Preparing to Teach in the Division of Information and Communication Sciences

The learning outcomes of the workshop

That you will:

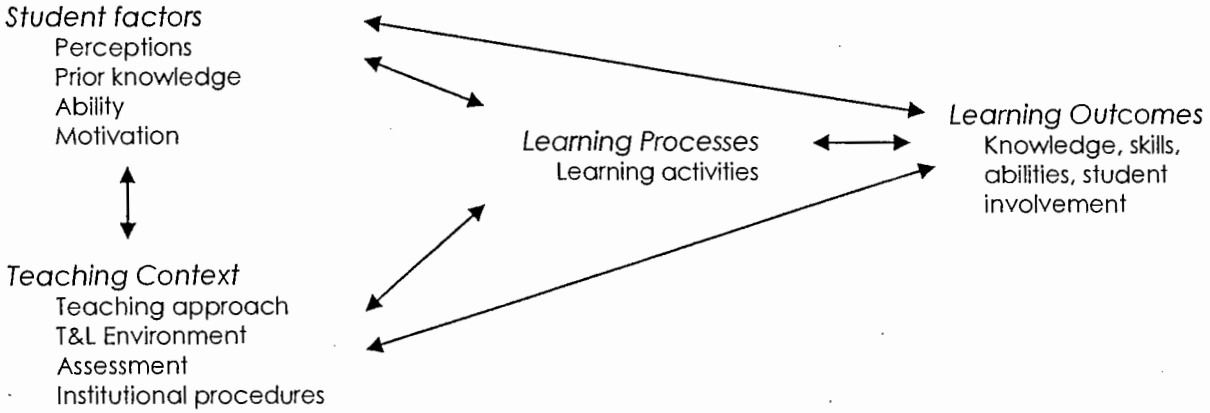
- understand some principles of how students learn in higher education;
- learn skills you can use in tutorials and practicals:
  - encouraging student preparation and participation,
  - supporting and valuing student contributions,
  - supporting a diverse student body, including your International students,
- understand the importance of the role of tutorials and practicals in enhancing student learning;
- be motivated to be professional in your approach to teaching;

What do you anticipate being the greatest challenge(s) for you as a tutor / demonstrator in your Department, in ICS this semester, and so.....What are your own goals for this session?

Consider a time when you were a student (or teacher) participating in a tutorial session and/or a laboratory practical, one that was worthwhile and enjoyable; what made it a good learning experience for you and/or your students?

What research tells us about how students learn

Studies of *the way students learn* show that the approach adopted by them is strongly influenced by teaching or departmental factors such as the type of assessment used, the workload of the subject, the feedback that is received, and the enthusiasm of the teacher (Adapted from Biggs, 2000):



Diversity in the student body

The students you are likely to encounter in your tutorials, come with a diversity of:

- Diversity of cultural background;
- Range of previous educational experiences/pathways into University;
- Range of previous teaching and learning environments;
- Varied contact with Australian educational system/philosophies;
- Life, work and country experiences;
- Language(s) background;
- Age, gender, (dis)abilities, socio-economic background;
- Motivation and interest in studying;
- Existing skills for learning.

Such diversity brings its challenges and benefits to the teaching situation.

Approaches to Learning

The learning approach (Marton & Saljo, 1976 a, b) adopted as a result of personal preferences and the "environmental" factors represented above, are closely related to the quality of the learning outcome. Students who intend to (or feel they have little choice but to) minimally meet requirements rather than develop an interest, or search for meaning in what is being learned, will normally achieve a lower quality learning outcome. Many of the factors which help determine whether a student will seek to discover meaning and develop interest (a Deep Approach to learning) or limit study to the bare essentials (a Surface Approach to learning) are within the control of teacher. A 3rd approach (Achieving) can be used in conjunction with either of the other 2 approaches, is about maximising the effect of effort and time. Characteristics of the 3 learning approaches are:

Approach	Aims of the Learner	Learning Strategies
Surface	*To complete the task requirements* Meet the requirements minimally; Set a balance between failure and working more than necessary; Satisfy the external (assessment) requirements.	*Focus on the signs (words, sentences, formula)* Limit their target to the bare essentials; Reproduce essentials for assessment through memorising or rote learning; Be passive in their learning; Prefer to learn in isolation. Have negative emotions about learning;
Deep	*To understand the task* Satisfy their interest in what is being learned; Develop higher levels of competence in particular topics and subjects; Become actively involved in learning by asking questions and wishing to apply their new knowledge;	*Focus on what is signified* Discover meaning by personal exploration, reading widely, practicing and memorising for meaning and understanding; Interconnect new learning with previous and related knowledge; Wish to examine various points of view and become involved in creating knowledge and understanding through discussion; Prefer to learn in a social context such as with other students or seeking opportunities to engage the lecturer in discourse; Overcome fear and other negative feelings and associate higher levels of values with learning.

Do any of these aims and strategies seem familiar to you? Think of your own experience as a learner: how did you prefer to learn? What approaches did you take or have you seen your students take?

Implications for our teaching:

*Surface approaches can be **discouraged** by:*

- Matching the level of the subject and the pace at which it is presented with students' prior knowledge;
  Because of the uses of surface approaches in their learning in previous subjects, many students will not have the expected prior knowledge at the start of a subject.
- Ensuring that assessment tasks align with a desired response (eg reduce success for rote recall of theories and facts and the chance for questions spotting);
  If students believe assessments just result in deriving grades, they will jump the hoops and in return they will get their qualifications. A deep approach is excluded.
- Keeping the workload to a level that allows students the wider exploration of ideas and the development of interest that characterises deep approaches to learning.
- Matching actual and desired administrative requirements (eg does the system punish late submission more than it punishes error?).

*Deep approaches can be **encouraged** by:*

- Structuring material so that students can see where they are going and make the connections within and outside the subject area. Regularly allowing students to 'map' where they have been and where they are going is a helpful learning aid.
- Allowing some freedom in learning such that students can adopt a style with which they feel comfortable.
- Supplying the enthusiasm necessary to generate motivation and interest (positive feelings are necessary for deep approaches to learning whereas cynicism and stress usually lead to surface approaches to learning).
- Involving the learner in as many active (discussion, planning, problem solving) rather than passive (being lectured at) situations as possible. The more ways the learner is involved the more interconnections, the stronger the learning.
- Giving qualitative feedback especially, but not only, on assessment items.
- Providing opportunities that allow misconceptions to be made explicit (eg interactive sessions).

Aims and Learning Outcomes of the Practical and the Tutorial

*Consider your role as a demonstrator or tutor, what are the **Aims** of Practicals and Tutorials? What **Learning Outcomes** do you hope to achieve?*

Facilitating a Tutorial

Before each formal teaching session:

Student Learning	Ask yourself: ➢ How will students benefit from this session? ➢ How are you going to ensure that they learn during and after the session? ➢ How are you going to monitor their learning? ➢ How will you encourage them to take a deep approach to their learning?
Materials	➢ Check notes for completeness: ➢ Anticipate when and how audio-visual resources are used; ➢ Which segments are necessary parts of your input and student activity, which ones could be deleted if time runs out; which ones are additional examples, and/or illustrations needed for clarification.
Rehearsal	Before each class: ➢ Think through what you are going to say. ➢ Allow adequate time for student activities and for debriefing them afterwards. ➢ Have you allowed time for questions, clarifications, extra examples?
Opening	➢ Are your opening sentences interesting, exciting? ➢ Will they gain students' attention immediately?
Room	➢ Allow yourself time to get to the room so that you can check (when necessary and possible) lights, furniture arrangements, OHP, microphone (check before whether you need one!), and any other resources you are using. ➢ Think about the room that you do most of your tutoring in: ➢ What does the physical space say about expectations for learning? ➢ What can you do about it?

The First Tutorial: PLAN WELL, the FIRST ONE is IMPORTANT

Make the Introductions: yourself to them; them to you; them to each other.

Use Icebreakers to encourage all students to feel comfortable and get to know the rest of the group.

Learn as many of their names as you can, and make sure they know yours!

Clarify your expectations: ground rules *eg* questions are encouraged; work expectations and requirements.

Make small groups smaller, especially early on. The most important reason for organising tutorial groups to work in smaller subsets is so that each student is actively engaged on the task at the same time. The role of the tutor is *not to answer questions*, but to create an environment where students can both ask, and answer. Students will often try to get tutors to answer the tutorial problems rather than grapple with the ideas themselves. Often tutors can shift students away from this attitude by careful questioning responses.

Time Management in a Tutorial.

Part of running a successful tutorial and practical, is making certain that the students leave having *learned* something. Often the requirement to 'finish' activities and problems, the short time available, and the fluid nature of discussion, can contribute to a largely 'unfinished' tutorial. Use you time well:

1. Plan Ahead! Allow a few minutes for settling down and informal conversations with the students.
2. Look at the requirements for the tutorial, and decide which questions or tasks contain the ideas most important to the current lecture series. Plan activities/discussions that support the question.

   2b. If you have a series of questions that you feel you 'must' cover ask the group to vote for the '3' most important to look at.
3. Generally allow about 5 mins working time individually or in small groups, then bring the problem/discussion to the whole group. Use your own experience and knowledge to pass the issues back to the class, or take the opportunity to demonstrate something important. If you demonstrate something it is critical to ask the students to do it again (or in a different format) in the next little session.
4. Deliberately make some errors (warn the group that you will do this) to highlight common mistakes – ask the group to identify them.
5. ALWAYS leave 5 minutes at the end to clarify the main issues covered in the tutorial. Let the students know what they have gained by being in the room.
6. Record the effectiveness of your tutoring, and the quality of learning, after each tutorial. If you come away with some questions about the content/class make sure you feed this information back to the lecturer in charge.

How does this process translate to the laboratory practical?

Assessing and Giving Feedback to Students.

Students appreciate good quality feedback on their work in order to enhance their learning. A tutor/demonstrator is in a wonderful position to give *verbal and written feedback* to students and assist them in a more coherent way than many lecturers.

Often you will be asked to mark student work when you are tutoring/demonstrating. It is important that your marks are consistent with the other tutors/demonstrators, and that value is given for evidence of learning. Students need *written comments* to let them know how to develop their thinking later (some will think of marks as something to get in their own right...). They also need *verbal feedback during the class* to let them know and evaluate how they are doing.

If your lecturer wishes you to give a mark for participation – negotiate with the tutorial group what participation will consist of, then record and give weighting to each component. When the time comes you can then easily give feedback.

If you are assessing responses to questions you need a 'marking scheme'. Such a marking scheme needs to acknowledge the difference between an incomplete or wrong answer, an adequate answer, an informed answer, and a really fantastic and well integrated answer. If you have a detailed marking scheme, then your students will know from the scheme what they need to improve.

Discuss the mode in which you are expected to operate with your lecturer-in-charge.

Teaching International Students

Much of what we want our International students to do in our tutorials/practicals is unfamiliar to them.

Old game—new rules

Imagine the following scenario. Some new friends ask you to play a game of cards with them—one you've played since you were a child. It's a game you're very good at and you've always won this game in the past. You're one of the best and everyone in your family and all your friends know it! However, unbeknown to you, your new friends play by different rules and there are heavy penalties for those who don't play by their rules. No one tells you this when you start to play though, so you play by the rules you know. You lose a few rounds because it takes you a while to realise that the rules have changed. In the meantime, you've been penalised quite heavily. In fact, you've lost a lot of money and you've begun to doubt that you'll ever be able to win at this game again. However, you're very determined so you start to try to work out what the new rules are. That's really hard because they're not written down anywhere and everyone is really busy playing the game. No-one has time to stop and tell you the rules. They all assume everyone knows them! Finally you do work them out though. Now the only problem is that remembering to play by these new rules is really hard because you've played this familiar game by your rules for as long as you can remember. Sometimes you forget that the rules have changed. You find that you need constant reminders, or you slip back into old habits and start playing by the old rules. You also find that you don't have some of the skills that the new game rules require and it takes you longer to complete the required plays. People get impatient with you. You get frustrated. You never *really* get used to the new rules.

from UniSA Learning Connection Guide: http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learningconnection/staff/svcs/tchngdes.asp (cited 01/03/04)

Not only are the rules different but also in undertaking a course of study in another country, such student may experience difficulties with:

- Social-cultural adjustment
  - Isolating;
  - Experience 'culture shock'
- Language
  - Australian accent;
  - Style of speech is different to what was taught 'back home'
    - speed,
    - idiom
- Educational expectations
  - 'Good' students in their home country as defined by....?

Our own practice must aim to help them successfully make whatever adjustments they need in order to access a quality education here at MU. Such students have a lot to offer us as their teachers, and their fellow learners once they have become accustomed to learning here.

Look for what students in your class *can do, not what they can't do* – don't be a deficit teacher!

If students require assistance, speak with your lecturer-in-charge, and refer them to support *as soon as possible* (counselling services, writing skills, 'English for Academic Purposes')

In our dealings with our International students we are able to provide an inclusive environment, based on best educational practice, which benefits all our students (Biggs, 1997):

Communication of Content

- Know who your students are so that you are aware of any specific issues, cultural or otherwise, in order to avoid miscommunication or offence;
- Make your course assumptions explicit *eg:* if the course content is closely related to a particular textbook/set of readings, make this clear to students;
- Speak clearly and always face the students when speaking;
- Use culturally inclusive/sensitive language;
- Avoid colloquialisms, abbreviations and long convoluted sentences;
- Use outlines and simple overheads to outline your tutorial at the beginning of the class and put it back up so students can find their place;
- Provide outlines for how notes might be taken (perhaps just in the first 2-3 weeks);
  - Support written notes with diagrams wherever possible
- Show/explain the crucial vocabulary for the sessions – especially the technical jargon;
- Ensure students can link the classes
  - comment on where this class leads on from the last one,
  - end each class with a summary and a note on the next class.

Communication of Expectations

- Explain/publish the modes of delivery and their purpose i.e. Lectures, labs, tutorials etc. and thus what is expected of the students in each of these environments;
- Publish the times at which you will be available for consultations and stick to them!
- Make your expectations of learning explicit from the outset:
  - class norms for your class,
  - go through this in the first session and reinforce in future sessions;
- Be explicit about the amount of time students are expected to work on their own outside formal classes;
- Be specific about the use of texts:
  - What sort of texts are appropriate and which one should they use?
  - Whether online materials can be used or do they have to do some library research?
- Identify the key concepts for students;
- Differentiate for the students the place of rote learning and analytical thinking in your discipline and this unit;
- Emphasise the role of problem-solving in their learning (students are often very confused about the term "critical"):
  - Comment on your own critical thinking strategies eg what questions does the reading raise for you? What other sources might you consult to test the validity of the claims?
- Be clear about what you want the students to do – summarise, identify, or argue;
- Provide written support for all learning tasks and assignments:
  - In oral presentations, let the skilled confident students present first modelling good practice,
  - 'Model' answers which highlight good practice,
  - explain the difference between 'quoting experts' and 'plagiarism',
  - how you expect students to think and behave in the discipline and your class;

Maximising student activity

Be sensitive to cultural norms of the roles of teacher and student

- At the beginning of semester take time to create a supportive and interactive class by:
  - Getting students to introduce themselves:
    - not in a large group, but perhaps initially asking students to move around on a 1-1 basis or in small groups,
  - Establishing clear guidelines for use of names and their pronunciation,
    - Putting students' names on the whiteboard so everyone can access them and thus use people's names in the class,
- Specifically encourage ALL students to actively engage in discussion by:
  - Setting up activities which require students to share experiences and knowledge with each other to successfully complete the task,
  - Making sure activities encourage, support and reward appropriate participation,
  - Taking advantage of the diversity of experience and interest of your student body;
- When using groups in the class:
  - think about the different constructions - self selected or teacher directed?
  - Encourage the group to agree on appropriate guidelines for interaction,

Asking questions:

- Provide students with structured ways of asking questions and following up problems encountered in lectures or private study,

Getting cross-cultural perspective:

- Specifically invite students to add comments based on their own cultural background,
- Establish cross-cultural groups for specific activities which require the different sub-groups to help each other to see a problem or issue from a different cultural perspective

Participating in small group discussion:

- Help International and NESB (non-English speaking background) prepare for small group discussion
  - Model effective and efficient reading strategies
  - Publish reading lists which indicate clearly what is *essential* reading and what is *optional* or *extension* reading related to specific tutorials,
  - Establish clear purposes for reading;
  - Establish sub-groups of learning partners of the same ethnicity who are given specific permission to talk in whatever language they like, even though their final presentation to the group will be in English;

Assessment

- Make clear to students the links between outcomes, content and the assessment tasks;
- Share with students the criteria for assessment tasks and provide early and frequent feedback;
- Make sure students are aware of the discipline's guide for referencing, and how this translates into reality;
- Go through the assessment tasks, deconstructing what it requires the student to do;
- In consultation with the lecturer-in-charge, set a short introductory task to assess English language competence;
- If it is Departmental / unit policy, consider giving students the opportunity to resubmit an early task so they can take up and learn from your feedback.

Are there any questions or concerns about teaching, and your students' learning that you are still left with?

Being professional in your teaching

- be on time;
- prepare for your teaching (keep in regular contact with your unit convenor);
- be respectful towards all you students;
- give clear boundaries for your role (eg hours available, how to be contacted etc.);
- be careful about commenting on other staff, or passing on information about any person
- maintain boundaries between professional and person relationships;
- do not take up counselling role in one-to-one work with students;
- in your use of anecdote and humour, be sensitive to differences in your student group;
- handle student complaints or behaviour in the manor dictated by your department;
- be aware of your specific responsibilities as contractor in your department.

Getting feedback on your teaching

You can gain feedback on your work from:

- Students;
- Course Coordinator;
- Colleagues;
- Supervisor.

Students are often expert at describing their own learning experience and rate teachers against their own view of what teaching should be, but they are rarely in a position to describe *the whole range of activities* that constitute teaching. It is important to remember therefore that students are *only once source of evaluative information.* The critical and constructive feedback of your colleagues can provide useful feedback about the quality of the planning, preparation and delivery of teaching, particularly if you specify the particular aspect(s) of your teaching for which you are seeking feedback.

It is not good enough however, to simply collect data and analyse and interpret it, the feedback you receive is only as good as the reflection you undertake, and the action you subsequently take as a result of it! This critically reflective cycle should be documented in your Academic Portfolio (http://www.cpd.mq.edu.au/TEDS/AcaPortfolio.PDF) and used in discussions with your course coordinator and/or supervisor for the purposes of improving your teaching, your students' learning and contributing to your career progression.

One form of formal feedback can be obtained through The Evaluation for Development Service (TEDS) at CPD (http://www.cpd.mq.edu.au/TEDS/teds.htm).

Other Resources

There are many and varied resources that might help you with your teaching, one that is readily available, and quite useful is:
A booklet has been developed by CPD called: ***Getting Started in Teaching:* Supporting Casual Teaching Staff at Macquarie University.** This booklet aims to provide guidance in the areas of:

- Your rights and expectations as an employee of Macquarie University
- Macquarie's expectations of you as an employee
- Effective teaching and learning at Macquarie
- Support that is available, particularly in the area of learning and teaching

Tutors Handbook 2000: Victoria University of Wellington'
You can download a copy (134 pages) from: http://www.vuw.ac.nz/utdc/tutors/index.html

Other resources are available for loan from CPD and the MU Library. Staff at CPD are also available to assist you if needed. Ring Sharon Fraser x8446 or email Sharon.Fraser@mq.edu.au

Some Helpful References

Asia Pacific First Year Project: Retrieved 23/02/05 from http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/APFYP/nutsnbolts_resc.html (some useful nuts and bolts advice)

Biggs, J (2000). *Chapter 7:* Teaching international students in *Teaching for Learning at University.* Buckingham: Open University Press. (the whole book is useful)

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Jaques, D. (2000). Learning in Groups: A handbook for Improving Group work. 3rd ed. IK: Kogan Page.

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Tutors Handbook 2000: Victoria University of Wellington' Retrieved 23/02/05 from http://www.vuw.ac.nz/utdc/tutors/index.html

Other References Included in Text

Biggs, J. (1997) Teaching across and within cultures: the issue of international student. In *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Advancing International Perspectives.* Proceedings of the HERDSA Conference, 8-11 July, 1997. pp1-22.

Marton , F. & Saljo, R. (1976a) On qualitative differences in learning – I Outcome and process, *British Journal of Educational Psychology,* 46, 4-11.

Marton , F. & Saljo, R. (1976b) On qualitative differences in learning – II Outcome as a function of the learner's conception of the task. *British Journal of Educational Psychology,* 46, 115-127.

Encouraging Participation

Brainstorming

Description	A creative thinking, free association exercise, in which group members generate as many ideas as possible, without criticising or questioning their validity, until time or ideas are exhausted.
When used	To generate new ideas and release students' potential to think of ideas.
Procedure	Topic or question displayed on board. Rules explained: no criticism of contributions; quantity more important than quality for now; more ideas = better chance of useable ideas; the wilder the better - it's easier to tame it down, than pump it up; hitching welcomed - if you can improve on someone else's idea, so much the better. Suggestions recorded on the board (may need more than one scribe). Only after all possible ideas are out do you (as a group) then assess the list and prioritise, categorise, thematise, or draw conclusions.
Limitations	Can become disorganised if not well-facilitated. Needs good follow-up (i.e, do something with the list).

Buzz groups

Description	Small groups consider different questions or issues for a set period of time, and report back to the larger group
When used	When participation from all class members is desired, or when you want active reflection on an issue with quick answers or solutions
Procedure	Split class into groups of 3-5, and set each a group a task: answer specific questions, provide illustrative examples, rank several items in order, suggest remedies to a problem, etc. Each group should have a recorder and a reporter, who then reports back to the whole class on behalf of the sub-group. Groups should be encouraged to question other groups during the reporting back session.
Limitations	Thought must be given to the purpose and organisation of the groups (e.g. a variety of ability levels). Success also depends on the kinds of questions and tasks specified.

Debates

Description	A team exercise, where groups of three or four take a 'pro' or 'con' stand on a controversial issue
When used	Ideal for controversial issues, with definite opinions on both sides.
Procedure	Designate groups 'pro' or 'con' and have them research their stance. Objectivity is guaranteed if you have students argue against their personal stance, e.g. those who support tax cuts argue for tax increases. Each team has a set time to present their argument, and the other team and the audience can challenge their points at the end of that time. It is up to the tutor to decide whether or not to allow interjections
Limitations	Competition, and emphasis on taking sides, can be divisive and may inhibit learning for some students.

Rounds

Description	In a round, everyone (including the tutor) makes an uninterrupted statement on a given topic.
When used	When full class participation is required.
Procedure	Everyone must contribute, but may simply say "Pass" if all ideas appear to have been exhausted. No comment or criticism is made until everyone has contributed. Contributions can be in the form of questions
Limitations	Only really successful in groups of twenty or less. Need to choose a topic that won't be exhausted too quickly.

Group roles

Description	Students work in teams or groups, each undertaking a different role.
When used	To encourage interaction, participation, and team work.
Procedure	Each group member is assigned or chooses a role to take on during discussion (roles can be rotated at various points during the discussion, or for the next activity) *Leader* - responsible for keeping group on task. Ensures everyone participates, respects each other, and checks that each group member has mastered the learning points of the exercise. *Recorder* - records notes of discussion, writes out solutions to problems, prepares material for oral presentation to class. *Reporter* - gives oral responses to the class. *Monitor* - keeps group area tidy and acts as timekeeper if necessary. *Wildcard* (in groups of five) - acts as assistant to group leader and assumes the role of any member that may be missing.
Limitations	Some students may feel constrained or overwhelmed by their roles, and shut down as a result. Rotation is important.

Jigsaw

Description	One topic is divided into several parts, each dealt with separately by small groups - often followed by a problem-solving situation where all the knowledge must be utilised in order to succeed.
When used	When topics are so big, abstract or complex that groups have difficulty handling them unless the discussion is structured in manageable chunks.
Procedure	Students work in small groups (expert groups) to master material. The facilitator rotates among groups to answer questions and make sure the material is being mastered and understood. Students return to home groups which consist of one member from each expert group. They teach each other their areas of responsibility and then use the new knowledge to solve a problem, write a group essay or assignment etc.
Limitations	Thought must be given to the make-up of the groups (e.g. a variety of abilities? as different or as similar as possible?). Success depends on the kind of material chosen, how the tasks are distributed (i.e. are the chunks fairly divided up?) and the final problem to be solved.

Pyramids/Think-Pair-Share

Description	Students think about and/or write down their response to a particular issue or question, then work in pairs on the same issues, then in fours, then in larger groups, until the whole class has pooled and shared their ideas, perhaps even reached a consensus.
When used	To encourage interaction among students, especially those who are reluctant to speak in front of the whole group. Often validates students' ideas when they see that others have the same thoughts.
Procedure	Each stage of the pyramid should involve a slightly more complex task, or demand more in-depth thinking of the students, to ensure that students are building on the achievements of the previous stage. This exercise is often called "Think, Pair, Share": two minutes think time, two minutes discussion with a partner, then class discussion.
Limitations	Quieter students' thoughts may get railroaded as the groups get bigger, but at least they've had the opportunity to contribute at the beginning.

Role playing

Description	Individual students take on different roles in a hypothetical or realistic situation, and improvise dialogue and action to fit their views of the situation and character they are playing.
When used	When you want your students to gain greater insight or understanding into a person or situation.
Procedure	Assign various students roles or characters, as well as a situation to role-play. Set the context, and have them discuss the characteristics of the various characters, as well as the issues at the heart of the situation. Then, have them present their role-play to the class, after which discussion, questions, or problem-solving may take place as a large group. Alternatively, you could place a card on each seat before class begins, with the name of a historical or literary or political person on it whose persona the student must adopt for the duration of a set discussion
Limitations	Inexperienced and less confident students may need a lot of structure and direction. Can get out of hand, if students apply a bizarre or exaggerated interpretation to their character. May complicate later discussion because everyone's experiences will be different. Inaccurate or unrealistic role-plays may distort the issue or confuse the audience.

Send-a-problem

Description	Groups pose problems, generate answers, and share opinions.
When used	A good way to get groups to discuss and review material or potential solutions to problems related to content information.
Procedure	1.Each member of a group generates a problem, writes it down on a card with a "Q" next to it, and asks the question of other members. 2.If the question can be answered and all group members of the group agree on the answer, then that answer is written on the back of the card, with an "A" next to it. If there is no consensus on the answer, the question is revised so that an answer can be agreed upon. 3.Each group sends its question cards to another group. 4.After reading the first question, the group discusses it. If the group agrees on the answer, they turn the card over to see if they agree with the first group's answer. If there again is consensus, they proceed to the next question. If they do not agree with the first group's answer, they write their answer on the back as an alternative answer. They follow this procedure until they have read all the first group's cards. 5.The question cards can be sent to a third, fourth, or fifth group, if desired. 6.Stacks of cards are then sent back to the originating group. The sending group can then discuss and clarify any question.
Limitations	Can be time-consuming, and the process needs careful explanation.

Symposium

Description	A discussion in which a topic is broken into various parts: each part is presented by an expert or well-informed person, in a brief, concise speech.
When used	When specific information is desired.
Procedure	Facilitator meets with three of four group members and plans an outline. Participants are introduced and give their reports. The group questions the speakers. Facilitator summarises.
Limitations	Can get off track. The personality of the speakers can overshadow the content of the discussion. A vocal speaker can monopolise the programme. Speaking times must be set and adhered to.

Potential Problems And Possible Solutions
{adapted from Bertola & Murphy (1994), Kidman (1994), and Pettigrove et al. (1993)}.

Class seems reluctant to participate

- Seek feedback and ask why they're not participating. Talk to students outside of class hours.
- Set specific tasks. Use Buzz Groups and Pyramids.
- Give students a few minutes to write down and clarify their ideas or questions before discussion begins.
- Make sure you are facilitating the discussion, not dominating it.
- Give some responsibility to the students for leading and facilitating the discussion. Simply tell them you're not going to talk for half an hour and they can conduct the discussion themselves. Or, pull questions (generated earlier by students) out of a box and have a student facilitate the class discussion until all questions have been answered.

Individual students are silent

- Use open, exploratory questions.
- Call on quiet students specifically, without embarrassing them (don't be too persistent if they don't want to contribute).
- Work more in small groups.
- Use role playing and assign the dominant students the quieter roles.
- Invite students to address one another, and not always go through you.

The best teachers of students are often other students. If you have a painfully shy or silent class member, it is sometimes useful to pair them with an empathic student in the class group....A more confident student draws the other one out and does some in-class coaching. That student will also bring concerns to the tutor's notice that the other student didn't feel comfortable about mentioning. This is another form of peer-tutoring, and one which has mutual benefits for both students. (Kidman, 1994, pp. 23-24)

One student dominates the discussion

If a student voices stereotyped opinions or makes a racist or sexist statement, you should challenge it immediately. If you don't say anything, other students will assume that you are in agreement. They'll be less willing to participate in class discussions if they don't trust you. Don't show that you are angry and avoid long-winded arguments, but be firm. Convince the student that there are other ways of looking at an issue, and then move on. (Kidman, 1994, p. 22)

- Thank the student for his/her contribution, then ask others to speak.
- Use "Rounds" where everyone has a turn.
- Appoint the dominant student as recorder and/or summariser of the discussion.
- Sit next to talkative students so that they're less likely to catch your eye and answer your questions first.
- Work more in small groups.

Students are talking about social events rather than the content

- They may have finished the set task or not found it challenging enough. Assign a further task, or come back together as a large group.
- Change group formations.
- Talk to persistent "distractors" after class.

Students complain about how you run the tutorial

- Seek regular feedback by talking to students before and after class, and by conducting informal (as well as formal) in-class evaluations at various times during the trimester
- Ask for suggestions.
- Brainstorm possible alternatives.
- Explain why you do things.
- Write criticisms and possible solutions on the board.

- Look back at the ground rules/contracts you established with students at the first session, and make sure you're keeping your side of the bargain and students are keeping theirs. Suggest a reassessment (as a class) of the ground rules/contracts if things aren't working well.
- Follow up on all suggestions.

Students don't listen to each other

- Remind them of the ground rules/contracts established in the first class, or suggest the introduction of a new ground rule.
- Restructure groups or change seating arrangements.
- Try a new activity.

Students haven't done the reading or preparation

- At your first session, when you negotiate ground rules or contracts, make sure that completion of required readings and preparation for class make it on to the list. Give students a sense of responsibility and accountability right from the start.
- Spend some time introducing the reading and explaining its relevance to the next class session and to the course as a whole. Stimulate students' interest or curiosity by explaining something about the author, text or context.
- Set some specific questions on which you can "quiz" students at the beginning of the next class.
- Encourage students to keep track of their reading in writing.

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