Building Beautiful Bridges: Training and Supporting International Tutors

Kyle Shannon, M.Ed. - Assistant Director
Brandi Willis Schreiber, M.A. - Program Director

Final Questions & Thank You

Agenda

The TEC-qualities Center at Texas Tech University

Best Practices for Recruiting and Hiring International Instructors

Lessons Learned

Next Steps...

Celebrating Diversity

Best Practices for Supporting International Instructors

Virtual Learning and Culturally Competent Tutors

1.
Agenda

1. What is the TECHniques Center at Texas Tech University?
2. Who are our students? Our tutors?
3. Best Practices for Hiring (international) Tutors
4. Best Practices for Training (international) Tutors
6. Celebrating Diversity
7. What We've Learned
8. What We'd Like to Do in the Future
9. Questions & Thank You
The TECHniques Center at Texas Tech University

- Fee-for-service, CRLA certified peer tutoring program in its 18th year
- Part of Student Disability Services
- 7 full-time Academic Counselors and 1 full-time Administrative Assistant
Our Students

- 175 undergraduate Tech students
- All students have a diagnosis of a learning disability, ADD / ADHD, and/or Autism Spectrum disorder
- Every major you can imagine
- Must be approved for services with Student Disability Services, attend their intake, and follow our policies to participate
Our Tutors

- Hire 70 - 80 tutors each semester to work one-on-one with these students
- Tutors go through a highly competitive interview, hiring, training, and on-the-job evaluation process
- Many international tutors apply, and we always have several international tutors on staff who tutor a variety of disciplines
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Best Practices for Recruiting and Hiring International Tutors
Recruitment

- Current tutor word of mouth
- Emails to advisors, professors, students, organizations
- Social media, TECH-announce, Career Centers
- Explicit description of requirements/eligibility, job description, time commitments
- Info session
- Application packet
  - Application
  - Resume, C.V., transcript from other institutions
Interview Process

- Based on student/course need

- Master Tutor and staff member
  - Take note of professionalism, knowledge of our program, interaction with interviewers, language use, questions they have for us

- Each interviewer takes notes on responses from interviewee as well as any other comments or concerns from interview

- Discuss as a full staff to determine if they are a best fit for our program and our students
You’re Hired!

- A phone call to let them know they are hired and next steps
- Offer email with more details about the job and what we will now need from them
- University employee paperwork
  - International Cultural Center
- Orientation, tour, and meet the staff
- Mandatory tutor training
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- Lessons Learned
- Best Practices for Recruiting and Hiring International Tutors
- Next Steps...
- Final Questions & Thank You
Best Practices for Training International Tutors

- Two-day mandatory training
  - Day 1 - All new tutors
  - Day 2 - New and returning tutors
- Tutor resource binder
- On-going training throughout the semester
  - Monthly team meetings
  - Supplemental/make-up training
  - Monthly check-ins with staff
Disability Specific Training

- Disability Overview (Day 1 of tutor training)
  - Common diagnosis seen in the TECHniques Center
  - Brief definition and characteristics

- Disability Specific Strategies (Day 2 of tutor training)
  - Case studies
  - Role play/simulations
Empathy

Empathy allows us to understand behavior from different perspectives and shapes our reactions to behaviors (Bugental, Johnston, New & Silvester, 1998).

- FAT City (fear, anxiety, tension)
  - Video/discussion
- Disability simulations
  - case studies
  - actual activities
  - role play
- Awareness
  - Never assume
  - Scaffolding vs. "fix-it"
  - "Platinum Rule"
Are vs. Are not

- Role of a TECHniques Center Tutor
  - Difference between TECHniques Center and drop-in tutoring
- Holistic support
- Confidentiality
- Boundaries
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Best Practices for Supporting International Tutors

- Comprehensive Tutor Policies & Procedures and required quiz
- One-on-one tutor observation with follow-up visit
- One-on-one monthly meetings with Academic Counselors to discuss progress
- Formal final end-of-semester evaluation with feedback and goals for next semester
- Tutor of the Month awards!
- Ask for feedback on how to help tutors who may be "silently suffering" or afraid to ask for help.
- Serve as references for next steps.
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Final Questions & Thank You

Lessons Learned

The TEC-ähiques Center at Texas Tech University

Best Practices for Recruiting and Hiring International Tutors

Next Steps...
Celebrating Diversity

We also support our international tutors by celebrating their diversity at our Center:

- International Potluck Event
- Feature blog posts which we share all over our social media and in our TECHniques Center newsletters
- Encourage international tutors to have their best and brightest friends apply to work with us
- Student / Tutor Appreciation Days where we get to know tutors better
- End of Semester Graduation Celebration during which we honor our graduating tutors and how they have impacted our center in unique ways
Lessons Learned

* Many international tutors come from backgrounds in which educational models are different and/or learning disabilities / differences are not recognized or celebrated.

* Many international tutors may be unfamiliar with the American culture of proper job applications, interviews, and hiring processes. Communication up front is important.

* Lots of one-on-one support, guidance, and feedback is key.

* Educating our students about the value of working with people from different cultures is just as important as educating our tutors how to do their job.

* TRAINING AND SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL TUTORS SURVEY
Next Steps ...

Let's visit a bit! Turn to someone in your row / table to discuss IF you like group talk. If not, jot down your answers to these two questions:

1. What are 2 ways you could better recruit, hire, train, and support international tutors in your program?

2. What are some ways that you could celebrate your international tutors?

3. What is one change / best practice from this session you could integrate right away when you return to your work?
Final Questions & Thank You!

LET'S CONNECT!

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