

SPARK Training



Teaching International Students & their Learning Styles (SPARK)

Presented by

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Session Overview

This session seeks to provide ideas and practical examples of ways to:

- teach more effectively in an international context
- promote better interaction between student cohorts
- Understand the need to build cultures of respect, collaboration and understanding to facilitate international learning




Culture Shock (International Students)


- Different physical environment & different customs and practices
- Language shock
 - *“ I speak English but I don’t speak Australian ”*
- Academic shock (different teaching/learning approaches)
- Relationships between academics & students
- Types of assessment (skills, knowledge & capabilities)

Culture Shock (Academic)

It can also be unsettling for teaching staff faced with a room of international students and often limited resources to devote to them outside teaching hours (despite the 24x7 demands)

- Will they be able to cope with the course?
 - What will they have studied before and is it equivalent?
 - Have they studied at this level in English before?
 - Is it going to take me extra time to teach them?
 - I can't even pronounce their names?
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Questions That Often Arise?

- How do I teach to this new diversity of local and international students?
 - Can I teach international students in the same way as local students?
 - How do I keep my standards up when working with international students who don't have the language ability and background to "keep up"?
 - I feel I am lowering the standards of my lectures and lessons!
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Tips for Teaching International Students

Consider your assumptions	Preparation
Management expectations	Gentle paced introductions
Group work (you need more than a “one-size-fits-all” approach).	Encourage speaking English in class but recognise that this may put some students out of their comfort zone
Case studies (relevant examples)	Assessment strategies
Get to know your students - International names can often be hard to pronounce – ask them whether they have a “preferred name”	Make time to reflect and share experiences with colleagues
Student expectations	Clear unambiguous requirements with well defined “time-frames”

Encouraging English




Effective Communication

- Find out where your students are from and do a little research on those cultures
 - Be sensitive to terminology (Use neutral language)
 - Be patient with students from different educational systems
 - Use more visual examples to avoid language barriers
 - Learn from your colleagues/previous students about what works
 - Make curriculum relevant by customising your examples
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Tools/Techniques

- Cultural/Language Quiz
- Geographical Quiz
- Use activities to encourage students to accepting that they learn differently and culture can b more important than language in this
- In particular International Students find it challenging to think/discuss/recognise that they do not all learn in the same way

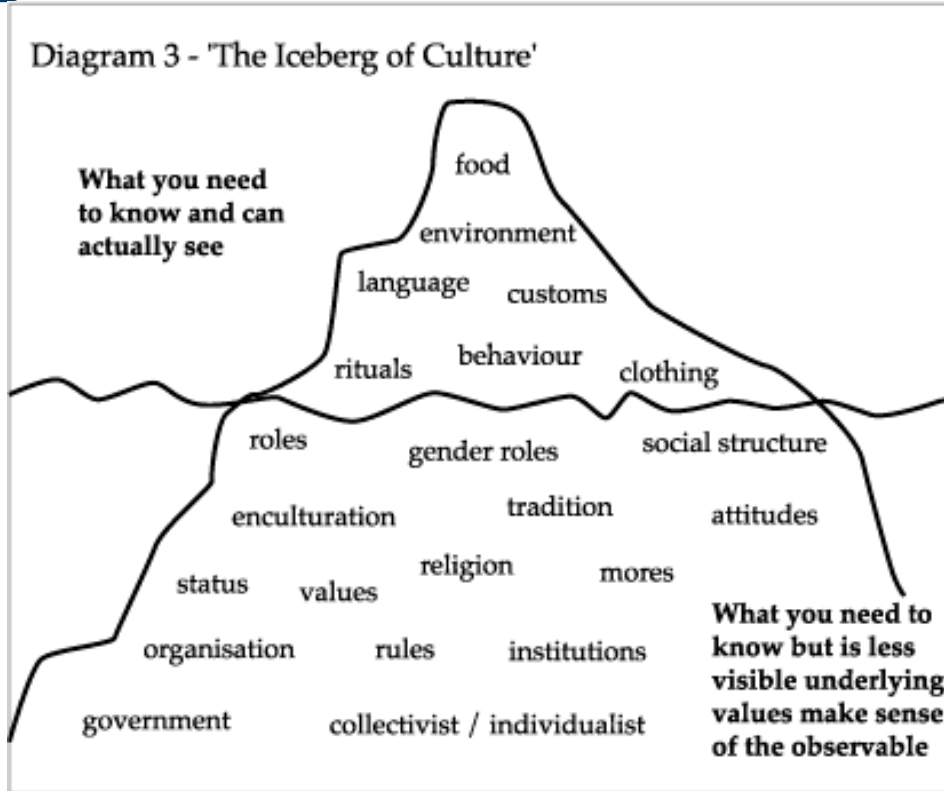
Forming Groups

- Students gravitate to their friends and often into their cultural and linguistic groups when sitting in class
 - Learning activities can be more effective with groups of diverse students
 - In-class team activities are a good way to get students to form new friendships and step away from their cultural norms and listen to the perspectives of others.
 - Yet the challenge is how to do this equitably, effectively and without offence (such as finger pointing)
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Some Non Threatening Techniques



Iceberg of Culture



Intercultural Communication

- Avoid stereotypes
- Useful to understand people's behaviour and how it differs
- Remember that you set the example
- Be respectful of all the beliefs, cultures and perspectives expressed by students in your class
- Pay attention to holidays/celebrations from other cultures

Culturally What Can We Do?

- To translate from concepts from one value system to another and make it work?
- Understand the “rules” of the game and how they differ across cultures?
- Accept that the features of education are highly influenced by culture are:
 - Different perceived status of teachers
 - Supportive culture of education
 - Differing views on accountability and assessability

Student Quotes

“Why does the teacher keep asking if we have any questions, I was taught it was rude to ask questions”

“All I need is to remember everything the teacher tells me and memorise the textbook/materials and I can pass”

“What is this critical thinking? Why can't I ask tell the teacher what I can remember ”

“Why can't I just learn the way I did before – why are they making it so hard for me?”

“I think my English is OK – so why can't I understand anything my teacher says”

Small Changes May Help

- Broadening the curriculum (provide global examples)
- Make curriculum relevant by customising your examples
- Ice-breakers do not always work in a “cross cultural context” so you might need to try other ways to get students to get involved
- Learn from your colleagues about what works
- Encourage cultural exchanges in tutorial activities

Self Reflection

1. Consider how your own personal style contributes to your own teaching and learning style
2. What changes/improvements could you make?
3. By thinking more about the cross-cultural differences in educational expectations, how can this assist in improving student interaction and the student experience?



Any questions?

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