

LTU – Workshop – International Students and Group Work, Feb, 2004
Collation of ideas from groups in the workshop

| PROBLEM | ISSUES | STRATEGIES |
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| <p>Communicating in English, including pronunciation difficulties</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctance/resistance • Low volume/expression • Design of room • 1st stage/forming • selection/poor linguistic skills • no confidence to participate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small groups/good rooms/support • self-selection for small groups • give time – don't push • spend first weeks developing group culture eg. contracts, bit of theatre/fun, valuing non-verbal contributions to the group, overt curiosity/respect for others personal/professional experiences/courtesy • refer to LAS (ESL) • encourage students to tell you when they do not understand • create space for sts to articulate/have their say |
| <p>Learning styles (“I want to know how to do it”)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not just about ESL • Reluctance to interrupt • Passivity of international students • Deference • Misunderstanding new learning/teaching styles • Resistance to change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honour different learning styles • Diff. small group, each with a different topic/theme eg. according to learning styles • Give rationale for group learning – be persuasive • Don't stereotype • Group rules (eye, hands up, it's OK to ask questions during session etc.) • Students realise it is collaborative effort to participate in group • Ensure sts know it not disrespectful to ask questions • Actively manage group dynamics • Use descriptions that are not value laden • Be explicit to describe learning process, so sts see advantages of them • Acknowledgment of effort • Linking issues (from diverse backgrounds) and making these opportunities for learning recognise academic dev. takes time |
| <p>Dominating students</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How not to discourage their contribution • But allow for others to contribute • Depends on context – if | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage individual student responsibility for certain aspects of topic (spokespersons) • Be explicit about who you want to respond – eg “ someone who has not answered a question” • Ask participants to monitor own contribution |

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| | <p>traditional/PBL tutorial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who enthusiastic • Those who want to prove they know! • Gender | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind group that everyone must participate • Make visual contact – directing questions |
| Sharing voices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confidence • lacking motivation • ESL student not contribute to group discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are all members able to contribute? ○ Difficulty for teacher to access all groups if in small groups ○ Assessing? ○ Dominance of one member | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if answer incorrect, ask another simpler question so that person experiences success • simplify tasks • important to allow students “letting in time” • may refer students for individual counselling • assess contribution content not volume • regulate who is speaking • teacher outline importance of professional communication • criteria based assessment • arrange groups differently in different sessions |
| Small group within class group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • logistics – physical ie fixed seating • ESL sts already sitting together • Student isolated • Silence • Self selection of small groups may lead to ESL sts being excluded or disengaged in communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue not laterally (talk to others in front of you or behind you) • Use strategies to group sts. Eg number off, • For isolated sts take st to an active group and spend some time with that group • Harness potential power of silence to reflect. • Spell out group expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Value diversity • Be directive in setting up groups • Provide opportunity for ESL sts to work together • Work with individual sts and coach them in ways of participating • Construct scenarios which promote ESL sts as expert • Broaden focus of teacher questions “How did you approach the task” |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a dedicated staff member to support ESL sts. • Investigate place of on-line discussion to support learning of ESL sts. • Ensure setting is conducive to conversation |
| <p>Including all participants</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose responsibility • Resources • Skills (differential) • Class size • Facility design • Facilitation • Income issues • Content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTU has strategy for International students – People should be informed that it is being operationalised (Assoc. Dean International Students) • Need top down – grass roots approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ University/school/subject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote benefits ▪ Provide resources • Open up topic of how students will learn • Availability of support for tutors and lecturers • Groups dynamics that are culturally appropriate • Uni. wide discussion of Academic Labour Process and how this is affected by International Students • Public Health Students Association - local students interested in supporting International Students • University resources to deal with hot spots |