Language barriers

Understanding

Language barriers. There are a lot of international students that aren't able to speak much English and they do struggle in tutorials, understanding what they’re trying to say.

Confidence

I mean, I think language is the biggest thing. There’s just so many international students who don’t feel comfortable speaking in English. People might also be shy or they don’t know anyone in the class, so that adds to it.

Communication problems

Well I think first of all, some of the students in our uni are from international students. So they find it very shy to talk out loud in a tutorial environment, because their English they think is not as good as some other students.

Cultural issues

Mostly, lack of confidence. Maybe some people are international students and they don’t speak - English isn’t their first language, so they’re a bit less motivated to speak or maybe it’s a cultural thing, you don’t discuss with people, you just sit down and absorb what other people are saying.

Expressing thoughts

First of all I would say is the language barrier like for international students with - like I’m an international student and sometimes you feel that if there’s other people where for whom English is the first language you tend to get quiet or feel, okay I might not be able to project my thoughts in the same way they would so that is one barrier.
Participation

I think you'd go and need to speak to them. I mean some people have - it's not that you can force people to talk, some peoples' English skills aren't quite up to scratch with everybody else's. They might be from overseas, or for whatever reason. It's difficult. Especially in my accounting degree as well, we have a lot of students from China and things like that, and it's hard to - it is hard to make them participate when they're not just worried about what other people think, but they're worried about what to say and how to say it properly. So there's that additional factor which prevents them from wanting to speak up, and that is a difficulty. On the one hand you might want to put the overseas students with local students to try and maybe get them used to native English speakers and things like that, but in the same time, there might be benefits if you put them in a group together, perhaps they can speak Mandarin or whatever together, but maybe that's not why they came to study in Australia, to keep studying and learning Mandarin. It's a hard question.

Development of oral presentation skills

In accounting, most of them are from a Chinese background so they don't feel comfortable speaking. Perhaps they know what they're talking about, but they don't have the English skills to say what they want to say. I find that, we're doing a lot of presentations in our accounting subjects, which I think should be made in all subjects. At the end of the day, we're probably going to be managers - aiming to be managers in the future, and we need to present and explain to our subordinates their instructions so they can do their job properly. That's why I think presentation skills are so important. I find that by doing all the presentations, my presentation skills have also improved a lot... It takes a lot of courage for them to speak up and also public speaking is a big fear among a lot of people.

First Year experience

They need to - you know in Macquarie they have a lot of overseas students, so I think they need to be aware of this. For me, I am an overseas student, so my first year was really tough because they speak too fast and I can't even like catch them. So I did pretty bad in my first year, but I'm getting better now, so that's fine for me. So especially for the first year lecturer, they need to know the standards of the overseas students, they're not familiar with the accent and stuff. So yes, they need to speak a bit slower.