

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND GROUP WORK - Feb, 2004

PROBLEM	ISSUES	STRATEGIES
<p>FORMING GROUPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-selected or teacher directed • Students who lack confidence to actively seek group membership • Local students do not choose international students to work with • Students do not like group work • Students do not see purpose of group work • Students understanding of group work is not developed • Postgraduates • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • put names on whiteboard (either as you go around the class, or after students having introduced someone) - check pronunciation!! • Spend time for students to walk around and get to know each other- have specific questions on OHP to help students get moving. • In groups, get students to discuss expectations of tutorials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are your hopes/ expectations from this subject? ○ What advantages will you gain from your knowledge of this subject? ○ We will be working in groups/teams. How do you feel about this? What do you personally like about it? What fears do have about working in a group? • Make sure you are explicit about your expectations and your role as teacher/facilitator ... • Discuss group structures: c/f self selected with teacher directed. Ask students to think about the purposes for each type of group • If appropriate (ie PBL) ask students to build some guidelines for group work – or show students a list and ask them to amend it. Get students to unpack statements ie: only one person speak at once – (ESL students take this literally and so can never find a space to jump into the conversation.) • Build in an activity that will highlight the experience of ESL students (taking into account that often local students are not aware of the benefits a range of experiences can bring to a class) ie compare and contrast health systems, education systems anything where the ESL student has knowledge that the local student doesn't – information gap activity. • postgraduates often have varied work backgrounds and this can be utilised in many ways in forming groups and in validating individual experience • Have an online discussion site – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ask students to introduce themselves ○ have a question/answer page ○ have an anonymous evaluation thread that you monitor <p><i>Spending time at this stage will be well worth it in the long run.</i></p>

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND GROUP WORK - Feb, 2004

PROBLEM	ISSUES	STRATEGIES
<p>MAINTAINING GROUP MOTIVATION AND INTEREST</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students get bored with group work so do not fully participate • international students cannot find space to contribute (for all reasons outlined in Lousia's paper) • dominant students • peer intimidation • patronising of ESL students • local students find ESL pron difficult to understand so become impatient and/or draw inappropriate conclusions about their peers • pace is too slow for some people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the first few weeks, rewrite all the names on the board and go through them at the beginning of class – or make a game of it with students - check pronunciation • make sure you have the same expectations of ESL students you have of the others, eg do not avoid asking questions and including them in discussions • ensure you plan the class well • timing carefully is important • structure the group activity, for eg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ have a set of specific questions for students to discuss ○ use a chairperson to keep group on track ○ vary the reporting back methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to whole group ▪ 1 – 1 ▪ form new groups – 1 from each original group ○ ensure time for the plenary at the end of the class • check the seating arrangements • vary composition of groups – think of purpose of task and arrange accordingly • vary the activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ pairs ○ small groups ○ brainstorming ○ problem-solving ○ etc • make sure you have a variety of questions: not just what questions, but why and how etc. • remember the strategies from forming the group – eg have a section that will draw on participants individual experiences, so everyone will have something to contribute (perhaps a study skills question could be in each class ie: time management, library use, note-taking skills etc – that way you are building in learning how to learn – just 5 minutes of group time could be spend and there would be no need for whole class feedback) • be aware of individual's response to group work – think about how you could construct the groups next time • if a class becomes too dependent on you – do not be afraid to set a specific group task, give students a set amount of time and tell them you expect feedback and then leave the room!

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND GROUP WORK - Feb, 2004

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• if a student is genuinely difficult to understand, do not be concerned about advising that person to seek help for pronunciation |
|--|--|--|

**LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND GROUP WORK - Feb, 2004**

PROBLEM	ISSUES	STRATEGIES
<p>ASSESSMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is participation assessed?????? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ if so <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ what criteria do you use ▪ how do you inform students of this ▪ how do you manage it in class time ▪ what of the “silent participants” ▪ is their an alternative? • group assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ group mark ○ individual marks • ESL students being left out of the group due to perception their writing will be poor! • Different cultural understandings of what a group assignment means • Presenting group assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • think about why you are setting a group assignment – make sure you have a sound educational reason for this • consider if the processes involved in group assignments are part of your course objectives • ensure task is explicit and marking criteria clear – exactly how much do you allocate to grammar!! (often hidden) if this is made explicit to students, they can openly talk about it and negotiate • make some class time to discuss expectations of group assignment work - is it truly a collaborative effort or individual efforts put together • make use of self assessment • make use of peer assessment • make sure the criteria for the above 2 are clear to students or in fact developed by students • think about having a poster session, rather than oral presentations of group work assignments • consider if you are marking the final product or the process as well • along with task, students can submit a brief journal of their own experience of the group assignment – perhaps with focus questions set by you • see options for assessment of group work http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/group.html

**LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND GROUP WORK - Feb, 2004**

PROBLEM	ISSUES	STRATEGIES
<p>INVOLVING ESL SPEAKERS IN GROUP ACTIVITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack confidence • not familiar with cultural norms of group interaction • native speakers patronising or hostile or impatient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • model group interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ role play ○ video of group work • explicit discussion of how groups work in different cultures – this will assist ALL students (native speakers as well as ESL) understand the different cultural practices involved here <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ hierarchical ○ politeness ○ disagreeing ○ giving opinions ○ dominance ○ asking for clarification • at times group international students together • many of the strategies suggested in other sections are relevant here also

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND GROUP WORK - Feb, 2004

Barlowe, C. (1999). A dilemma within peer group assessment. In K. Martin, N. Stanley and N. Davison (Eds), *Teaching in the Disciplines/ Learning in Context*, 24-27. Proceedings of the 8th Annual Teaching Learning Forum, The University of Western Australia, February 1999. Perth: UWA. <http://lsn.curtin.edu.au/tlf/tlf1999/barlowe.html>

Fraser, S, Cheers, M & Deane, E. *Getting it Right with Group Assessment* Proceedings from 2000 National Teaching Forum, AUTC <http://www.autc.gov.au/forum/papers/fraserAUTC.doc>

Group Assessment Tasks and Assessing Groups <http://www.flinders.edu.au/teach/assess/tut/grpwrk.htm>

Issacs, G. (2002) *Assessing Group Tasks* Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Series, UQ http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/downloads/T&L_Assess_group_tasks.pdf

James et al (2002) *Assessing group work*, <http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/group.html>

La Trobe University, ADU Forum on Assessment <http://www.adu.latrobe.edu.au/assess.spks.html>

Murdoch University Code of Practice – Assessment Advice on Group, Self and Peer Assessment and on Assessment of Participation <http://www.murdoch.edu.au/vco/secretariat/admin/codes/advice.html#group>

Solimon, I. (1999) *Teaching Small Groups* Teaching and Learning Centre, UNE. <http://www.une.edu.au/tlc/pub/smgroups.pdf>