Ten Tips for Teaching International Students
(Which will also benefit your domestic students)

1. How to identify and close gaps between teacher and student expectations about teaching and learning
   a. Be aware of your own expectations and find out how they differ from your students’
   b. Be explicit about student performance expectations in your syllabus and orally during the first week
      (attendance, class participation, assignment requirements, grading policies, reading textbooks in advance,
      cheating and plagiarism, etc.)

2. How to get students to participate in class
   a. Students participate more actively when they know each other and feel the environment is safe, so allow
      time for students to get to know each other
   b. Ask a question and give enough time for students to formulate a response
   c. Do not be afraid to call on students by name
   d. Make it clear that they can pass if they cannot answer or comment
   e. Many students are taught for years not to volunteer information or ask questions in class, so by requiring
      active participation, you might be expecting students to undergo an instant personality change which might
      make them feel very uncomfortable
   f. Give examples of active participation, explain why they need to participate, and reward or praise appropriate
      behavior
   g. Give students questions the day before so that they can be prepared to give answers or have discussions
   h. Use discussion blogs in advance of class discussions

3. Remind students at the beginning that asking questions in class is preferred and that it is okay to have different
   opinions from the teacher. Many students feel very uncomfortable asking questions in class because they think
   they are wasting teacher or class time.

4. Explicitly explain your teaching methods and give reasons for doing certain things (e.g., we value discussion and
   exploration of ideas, critical thinking, and not necessarily the final idea or the right answer).
5. When possible, give students study guides and vocabulary lists to guide them when they read textbooks.
6. **Monitor student understanding.** Many of them might nod their heads while listening to you, but they might not actually understand what you are saying. You may want to slow down the speed of your speech a little just at the very beginning of the quarter and repeat information when possible.

7. When possible **make information visual** and **list new vocabulary or unusual words on the board** (students may not hear words or information if they are not familiar with them).

8. Create a **class atmosphere** where all students will feel comfortable to interact with each other and you. Model good behavior. Show goodwill and be patient.
   a. It is essential to learn the students’ names and pronounce them correctly
   b. Don’t give up when you don’t understand what they say (ask students to repeat slowly, spell words out, write sentences down, or as a last resort, get friends to help)
   c. Learn about their cultures
   d. Understand how they view plagiarism and cheating so that you can make your expectations and requirements very clear
   e. Keep your audience in mind when explaining things. To aid understanding, try to avoid using slang, jargon, or cultural references (such as football or baseball) that students would be unlikely to be unfamiliar with, unless you clarify what the expressions mean.

9. **Facilitate group work**
   a. Explain the purpose of group work
   b. Whenever possible, the teacher should form the groups, assign roles, and give clear expectations for group outcomes
   c. Allow students to develop good working relationships by keeping them in groups for two or three weeks (or even longer if possible)

10. **Encourage students to teach each other about their cultures** so that they can understand the cultural implications or background of what is going on. For example, in some cultures, it is not okay to answer twice in a row because it might be seen as showing off, but in the US it might not be. Also make students aware of stereotypes so that they will not prejudge others.

Know where to find help and support. For example:
   a. ISS council ([ISS@greenriver.edu](mailto:ISS@greenriver.edu)) can help with individual international student problems, language tutoring, etc.
   b. The Teaching and Learning Center ([http://www.greenriver.edu/tlc/](http://www.greenriver.edu/tlc/)) for faculty
   c. The Writing Center (in RLC) for students