



SUPPORTING ESL STUDENTS AT OCAD

INCLUSIVE TEACHING

ONTARIO
COLLEGE
OF ART &
DESIGN

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EDITED BY

Catherine Black, First-Year Writing Coordinator, Liberal Studies
Rebecca Smollett, Assistant Director and ESL Specialist,
Writing & Learning Centre

CONTRIBUTIONS BY

Beth Alber
Catherine Black
Miranda Chung
Nicole Collins
Priscila Diaz
Tina Giovinazzo
Christina Halliday
Bruce Hinds
Lise Hosein
Johanna Householder
Sammy Kuo
Caroline Langill
Max Lin
Zheng Yun Lu
Jane Ngobia
Soyang Park
Lori Riva
Magda Salamanca
Setsuko Sanagawa
Rebecca Smollett
Qiao Zhang

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INTRODUCTION

We hope that the content of this booklet will help you as an educator to continue to create a supportive, enriching classroom, studio, and workshop environment for ESL and non-ESL students alike. Like many instructors, you may be concerned that you need to be an ESL specialist or have some formalized ESL training to adequately address the learning needs of ESL students. You may be relieved to realize that this is not necessarily the case, and that there are many simple ways that you can make your curriculum delivery and feedback even more useful to your ESL students. In fact, you will likely find that many of the techniques contained in this booklet will not only prove helpful to ESL students, but will also help you craft and deliver an inclusive curriculum that will be meaningful to students from a variety of backgrounds with a variety of learning styles and needs.

Within this booklet we will address the most pressing questions raised by our colleagues: how to fairly grade and give feedback on ESL papers; how to help students who are struggling with comprehension in lecture, seminar, and discussion; how to encourage better participation from ESL students. Through first hand accounts from students and faculty alike and through topics such as who our ESL students are, how inclusive teaching helps enrich the educational experience for all students, and the importance of internationalizing

our curriculum, this booklet will also aid your overall understanding of the ESL student experience. For those of you who yourselves have a language other than English as your native tongue, or who were educated outside Canada, we hope that what you find here will ring true to some of your own experiences.

Cultural diversity is a key value in OCAD's Strategic Plan. It is our hope that you will continue to see your ESL students as resources in the development and delivery of a rich, inclusive curriculum that caters to the diversity of our student population. The issues touched on in this booklet are complex ones and in many cases we know we have barely scratched the surface. We hope though that you will be able to take away from it some practical suggestions and that the issues raised here will spark interesting and challenging discussion. You can find the material contained in this booklet online in the faculty area of the OCAD website. We encourage you to bring to us your questions, comments, challenges, and success stories so that we might continue to add to our materials.

Catherine Black

*First-Year Writing Coordinator,
Liberal Studies*

Rebecca Smollett

*Assistant Director and ESL Specialist,
Writing & Learning Centre*

STUDENT STORY



A confident moment for me was the interview when I wanted to get into OCAD. I presented my work and that was my first presentation in

Canada. It seems that went pretty well and I got accepted. So that gave me a lot of confidence. I did a piece on Chinese calligraphy and I told them the different stories and the background behind the calligraphy and when I presented each piece I told them why I was doing this and how it was related to historical events and they were very interested. One of the professors said, "I've never had a presentation like that before." I surprised them.

Zheng Yun Lu, *Integrated Media*

RESOURCES

A number of online resources for further reading are mentioned throughout this booklet. For links to these materials, visit our page in the faculty section of the OCAD website.

UNIVERSAL INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Universal Instructional Design (UID) is a powerful approach to teaching. It draws on a diversity of teaching methods to meet the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds and with a range of learning styles. The idea is that if we remove barriers to learning for certain students, such as those with non-standard learning styles, our teaching will become more effective and accessible for all. The idea grew out of the concept of "Universal Design" of products and buildings.

Many of the principles of UID can be applied to teaching ESL students. And many of the techniques suggested here for supporting ESL students will benefit other students in your class with diverse learning styles. To learn more about UID, visit the website of the University of Guelph at www.tss.uoguelph.ca/uid/.



FACULTY STORY



When I arrived in the UK in 1997, my academic English improved much faster than my casual English since I did not hang out with my fellow students in a pub much but rather spent long hours a day eagerly reading the critical texts with thick English-English or English-Korean dictionaries. I had a priority to fully explore and enjoy the advantages of academic freedom, the critical inquiry, and liberal atmosphere that the new place offered me that I could never imagine back in Korea.

Being a non-native speaker of English and finally making a career in the English speaking world was not an easy journey but was worth the challenge considering the lessons I have learned. Knowing more than one culture and one language gives you the advantage of a “double-eye” that allows you to be able to converse in cross-cultural perspectives from your own experience of exploring the differences. You can become better equipped to learn the ethical, pragmatic, and constructive ways of building an intellectual community around you beyond particularist prejudices and biases. Being a figure of difference can make you see the issues of otherness and tolerance more sensitively; this has a wider implication in the equitable community building that our and other communities in the world are currently trying to tackle.

At the same time I encountered a structural discrimination I had to overcome at the heart of reputable, multicultural,

progressive, and liberal Goldsmiths College where I studied towards my MA and PhD and also worked since 1998. (And it may exist even in our (un)consciousness here today.) The head administrator discouraged me from applying to the PhD scholarship (given to only two PhD students in the department) because I was an “international student” and reminded me that it had never been given to a non-British student.

If it was not for the whole-hearted support from two professors in the department who knew and valued my academic performance and contribution to the intellectual dynamic of the department, I could never have benefited from the scholarship. This was followed by my first teaching assignment in the English speaking world in Goldsmith’s Art History MA programme, which again would have never happened if it was not for their trust and support in my potential. An enlightening and spirited comment during a conversation came from professor Howard Caygill, who is a Kantian philosopher, English-German, and so-to-speak “white-male” academic and who became my PhD supervisor. He said “not only you, we are all post-colonial.” This presented me a cosmopolitan spirit with such an acute historical consciousness that continues to inspire me today.

Hard work, trusting oneself, being open, not being discouraged by prejudices, enjoying the process rather than the result, are some important lessons I want to share with all future educators of cosmopolitanism.

Soyang Park, *Liberal Studies*