Inclusive Teaching Strategies for Supporting EAL Students
Tune into Teaching Week

Image from *Language Magazine* (2020)

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Session Goals:

1. Greater awareness of how societal inequity is reproduced in the classroom due to the hegemony of English in intercultural communication

2. Highlighting how multilingual, EAL, and/or racialized students are excluded through racist micro-aggressions and micro-invalidations

3. Understanding which teaching and facilitation strategies can lessen the impact of exclusion of multilingual students

4. An appreciation for how attentiveness to intercultural pedagogy and to multilingual audiences can benefit all participants in a space

Agenda

- Introductions and context for our work

- International and multilingual students at U of T
  - Student voices
  - Enrolment and survey data
  - Deficit mindsets around multilingual international students
  - Recent concerns shared by students

- **Breakout Room Discussion #1: Strategies to create welcoming spaces**

- 7 inclusive teaching strategies for the classroom

- **Breakout Room Discussion #2: Reflections and takeaways**

- Time for Q&A
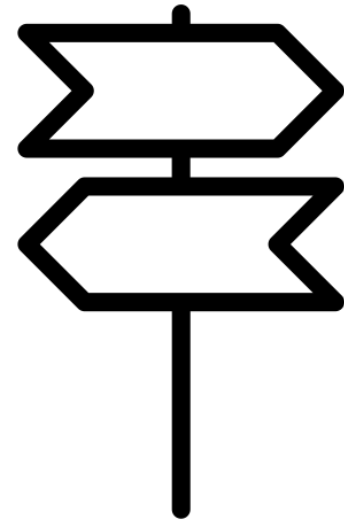
Student voices:

"Throughout my PhD journey, I have often felt that my academic English is not good enough because I was not born in Canada, even though it is my first language. "

"In conversations, my roommate often corrects my English and I'm not sure what to do. They think they are being helpful, but this really affects my confidence."

"Although students in my classes are polite, they make assumptions about my English and treat me differently once they hear my accent."

Adapted from student reflections in Academic Success workshops: *Overcoming the Messaging that Your English is "Not Good Enough"*
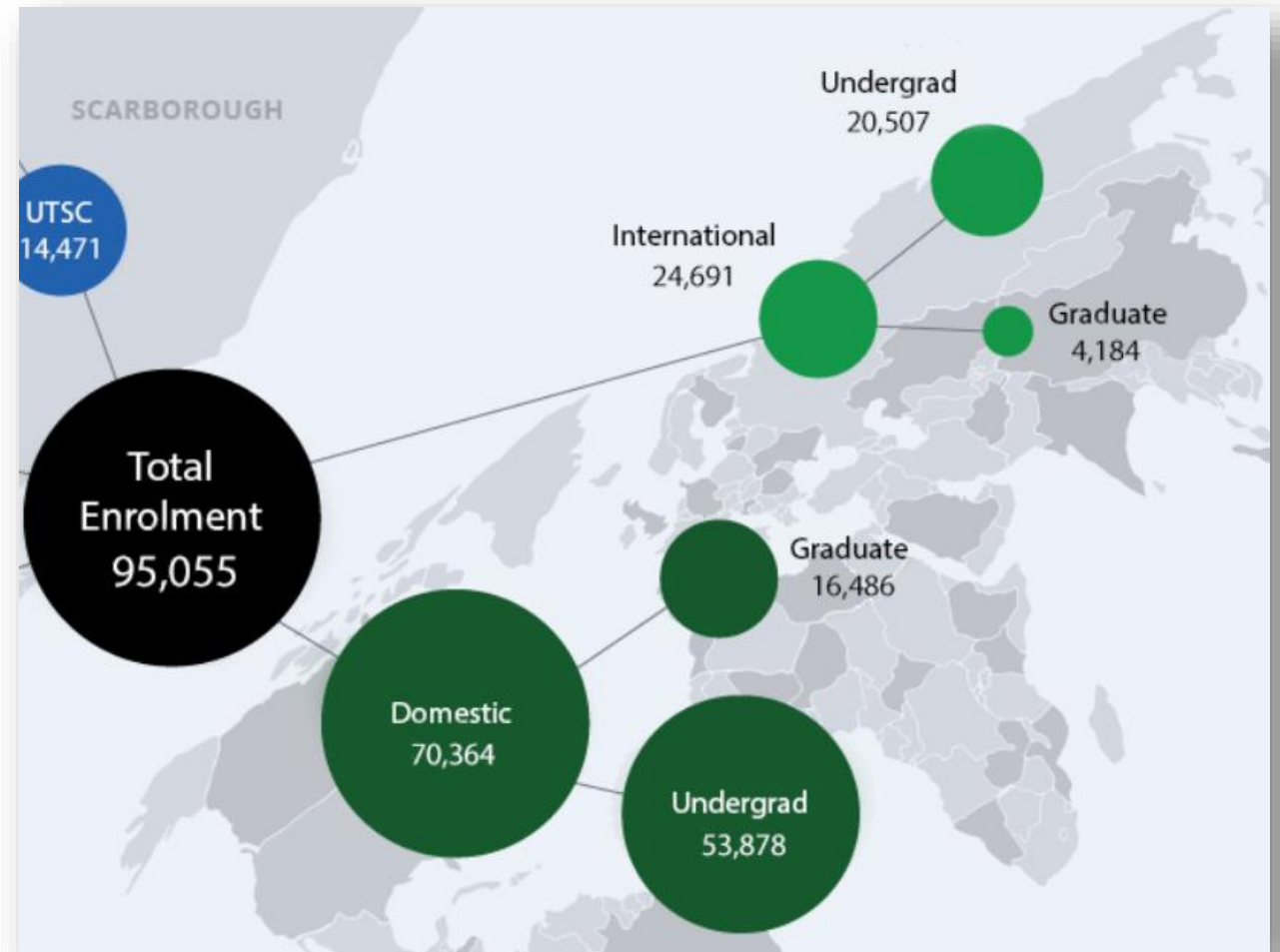
U of T Enrolment Data

International undergraduate and graduate students (i.e. study permit holders) make up **25.9%** of the total student body across three campuses.

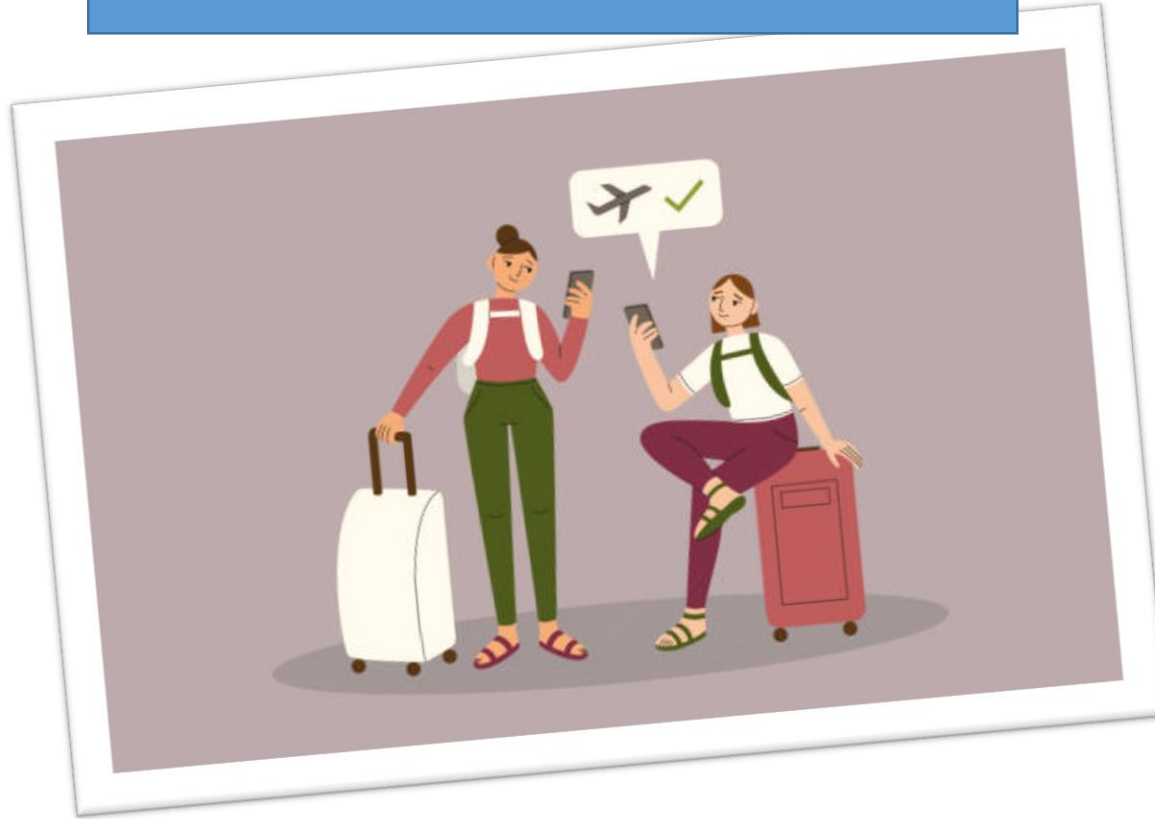International students by degree:
- 27.5% of all undergraduate
- 20.2% of all graduate

www.utoronto.ca/about-u-of-t/quick-facts

Who are our students?

UNDERGRADUATE - INTERNATIONAL

21% identify as LGBTQ+

64% speak a language other than English at home

15% identify as first-generation students

From the National Survey of Student Engagement (2020) and the Multi-Institutional Survey of Leadership (2018)

Who are our students?

UNDERGRADUATE - DOMESTIC

20% identify as LGBTQ+

29% speak a language other than English at home

17% identify as first-generation students

From the National Survey of Student Engagement (2020) and the Multi-Institutional Survey of Leadership (2018)

Deficit mindsets around multilingual international students

- Native-speakerism both privileges the English-speaking West as an ideal and others students unfamiliar with learner-centered teaching (Holliday, 2006)

- Category of "international student" often tied to perceptions of their lower English language ability and racial otherness (Surtees, 2019)

- Validity and gatekeeping practices of proficiency tests (Rajendram et al, 2019)

- English proficiency of multilingual students is judged against the "native speaker norm" (Huo, 2020)

- World Englishes often seen as "variants" of a standard, but they are valid context-specific languages (Kachru, 1990)

Holliday on Native-speakerism (2006)

"

An underlying theme is the 'othering' of students and colleagues from outside the English-speaking West according to essentialist regional or religious cultural stereotypes, especially when they have difficulty with the specific types of active, collaborative, and self-directed 'learner-centred' teaching–learning techniques that have frequently been constructed and packaged as superior within the English speaking West.

Such a perspective is native-speakerist because it negatively and confiningly labels what are in effect 'non-native speaker' 'cultures' as 'dependent', 'hierarchical', 'collectivist', 'reticent', 'indirect', 'passive', 'docile', 'lacking in self esteem', 'reluctant to challenge authority', 'easily dominated', 'undemocratic', or 'traditional' and, in effect, uncritical and unthinking (Holliday 2005: 19, Pennycook 2002, Kubota 2001).

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Pause for questions or reflections

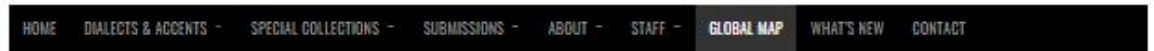Image retrieved from https://www.columnfivemedia.com/how-we-do-project-retrospectives/

Resource: International Dialects of English Archive – take a look & listen!

A repository of audio samples and transcripts to demonstrate the range of dialects and accents within English usage around the globe.

https://www.dialectsarchive.com/globalmap

Impact of deficit mindsets on students:
Micro-aggressions and micro-invalidations

- Can be psychologically damaging as they occur frequently, leading to second guessing oneself

- Impact on cognitive bandwidth (Cia Verschelden)

- Can lead to feeling like an imposter and feeling excluded

- Impact on identity, belonging, and self-confidence

Concerns that were amplified with shift to online learning for multilingual students:

- Microaggressions or impasses around their spoken English
- Speed of others' delivery; unfamiliarity with colloquial language and idioms
- On-going concerns about making mistakes or being misunderstood, leading to non-stop self-vigilance
- Feeling invisible (or hyper visible) in these spaces

Image retrieved from https://mantasleep.com/blogs/sleep/how-to-reset-your-sleep-schedule

Writing Reflection (5 min)

Please jot down some thoughts related to one – or both – of these questions.

1. What are some strategies that you currently use to create welcoming spaces for multilingual students?

2. What are some challenges (or discomforts) that you've encountered while supporting multilingual students?

When we're finished, we'll move into breakout rooms for group discussion.

Breakout Room #1 (10 min): Small group discussion

In your groups, please:

- discuss the questions about creating welcoming spaces and encountering challenges
- share only what you are comfortable with from your reflections
- appoint a note-taker and representative for when we debrief as a larger group
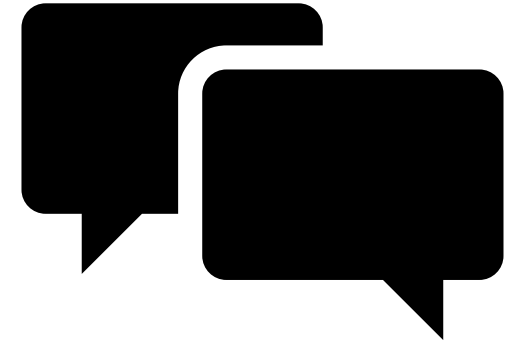
You can find the collaborative working document
(titled **"Breakout Room 1 – Small Group Discussion"**)
in the shared folder.

Sharing back

Break: 10 minutes

7 Inclusive teaching strategies for the classroom

1. Challenge deficit mindsets by using inclusive terminology

Consider shifting the following terms and acronyms:

- non-native English speaker

- English language learner

- English as a second language (ESL)

- English isn't good

- multilingual English user

- English language user

- English as an additional language (EAL)

- user of a World English different from Toronto's

2. Validate the different languages and World Englishes in the classroom

Examples:

- Poll students anonymously about their additional languages and then share the results with the class.
- Affirm that all English dialects and accents from around the world are welcome in the space.
- If appropriate, suggest to students that if "stuck", they can use a word or phrase from another language.
- If comfortable, share your own multilingual experiences and what strategies helped you navigate challenges.

3. Encourage students to be patient with each other, but also with *themselves*
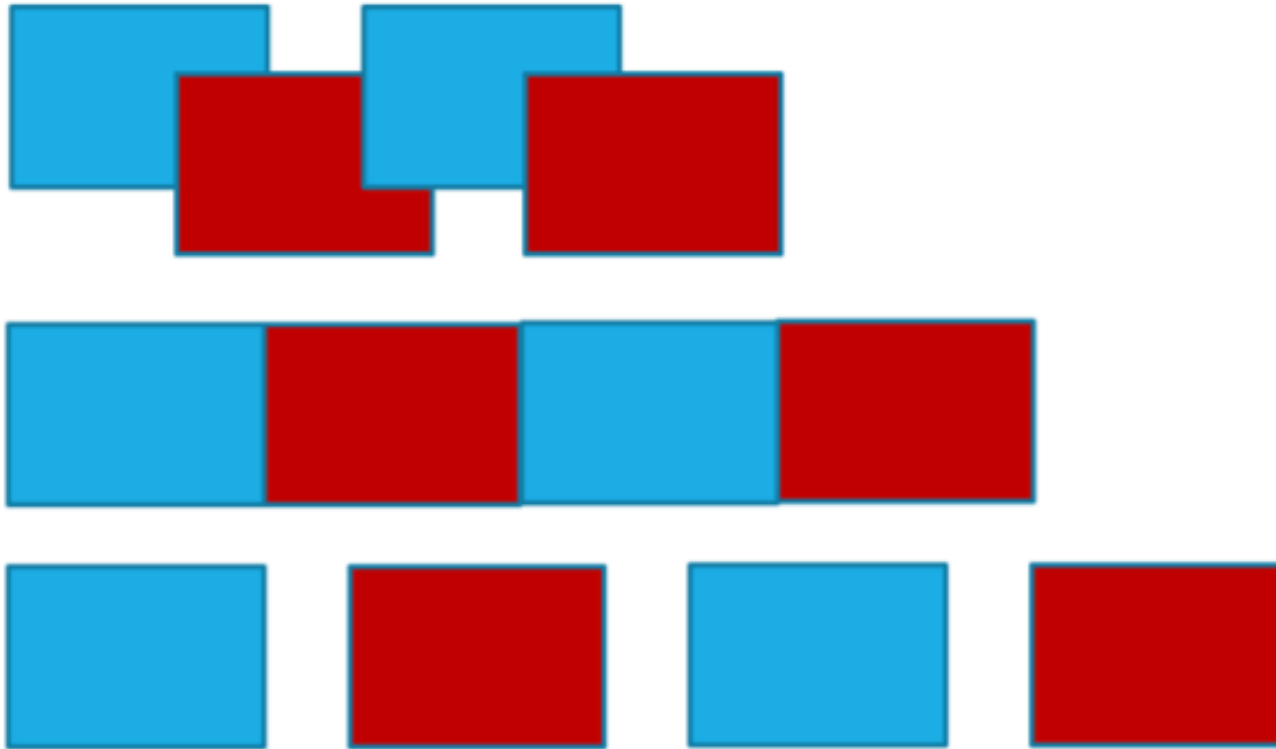
Examples:

- Remind students that in a diverse classroom, additional time will be needed by all to negotiate meaning in English.
- Encourage students to ask you – and their peers – for repetition, clarification, or about unfamiliar terminology/acronyms.
- Gently remind all students that a slower pace benefits all listeners and the accuracy of captioning (if using teleconferencing platforms).
- Model communicability over grammatical accuracy for students – i.e. "Don't worry about small errors if the overall meaning is clear."

4. Normalize – and incorporate – silence into the space

Examples:

- Discuss silence as a valid form of engagement and part of the learning process.
- Insert **proactive pauses** into your teaching – e.g. "I'm going to stop on this slide for 45 seconds so that you can read all the labels."
- Provide opportunities to pause and reflect on a question before discussing it in groups or with the class.
- Count down from 10 seconds before filling a pause or if nobody has volunteered to answer a question.
- Introduce a reflective writing prompt before placing students in small group discussions.

Types of Conversational Patterns.

Adapted from Tannen, D. (2006). *That's not what I meant! language, culture, & meaning* [Video]. Into the Classroom Media.

5. When facilitating discussions, establish expectations… but also alternatives

Examples:

- Share information about the typical format of the class (e.g. discussion-based, lecture-style, small groups) so that students can prepare for future sessions.
- Use anonymizing platforms (e.g. Mentimeter) so that participants do not always feel tied to their screen name.
- Offer various ways to participate outside of speaking (e.g. direct-messaging the facilitators or attending office hours).
- For students who find it difficult to take turns verbally, invite them to submit a written reflection for credit.

6. Tips for instruction and lectures

Examples:

- Activate captioning and make in-real-time corrections for proper names or terms that were not accurately captured.
- Balance open-ended check-ins ("So far, so good?") with more specific questions ("Do you have any questions about the difference between x and y?").
- Use multiple modalities: provide slides or handouts before your presentation so that students can scan ahead for main points and understand the road map.
- Provide examples that reflect the cultural diversity of the students, or invite them to make these connections themselves through discussion prompts.
- Monitor and adjust your pace through inviting feedback (e.g. "Go Slower" button on Zoom).

7. Tips for clarifying assessments

- Provide clear directions about every aspect of every assignment, including weight.
- Explain the purpose of feedback and the importance on implementing it in different assignments before the deadline.
- Sharing a specific rubric and/or exemplar for every assignment:
  - Explain key terminology related to grading and assignments and provide the students with suitable resources
  - Use "clarity" instead of "grammar" in the rubric, if appropriate for the course.
  - However, if you notice errors that impede understanding, flag those for students.
- Provide specific and actionable feedback to assignments that do not focus only on language issues.
- Include a variety of assignments (e.g. essays; in-class presentations; low stakes writing activities).

Pause for questions or reflections

Image retrieved from https://www.columnfivemedia.com/how-we-do-project-retrospectives/

Yukio Tsuda's Ecology of Language Paradigm (2014)

1. The **right to language and equality in communication** in English-dominated international communication

2. A theoretical base for resisting the hegemony of English by proactively promoting the **cultural and linguistic knowledges** of other geographies

3. The development of a global language policy, especially from the position of **promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism**

4. A **critical awareness** for (all) English-speaking people to be aware of the dominance of English

Tsuda, Y. (2014). The hegemony of English and strategies for linguistic pluralism: Proposing the ecology of language paradigm. In J. Yin, Y. & M. K. Asante (Eds.), *The global intercultural communication reader* (pp. 459–470). Routledge.

Breakout Room #2 (10 min): Small group discussion

Reflections:

What is one strategy or suggestion we discussed today that you'd like to implement?

Sharing back

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