Tips for Working with International Students

The following tips were written by international students to help those who meet them.

- Smile at me.
- Ask me: How are you? Be personal, not mechanical.
- Names are important. Try to pronounce my name; ask me how it’s pronounced, then try to repeat it. Your efforts will be appreciated.
- Be interested. It’s ok to ask about my country and my family. They are important to me.
- Listen attentively and be patient. Give me time to answer your questions and finish my sentences on my own.
- Talk slower, clearer, not louder. My hearing is fine, but English may not be my first or perhaps even second language.
- Tell it simply. If I don’t understand, try conveying the message with different words.
- Explain acronyms.
- Write it down, step by step.
- Recognize me. I do not know many people. I need to belong.
- If I omit something on a form, it is probably because I do not know what to write.
- If I look confused or lost, it’s probably because I am.
- Although English may be a limitation, a lot of my initial confusion is simply due to the fact that things are done differently here than what I’m used to. Help me understand how the system works.
- Become sensitive to cultural differences and similarities. Don’t take things for granted. Explore topics such as how other cultures approach family, food, fashion, education, relationships, communication, politics, work, nature, holidays, etc. Share information and insights on U.S. American perspectives. I enjoy learning about life in the States.

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