English Language Learner's Fact Sheet

General Information

✓ Common terms of reference: ELL (English Language Learner) and CLD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse)
✓ ELLs typically come to the university with the intent to attain an undergraduate or graduate degree
✓ Social status affects students’ perspective on learning and classroom expectations
✓ Government funding may affect students’ attitude, motivation, and behavior
  Example: some government sponsored students have a lax attitude about language learning, they are eager to begin academic classes to attain a degree from an American Institution yet lack the necessary skills to be successful

Difficulties for Learners

✓ Misunderstanding of presupposed literacy skills attained in the L1 (native language)
  Example: The effects of diglossia often lead to illiteracy affecting literacy in L2 (second language)
✓ Written language tends to use a more formal register than spoken language
✓ English spelling and pronunciation are difficult due to the unintuitive nature of the relationship between English orthography and phonetics
  Examples: a learner may know a word by sound but be unable to write it correctly (or find it in a dictionary) or they may see a word written but not know how to pronounce it or miss learn the pronunciation; non-cognate sounds/words

Cultural Differences: Academic / Social

✓ Students may have very different cultural perceptions in the classroom as far as academic, teacher and peer expectations
✓ Cultural differences in communication styles
  Example: some students do not see classroom discussion and interaction as important but place a heavy emphasis on teacher-directed lecture
Use of idiomatic, slang, and colloquial terms lead to many student misunderstandings in the classroom

Many learners find that English learned in ESL classes is significantly different from how English is used in the academic classroom

Different educational backgrounds / learning styles (traditional vs progressive); behavior / classroom expectations

Many students believe that just the final exam counts

Many students expect professors to tell them everything they need to know

**Interaction with Native Speakers**

Often difficult due to a self-perceived inadequacy of English proficiency and a lack of pop culture knowledge

*Examples:* classroom group activities, ESL students often do not participate, because of embarrassment about their English; their native cultures may value silence and individual work preference to social interaction and talking in class

Professor-student interactions: in many cultures, teacher-led discussion is the most common form of lesson

Professors may observe ELL students will fail to participate, and often have difficulty understanding professors because they talk too fast, do not use visual aids, or use native colloquialisms

**Helpful Tips**

Reevaluate teaching methods to ensure students' needs are being met

Utilize a variety of methods/strategies

Use visual representations: PPT, Prezi, graphic organizers, and clarifying expressions such as “in other words”

Encourage time management and study skills; interaction with professor and classmates; and plagiarism avoidance

Explore alternate instructional practices to better meet the needs of the ever changing student population