

Studying in Australia presents international students with exciting opportunities, but there are also challenges that students from other parts of the world often must overcome as they adapt to the Australian lifestyle. Most of these challenges stem from cultural differences, and the Australian classroom is no exception.

Students in the Australian Classroom



International students who come from countries where the classroom is a conservative, authoritative place may at first find the Australian university classroom a bit chaotic. Visiting students may perceive Australian students as rude or disrespectful if they speak out or question instructors, which in some cultures is embarrassing behaviour.

Student classroom participation, however, is not only expected but often rewarded by Australian instructors in the form of high marks and verbal praise. Asking questions is encouraged, and debating with instructors or other students is not out of place. The Australian student is eager to prove that he is not only listening to an instructor's lesson, but that he is thinking about it and critically evaluating all the information that is being given.

While generally students are expected to raise their hands and seek permission to speak, Australian classroom discussions can occasionally become excited and animated, with students speaking over one another. This can seem intimidating and even baffling to some international students. Other international students may grow impatient or frustrated with what seems to be a class interruption.

For students who are non-native English speakers, the speed of ideas exchanged during classroom discussions may at first seem dizzying, with discussions rendered nearly incomprehensible. However, over time, most international students, even those who are not yet experts in Australian English, can become increasingly comfortable with the Australian classroom atmosphere.

As international students' English skills improve, and as they summon the courage to speak out in class themselves, they may even begin to enjoy the Australian classroom expectation to think critically and explore classroom subjects in-depth, which can lead to an even more meaningful understanding of the lessons being taught.

Teachers in the Australian Classroom

