

- Use resources that reflect diversity;
- Avoid using culture-specific expressions, or where you do, try to explain the meaning or clarify the context.

This is where the concept of ‘internationalising content’ is useful. Internationalising content “*refers to the selection of global and intercultural subject matter and assignment that focus on variations in professional practices across cultures*” (Barker, 2012, p. 203). For example, in health sciences students might explore how different health systems operate globally, nationally or internationally to manage palliative care treatment.

3. Develop reflexive processes

Reflective practice involves thinking about what you do, i.e. considering your experiences critically to draw new insights into what happened, why things happened as they did and what (if anything) you would want to do differently in future;

Reflexivity is finding strategies to question things like our own attitudes, values, to attempt to stand in the shoes of others, i.e. to see how we are shaping the lives of others and how we can behave in more humane and ethical ways (Allen, 2022).

Reflection commonly asks students to analyse a situation in terms of their own beliefs and experiences. Consider extending these learning opportunities, so that students reflexively evaluate why they feel, think or act in particular ways and think about how people with different values might respond to similar situations. This can raise the level of awareness of the influences of biases, cultural barriers and contexts, and develop students’ critical thinking capabilities. This [LTO video describes further examples of how students can engage in reflexive practice](#) that you may incorporate in your teaching. For example: [Cultural Awareness and Transition](#) & [Settlement and Adjustment](#)

4. Foster communities of learners

Creating a supportive learning community helps students to connect, share ideas and collectively make progress on their goals. Encourage the class, or student groups, to develop collective goals and shared agreements on: how they will interact, support one another, and come to know and respect one another’s diverse perspectives. Key strategies to achieving this, as described by Arkoudis et al. (2013, p. 230) include:

- Setting clear expectations about peer interaction;
- Respecting and acknowledging diverse perspectives;
- Assisting students to develop rules regarding interaction within their group;
- Informing students how engaging with diverse learning strategies will assist their learning;
- Providing group work resources for students.

Another strategy is peer-mentoring schemes. Consider what opportunities exist within your teaching context for: pairing domestic students with international students, or having later-year international students mentor or coach first-year international students. Setting tasks and activities within peer or near-peer groups creates wonderful opportunities for reflection and learning (Hills et al., 2010; cited by Barker, 2012, p. 205).

This is where the concept of “*internationalising teaching and learning*” (Arkoudis, 2006) is useful. Internationalising teaching and learning is where educators model behaviours that embrace diversity.

5. Explicit rules of the learning game that we need to teach international students

Academic Integrity

Australian research shows that international students are more likely than domestic student to lack confidence in producing work that meets academic integrity standards and have been reported for a breach 50% more than domestic students (Bretag et al., 2014).

A tried and true method for improving student confidence is to build familiarity through structured activities. The goal here, is to unpack the term 'academic literacy' for our students, and show them how to perform each of the elements in a way that is independent, robust and consistent with integrity standards. A working definition of academic literacy is:

the ability to read, write, understand, analyse, interpret, create and communicate in formal scholarly content. It involves being capable of critical/independent thought, being able to work alone and knowing how to acknowledge the work of others. (Whitelaw et al., 2010; p. 6, cited by Barker, 2012; p, 205).

For more ideas on strategies you can use to help you students to develop their academic literacy and understand academic integrity, see the [LTO Academic Integrity Practice Guide](#).

6. Supporting mental wellbeing

McKenna (2022) suggests that one coping strategy used by international students to deal with homesickness is to find comfort in their religious practices. It would make sense that we should find out more about our students' religious backgrounds. It is important that we don't expect students in our class to be the source of that knowledge, unless it is part of a carefully structured shared activity of cultural and linguistic exchange amongst student peers. Instead it is up to us as educators to find other means to learn about the needs of international students. For instance, are there special religious days of significance?

Despite our best efforts, international students, just like domestic students, will face challenges with mental health. This short resource helps you find ways to build mental wellbeing into your learning and teaching, [Spotlight on Supporting Students' Mental Health and Wellbeing](#).

It is important to remember, that cultures are fluid, that most student behaviours are not static, and that by using the strategies outlined in this practice guide to include various cultural and religious perspectives – we can provide a richer learner experience that benefits us all.

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