**WHAT WOULD YOU DO?**

**CASE STUDIES FOR YOUR CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM**

**For solutions, please visit culturaldiversitydurham.weebly.com  
and click on “Tips & Resources”.**

**CASE STUDY # 1: “HELPING” OR CHEATING?**

**CASE STUDY # 2: UNITED WE FALL**

**CASE STUDY # 3: DON’T MAKE ME PARTICIPATE**

**CASE STUDY # 4: IF ONLY I COULD WRITE IN RUSSIAN**

**CASE STUDY # 5: SUGGESTIVE MISCOMMUNICATION**

**CASE STUDY # 6: WHERE’S YOUR SOURCE?**

**CASE STUDY # 7: TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT**

**CASE STUDY # 8: A TEST OF TOLERANCE**

**CASE STUDY # 9: SKIPPING OR “MISSING”?**

**CASE STUDY # 10: THEY’LL PULL MY MARK DOWN**

**YOUR CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM**

**CASE STUDY # 1: “HELPING” OR CHEATING?**

Apollonia and Irenka are both in Arthur’s Architectural Drafting course. When Arthur is grading their hand-drafted building plans, he notes how very similar the two assignments look. Overlapping them, he can see that they are absolutely identical, which cannot have happened by chance. When Arthur confronts the students, they freely admit to having collaborated on the project, and express bewilderment that there’s a problem with this. They tell him that, in Poland, where they are from, it is considered normal and appropriate to help each other succeed.

**What steps should Arthur take now?**

**What might Arthur have done to reduce or prevent this type of cheating in his class?**

**YOUR CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM**

**CASE STUDY # 2: UNITED WE FALL**

It is the third week of classes. June is a big fan of group work, and she typically puts students in her first year nursing class into stable learning groups starting right from the first day of class. Knowing that students prefer to work with their friends, she allows the students to self-select their groups; in each class, June has hands-on exercises that the groups work on together to support everyone’s learning. She notices that five Asian students have chosen to work together as a group, but she doesn’t think much about it—until midterm, when she realizes that three of the students in that group are close to failing the course. She is aware that all of the students in the group are international students from Korea and China, and all speak English as a second language. June is very concerned about three of the International students’ potential for success at this point and is worried about how to manage this in her class.

**What steps should June take now?**

**What could June have done to prevent this problem from occurring?**

**YOUR CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM**

**CASE STUDY # 3: DON’T MAKE ME PARTICIPATE**

Olga’s Fitness and Health Promotion class is lively and VERY interactive—these students learn best through talk and physical activity! Accordingly, Olga designs her lessons to include a lot of fast-paced activities that engage the students in talking about and interacting with the written and visual content. This year, Olga has an international student from Nigeria in the class, who speaks English as a second language. Abayomi does well on multiple choice tests, but when the class activity requires verbal presentations or group interaction, he is conspicuously silent. He seems increasingly isolated from his fellow students, and Olga is worried about him.

**What can Olga do now to support Abayomi’s success?**

**What might Olga have done to prevent this situation from developing?**

**YOUR CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM**

**STUDY # 4: IF ONLY I COULD WRITE IN RUSSIAN**

Dima is from Russia, and she has expressed how very privileged she feels to have obtained an international student visa to study in Canada. She works very hard and is extremely attentive in Andrea’s communications class. Andrea is dismayed, then, when she receives Dima’s first essay and finds that it is FULL of grammatical errors. Andrea has been given to understand that Dima has the level of ESL required for the program. The ability to communicate clearly in English is critical in Dima’s program, and Andrea feels that she must grade Dima against the same rubric as the other students—but if she does, Dima will fail this paper. She fears that Dima will be crushed by a failure.

**What steps should Andrea take now?**

**What might Andrea have done to prevent this situation from arising?**

**YOUR CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM**

**CASE STUDY # 5: SUGGESTIVE MISCOMMUNICATION**

Bao, an international student from Vietnam, is struggling in Pamela’s math class. Pamela has suggested that he get help from SALS, but when she asks if he has done this, he smiles and shrugs and assures her that he will do so at the earliest opportunity. Pam suspects that he has no intention of following up and she feels frustrated—if he doesn’t get help soon, Bao will fail a critical course!

**What might Pamela do now to motivate Bao to seek help?**

**What might Pamela have done to increase the likelihood that Bao would have sought help by now?**

**YOUR CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM**

**CASE STUDY # 6: WHERE’S YOUR SOURCE?**

Valerie is teaching a first year class that involves the writing of a complex research report. Vahini, an international student from Bangalore, India, has submitted a well-written paper, but as Valerie reads it, she begins to have a lot of misgivings. Given that the assignment is a research report, almost ALL of it should be from expert sources, and Vahini’s paper has only three references related to her direct quotes. Valerie writes “Please see me” on the top if Vahini’s paper and, sighing, goes on to the next paper in the stack, wondering if her students will EVER learn not to plagiarize.

**What steps should Valerie take when Vahini comes to see her?**

**What might Valerie have done to prevent this problem from happening?**

**YOUR CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM**

**CASE STUDY # 7: TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT**

Beau has several international students in his first year electrical engineering class, which involves a hands-on lab component each week. As part of their marks, students are required to submit a weekly lab report. Beau thought he had made it clear that the report was to document the weekly experiment, but when he gets the first batch of reports in, he sees that the submissions from the international students are wildly erratic, varying from a 1,000 word essay to a few sentences scribbled on a page torn from a notebook.

**What might Beau do now to support the success of his international students?**

**What might Beau have done to prevent this situation from arising?**

**YOUR CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM**

**CASE STUDY # 8: A TEST OF TOLERANCE**

Gregg has set up a 2 hour test that is worth 20% of the course. As the students come in and get ready to write the test he reminds them that there are no aids allowed. He repeats that they are not allowed to bring in anything else except a pencil and a calculator. Gregg hands out the tests and sits down at the front of the class and immediately notices that several international students are talking at low volume in their own language. He reminds them they are not permitted to talk and watches them for a few minutes. Again they start to talk but more quietly and Gregg thinks they may be sharing answers. He warns them again and they quiet down. Next Gregg notices that some of them are simply moving their papers to the edge of the desk so the others can see the answer. He also notices that, after 30 minutes, one of the international students has put his head on the desk and is not writing anymore.

**What should Gregg do now?**

**What might Gregg have done to prevent this situation from arising?**

**YOUR CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM**

**CASE STUDY # 9: SKIPPING OR “MISSING”?**

Ana has a class of engaged students. There are 24 students; about half are international students. The students are often late but they do come to class. As Ana is marking the recent test she notices that the international students did very well in the first two quizzes and the trend continues. She hands the test back and all seems well. The next class, however, only four of the international students come to class and they seem to be on their computers and are not engaged at all in the classes. When Ana asks the students where their friends are, they say they don’t know. The following week none of the international students show up to the class. Ana doesn’t know what has happened. There is a quiz tomorrow and she expects they will come to write it as she has emailed the class a reminder, but she is puzzled by their absence in class.

**What should Ana do now?**

**Is there anything Ana could have done to prevent this scenario from arising?**

**YOUR CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM**

**CASE STUDY # 10: THEY’LL PULL MY MARK DOWN**

Tim is assigning a class group task and has asked the students to form six groups according to the names he has posted on the board. One group has three students who are a visible minority, a domestic student, and a mature student. The mature student comes to Tim and tells him she does not want to work with the ESL students because the group will get a lower mark. Tim knows that one of the ESL students has heard the remark and has told the group what the student has said. He also knows that the two ESL students have some of the best marks in the class and are tutors at SALS.

**What should Tim do now?**

**What might Tim have done to prevent this scenario from arising?**