**Intercultural Aspects of Teaching and Learning: Induction Session for Teaching Staff**

“When I asked what was wrong with my essay, all he said was that he didn’t understand what my essay was about and I had to change it! When I heard that it really broke me and I went to the bathroom crying, because I knew myself I was diligent and I study for long hours.”

(*International postgraduate student who requested a 1-1 Academic Skills consultation at HWU*)

**Discussion A. Diversity in the classroom: intercultural aspects of teaching and learning**

**DISCUSS: Can culture affect the expectations, assumptions or behaviour of** **HE teaching** **staff or students** **in any of the following areas? If so, how? Give examples if possible.**

**Choose topics below to discuss with your group, and prepare to report key ideas in 8 minutes:**

\*The term ‘culture’ is used here in the broadest sense, to refer to the values, beliefs and behaviour of cultural groups of all types, whether within organisations, age groups, differently abled or transnational interest groups.

1. Classroom interaction
2. Group work
3. Student and teacher roles
4. Formative or summative assessment
5. Student autonomy
6. Session/ lecture content
7. Writing: register, rhetorical conventions, genres…
8. Intellectual property and acknowledgement of sources
9. Other?

**Discussion B: Cultural misunderstandings:****What went wrong?**

Choose some of the scenarios below and discuss possible causes of the cultural misunderstanding or issue. Be ready to report your ideas to the rest of the group in **8 minutes:**

1. Student: I usually get A grades for my essays and I attended every single lecture, so I was shocked to get a D in the exam.
2. [After group discussion] Students A: “Students B were slow, boring conversationalists”. Students B: “Students A were rude”. (adapted from Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2005, p.58)
3. Student [knocks on lecturer’s office door]: Hi, I have something I need to discuss. I’ll see you later! Teacher: No, you won’t! [shuts door]
4. A student in your class is polite but doesn’t participate much in group work and seldom gives you eye contact. Why might that be? How could you find out?
5. The students you've been teaching for three weeks were very quiet at the beginning and are still quiet. Most seem able to answer questions related to learning materials so the problem doesn’t seem to be related to lack of comprehension. Why might they be quiet? What steps could you take to make the class more interactive?
6. Some years ago, a relatively inexperienced female HWU Pre-sessional teacher was standing at the white board, explaining something to her class. A male student walked to the front and took the board pen out of her hand. He then turned to the class, saying “I’ll explain it!”

**Task C: Final Group Discussion: planning to maximise the benefits of student diversity**

1. How can teachers:

1. plan sessions to accommodate student diversity (e.g. previous academic culture, academic discipline, age, health, neurological type, gender, personality…)?
2. foster development of a *negotiated class culture* based on mutual respect?

**Write your name and email address here if you’d like to receive a summary of today’s discussion:**

Name:

Email:

\**We’d also be grateful for any feedback on the usefulness of the session or induction materials*. ☺