

WHAT DO WE SEE? WHAT'S BELOW THE SURFACE?

Skim through the boxes below that describe scenarios resulting in a breakdown in communication, a misunderstanding, or a frustration between students from other countries and their MCC instructors. In the last box, write your own example or experience.

1. A Burmese student won't stop calling you "teacher" or "miss" even after you ask the student to call you by your name.	2. A Turkish student looks very uncomfortable when you try to shake hands at the door on the first day and welcome the students to the classroom.	3. A Saudi student earned a 60% on a project. The student persistently and possibly aggressively asks if you will change the grade.
4. A Puerto Rican student seems to be frustrated with you whenever you ask where something is. The student puckers her lips and raises her chin at you.	5. You know your Sudanese student is confused, but the student won't ever ask you any questions or come to office hours.	6. A Japanese student gives you a gift in the middle of the semester.
7. An Iraqi student questions you about his grade after class. While doing so, he crosses his arms and appears confrontational.	8. A Chinese student has submitted a research paper with reference material and content copied and pasted from internet sources.	9. A young Iranian student gets the answer right, but when you smile at him, he looks down and doesn't offer any more answers.
10. A Columbian student is regularly late to class even though you explained the penalty for being tardy in your CIS.	11. Whenever you assign a group project, you notice all of your non-native English speaking students work together. They don't integrate with the rest of the class.	12. <i>Your scenario:</i>

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IN GENERAL . . .

<p>1. Burmese Student: Using titles instead of names is a way to show respect for status in Asian cultures. Maintaining hierarchal roles is important. Encourage “Professor” if the student doesn’t seem comfortable with your first name.</p>	<p>2. Turkish Student: Conservative Muslims do not engage in touching between unrelated men & women. Maybe your student was the opposite sex. Male/female roles & expectations vary between religions and cultures.</p>	<p>3. Saudi Student: Negotiating is a common practice in many Middle Eastern, Latino, and some African countries. Some students expect they have to negotiate or pay for their grade.</p>
<p>4. Puerto Rican Student: Gestures and body language can vary greatly from culture to culture. In Puerto Rico, this is the gesture means, “What did you say?” or “Please repeat that.”</p>	<p>5. Sudanese Student: Respect for elders in African cultures is paramount. Asking the teacher questions is considered an insult because it implies the teacher didn’t explain it clearly enough the first time.</p>	<p>6. Japanese Student: Gift giving is a highly valued cultural practice in many Asian countries and does not infer bribery – unlike in some other countries.</p>
<p>7. Iraqi Student: Gestures and body language can vary greatly from culture to culture. In some Middle Eastern countries crossing arms is a way to show respect.</p>	<p>8. Chinese Student: Ownership of ideas is a Western cultural value and reflects a highly individualist orientation. Collectivist cultures value collaboration and see “copying” as borrowing or sharing.</p>	<p>9. Iranian Student: Wanting to maintain distance is a sign of respecting elders. This combined with Islamic faith/gender roles results in a more formal relationship. Looking someone in the eye and smiling is flirtatious in some cultures.</p>
<p>10. Columbian Student: Time is a cultural concept. In most central and south American countries, time is more fluid and flexible. Being “on time” might mean arriving 5 minutes to hours late depending on the event. Arriving early is considered rude.</p>	<p>11. Student Groups: Working with others different is a challenge for students from every culture. Humans naturally seek out others like themselves, but students miss out on the richness of working with and learning from their culturally different peers.</p>	<p>12. Personal scenario: <i>Some volunteers will share their personal scenarios with the group for discussion.</i></p>