

## Suggestions to Foster Success for International Graduate Students

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2013-08-22

**Professor Tip #1:** Make lots of friends with students from the US and from other countries. These will be your peers around the world for your whole life! Join student organizations beyond those related to your home culture. Create study groups of colleagues in each course that you take. Join or create research teams to work on projects. You are the best in the world, so get to know lots of other students!!

**Professor Tip #2:** Check out the Smarthinking services. MSU includes it as a linked service from our Center for Academic Success. You can upload an essay and get feedback on structure of the paper, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, etc. This is free for MSU students; the cost is part of your student fees. Check it out in the Center for Academic Success. I have heard from domestic students that this is the best advice ever.

**Professor Tip #3:** In the US, quite often, professors will give students some choices about the topic for the class projects. For example, you might be required to write a paper about the financial situations of a business, but you get to choose which business to feature. Or you must do a literature review, but you get to choose the topic. My recommendation is that (whenever you have a choice) you always select projects or topics that will relate to your capstone project (thesis, creative project, alternative paper, etc) for your degree. This is efficient and useful for your work. These projects can help you narrow your capstone focus or even to change your focus when it is not the final capstone topic. A topic related to your home country will be useful. Comparison studies (your country and US or another) are also useful. I recommend using data that already exists somewhere else, so you save time and money. But your thesis should be a new analysis or new way of thinking about the existing data.

**Professor Tip #4:** (For students at their university just a short-time) Complete all your on-campus courses during your time in the USA and finish related on-line courses after you return to your home country, so you still might complete a certificate or a degree! Your internship can count as credits toward the degree, too. Discuss all this with your academic adviser!

**Professor Tip #5:** Use a planner calendar and write down everything that will be happening into the future of this year. The time will fly past so quickly... sometimes if you don't plan on something, you will miss it. Professors think that students should spend at least 2 hours outside of class for every 1 hour inside of class meetings, so plan enough time for studying and completing assignments. You will want to begin your internship search *\*right now\** so that you find something good before May. Ask your adviser for ideas of nearby conferences so that you can increase your professional network -- and put those on your calendar. Have a great time!!!

**Professor Tip #6:** Use LinkedIn. This is a great lifelong resource that you can still use when you return to your home country.

**Professor Tip #7:** How to succeed in a class. (a) Show up to class! (b) Listen carefully, because many professors talk very fast and think the students understand the vocabulary; (c) Read the

textbook in advance (more about this in another advice later); (d) say something out loud in every class meeting, even if you only make a joke or ask a question (most professors like participation); (e) make a presentation about how the class topic relates to things in your home country.

Professor Tip #8: Visit the university's Career Development Center. This is a job search service that is supported by your student fees. You can get help with writing your resume to present yourself in the best way possible. You can find resources about possible internships in your professional field. You can make (maybe video?) practice interviews so you do well at that stage. You can meet potential employers. Even if you do not get a job offer, this is good practice! Also, Career Services might offer: Myers Briggs and other tests; contacts of alumni working in your field of interest; contacts of HR people in the companies of your interest; professional coaching in case you are still wondering about "what to do next."

Professor Tip #9: How to read a textbook chapter. I suggest trying to read the chapter before the class meeting when the professor will discuss/present the materials. This will help you have ideas about what the concepts are. See online tutoring resources from University of Wisconsin - Green Bay.

STEP 1 Survey/Preview the Chapter (Skim the entire chapter.) Skim to create a background and to activate prior knowledge. Skim to get an overview of the organization of the chapter. Skim to overcome inertia and find materials that will help you get started on the assignment.

STEP 2 Skim each section before reading that section carefully (Skim one section.) Read introductory paragraphs. Look for boldface words.

STEP 3 Carefully read/underline/highlight each section (paragraph by paragraph). It's okay to write in your textbook. Use self-questioning techniques. Look for:

- a. definitions
- b. methods
- c. sequences
- d. cause-effect relationships
- e. comparison-contrast

Professor Tip #10: Check out Atomic Learning through MSU. This is a free resource if you go through MSU. Atomic Learning has educational resources that allow learners of all ages to "embrace" technology. An integral part of your professional development program, Atomic Learning's online training resources make it easy to learn new technology. You will need your MSU username and password to sign-in.

Professor Tip #11: Get acquainted with the university librarians! They are the best. Their jobs are to help you and they love to do their jobs. Many librarians specialize according to academic majors or content. They can show you resources that you never even dreamed about... and many of the resources are available online and free. They can show you short-cuts for research and writing and reporting!

Professor Tip #12: Learn to use RefWorks!! This is a resource that changed my life, really, in good ways. At my university and many others, it's available FREE through Library Services /

Article Databases A - Z / RefWorks. Students, faculty and staff can use RefWorks to: (1) Create bibliographies for research papers, theses and alternate plan papers; (2) Organize citations for multiple research papers and projects; and (3) Import citations from the online databases and library catalog. It will generate the resource list in whatever writing style is required (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.) Log-in with your university username and password and then create your own RefWorks account. RefWorks is excellent!

Professor Tip #13: Practice academic honesty. This is a big deal in the USA, because one's intellectual work is considered to be one's intellectual property. Therefore, the source (the original writer) should be given credit through citation when you refer to a source other than your own words. This is from my university's academic honesty policy: "Individuals will fulfill their academic responsibilities in an honest and forthright manner. Every student is responsible for becoming familiar with and abiding by the University policy on plagiarism and academic honesty as well as the guidelines and policies established by their instructors and programs of study."

Professor Tip #14: This is from my university's academic honesty policy. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: plagiarism (such as presenting another's phrasing, concepts or line of reasoning as if it were your own); submitting course assignments that are not your own; submitting the same paper in different classes without prior approval from both instructors; cheating on assignments, laboratory reports or examinations; acquiring or using test materials without faculty knowledge; failure to follow class policy; obtaining academic benefits through inappropriate application of technology; computer fraud or unauthorized access; engaging in academic fraud alone or with others; downloading material off the Internet without proper citation; illicit attempts to influence grading; failing to abide by test-taking procedures; signing the class attendance roster for an absent student. (My words) Therefore, do not cut and paste material from another publication or web page and present it as your own work. Do not copy and paste abstracts from journal articles into your research paper. That is called plagiarizing and it is not honest in American academic practices.

Professor Tip #15: Internships. I know that every student who majors in community health wants an internship at the CDC in Atlanta, GA and that every student who majors in international relations wants an internship in Washington DC, but let's be frank. Those placements are very competitive. Maybe you can apply, but do not "put all your eggs in one basket" as we say here in the Midwest USA. Broaden your possibilities and your searches. In the past few years, some of my international student friends have "stayed local" in my city and worked in the city or regional government offices, in the American Red Cross office, for the City Economic agency, and more. Such local internships also enable you to keep your current apartment/furnishings/transportation and avoid the expense and trouble of canceling apartment leases and moving across the country. I recommend that you find an agency that is similar to an agency in your home country -- in which you are most likely to work when you return home. Good luck!

Professor Tip #16: Use Atomic Learning for tutorials about technology and software. It's free to MSU students.