading materials usually help me get familiar with the vocabulary and the background, which eases the difficulties of understanding the class. However, I also agree that getting an acceptable amount of reading materials is important. Although sometimes the instructor tells us those are just recommended materials which you do not need to finish all of them, what really happens is we do not know how to choose unless we read all of them. In fact, since Asian ELL students' reading speed is significantly slower than that of native English students, the burden of excessive reading materials on Asian ELL students is multiplied. Personally, I usually feel like it takes me 3 to 5 times longer than instructors seem to think it should take.

Regarding the suggestion that "the instructor provides additional factual information that is culturally sensitive, with space, time, and learning cues to engage students in classroom activities," one participant felt that it would increase anxiety and stress because international students "need more time to reflect". This reflects Asian ELL students' anxiety about teachers providing additional information. They worry that

the teacher will say more, and they won't understand or have time to react. In my personal experience, this anxiety is most likely to occur when the student's English language ability is weak or when the student is not familiar with the cultural context. In contrast, another participant felt it could enhance confidence because it helps to "interact with other team members", and the confidence is from "expressing and practicing". This more positive feedback is likely due to the participant's ability to understand more of what the teacher is saying in English and use this information to help them participate in class discussions. From my angle, providing some information is better than nothing because that information is like supplementary guidance to help us be engaged in classroom activities.

One participant felt that "check the understanding of announcements and give some time for reflection when asking questions" would embarrass the student. She said it would be better to repeat the question or explain it in a simplified version. Another participant agreed with her and said she would ask the teacher to repeat the question, too. This discussion is slightly different from the data in the previous Matching Game. In the Matching Game, this teaching proposal received only one negative option. This discussion is consistent with the presupposition of this co-design session that participants may experience changes in their thinking during participation. This change comes from the stimulation of ideas between different participants.

### **Common ground**

During the discussion, participants mentioned a few teaching suggestions several times and expressed their favorites. All four participants expressed their fondness for the instructor employing study cases from diverse cultural backgrounds (outside of Euro-centric history). The benefits of this proposal they pointed out include making students feel supported when their cultures are acknowledged by professors, encouraging students to contribute to a class by bringing their cultural perspectives from their lived experience, and making the course more accessible for students not familiar with local policy or copyright concerns, enlarging the study area of interest, reducing bias, etc. One participant expressed her appreciation for the amount of work a teacher put into preparing the multicultural case studies in a course related to photography history: "...looking for the materials outside Europe and English is already like, a hard, difficult thing to do. So, you can see how much they did research. And yeah, I like that course a lot." I also support this proposal, because I feel isolated when I do not understand the local culture cases that

teachers and students are discussing enthusiastically such as Canadian artists, art venues, government agencies, etc. When the teacher does not mention my country or ethnicity, I feel that I should not share my lived experience or cultural background, and I assume that my sharing is not welcome or not interested in others.

Two participants unanimously expressed their support for the instructor clarifying expectations and providing sample works or steps for completing assignments or checklists. They think the sample works help students visualize the teacher's expectations and avoid miscommunication. One participant described her experience as: "...when the professor is talking about something that he likes to see, it's pretty difficult for us to visualize it, especially with different cultural environment backgrounds. Like, what are you...What do you really want? If the professor provides sample work, we will know, like, oh, this is what you're talking about. Sometimes, when I hear a lecture, I was like, okay, this is what you want. Then I see the example where I was like, whoa, that's what you want." She also mentioned that rubrics and marking systems are so helpful. I agree with them because I rely on the sample works and rubrics provided by the teacher to get the ideal grade.

Instructors using "slower speech" were mentioned by two participants in their breakout room discussion. They both agree that slower speech is pretty useful; even overly slow speech or a sleepy voice is better than fast speech. The other two participants also mentioned that they couldn't understand when professors talked very fast in in-person classes. They think that a critical benefit of online learning is the class recordings which allow them to review the course. Although the participants did not describe how they used the recorded courses, my personal experience is that the course videos could be repeated until we understand what we do not understand at the beginning, and we could pause the video to look up the dictionary. I think it is always friendly for English learners to slow down a bit when talking to them, but the problem is that it may make native English speakers feel a bit uncomfortable. It seems the recorded courses could be a solution to this problem since it would allow Asian ELL students to set their own pace and review sections of lectures when necessary.

### **Other issues**

In addition to the teaching proposals in the Matching Game, the participants' discussion extended to some other issues and needs. In summary, there are two concerns:

1. Many grants and jobs are not available for international students. Professors are expected to share grant opportunities that are eligible for all students.
2. Faculty must acknowledge what is happening around the world and how it affects international students and should offer community care instead of only targeting them as vulnerable groups. Professors are expected to share more resources to help students who have difficulties such as traveling home during the pandemic and the Ukraine war period.

### **New proposal**

In the last phase, I asked participants to develop teaching proposals for preparing teaching materials and organizing classroom activities. In addition to these two aspects of teaching, participants also came up with some other expectations for faculty and institutions. Corroborating with the findings of the Matching Game and the World Café, forming teams emerged as one of the most controversial issues in this workshop, with participants offering many different opinions on how to form a team in this phase.

Since the participants' English levels and expressions varied, and some vague expressions were used, including some spelling and grammatical errors, I paraphrased the participants' words with my own understanding.

### **For preparing teaching materials**

1. Include sufficient visual factors in teaching slides and other teaching materials; use visual elements to help students with language difficulties understand the class.
2. Use videos with subtitles as teaching materials.
3. Use clear narrations in teaching materials.
4. Use simplified English to prepare teaching materials.
5. Prepare teaching slides.
6. Avoid long reading materials in teaching slides.
7. Create jargon lists for students.
8. Tell Asian ELL students the emphasis when giving them reading materials.
9. Provide a clear syllabus.
10. Give students organized teaching materials or provide side notes about what are the materials for.
11. Avoid non-class related samples or cases.

12. If the lecture is all about the reading material, avoid long pre-reading materials.
13. Use different colors to highlight key points.
14. Highlight difficult words and provide a word list with explanations.
15. Provide links for video and audio resources if students are supposed to learn from video or audio.
16. Include trigger warnings when needed.
17. "The readings with directed questions or to provide some of the contexts of the readings."
18. Provide videos' references, journal paper extracts, and writers' or artists' interviews.
19. Avoid local abbreviations and logos, or provide explanations when using them in teaching materials.

### **For arranging classroom activities**

1. Provide written guides for teaching activities.
2. Allocate specific time to help international students with language barriers in class, such as giving them time to consult dictionaries, discuss unfamiliar vocabulary, or ask questions.
3. Apply Icebreakers at the beginning of the semester to get students familiar with each other to help international students better integrate into the classroom and build friendships.
4. Make sure that the rules of activities are clear to Asian ELL students by letting them talk about the rules and explain to them when necessary; avoid embarrassing students who don't know what to do.
5. Ask each student to share their thoughts instead of letting them speak freely.
6. Break the large group into small groups and clarify the discussion topics.
7. Ask questions that interest the students.
8. Give students enough time to ask questions.
9. Identify students' weaknesses and provide targeted support, such as specific classroom activities.
10. Give students assignments to complete in class.
11. Acknowledge and understand barriers, avoid any kind of isolation which leads to vulnerable feelings.
12. Encourage students to share perspectives from diverse cultural backgrounds.
13. Encourage students to bring language diversity to class.
14. Give Asian ELL students more time to keep up with the rest of the class when needed.
15. Organize classroom activities so that students learn from each other rather than compete.

16. In in-person classes, assign students topics to take photos of each week, rather than just talking to each other.
17. Organize some outdoor activities such as field research instead of just staying in the classroom.
18. Invite guest speakers or panelists from diverse backgrounds.
19. Provide specific word lists for class discussions and critiques.
20. Create an atmosphere in which students feel free to speak freely such as small groups talk.
21. Clarify the schedule for the current class and the following class.
22. Encourage students to share their lived experiences from diverse cultural backgrounds.

### **Other expectations**

1. Allow students to record the class.
2. Use clear handwriting to make it easy for students to take notes.
3. Share all the resources being mentioned in class to students after class.
4. Give students reading materials directly rather than letting them find them by themselves.
5. Provide lecture recordings with transcripts and share teaching slides.
6. Provide easy access to Asian ELL student support offices or faculty office hours to provide resources and support to Asian ELL students.
7. Give students guidance on the facilities of the school so that they can find various materials.
8. Write down key points on the board for students' reviewing and note-taking.
9. Share grants opportunities that are eligible for all students since many grants and jobs are not eligible for international students.

### **Different opinions on how to form teams**

1. Allow students to team up freely.
2. Mandatorily team up international students with local students.
3. Assign partners for in-classroom activities, and grade separately.
4. Randomly form teams.

## Conclusion

In terms of helping Asian ELL international students cope with linguistic and cultural obstacles, in the Matching Game and the World Café phase, most participants expressed their support for most teaching proposals. Students represented openness to and support for having faculty members use multiple, layered interventions to support Asian ELL students. Perhaps not every intervention would work for all students, but a combination could help many of them. In addition, all participants contributed new support proposals. At the end of this workshop, some participants expressed different opinions on a specific question of how to form teams in classrooms.

In the Matching Game, participants supported most of the pre-set interventions and only disputed a few. One of the most welcomed proposals was for teachers to encourage and help students participate in classroom activities, for example, by providing detailed guidance and explanations to students. The supports that more frequently matched negative options included teachers assigning pre-class readings and teachers having native and non-native English-speaking students work in teams.

The results in the World Cafe session were broadly consistent with the results of the Matching Game. Everyone was supportive of the various teaching measures to support Asian ELL students, but their feelings about a few specific measures varied. For example, on the teaming up issue, one participant talked about her favor of having native and non-native English speakers team up because it was a good communication opportunity, while another student was against it because it reminds both student groups of their differences and creates an invisible barrier. Regarding pre-reading materials, most of the participants feel that the amount of reading is burdensome, but at the same time, it is also helpful to improve learning efficiency. Personally, I believe that a moderate amount of pre-school reading should do more good than harm. Other controversies involve teachers providing culturally sensitive information and giving students more time to respond to questions. The measures that were mentioned and unanimously supported in the discussion were:

1. Using culturally diverse study cases.
2. Providing sample works for assignments.
3. Using a slower pace of speech.

In addition, some participants mentioned the expectation for teachers to share grant opportunities that are eligible to all students and provide appropriate support for international students in need during pandemics and wars.

In the final New Proposal phase, participants provided many new suggestions for preparing teaching materials and organizing classroom activities, adding to the richness of the teaching proposals in the previous Matching Game. Some participants also suggested other aspects, such as allowing students to record lessons, teachers using clear handwriting, and sharing teaching materials with students. Several participants again raised the issue of how to form teams; they mentioned different opinions such as free teaming, forcing native and non-native students to form groups, assigning partners, grading separately, etc. How to form teams was one of the most controversial topics among Asian ELL students identified in this focus group workshop.



## References

- Alloh, F. T., Tait, D., & Taylor, C. (2018). Away from home: A qualitative exploration of health experiences of Nigerian students in a U.K. *Journal of International Students*, 8(1), 1–20. Doi: 10.5281/zenodo.1101024
- Andrade, M. S. (2006). International students in English-speaking universities: Adjustment factors. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 5(2), 131-154. doi:10.1177/1475240906065589
- Andrade, M. S. (2009). The effects of English language proficiency on adjustment to university life. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 3(1), 16–34. DOI: 10.1080/19313150802668249
- Beasley, C. J., & Pearson, C. A. (1999). Facilitating the learning of transitional students: Strategies for success for all students. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 18(3), 303-321.
- Berry, J. W. (1980). Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation in AM Padilla (Ed.), *Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings*, (pp. 9'25). *Boulder, CO: West 'view*.
- Bista, K., & Gaulee, U. (2017). Recurring themes across fractal issues facing international students: A thematic analysis of 2016 dissertations and theses. *Journal of International Students*, 7(4), 1135–1151. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.103598
- Brown, L. & Jones, I. (2013). Encounters with racism and the international student experience. *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(7), 1004–1019. DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2011.614940
- Campbell, J., & Li, M. (2007). Asian students' voices: An empirical study of Asian students' learning experiences at a New Zealand University. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(4), 375–396. Doi: 10.1177/1028315307299422
- Chan, E. (2009). Living in the space between participant and researcher as a narrative inquirer: Examining ethnic identity of Chinese Canadian students as conflicting stories to live by. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 103(2), 113-122.
- China Central Television. (2018, December 19). *Chinese students commit suicide due to depression, and experts call for attention to mental health* [Video]. China Central Television. <http://tv.cctv.com/2018/12/19/VIDEQgcg71J39EWHuQs4wIXq181219.shtml>
- Clarke, D., & Xu, L. H. (2008). Distinguishing between mathematics classrooms in Australia, China, Japan,

- Korea and the USA through the lens of the distribution of responsibility for knowledge generation: Public oral interactivity and mathematical orality. *ZDM*, 40(6), 963-972.
- Clarke, D., Xu, L. H., & Wan, M. E. V. (2010). Student speech as an instructional priority: Mathematics classrooms in seven culturally differentiated cities. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2), 3811–3817.
- Cowley, S. P., & Ssekasi, D. H. (2018). Motivation, induction, and challenge: Examining the initial phase of international students' education. *Journal of International Students*, 8(1), 109–130. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1101039
- Dao, T. K., Lee, D., & Chang, H. L. (2007). Acculturation level, perceived English fluency, perceived social support level, and depression among Taiwanese international students. *College Student Journal*, 41(2), 287–295.
- Dong, T., Anderson, R. C., Kim, I., & Li, Y. (2008). Collaborative reasoning in China and Korea. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 43(4), 400–424.
- Du Bois, C. A. (1956). *Foreign students and higher education in the United States*. American Council on Education.
- Erichsen, E. A., & Bolliger, D. U. (2011). Towards understanding international graduate student isolation in traditional and online environments. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 59(3), 309-326.
- Evans, S., & Morrison, B. (2011). The first term at university: Implications for EAP. *ELT journal*, 65(4), 387-397.
- Global Affairs Canada. (2019, March 6). Succeed at School in Canada.  
<https://www.educanada.ca/study-plan-etudes/during-pendant/succeed-reussir.aspx?lang=eng>
- Holmes, P. (2004). Negotiating differences in learning and intercultural communication: Ethnic Chinese students in a New Zealand university. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 67(3), 294-307.
- Huang, Y. (2012). Transitioning challenges faced by Chinese graduate students. *Adult learning*, 23(3), 138-147.
- Hughes, H. (2010). International students' experiences of university libraries and librarians. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, 41(2), 77-89.

- Ing, M., & Victorino, C. (2016). Differences in classroom engagement of Asian American engineering students. *Journal of Engineering Education, 105*(3), 431-451. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jee.20126>
- Kasper, L. F. (1997). The impact of content-based instructional programs on the academic progress of Asian ELL students. *English for specific purposes, 16*(4), 309-320.
- Khanal, J., & Gaulee, U. (2019). Challenges of international students from pre-departure to post-study: A literature review. *Journal of International Students, 9*(2), 560-581.
- Khawaja, N., & Stallman, H. (2011). Understanding the coping strategies of international students: A qualitative approach. *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools, 21*(2), 203-224.
- Kim, S. (2008). Silent participation: East Asian international graduate students' views on active classroom participation. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching, 19*, 199-220.
- Kwon, Y. (2009). Factors affecting international students' transition to higher education institutions in the United States: From the perspective of the office of international students. *College Student Journal, 43*(4), 1020-1037
- Lee, D. S. (1997). What Teachers Can Do to Relieve Problems Identified by International Students. *New directions for teaching and learning, 70*, 93-100.
- Lee, H. J., Lee, J., Makara, K. A., Fishman, B. J., & Teasley, S. D. (2017). A cross-cultural comparison of college students' learning strategies for academic achievement between South Korea and the USA. *Studies in Higher Education, 42*(1), 169-183.
- Li, H.Z. (2020). A Narrative Study of the Cultural Adaptation: Process and Influencing Factors of International Students in the United States. *China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House*.
- Li, Y. (2004). Learning to live and study in Canada: Stories of four EFL learners from China. *TELL Canada Journal, 22*(1), 25-43.
- Lillyman, S., & Bennett, C. (2014). Providing a positive learning experience for international students studying at UK universities: A literature review. *Journal of Research in International Education, 13*(1), 63-75.
- Liu, X., Liu, S., Lee, S., & Magjuka, R. J. (2010). Cultural differences in online learning: International student perceptions. *Educational Technology & Society, 13*(3), 177-188.
- Ma, J. (2020). Supporting practices to break Chinese international students' language barriers. *Journal of*

- International Students*, 10(1), 84-105.
- Moon, C. Y., Zhang, S., Larke, P. J., & James, M. C. (2020). We are not all the same: A qualitative analysis of the nuanced differences between Chinese and South Korean international graduate students' experiences in the United States. *Journal of International Students*, 10(1), 28-49. DOI:10.32674/jis.v10i1.770
- Open Doors Report. (2020). Top Ten Places of Origin for International Students. <https://opendoorsdata.org/infographic/top-10-places-of-origin-of-international-students/>
- Park, E. (2016). Social and educational challenges of international students caused by accented English in the Australian context: A sociolinguistic analysis of linguistic experiences (master's thesis). *School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University, Southeast Queensland, Australia*.
- Parks, S., & Raymond, P. M. (2004). Strategy Use by Non-native English-Speaking Students in an MBA Program: Not Business as Usual! *The Modern Language Journal*, 88(3), 374-389.
- Poyrazli, S. (2003). Ethnic identity and psychosocial adjustment among international students. *Psychological Reports*, 92(2), 512-514.
- Poyrazli, S., & Grahame, K. M. (2007). Barriers to adjustment: Needs of international students within a semi-urban campus community. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 34(1), 28-36
- Poyrazli, S., Kavanaugh, P. R., Baker, A., & Al-Timimi, N. (2004). Social support and demographic correlates of acculturative stress in international students. *Journal of College Counseling*, 7(1), 73-82.
- Ramburuth, P. (2001). Language diversity and the first-year experience: Implications for academic achievement and language skills acquisition. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, 13(2), 75-93.
- Ramsay, S., Barker, M., & Jones, E. (1999). Academic Adjustment and Learning Processes: a comparison of international and local students in first-year university. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 18(1), 129-144.
- Robertson, M., Line, M., Jones, S., & Thomas, S. (2000). International students, learning environments and perceptions: A case study using the Delphi technique. *Higher education research & development*, 19(1), 89-102.

- Schutz, A., & Richards, M. (2003). International Students' Experience of Graduate Study in Canada. *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education*, 7(1), 56-63.
- SHARE Team. (2020, March 2). Teacher-centered vs. student-centered education. Resilient educator. <https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/which-is-best-teacher-centered-or-student-centered-education/>
- Smiljanic, I. (2017). The role of attachment, travel experiences and English proficiency of international students, acculturative stress and depressive systems. *Journal of International Students*, 7(2), 188-203.
- Smith, R. A., Khawaja, N. G (2011). A Review of the Acculturation Experiences of International Students. *Interpersonal Journal of Interpersonal Relations*, 2011(35), 699-713.
- Song, K., Dong, H.M., Shi, S., & Wang, J.F. (2020). A Survey and Analysis of Influencing Factors of Cross-cultural Learning among Chinese Overseas Students: taking American students as an example. *Higher Agricultural Education*, 2020(8), 56-61.
- Swagler, M. A., & Ellis, M. V. (2003). Crossing the distance: Adjustment of Taiwanese graduate students in the United States. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50(4), 420.
- Swathi, R., Mark, K., Kara, K., & Ankita, G., (2017). Strategies to address English language writing challenges faced by international graduate students in the US. *Journal of International Students*, 7(3), 764–785.
- Tange, H., & Jensen, I. (2012). Good teachers and deviant learners? The meeting of practices in university level international education. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 11(2), 181-193.
- Tompson, H. B., & Tompson, G. H. (1996). International perspective: Confronting diversity issues in the classroom with strategies to improve satisfaction and retention of international students. *Journal of Education for Business*, 72(1), 53-57.
- Trice, A. G. (2004). Mixing it up: International graduate students' social interactions with American students. *Journal of college student development*, 45(6), 671-687.
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2021). Other policy relevant indicators: inbound internationally mobile students by continent of origin. <http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=3804#>

- Wang, D.J. (2011). A study on the factors influencing the cultural learning adaptation of Chinese overseas students in American Universities. *Journal of Lanzhou Jiaotong University*, 2011(2), 111-114.
- Ward, C., Bochner, S., & Furnham, A. (2020). *The psychology of culture shock*. Routledge.
- Wu, H., Garza, E., & Guzman, N. (2015). International Student's challenge and adjustment to college. *Education Research International*, 2015, 1-9.
- Xu, L., & Clarke, D. (2013). Meta-rules of discursive practice in mathematics classrooms from Seoul, Shanghai and Tokyo. *ZDM*, 45(1), 61-72.
- Xu, X. (2016, July 26). *Your child in the United States: prestigious school and lonely heart, prosperous but commit suicide* [Video]. VOA Chinese.  
<https://www.voachinese.com/a/upenn-20160726/3435077.html>
- Yakunina, E. S., Weigold, I. K., & McCarthy, A. S. (2010). Group counseling with international students: Practical, ethical, and cultural considerations. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, 25(1), 67-78.
- Yeh, C. J., & Inose, M. (2003). International students' reported English fluency, social support satisfaction, and social connectedness as predictors of acculturative stress. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 16(1), 15-28.
- Zhang, Z., & Beck, K. (2014). I came, but I'm lost: Learning stories of three Chinese international students in Canada. *Canadian and International Education*, 43(2), 1.
- Zhou, G., & Zhang, Z. (2014). A study of the first-year international students at a Canadian university: Challenges and experiences with social integration. *Canadian and International Education*, 43(2), 1.