

Approaching “International” Classrooms and Teaching Styles

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Basic starting points

- Acknowledge that international students have different language and learning skills
- Focus on encouraging and motivating them to work hard rather than threatening that some will pass and others will fail
- Stress the understanding of ideas/principles and applied learning rather than memorizing textbooks or chapters. This tends to 'even out' the abilities of students with different social and cultural backgrounds.

Varying language levels

- Seek out a 'median' point for language communication (not too simple or difficult).
- Ensure that students present class material verbally and 'in their own words'
- Teacher-monitored in-class exercises (both individually and in small groups) followed by class discussion
- Allowing students to draft and prepare material in their own language of choice (where final result must be in English)

Catering to students with differing language capacities

- Emphasize the ‘need’ or ‘requirement’ for students to talk or participate in class. Separate from attendance, make part of their final grade for participation.
- I use this to encourage my students at various points in the semester to ‘talk’, to answer questions in class (i.e. bonus marks for talking). A few of the really ‘shy’ ones don’t participate, but most do in order to boost their grade

Handling students' unwillingness to participate

- Set assessment components to include 'participation' as opposed to just 'attendance'
- Using oral presentation as a practical mode of assessment where possible (i.e. group or individual presentations)
- Organization of class/group activities and ensuring a rotation of the role of spokesperson

Combatting students copying, plagiarizing or memorizing

- Written homework to be ‘discussed’, with focus on students presenting material ‘in their own words’ (i.e. not just reading)
- If no responses come, remind students of their participation grade and that interaction provides a way to boost individual grades
- Insist on references for all homework exercises, using original exercises to demonstrate their point

Conducting classes with PowerPoint

- Avoid 'crowding' students with too much information.
- Make the notes available to students, preferably as soon as classes finish
- Using good examples (both local and global) can help gain the attention of all students in an multinational classroom.
- Humor is a great way of keeping students' attention

Avoiding distractions

- Don't admonish late students, simply stop talking and wait for them to sit down.
- When the bell goes, try to let the students go out ASAP
- Beware of students that send class discussions off-track. Try intervene in a way that draws the focus back to your topic
- No food during class-time
- Monitor notebook usage

Q&A

- I hope that this presentation has been useful in presenting some methods for approaching Communication problems within the International College
- If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them now