

University of South Carolina, English Programs for Internationals

Questions by Instructors

A. Negotiation of grades and related issues

1. My Iraqi/Saudi students think no grade-if they are not happy with it- is final. They importune for change even after many emphatic "No!"s.
 - Culturally based? Suggestions on how to handle
2. When students fail a level, there is always a lot of negotiating/arguing a higher grade and they rarely want to take "NO" for an answer.
3. I have had many Arabic speakers not get their way (grades, attendance, etc.), but then they cry or throw a fit. How do you really deal with this?
4. Arabic-speaking students often want to "negotiate" their grade or level placement. What are the best culture-appropriate ways to let them know that this is not possible in the U.S. system?
5. How do we convince Arabs that our rules are not negotiable and that the consequences for not following them are firm?
6. How can we impress upon the Arabs the importance of time such as deadlines?

B. Female Saudis

1. From my first EPI experience with Arabic students my question is: How can we motivate female Arabic students to be more confident when doing assignments? I had a female Arabic student who was very serious and friendly, but reluctant to do anything unless I 'held her hand' through assignments-Is this a unique case?
2. Classroom management strategies for female teachers in Arab male-dominated classes

C. Cheating

1. How do we drill into students' heads (particularly the Saudi students) that cheating is not acceptable? They think it is 'helping' each other! Any fun tricks?
2. How do Arabic speakers view and respond to cheating and plagiarism?

D. Pronunciation/phonics teaching

1. Best ways to help with mastery of vowel sound-symbol correspondence, both for purposes of pronunciation and spelling.
2. Ways to teach spelling and phonics

E. Socio-cultural and socio-political issues

1. As an American woman, I would appreciate some practical suggestions you have as I relate to Arabic men, either older or younger than me?
2. Can you speak on how to handle certain socio-political issues that come up with Arabic students, namely, anti-Semitism, anti-LGBT rhetoric, pro-Hitler sentiments, etc.

F. Coming from an oral culture and understanding "Western" way of writing

1. Arabic speakers are usually better speakers than readers or writers. How can we as instructors capitalize on their strengths to help them in their weaknesses?

2. Strategies for teaching Arabic students, who I assume are an oral-based/story-based culture, how to write very linear Western, 3 point essays?
 3. What is an effective way to help Arabic native speakers develop ideas in the sense of American academic rhetoric-in an argument paper? Basically, evidence vs. repetition.
 4. My Saudi students have difficulty following a line of argument in a text discerning between suggesting details for main ideas. This means they also do not know how to use supporting details in essay writing, etc. How can we teach this Western way of writing. We attempt to teach it, pointing out rhetorical differences, but it does not seem to really take root.
- G. Writing intellectually and being responsible for your own writing
1. One of the issues I face w/Arabic Ss quite frequently is not only grammar problems but the ability to produce topic-related intellectually intelligent ideas in advanced level writing that go beyond elementary common sense. What would be your insight on this issue and your advice to me as a teacher?
 2. How does one get a Gulf Arab student to produce quality text instead of just producing text?
 3. What tips can you give us to encourage our students to edit their written assignments?
- H. Reading and Vocabulary
1. How do we promote vocabulary building?
 2. What are some tips on motivating students in the reading classroom?
- I. Being a student (learning a language) in the U.S.A. vs. e.g. in Saudi Arabia/Iraq
1. How do we help them develop responsibility and diligence to understand the importance for their academic success?
 2. How do we get them to see the necessity of being a student first and foremost and that the standard is far above of what they produce?
 3. How do we communicate that learning is a language is a slower process, unlike previous school learning they may have had?
 4. Describe the typical high school experience of Saudis in an effort for us to understand their academic work ethic and style of instruction/expectations for students.
- J. Miscellaneous (Academic success, motivation, responsibility,
1. What is most important to our Arabic students and how can we use that to involve students in our program?
 2. How do we get students from this part of the world to understand that we want to help them but have other responsibilities that sometimes take precedence over their problem?