Social English and Academic English are very different. A student may be proficient in one but not the other. A student's level of Academic Different educational backgrounds affect their language strengths and weaknesses. Students can develop social English skills in six months to two years, while academic English can take three to seven years.

When speaking to Non-Native English Speakers ...

1. Speak a little slower than “normal American” pace (but still naturally) and articulate your words clearly.

2. Give students time to understand what you have said before expecting a response. Don’t immediately start repeating (or rephrasing) what you have just said.

3. Simplify sentence structures.
   - Rather than: “Even though you will have to change your password the next time you log-in, you can register on eSIS with your current password.”
   - Try: “Now you can register on eSIS with this password. But next time you need to change your password.”

4. Make direct requests or ask direct questions.
   - Rather than: “In order to take care of that hold on your account you are going to need a valid credit card. Do you have one?”
   - Try: “You need a credit card.”

5. Repeat a question or sentences verbatim before trying to rephrase.
   - Language learners need time to process what you have said. Rephrasing requires them to process two or more utterances, decreasing the likelihood of comprehension.

6. Use simple, clear vocabulary and avoid specific vocabulary that students may not know.

7. When specific vocabulary is important, teach the vocabulary by giving students a handout listing terms and their explanations.
8. Use simple printed handouts to support your communication needs.
   - Explicitly point out key information on handouts
   - Use **bold**, *italics*, underline, and **color** to make key information standout
   - Use pictures, visuals, media, and **realia** (objects, examples, things)

9. Use **nonverbal cues** such as gestures, facial expressions, and nodding to help convey meaning.

10. Clearly mark transitions when changing topic or focus, explicitly signal the changes (e.g., **“First** we will ...”, **“Now it’s time for ...”**).

11. Avoid using idioms or colloquialisms.

   **Rather than:**
   - “Tuition in the US costs an arm and a leg.”
   - “I hear you.”
   - “Feeling a bit under the weather?”

   **Try:**
   - “Tuition is expensive in the US.”
   - “I understand you.”
   - “Are you sick?”

When listening to Non-Native English Speakers ...

- Focus on **what the student is saying** instead of on the difference in accent and pronunciation.
- Look at the student and pay attention to both **verbal and nonverbal cues**, which help convey meaning.
- **Ask the student to write** down words that you do not understand.
- **Ask the student to repeat** what he or she said if you do not understand.
- **Paraphrase** what you think the student said if you are unsure that you understood him or her. For example: “So you want me to ...” or “Let me see if I understood you. You said that ...”