

International Students' Experiences Learning English in the English Language Institute

Presented by Daniel Wagner



Warm Up Activity

Learning how to pronounce names

- Learning how to pronounce names is a great way to connect with the international students in your class.
- Learning names in Chinese can be very easy since there is a limited range of phonemes.

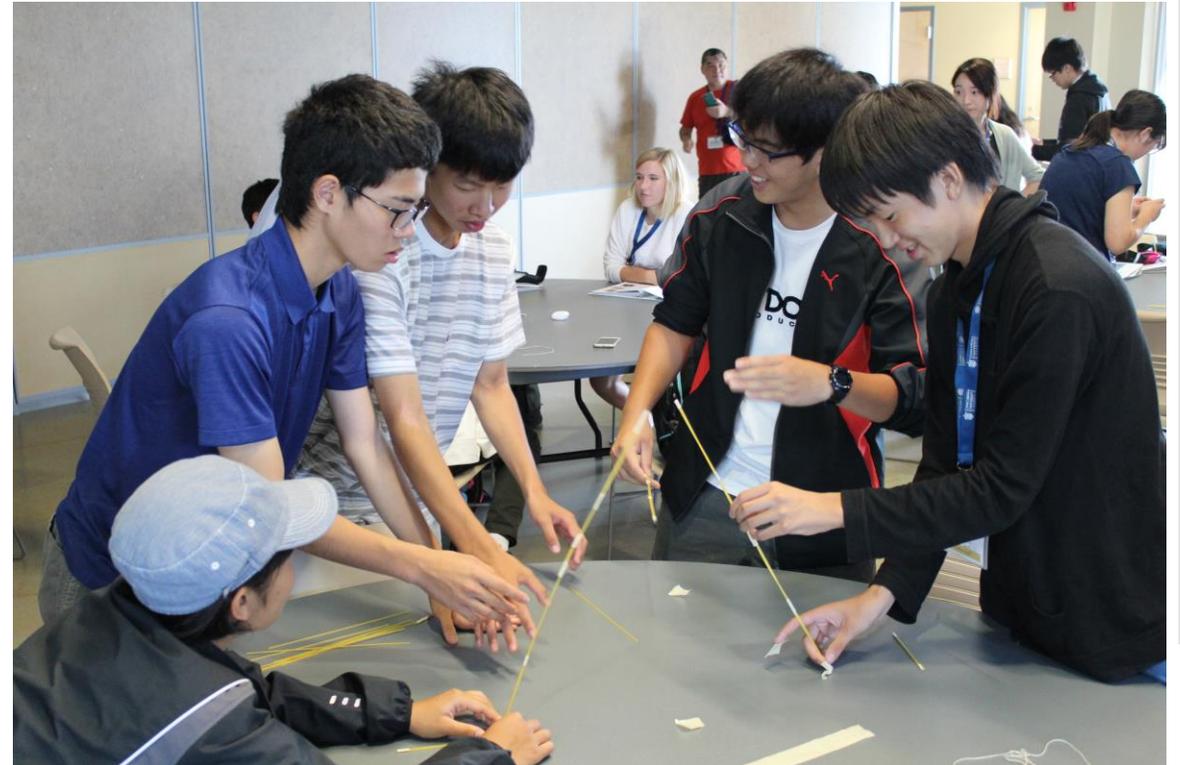
Pin yin	Similar English sound	Pin yin example	Chinese character
k	come	Ka (card)	卡
q	cheese	Qu(go)	去
x	ship	Xia(below)	下
c	cats	Ci (time)	次
zh	germ	Zhu(live)	住

Practice some
of these
common
names in
Chinese

Zhu Kaihui	Liu Yuqi	LI Zhengyuan
Ding XuanYang	Qian Jiaxin	Wu Muqing
Xu Haolan	Tian Siyu	Lei Ziheng

Introducing the English Language Institute

- The purpose of the English Language Institute is to provide international students multiple opportunities to experience life in the United States through cultural immersion and English instruction. Our commitment is to help students achieve their language goals and fully prepare them for academic courses at Concordia University.



ELI: The Facts

- The English Language Institute curriculum is separated into 4 levels, including...
 - Basic
 - Beginner
 - Intermediate
 - Advanced
- Each ELI term is 7-weeks long during the school year . there is one 10-week term in the summer .
- Each term consists of of 21+ hours per week of in-class instruction.
- The courses include:
 - Speaking and Listening
 - Writing and Grammar
 - Reading and Vocabulary
 - TOEFL preparation (Intermediate and Advanced)
 - Extensive Listening (Basic and Beginner)

ELI: The Courses

Speaking and Listening

- The speaking and listening course provides the students with opportunities to practice speaking English. Students discuss a range of academically focused topics that prepares them for the discussions they will experience in their academic classes.

Topics include:

Technology	Government	Art	Business
Language	Environment	Food and Diet	Transport
Tourism	Health	Media	Society

- Students also develop critical thinking skills as they work on objectives together using English to communicate.
- Additionally, students are assigned **Conversation partners**. Conversation partners are Domestic, Concordia students who regularly meet with the ELI students to help them practice speaking English

ELI: The Courses

Reading and Vocabulary

- The reading and vocabulary focuses on skill-based learning instead of knowledge. Students are given opportunities to interact with texts by practicing pre-reading, reading, and post-reading strategies.
- The course prepares the students to read texts quickly without interpreting every word. This includes
 - Locating the main ideas in a text.
 - Identifying the function and purpose of paragraphs.
 - Guessing word meanings based on context clues.
 - Identifying transition and marker words.
 - Developing effective abilities for note taking.

ELI: The Courses

Writing and Grammar

- This course provides students with the opportunity to practice writing strategies. Students are expected to be able to write about a range of essay styles including...
 - Problem and solution
 - Opinion
 - Cause and Effect
 - Advantage and Disadvantage
 - Summative
 - Descriptive
- Students are expected to use critical thinking skills to respond to essay topics. (A key component of the IELTS test is measuring a student's critical thinking abilities via their writing)
- Students also learn how to correctly format a paper in either APA or MLA format.

ELI: The Courses

TOEFL Preparation

- The primary two language tests that are used by universities in the United States are IELTS and TOEFL.
- These tests cover a range of topics and assess a student's ability to comprehend and perform in English.
- The tests assess both knowledge of English grammar/ vocabulary and skills to use the language in a variety of contexts.
- The TOEFL prep course offers students these features:
 - Direct grammar instruction
 - Reading skills development
 - Listening skills development
 - Writing skills development, including how to analyze and report about graphs and charts.

ELI: The Exit Criteria

- At the end of each term, students have the opportunity to advance up a level in ELI or exit out of the program.
- The final assessment consists of 5 parts:

ELI exit criteria



- TOEFL Exam
- Grades
- Timed Writing
- Faculty Interviews
- Teacher Recommendations

Characteristics of International Students in Concordia



Types of Students

Disclaimer:

Before I begin, it is important to understand that every student is a unique individual with very specific strengths and weaknesses. The following information is only provided to introduce some common student issues.

Types of Students

Overall, there international students can be divided into three main groups:

- Students with strong performance abilities
- Students with strong comprehension abilities
- Generation 1.5 students

Students with Strong Communication Abilities

Students in this category tend to be able to communicate freely in classroom activities. They are fully conversational in English and are able to engage in discussion with domestic students. However, these students still need to develop other areas in their English learning.

Strengths

- Strong listening comprehension skills
- Able to interact in classroom discussion
- Able to interact with domestic students and professors
- Able to express their opinions or issues with limited difficulty

Potential Weaknesses

- May have issues with writing and grammar
- May not be able to distinguish between formal and informal writing styles.
- May need extra time completing extensive reading assignments
- May still need extra help with proper paper formatting and avoiding plagiarism.

Students with Strong Comprehension Abilities

Students in this category have possibly taken multiple English courses throughout their academic careers. They may be able to understand a large amount of English vocabulary, and they tend to do well on grammatical exercises.

Strengths

- Strong understanding of English vocabulary and grammar.
- Understands the foundations of essay writing.
- Understands strategies for finding information about English; have study habits in English Acquisition.

Potential Weaknesses

- May be nervous about interacting with domestic students or professors.
- May have issues with working in groups to complete tasks.
- May not seek out extra help even if they are struggling.
- May need extra time on reading and listening assignments.

Generation 1.5 students

Generation 1.5 students are individuals who may have started their academic careers in the United States in middle school or high school.

These students have a bigger challenge than domestic or international students. Many times, they move during a time in their lives in which they are developing their own native language. For example, some Generation 1.5 students may not know how to write in their native language.

These students are especially difficult to find because they speak English fluently and blend in with American students. However, these students may still need extra support in their academic classes.

This may include...

- Extra support in writing
- more time on reading assignments or assessments
- direct instruction on writing or understanding research strategies.

Common Issues with International Students

With this information in mind, you may be reflecting on some of the issues you have seen in your classroom. In my experience, some international students may have issues with the following:

- Understanding how to interact in group activities and assignments
- Understanding the purpose of an assignment. (Put into your own words, Summarize the information, Respond to the prompt)
- Plagiarism
- Understanding how to use campus resources. (Office hours, Writing Center, Study Halls)

The Solution

- These issues regularly come up in an academic, international institution. However, there are methods to deal with these issues constructively.
- If you have any issues with international students in the future, I would encourage you to contact me in the International Center. I will be able to help the student directly or I can direct them to the right resources on campus.
- Any time you have questions about international education, I encourage you to contact me:

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- On the back of the handout, work in a group and discuss some of the issues you have experienced interacting with international students. What are some of the challenges you have seen?
- Questions?
- If ELI was to host another lunch n' learn series, what topics should be covered?