Teaching in an educationally mobile world: good practice principles and teacher adjustments

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Getting the issues out

Have a paired discussion for five minutes:

How my teaching has changed in recent years because my students are becoming more and more diverse……..

Be ready to feed back your key ideas.
In a nutshell …. summarising the workshop

- Many diverse students have specific learning needs. [The needs are not unique to this group.]
- Students’ needs can prompt teacher adjustments and changes. … how and what they teach.
- Teachers often find adjustment a big challenge.
- New roles, new approaches.
- Good practice principles help in devising context-specific solutions.
- One example of ‘principles into practice’: ‘How could I run seminars more effectively for my diverse students?’
- Teachers need help and support to make adjustments.
- Individual, program-level and institutional support needs to be aligned.
‘Diverse students’: some factors do impact on learning

Mobility  (‘far from home/support, far from familiar, far from the place where I will use my learning’) + high cost, high pressure, high expectations etc

Academic cultural difference(s)

Learning and teaching in English
Predictable and common learning needs arising from:

- Learning and communicating in English
- Operating in an unfamiliar academic culture
- Having/not having useful skills (for example, academic skills, reading, writing, exams and assessment, self-management, research etc)
- Participation, taking part
- Collaboration and feeling included
- Taking home a useful and relevant qualification
Activity: thinking about [diverse] students’ learning issues

Divide into groups of 4.

Do you agree? Are these the issues your students face?

Which are most likely to make students less effective learners?

Which would you like to concentrate on today? – name 2 in 10 minutes
A suggested approach

1. Start with your culturally and linguistically diverse students’ learning needs
2. Think about YOU making adjustments……by individual teachers, for the university, in the program, for the course and in the classroom
3. Use generic good practice principles for teaching across cultures to make adjustments

Apply good practice principles at different

- levels of responsibility (course, program, university)
- contexts (lectures, writing, research, group work)
- goals and outcomes (inclusion, easier life, sustainability)

Good practice principles for inclusive teaching across cultures

1. Treat all students as if they are still learning, especially for skills.
2. Adjust for diversity
3. Provide specific, explicit information that fits that specific context – don’t make them guess
4. Foster engagement and intercultural dialogue
5. Use reflection as a teacher; be flexible, evaluate then use the results to make changes
6. Prepare students for life in a globalizing, diverse and interconnected world
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<th>Designing group work</th>
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<td>Foster interaction and dialogue</td>
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How could I [run a seminar] in a way that
... 

- treated all students as if they were still learning relevant skills and knowledge?

- adjusted for their diverse backgrounds and language skills?

- provided information that was specific to the seminar / to the seminar process?

- encouraged [cognitive] participation?

... encouraged collaboration and interaction?
A quick reality check

What might keep you from asking / answering questions about changing practice [in running seminars]?

What might keep your teacher colleagues from asking themselves / answering questions?
An example of principles into practice

Let’s work through one example [about running seminars]

This is about imagining what might happen, not about slotting into ‘the right box’ what you already do.
‘Seminars where students are developing skills’: what would the seminar be like?

Which skills would the students be developing?

✓ Discussion/ interaction
  (especially in an unfamiliar language)
  (especially with students from different cultural backgrounds)
✓ Analysis and evaluation
✓ Using seminar materials

How could you help these develop?
Seminar adjustments if students have diverse background knowledge

- Expectations are stated
- Necessary background is provided – perhaps in a handout or by pointing students to where they can fill gaps.
- Opportunities for retrieving/activating/checking previous knowledge and experiences
- Ways for students to identify and/or alert you to problems / misunderstandings
Seminars that recognise students’ diverse language capabilities

Before: Pre-reading, pre-warning, make a glossary of key terms

During

- Safety (for example, small sub-groups, no forcing to speak, calm silence while students search for words….)
- Rehearsal (a chance to gather the vocabulary etc)
- Structured discussion formats, structured report-back
- [Teachers] Self-monitoring for language (‘Am I understandable enough?’)
- Use written records / briefings

After:

- How/when/where can students ask questions? How can they seek clarification?
Provide context-specific information

[Many of the suggestions already made also do this]

✓ State the rationale or **learning purpose** of a seminar.

✓ State rules, behaviours; say what is **NOT** allowed; set out the schedule;

✓ Pay attention to students’ surprising behaviour – what are they assuming?

✓ State when and how students can **use** seminar material/ outcomes
A seminar that encourages everyone to participate

- Broaden your definition of ‘participation’ – it is not just talking. Help students value listening.
- Make time to ‘warm up’, to ‘get to know’
- Build in safety, especially early on. Set small & structured groups, specific tasks, rehearsal.
- Control dominance, over-participation (including by the teacher)
- Model listening and valuing.
- Rethink seminar tasks: are they accessible, relevant and understandable for everyone?
1. Select a significant teaching activity or interaction

2. Start to imagine: what the good practice principles would look like? sound like – how would that principle work in this specific context?

3. List teacher behaviours and adjustments under each of 4 headings.
A warning on presentation

Your posters will be put up on the wall and people will look at them without you there.

Make sure what you write will make sense on its own – without you to explain.

Be specific. Write in complete ideas.
How can we all help / support teacher adjustment?

Start with their issues, their problems.

Listen hard. Move on from describing the problem. Identify the local, discipline-specific benefits for their students and for themselves as teachers.

Offer examples, theory, rationale, principles to support thinking / planning. Offer choices and options…. Read the literature

List and investigate resources.
Make a plan…..

Stay with it – this is long-term, tough and important work.