First of all:

- Thank you for being here!*  
- Especially thank you for being here so early!

(I’m not a morning person...are you?)
My background

I’ve been teaching at the post-secondary level for 31 years, the past 9 years at the two-year college level.

I’ve been involved in publishing for about 20 years:

- Developmental editor
- Math writer
- Author
- Editing Director (AMATYC)
One exciting project was as co-author for a textbook series in the Kingdom of Bhutan.

The differences in educational approaches were fascinating, and have sparked an interest for me ever since!
Where I work now

Sheridan College
Three campuses

All in the Greater Toronto Area
Mississauga

- Canada’s sixth largest city
- A diverse multicultural community
Hazel McCallion Campus

Hazel McCallion Campus
MISSISSAUGA

STUDENTS / CAMPUS IN SQ. FT.
5,848 / 331,658
Hazel McCallion?

- Mayor of Mississauga for 36 years, retiring in 2014
- Featured on CNN and *Live with Regis and Kelly*
- Sheridan’s 1st and current Chancellor
- (At age 98!!)
Some Sheridan stats:

Sheridan is ranked as the **#1 college in Canada** for international student experience.
International recruitment

- A few years ago, immigration law in Canada changed.
- It became a win–win for students from India to study in Canada should they wish to eventually pursue citizenship.
- Sheridan began actively recruiting in India at that time.
- We are hiring and thriving.
One semester:

- One of my classes was predominantly International students from India
Disclaimer…

Will you accuse me of painting all with the same brush?

Perhaps, but the generalizations that follow in this presentation are:

- Overall impressions…
- Based on observations…
- Entirely anecdotal in nature…
- A starting point for further study & research.

(They are meant only to paint a picture of the experience.)
So what happened at first?

Surprises!
Surprise:

What is 4 by 2?

Did you say 8?

(That’s what I would say…)

My students from India would say…. 2

Okay: “by” means divide…
Surprise:

What is 3 into 6?

Did you say 2?

(yup, that’s what I would say...)

My students from India would say.... 18

Okay: “into” means multiply...
What would you think if you are talking to a student and they are doing this as you speak?

I now know that headshaking can mean many things:
- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Carry on

Headshaking is also a sign of respect. 😊
Mathematically speaking...

- What is \( \frac{22}{7} \)?

- Well, using my calculator, I see it’s 3.14285714

- This is not actually pi though!

- Our students use calculators, and need great accuracy.

- The students from India were not permitted calculators. They used approximations like this & are extremely proficient at calculations.

- What they are not as proficient at is critical thinking.
Ontario students tend to struggle more with numeracy.

The College Student Achievement Project (CSAP) found that:

One in three students in first semester (over 12,000 students a year province-wide) are “at risk” of not completing their chosen College program because of their achievement in mathematics.

They do pretty well with critical thinking though!
Challenges

- Balancing two diverse groups with different skill sets in one class:
  - How to nurture critical thinking?
  - How to support numeracy issues?
  - How to accurately and fairly evaluate & assess both groups?
  - How to keep their interest alive?
One more notable thing...
Many of our international students from India view attending class as optional.

If there is nothing to hand in for grades, they will often not show up or leave early.

A colleague reported a recent grad saying:

“I didn’t really get that we were expected to attend class all the time until well into third semester.”
While this aspect isn’t actually directly connected to mathematics, it does highlight a fundamental difference in how these students view school, learning, and my role as professor in their learning.
An international classroom is a rich & exciting learning environment to be fully embraced and enjoyed.

There is a learning curve though!
Learning Diversity began being about students and the diversity in their learning. Now, I understand more. It’s really about my own journey:

Learning about Diversity
Thank you very much!

😊

Questions?

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