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1. Learning and teaching at the University of Wollongong

Meeting with your subject coordinator

(Adapted from, *A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ, 2010*)

At your initial meeting with the subject coordinator, make sure that you ask about the following things:

- What skills and knowledge you will need to tutor on this particular subject? Is there any training available? Does the School or Faculty have a designated Tutor Training Coordinator?
- The tutorial program – is there a plan/schedule for the entire semester? How are tutorials conducted? Is there a structured program or learning guide for tutorials? Are you required to develop tutorial plans and materials? You may ask for past examples of tutorial activities so that you can familiarise yourself with your role.
- Can you have copies of all teaching materials, such as textbook/s, course outline, lecture notes (if produced for students), references/readings, lab manuals etc, so that you can prepare in advance of class?
- What is the assessment for the course, and are you required to mark students’ work? – If so, is there a marking scheme/criteria for the assessment task/s, and what is the expected turn-around time for marking?
- Are you expected to attend lectures? Is this part of your paid work or expected as part of your own preparation?
- What resources are you allocated as a staff member – office, phone, photocopying/printing allocations, stationary, library card etc?

It is also a good idea at this initial meeting to ask your subject coordinator if they would be willing to set a number of meeting times with you throughout the semester. Having this regular contact with them serves several purposes, for example:

- You can keep the subject coordinator up-to-date with how students are going in the subject, as you are most often the first ‘port of call’ for students;
- You can keep the subject coordinator informed about your work, and you have an opportunity to discuss any difficulties you may be experiencing;
- You have an opportunity to clarify your understanding of particular aspects of the course such as the assessment, before any problems arise or become worse;
If face-to-face meetings become difficult to schedule, keep contact via email or a brief written report on how you are going. It’s OK to take the initiative to contact the subject coordinator, and they will usually appreciate the effort that you make.

UOW has a ‘Good Practice guideline’ on leading teaching teams. This guide provides useful guidance to faculties and subject co-ordinators in relation to their roles and responsibilities leading casualised teaching teams. The guidelines can be found at http://www.uow.edu.au/about/policy/UOW069338.html

Common concerns for new tutors

- They will think I am too young
  - take no notice of me
  - think I don’t know anything
  - try to take advantage
  - not listen
- I won’t know what to do if they behave badly
  - come late
  - talk
  - disrupt the class
- I may lose control of the class
- They won’t understand me
- I won’t be able to answer their questions.

Characteristics of a ‘good’ tutor

(Compiled from student responses to interviews and surveys)

- Appears confident.
- Treats you with respect.
- Tells us what we are going to do and why it is important.
- Asks students questions.
- Listens carefully.
- Explains clearly.
- Is able to generate discussion, not dominate discussion.
- Leads you through the material without telling you or lecturing you.
- Gives you a chance to answer questions and ask other questions.
- Encourages people to ask questions, even stupid questions without making them look stupid.
- Makes sure you understand what you need to understand without just telling you and leaving you to get on with it.
- Doesn’t assume prior knowledge.
- Clearly explains assessment tasks and assessment criteria and expectations.
- Takes interest in students and their progress.
- Enjoys teaching.
- Is enthusiastic.
- Knows students’ names and talks to them outside of class.
- Marks fairly.
- Gives useful feedback.

**A few tips about confidence and relationships**

*Confidence*

- Most tutors are nervous when they begin tutoring. Most people won’t know if you don’t tell them
- When speaking to the class, insist that they be quiet
- Be friendly and approachable - show students that you really want them to learn
- Walk around and ask them how they are doing

*Respect*

- Treat all students with respect and make sure they treat each other and you in the same way.
- Students will not contribute if they think they will be made to look stupid. Never put students down, even if they get the answer wrong. Appreciate the fact that they are trying and that they are prepared to risk speaking up.

*Model the kind of behaviour you want*

- Insist on treating students as adults.
If you show them trust, respect, openness, honesty, enthusiasm and inclusivity you will generate the same in them.

If you find you are getting annoyed remember it is the behaviour not the student that you are getting annoyed about – and no one can make you annoyed unless you let them. Control your own behaviour.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

- In the first week explain/discuss the role and responsibilities of the tutor and the students. Make this into a handout for them to keep. Give it a title e.g., “Tutorial Guidelines”. Refer to it.
- Discuss the learning environment:
  - How the tutorials will work - e.g. they will be expected to work in pairs, groups, alone at different times, try out ideas, get things wrong sometimes, learn from mistakes
  - What they can expect from you - e.g. you will try to help them learn, make sure everyone gets a fair go, give them feedback, not put them down
  - How they are expected to behave - e.g., respect other students, cooperate with each other, work hard, prepare, be on time etc
- Let students know there is a *Code of Practice - Students* on the web and remind them of their responsibilities according to the Code.

**Listen**

- Listen carefully and check that you understand what they are saying before you respond.

**Make it interesting and active**

- Students are more likely to cause you problems if they are bored, can’t see the point, can’t hear you etc. Make it interesting and involving for them and try to have some fun in class. Make sure they are doing more work than you are.
- Show your enthusiasm - explain what’s in it for them and why they will need it.
Break the ice

- It is really important to set up a safe, inclusive learning environment where students can work together comfortably. This means they need some time to be introduced, get to know each other and talk about something “non-threatening”.
- Ask each person to introduce themselves around the room – name, what it means, where they are from, what they want to do when they complete their degree. A good idea is to put up a map and ask them to mark places they come from. If the tutorial is large they might break into two or four groups for the introductions. This approach ensures people have met some of the class members.
2. Your first class

Checklist for new tutors – surviving your first class

(Taken from, A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ, 2010)

- **Get organised** (find out where the room is, make sure it has the things you need in it, organise materials such as overheads, whiteboard pens, USB, etc).
- **Prepare material thoroughly** (read the material and think about it – what questions would you ask about it, etc).
- **Dress and behave appropriately** (dress to assert authority and credibility, and behave in a professional manner at all times).
- **Prepare an icebreaker activity** (get to know the students, and allow them to get to know you – see below for ideas).
- **Make a strong start** (be aware that nerves will be worst at the beginning – have some strategies to cope with these – overheads with information on them such as your name and contact details, an outline of the tutorial session and objectives, what’s going to happen, etc – take a deep breath, it won't be as bad as you think!).
- Talk to the group about your **expectations** of them, and ask about what expectations they have of you. Consider getting the group to **establish a set of ground-rules** for their class (see below for ideas).
- **Facilitate** the tutorial session, don't dominate.

And, don’t forget to **reflect on your first tutorial** session – How did it go? Did you achieve all your objectives and get through all the necessary material? What went well? What did you enjoy and what did the students seem to enjoy? What could be improved for next time? Celebrate...you'll never be a new tutor again!

**Introductory activities – Ice breakers**

(Taken from, A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ, 2010)

Introductory activities have been designed to help people to get to know one another when they come together as a group for the first time. They are sometimes known as 'ice-breakers' or 'warm-ups'. Just as you, the tutor, will feel nervous about meeting the students for the first time, often the students also have anxieties about who will be in the group, how they will be seen, and may feel reluctant to take any risks in participating until they feel more comfortable.
These introductory activities are a good way of setting the 'tone' for the sessions; showing your students that you wish to establish a relaxed atmosphere and engender a spirit of fun as people talk to one another, participate in activities, and learn from each other. However it’s important to take into account students' expectations and past experiences (and your own! You may have had negative experiences with these kind of activities as a student yourself) and select the activities with which you think your group would be comfortable with. So, if in doubt, select an activity that isn’t too risk-taking, requiring a great deal of self-disclosure or participants to have the whole group’s attention on them specifically.

**Introducing your neighbour**

When people are sitting in a circle, ask them to form into pairs. Each person in the pair tells their partner something about themselves; where they work, their family, etc. Once this is done, each person then introduces their neighbour to the large group.

**I like ...**

Have people sitting in a circle. One person begins by saying his or her name and favourite food. For example, "I'm Sasha and I like bananas". The next person repeats what has been said and then adds their name and food. The third person then has to remember the previous two people's name and their favourite food before adding their name and favourite food. And so it goes on until the last person (a tutor) has to recall everyone's name and favourite food.

**Soul-mates**

Have people think of three things, for example their favourite food; favourite name for a girl; favourite song. They then have to go round the rest of the group trying to find someone who likes the same three things as they do.

**Catch my name**

Have the group sitting in a circle and pass round a ball. As people take it they say their name loudly for all to hear. When this is done, the rule changes; people then throw the ball to another person. The person catching it has to say the name of the thrower. If they cannot remember they have to find out the person's name before they throw the ball to someone else.
Once again, that person has to say the name of the thrower. The game continues until everyone's name is known.

**Your number's up**

With the group sitting in a large circle, number them from one to five; then start again at one and carry on until everyone has a number except one or two people. They go into the middle. The tutor calls out one number and those people have to change seats. As they do, the people in the middle try to find a seat and they then become that number. The game continues until everyone is well warmed-up!

**Name bingo**

This is a great game to get people up and moving around, talking to each other. Give everyone a sheet of paper and pen on which are drawn nine squares (three by three). People have to collect the autographs of nine people in the room (one per square) and as they do, find out a little about them. When everyone has filled their squares; the tutor then calls out the names of people in the group. If people have that name in one of their squares, they mark it off. The winner is the first person who has the names of three people in a row or column. They have to introduce the three people to the rest of the group.

**Person Bingo**

This is a variation of Name Bingo and works on the same principles of bingo with numbers, so the instructions are easy. Fill each square with a characteristic/interest/hobby and have your students find a person in the group to match each one of the squares, and then yell bingo! Use only one name per square, and try and use each name only once.

**Remembering students’ names**

*(Taken from, *A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ, 2010)*

One of the greatest challenges at the beginning of a new semester is coping with new students' names. No matter how large the class it is worth persevering so students have a sense that you care about them as individuals, and this can help create the kind of atmosphere that facilitates learning. Here are some suggestions to assist in coping with the challenge of learning names (or at least some names):
Name Badges – These can be given out as people arrive. Write the names in large print so that they are easy-to-read. Sticky labels can be used as name badges.

Have students sit in the same seats for the first few weeks until you are able to match names with faces. Pass around a seating chart for students to fill in (warn them that joke names will not be appreciated!).

Have students give their name before they speak. This can be continued until everyone (both teacher and students) feels they know each other.

Use students’ names as often as possible.

Have students make place cards on the first day of class that can sit on the desk in front of them.

Take a class photograph of students and cut them up and put their photograph beside their name on the class list.

Have students introduce themselves to the class by a descriptive adjective – eg. Gorgeous Greg, Brilliant Betty.

Establishing expectations and/or ground rules

(Taken from, A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ, 2010)

Often problems arise with students because of unclear expectations about your role as a tutor and about their role as a student and a member of the class. Establishing expectations or ground-rules at the beginning of semester can help clarify these expectations and help in maintaining a good working relationship between you and the group, individual students, and among the students themselves.

If you feel uncomfortable using the term, ‘ground-rules’ with university students, as sometimes this may seem or be perceived as juvenile, then use the term expectations. Getting the students to generate the ground rules themselves (with input from you as the tutor, of course) can also help to establish rules that will be more likely to be kept by the group, as students will feel like you trusted and valued their perspectives.

A set of ground-rules can be a helpful tool when having to deal with difficult situations at a later date – for example, if some students are dominating discussion or behaving inappropriately, being able to refer back to the ground-rules that the students themselves negotiated can be quite powerful in getting back control of the class. It’s also quite useful to
review the ground-rules during the semester, to get feedback from students on how they think things are going, if there are any rules that aren’t working or any rules that should be added.

Here are some possible ground-rules (for the tutor and the students):

- everyone will be on time
- respect each other’s point of view
- listen to each other, and don’t interrupt when another person is speaking
- don’t criticise or ‘put down’ another person
- come prepared for each class
- turn off mobile phones
3. Understanding student learning

What do students learn?

(Taken from, A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ, 2010)

According to research (e.g., Arnold et al, 1991; Laird, 1985) generally students retain:

- 20% of what they hear
- 30% of what they see
- 50% of what they see and hear
- 70% of what they see, hear and say
- 90% of what they see, hear, say and do

As Confucius says, "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand". Consequently, effective learning is most likely to occur if students have the opportunity to hear a lecture or discussion, see a demonstration or visual display, discuss the material, and have an opportunity to do something with this material. ‘Doing’ something is what we call ‘active learning’, engaging with the learning material through activities by themselves and with other students.

Therefore, in universities where the common structure for a course of study comprises lectures and tutorials or lab sessions, the role of the tutor and the tutorial becomes vital for the learning process. It is the small group environment of the tutorial that can provide most opportunities for students to ‘say’ and ‘do’, what they have seen and heard in the lecture.

However, not all students learn in the same way. The next section will discuss some key ideas relating to the ways in which students approach their learning.

How do students approach their learning?

(Taken from, A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ, 2010)

There are a variety of models that explain the different ways in which students approach their learning, most reflecting different activities or strategies that students use and the motivations behind using them. The following is an example of one framework developed by Richardson...
(1990) based on work by Ramsden and Entwistle (1981), which includes a questionnaire called the Approaches to Study Inventory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep approach</td>
<td>Active questioning in learning – “I usually set out to understand thoroughly the meaning of what I am asked to read”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension learning</td>
<td>Readiness to map out the subject and think divergently – “In trying to understand an idea, I let my imagination wander freely to begin with, even if I don’t seem to be much nearer a solution”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating ideas</td>
<td>Relating information to other parts of the course or beyond – “I try to relate ideas in one subject to those in others, or to real life situations”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of evidence and logic</td>
<td>Relating evidence to conclusion – “Puzzles or problems fascinate me, particularly when you have to work through the material to reach a logical conclusion”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reproducing Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface approach</td>
<td>Preoccupation with memorising – “The best way for me to understand what technical terms mean is to remember the textbook definition”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvidence</td>
<td>Over-cautious reliance on details – “Tutors seem to want me to be more adventurous in making use of my own ideas”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of failure</td>
<td>Pessimism and anxiety about academic outcomes – “The continual pressure of study and assignments, deadlines and competition often makes me tense and depressed”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus-boundness</td>
<td>Relying on staff to define learning tasks – “I like to be told precisely what to do in essays or other assignments”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Taken from, *A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ*, 2010, p.12)

Another very well known model of student approaches to learning is by John Biggs (1987) who developed the Study Process Questionnaire (SPQ) to measure an individual student’s typical learning style. Like Richardson’s model above, the SPQ contains the surface and the Deep approaches, but also includes an achieving approach to learning. Each approach is a combination of ‘motive’ (motivation) and ‘strategy’ (action). Here is a description of each approach;
Studies of student learning show that often the approach adopted by students is strongly influenced by factors in the environment, the teaching method, or the nature of the subject, such as the type of assessment used, the workload required, feedback received, the enthusiasm of the teacher, or a large amount of content to be covered in the subject (e.g. first year biology or chemistry).

Research also shows that the learning approach adopted by students is often closely related to the quality of their learning and their academic achievement – students who have a surface approach to learning, being extrinsically motivated and focussed on facts and details rather than understanding and relating concepts, and developing an interest for in what is being learned, will normally achieve a lower quality learning outcome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surface</td>
<td><em>Extrinsically motivated</em> – (often to avoid failure) by assessment requirements and the need to “pass”, seeing study as a means to an end such as a job, balancing not working too hard with passing.</td>
<td>Focuses often on only the bare essentials, the facts and details (rather than making connections between them and seeing the structure of what is being learned), in order to reproduce the information accurately, and often use memorising strategies. They aim to meet assessment requirements but often only to minimum standards, and appear to be focused on passing the assessment instead of learning and understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep</td>
<td><em>Intrinsically motivated</em> – usually to satisfy personal curiosity and interest in the topic.</td>
<td>Aim to maximise their own understanding of concepts, and make sense of what they are learning. They read widely, discuss ideas with others, reflect on different perspectives, relating ideas together and making connections with previous experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving or Strategic</td>
<td><em>Motivated to achieve academically, often linked to ego and self-esteem, and wish to obtain high grades or other rewards/recognition.</em></td>
<td>Optimise their organisation of time and effort and choose the most efficient and effective strategy for particular tasks (while memorising is often considered a surface strategy, it depends on the intention, and is often a part of the achieving approach if the most efficient and effective way of learning the particular material). They identify the assessment criteria and estimate the learning effort required to achieve a particular grade. Often follow up all suggested readings/exercises, scheduling time and organising workspace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Taken from, *A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ*, 2010, p.13)
Teachers can influence these factors to varying degrees. For example, we can discourage disinterest and extrinsic motivation, and encourage intrinsic interest by sharing our own passion and enthusiasm for the subject, emphasising its relevance to their overall program of study and their career goals, particularly in designing interesting activities and assessment tasks that help students to make connections between the subject and the 'real world' of work or the profession.

It is the making of connections between ideas that distinguishes between surface and deep approaches to learning, and hence, the quality of students’ learning. We can also see now why students retain more knowledge if they see, hear, say and do; that the more students ‘say’ and ‘do’, the more they are like to make sense of the information for themselves, develop an understanding of the material and relate information learned to other parts of the subject or beyond. These ideas are brought together in the following section on theories and principles of learning.

**Theories and principles of learning**

(Taken from, *A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ, 2010*)

Recent developments in student learning have been primarily based on a **constructivist** philosophy, whereby effective learners are considered to be the determinants of what is learnt. From this ‘learner-centred’ view, the teacher's role is that of a facilitator of the learning, and the prior ability and knowledge of the learner determines the learner's approach to a learning task. Learners take an active role in the learning process, particularly for those who choose to be engaged in meaningful learning where their intentions become more significant than those of the teacher (Moon, 1999).

According to the constructivist view of learning, the effective learner constructs their own knowledge and the knowledge is conceived to be organized like a network (i.e., cognitive structure) rather than a bucket of information contained in memory. Students utilise what they already know (their prior knowledge) in helping the learning of new material and integrating or assimilating it with their existing knowledge – they build on what they already know and are more likely to engage in meaningful learning.
Meaningful learning (or deep learning) occurs when the learner intends to understand the learning material and make sense of it in terms of what they already know and experience, and to utilise this knowledge in new situations. This is in contrast to rote learning or learning by memorizing (or surface learning) which occurs when the learner does not, or cannot, relate the material of learning to prior knowledge and instead learns isolated bits of knowledge such as facts and details.

Given these notions about how students learn, here are some key principles of learning that are important foundations for effective teaching and learning (Angelo, 1998; Biggs, 1999).

1) **Learners need guidance and support**, and benefit from being given some basic structure from which to grow their knowledge from - having 'sign posts' pointing out key information is crucial if it is to be learned.

2) **Learning is best facilitated when students’ prior knowledge is 'cued'**, so that they can begin to assimilate new information in an organised way that relates to their existing knowledge.

3) **Learning occurs through communication and social interaction**, and students should be encouraged to share, question, reflect on and challenge ideas so that their knowledge is modified and advanced.

4) **Learning is not a 'spectator sport'** and students need to act on information for it to become meaningful and integrated with their existing knowledge.

5) **Deep understanding occurs when students are able to apply their knowledge to new situations**, and this kind of learning occurs through practising with this information many times in different contexts.

6) **Students learn better when they are aware of their own learning processes**, the strategies they use, and if they continually monitor their understanding.

(Taken from, *A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ, 2010, p.15*)

**Adult Learners**

(Taken from, *A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ, 2010*)

Research shows that adults, as mature-age students, have some common characteristics. One of the major differences between mature-age students and university students who have moved on straight from high-school, is that adults have much more work and life experience. Their experiences can be an excellent resource and contribution for the class, and the teacher
should try to capitalise on this and integrate these rich work and life experiences into the learning environment.

Adults also often have a real sense of purpose for their learning that is sometimes quite different from younger students. They are often wanting to change their career, or have come to university after many years at work, and may not be learning ‘just for learning’s sake’, and have a very clear idea of what they want to do when they finish studying. This is in contrast to high-school leavers who often don’t really know what career or occupation they want to pursue. Adult students are often extremely motivated, and they are spending their own time, money and resources to study. They may have given up work to study, but still have family to support, so are dedicated to passing each subject. Adult students tend to be very focused in the classroom and like to cover material quickly, but completely.

All students, but particularly mature-are students, need to feel valued and respected by not just the teacher but also their fellow students. Set an example for in the class and treat them as individuals with a mature outlook, successful in their work, and with a variety of experiences. If the adult students have not been in a formal learning situation for a while, their self-esteem may be fragile. They may approach learning with some fear as their past learning experiences may have been negative.

Here are some key principles for adult learners – they prefer learning environments that:

1. are active, practice/problem-based, rather than passive (e.g., listening or watching).
2. support and promote positive self-esteem.
3. enable them to integrate new ideas with what they already know.
4. show respect for them as individual learners.
5. value their experiences and perspectives and contributions.
6. allow them choice and self-direction, and is meaningful for them and their needs.
7. reinforce their learning, and enables them to apply their learning immediately.


The following diagram represents a model of the Adult Learning Cycle (based on what is the called the Action Learning Cycle), but it represents a good model for all learning and can be used to plan individual tutorial sessions, and well as the overall semester program. It reflects the constructivist view, and incorporates four stages of learning. Guiding learners
through this cycle will help promote a learning environment that supports the adoption of meaningful or deep learning approaches.

from: http://oesi.nci.nih.gov/services.cted/trainersguide/Trainers_1_m.pdf

(Taken from, A Tutor's Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ, 2010, p.17)
5. Strategies and skills for small group teaching

This section of the handbook offers several strategies for encouraging active student participation.

Questioning skills

Why ask questions?

(Taken from, The Melbourne Sessional Teachers handbook, 2009)

Questioning is a vital facilitation skill for teachers, and it is a useful strategy for encouraging active learning. A good questioning technique will allow you to:

- arouse students’ interest in a topic or issue;
- assess the level of students' existing knowledge;
- check students’ understanding of concepts and theories;
- assist students to review and make links to previous classes;
- prompt discussion and debate;
- develop students’ communication skills;
- challenge students to defend their positions and refine their argument;
- stimulate creative and critical thinking;
- involve all students actively in learning; and
- clarify and confirm what students have said.

Becoming skilled at using questions comes with considerable practice and experience. You can start to improve your skills in this area by planning and preparing the types of questions you will ask during the class. There are several factors to consider in using questions effectively:

1) Use a range of questions pitched at an appropriate level

The type of questions you ask will depend on the purpose for asking them. Broadly speaking, there are two types of questions: closed questions and open questions.

Closed questions - e.g. Did the author explain the limitations of his methodology? Did profits increase or decrease? These questions require a one-word answer – either ‘yes’ or ‘no’, or a choice between alternatives that you offer. While teachers are generally advised to limit their use of closed questions – as these kinds of questions
do not encourage extended responses from students – they can be useful as a way of giving students a hint or starting point, especially if students are struggling to answer an open question.

**Open questions** – e.g. What did the author say about his methodology? Why did the venture fail? These types of questions invite a more detailed response and encourage deeper levels of thinking and understanding.

Often when students do not respond to a teacher’s questions, this is because the question is not pitched at an appropriate level or it is too general and vague. Try to vary the types and level of questions you use to encourage students with different capabilities to participate. A useful guide to the different levels of questions is Bloom’s Taxonomy of the cognitive domain:

- **Knowledge** – e.g. Who were the key composers of the Baroque period? What does ceteris paribus mean in Economics?
- **Comprehension** – e.g. What’s another way of saying this? How would you explain this?
- **Application** – e.g. How would this apply in a construction site? How could you apply this theory in your work?
- **Analysis** – e.g. What factors contributed to this problem? Why did the company’s strategy fail?
- **Synthesis** – e.g. How do all these ideas relate? What conclusions can we draw from these various perspectives?
- **Evaluation** – e.g. Based on the company’s stated goals, how effective has the marketing campaign been?

It is often a good idea to build the complexity of questions gradually. In other words, start with a straightforward, simple question and then build on students’ responses to ask more complex questions that require analysis or synthesis and critical thinking. For example:

```
What two issues does Lee raise in his article?
↓
Why are these problematic?
↓
How do these relate to the ethical issues raised by Anderson?
↓
How effectively has she argued her case?
```
2) Allow time for students to respond

It is important to give students time to think about and process the questions you ask. One of the common mistakes made by inexperienced teachers is not allowing enough ‘wait time’ after asking a question. This often results in the teacher answering his/her own question or abandoning the question and moving on to the next one.

Remember to give students enough time – at least a few seconds – to respond to your questions. In other words, do not be afraid of short silences. If you do not get a response the first time, ask the questions again or ask it in a different way. You can also give students a minute or two to think about a question – e.g. I’m going to give you a minute to think about this question and then I’m going to ask for some responses.

3) Respond appropriately to answers

Teachers play an important role in creating an environment in which students feel comfortable to answer questions, contribute to class discussion and ask questions themselves. One way to do this is to consistently give positive feedback to students who answer questions or contribute to the discussion (e.g. ‘well done’, ‘very good point’, ‘yes’, ‘that’s right’ etc.). This kind of immediate feedback encourages student participation and the ‘risk-taking’ involved in volunteering answers and comments.

It is also important to respond appropriately to students who offer an incorrect or inappropriate response. If part of the student’s response is adequate, acknowledge this before pointing out where the gaps or mistakes are – e.g. ‘You’re on the right track, but have you thought of ...?’ Another approach is to ask students to explain their point or give examples – e.g. ‘Can you explain what you mean by ....’, or ‘Can you explain how you worked that out?’ This will help you to clarify specific gaps in the student’s response. Also, invite contributions from other students - e.g. ‘Did anyone take a different approach?’ ‘Does anyone have a different view?’ etc. Students can feel embarrassed or discouraged when they have volunteered incorrect answers so remember to be encouraging and perhaps remind them that the material is designed to be challenging.
Facilitating small-group activities

(Taken from, *The Melbourne Sessional Teachers handbook, 2009*)

Facilitating small group activities in class can be a useful way to encourage active participation by all students. Breaking up the class into smaller groups of 3-5 students or pairs allows students – particularly those who are more reticent and reluctant to speak in larger groups – to articulate their views or compare their responses to questions in a smaller, non-threatening group. This allows students to learn from their peers and to develop important generic skills such as communication skills, critical thinking, problem solving and teamwork. More importantly however, small-group activities provide students with opportunities to interact with and learn from their peers. This is widely acknowledged as being an important factor in student engagement: ‘the more frequently students interact with peers in the learning community in educationally purposeful ways, the more likely they are to engage with their learning’ (Krause, 2005, p.25).

There are numerous useful resources that provide many more ideas and suggestions for small group activities. Here are a few examples of the kinds of small group activities you can facilitate in class.

**Buzz groups**

Students form small groups of 3 or 4 to work on a set question or problem. Buzz groups can be used in small group teaching settings to:

- review course material – e.g. 3 minutes at the beginning of class to list 3 main points from the lecture or last week’s class
- compare answers to questions - e.g. 5-10 minutes to compare answers to problem solving activities or tutorial exercises
- brainstorm and share ideas on a particular question, issue or problem
- solve a specific problem or complete an exercise

When facilitating buzz groups, it is useful to give students an indication of the time they have to do the activity and the way in which you want them to report back – e.g. ‘*a spokesperson from each group to give a 2 minute report*’ or ‘*two points from each group*’ etc. Doing this will help students focus on the task at hand. It is also useful when you have a set of questions...
to cover in the session, to allocate a specific question/s to each group. You can then ask students from each group to present their response to the rest of the class.

**Pyramid discussion**

As the name suggests, this technique involves building up the number of students in the group from one to the whole class. This technique is particularly useful for discussing a ‘big’ or contentious issue, solving a complex problem, or when the objective of the activity is negotiating to reach consensus.

Pyramid discussions work as follows:

1. Students are given a few minutes to think about the question/problem individually and to jot down a few notes.
2. Students form pairs and share their ideas, reach a consensus or work on the problem at hand.
3. After a short period of time (at least 10 minutes), pairs join to form groups of four. Again, the aim is to share ideas, solve the problem or reach consensus.
4. Then, a group of four students joins another group of four to make a group of eight and continue the discussion. Depending on the time you have, you may prefer to skip this step.

**Jigsaw activity**

This technique is particularly useful for discussing case studies involving various perspectives, solving a problem with different parts, or when there are a number of set readings to discuss in class. The group size will depend on the number of parts or tasks in the activity. Here is an example of how the jigsaw technique works when you have 3 articles or case studies to discuss:

1. The three texts (A, B, C) are distributed to the class so that a third of the students have text A, a third have text B and a third have text C. Ask students to read the text individually either at home as preparation for next week or, if the text is very short, give students 5 minutes to read during class.
2. Students who have read text A form groups of 3-4 to discuss the main points or questions concerning the text; those who have read text B form groups with other text B students and the same with students who have read text C.

3. After 10-15mins, students are asked to form groups of 3 so that each different text is represented in the group. In other words, each group should consist of a student who read text A, a student who read text B and a student who read text C. Then each student takes turns to explain the main points from the text they read.

If you have time, it can be useful to conclude the activity by bringing the whole class together to review the main points/issues.

**Leading problem solving sessions**

(Taken from, *The Melbourne Sessional Teachers handbook, 2009*)

In a number of disciplines, small group teaching involves working on a set of problems that have usually been set by the subject coordinator or lecturer and distributed to students before the class. These classes can pose several challenges for the teacher, especially when students come to class expecting to get all the solutions to the problem. In this situation, it can be easy for teachers to fall into the pattern of going through all the set questions on the board while students busily copy the answers. This is particularly the case when there is a large number of set questions and teachers may feel there is not enough time for peer-interaction and group work.

Another common concern of teachers in these settings is knowing where to ‘pitch’ the lesson when half the students have attempted the problems before coming to class and the other half haven’t. What can you do to encourage more active involvement from students in problem solving sessions? Here are a few suggestions:

- From the first session, make it clear to students that you will be running the classes on the assumption that students will have attempted the problems before coming to class. Emphasise that the sessions will be more valuable for students (especially in preparing for exams) if they prepare beforehand.
- Avoid the temptation to do all the work yourself. Go through the problems together and elicit responses by asking a series of questions rather than doing all the explaining yourself –e.g. *In order to calculate the exact percentage gain or loss what do we
have to do? .... OK, how do we calculate the percentage gain or loss if the yield increases by 25 basis points? ‘

➢ Even if it is clear that most of the students have not prepared for the class, ensure that they are doing more than just ‘getting the answers’. One suggestion is to say something like ‘Ok, I can see that most of you have not done your tute work so I’ll give you 5 minutes to quickly attempt question one’. While students are working on the problem, those students who have prepared the questions can form groups and compare their answers/approach. Doing this will ensure that both groups of students are involved and working in class.

➢ Vary the way you go through the set of problems. For example, give students 5 minutes to work in pairs to compare their answers to a question before going through the answer yourself. Then when you go through the answers with the whole class, students will be more ready and willing to contribute. Another suggestion is to allocate questions to students in pairs or small groups and ask them to explain the answer or write their calculations on the board or on overhead transparency (which you have provided). While they are doing this, you can go around and monitor their progress – this will help you to check individual students’ understanding and assist if they are struggling.

If it seems like there are too many problems to cover in the session, prioritise and focus on the problems that are worth exploring, or ask students which problem caused them the most difficulty and start with this one. It is much better to cover a few problems in depth and help students to consolidate their understanding, than to go through a long list of problems at a superficial level. If you are concerned that you should be addressing all the set problems, then perhaps you could prepare solution sheets for the more straightforward questions and distribute these at the end of class or put them on the LMS after the class. Before you do this however, remember to speak to your subject coordinator he/she may have different expectations or suggest other strategies for leading the problem solving session.

Facilitating student presentations

(Taken from, The Melbourne Sessional Teachers handbook, 2009)

In many small-group teaching settings, students are required to give a presentation or a seminar paper. While this ensures the active participation of the student presenting, it often
leads to a ‘flat’ classroom atmosphere where the presenter is reading from prepared notes and the audience is sitting quietly looking disengaged. How can you facilitate student presentations to encourage active listening and stimulate discussion? The following suggestions may be helpful.

➤ Provide guidance on giving oral presentations. Have a class discussion on what constitutes a good presentation. For example, talk about the importance of:

- stating the purpose/aim of the presentation;
- having a clear and logical structure;
- engaging with the audience through appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication – e.g. speaking clearly, maintaining eye contact, etc.;
- using notes appropriately – i.e. not reading word for word;
- having good quality visuals (if the student is planning to use visual aids); &
- keeping to the time limit.

➤ Give students a time limit for their presentations and for follow-up questions and discussion. Let them know how you will be handling this – i.e. Will you be signalling when there is one minute left? Will you ask students to pose questions at the end? etc.

➤ Ask presenters to include a question for the class or a short activity (if appropriate) during the presentation.

➤ Give the audience specific tasks to do while listening to the presentation – e.g. ‘think of three discussion questions’; ‘list three points that were new or relevant to you.’ etc. You can then ask for the audience’s contribution after the presentation.

➤ Design a short peer-feedback form for the students in the audience to complete during the presentation. For example, the form might consist of three open-ended questions:

- What did the presenter do well?
- How could the presentation have been improved?
- What was the most interesting part of the presentation for you?

At the end of the presentation, these forms can be collected and given to the presenter as peer feedback.
Facilitating laboratories and practical classes

(Taken from James and Baldwin, 1997)

Preparing for a practical class is much the same as getting ready to tutor, but there are some specific issues to bear in mind. Clearly you must be thoroughly familiar with the procedures that students will follow and the learning objectives of the session.

In the first instance, you must ensure that you can smoothly guide students through the set tasks in the available time. Give some thought to the sequence of events and the likely time that each stage will take - this will help you to keep students focused. Learn to spot possible blockages and warn students of them, for even tried-and-true experiments might have steps that students find difficult to understand or execute.

Ensure that you are totally confident about explaining equipment usage. This may mean testing equipment beforehand to check that you are able to explain the key features quickly, clearly and without any fumbling around. Watch out for any areas in which there are risks and point these out to students.

A major part of the demonstrator's role is to engage students with the theory and the assumptions that are relevant to each exercise. To prepare for this, give some thought to how you will introduce the session, if this is your role. In particular, think about how you can make connections with previous activities or the associated lecture series. It is also a good idea to think about the type of probing questions that you can ask students during the session to prompt their thinking and to help them explore the principles underlying the tasks for the day. There is more advice on your role as 'questioner' elsewhere in the handbook.

The role of the demonstrator

(Taken from, The Melbourne Sessional Teachers handbook, 2009)

What is the role of the demonstrator? Some people don't consider demonstrating to be teaching, but it most surely is. Unfortunately, the term 'demonstrator' is misleading because it tends to conjure up images of someone who shows students certain techniques and methods, which students presumably later replicate.
Certainly, demonstrators are expected to explain techniques with which students may not be familiar (if only for expediency's sake), and it is usually necessary to instruct students in the operation of laboratory equipment if students are using it for the first time. But the role of demonstrator hardly ends there. In fact, effective demonstrators play many roles in the laboratory, and the opportunities this form of teaching provides for one-to-one interaction or discussion in small groups make for rewarding experiences.

One of the other myths about demonstrating is that it is a less intensive task than tutoring. This is not the case. It is important to see the role of demonstrator in active terms - don't imagine that you will be able to stand back and play trouble-shooter while students work more or less autonomously. You may well be able to do this, but this is not the role for which you are employed. Your role is to teach - to make contact one-to-one with all students each session, to probe student understanding, to be intellectually provocative, and so on. Effective demonstrators have a great deal of get-up-and-go, and are a friendly thorn in the students' side.

**Demonstrator roles**

(Taken from, *The Melbourne Sessional Teachers handbook, 2009*)

- **Questioner** - Perhaps the most significant role of demonstrators is to probe student understanding of theoretical and conceptual principles. Laboratory exercises should not be conducted mechanically without an eye for the central principle. In the main part, the demonstrator's role is to remind students of the intent of the exercise and to invite them to make connections to the bigger picture. This means employing a comprehensive questioning technique.

- **Expert consultant** - Students also need answers and clear direction. Students may need someone to turn to if they are unsure about procedural steps, uncertain about what they are expected to observe or record, or unclear about the objectives of the learning experience. The demonstrator needs to be on hand and willing to offer expert, authoritative advice and commentary.

- **Salvage agent** - Occasionally (or maybe even regularly) things will go awry. Equipment does not always perform as expected, experiments may not turn up what was anticipated, and mishaps can occur. Treat these serendipities as opportunities for
learning! Bear in mind, and stress to students, that the learning outcomes for a practical class are more to do with the process than an end product.

- **Time manager** - Time is precious in many laboratory classes and students must work to a tight schedule. Even though students have responsibilities for their own time management, demonstrators probably should play a role too. This means keeping an eye on the progress of individuals and groups, and identifying and heading off potential blockage points in the procedures.

- **Professional model** - It is easy to overlook the fact that students see you as a role model. Your attitude towards inquiry, the reporting of findings, your behaviour in the lab, all send messages about the standards of the scientific method and what it is to be a professional in your discipline.

- **Person of responsibility** - Don't forget that in most labs there are health and safety considerations. You need to be familiar with procedures for an emergency and for the reporting of accidents. Take note of the location of fire extinguishers, fire blankets, safety showers and other safety equipment. You may need to be the first to act in an accident or emergency. As a precaution, remind students of hazards in any procedure they are undertaking, and point out the safety features of the laboratory. (James and Baldwin, 1997)

### A three-point questioning technique for labs and practical classes

(Taken from, *The Melbourne Sessional Teachers handbook, 2009*)

1) Procedural questions that ensure student endeavours are focused:
   
   a. For how long will you heat this?
   
   b. What should be the concentration of the salt solution?

2) Prompting questions, encouraging student engagement:
   
   a. Have you thought about...?
   
   b. Are you remembering to look for...?

3) Probing questions, to explore student understanding:
   
   a. What do you predict will occur?
   
   b. What would you expect to happen if...?
   
   c. How would you design an experiment to...?
6. Strategies for dealing with difficult behaviour

Dealing with difficult situations: FAQs

(Taken from, The Melbourne Sessional Teachers handbook, 2009)

*I ask a range of questions in every class but students don’t respond so I end up answering my own questions and doing most of the talking. What else can I do?*

When students do not respond to questions, a common response by teachers is to give up on asking questions and revert to mini-lecturing mode. Avoid the temptation to do this and try to persevere with questioning. Some teachers call on individual students to answer questions when they don’t get a response from the whole class. Although this can be a useful strategy if you know the students quite well, it can also have the unintended effect of making some students feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. A much better strategy would be to repeat or rephrase questions that you ask to the whole group and wait for responses. If after a short time, you still get no responses, then give students a couple of minutes to think about the questions – e.g. ‘This is a tricky question so I’m going to give you one minute to think about it, perhaps talk to the person next to you and then I’m going to ask for responses.’

If students are generally not responsive to your questions, you may have to think about the type of question you are asking: Are you starting with a question that is too complex or difficult? Would it be useful to give a hint or start with a simpler, straightforward question and build the complexity of questions from there?

*Every time we have a class discussion, the same couple of students dominate. How can I ensure that the quieter students have an opportunity to contribute?*

This is where small-group activities or pair work can be useful as they give all students the opportunity to interact with peers and contribute to the discussion. If you find that the same couple of students dominate small group discussion, then think about getting the groups to assign roles. For example, you could ask groups to choose someone to take notes and a spokesperson to report back, emphasising that they should choose ‘someone we haven’t heard from before’.

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Knowing students’ names can also help you manage the situation – e.g. ‘Thanks Ben, can we hear from someone who we haven’t heard from today? What do you think about it Susan. Do you agree with Li?’ etc.

Of course you need to do this tactfully and take care not to make individual students feel uncomfortable by singling them out, but keep in mind that when used appropriately, names can be a very powerful tool for managing classroom dynamics.

One of my students is quite rude and disruptive and I feel that it’s creating some tension in the class. How can I resolve this?

There are no foolproof strategies for dealing with disruptive behaviour as this will depend largely on your classroom management style and confidence to deal with the problem, as well as the nature of the disruptive behaviour the student is displaying. Behaviour that constitutes sexism, racism or bullying cannot be tolerated and you need to speak to the student immediately (outside of class), informing him/her that the behaviour is unacceptable at the University. You can refer the student to the various university policies that deal with discrimination (see Chapter 10 of this handbook). If the behaviour continues, seek advice from your subject coordinator or sessional staff coordinator.

Remember that the students in your class look to you for leadership so you need to handle difficult situations with confidence and maturity. This means not showing your frustration or annoyance and avoiding direct confrontations with students if possible. If a student is constantly disagreeing with you or trying to undermine your leadership of the class, and you have tried the subtle strategies mentioned in this section of the handbook, then ask to speak to the student outside of class. Be honest with the student about the effect of his/her behaviour on the class and give him/her the opportunity to voice any grievances he/she may have. Try to adopt a gentle, collegial tone and avoid blaming or accusing the student of bad behaviour. If the classroom atmosphere does not improve in the next week or so, consider talking to the whole class and revisiting the discussion on roles/expectations. Also, seek advice and support from your coordinator.
7. Teaching international students

International students account for approximately 30 per cent of the total student population at the University and they come from more than 100 countries including China, Saudi Arabia, India, Canada, Pacific Islands, and Africa. For the majority of these students, English is a second or additional language.

This section offers advice and strategies for teaching international students and is taken from a larger guide, *Teaching International Students*, developed by Sophie Arkoudis (2006).

**Creating opportunities for small group participation**

(Taken from, *The Melbourne Sessional Teachers handbook, 2009*)

It has been widely observed that international students may appear hesitant in contributing to group discussions. This is not necessarily because this is their preferred learning style. International students often report that they would like to participate but lack the confidence to do so. This could be in part due to their lack of familiarity with how to contribute to an academic discussion or their perceived lack of English language skills. Contributing to discussions can be seen as a risky undertaking if the students are not comfortable with their English language ability or are unfamiliar with the cultural conventions for ‘breaking into’ the conversation. Academics may need to create ‘safe’ learning environments where students feel that they can make a contribution. Creating opportunities for participation in class where students feel supported can be achieved by incorporating some of the following strategies:

**Preparation for small group discussion**

(Taken from, *The Melbourne Sessional Teachers handbook, 2009*)

- As second language learners of English, students need to be given adequate time to prepare responses. One strategy that can be used is to ask students to prepare some responses for the next tutorial or seminar. Set key questions with the reading material so that students can prepare their answer before the class. This will give them greater confidence in contributing to any discussion.

- It is important to make expectations about student participation clear to international students. As we know, this is an effective strategy for all students, but it is particularly useful for international students because research indicates that they are often not
aware of what participation in class actually means in an Australian tertiary context. Making academic expectations clear can help to clarify this to students.

- Create a teaching atmosphere early in the semester in which students interact with each other. This allows the opportunity for international and domestic students to talk and get to know each other.

### Encouraging contributions in class

(Taken from, *The Melbourne Sessional Teachers handbook, 2009*)

- We know that one way of increasing participation is to memorise students’ names and invite them to speak. This can be a successful strategy if the lecturer has already established a ‘safe environment’ and if the international students feel that the group values their contributions.
- Ask international students how the issue would be considered from their experiences, keeping in mind that they do not represent the views of their culture or country.
- Briefly summarise the discussion from time to time, highlighting the key points, so that the students can follow the discussion.
- Pose questions or issues that students can discuss in pairs and then report back to the class.
- Remember to wait before moving on to another student, as it can take time for international students to understand the question, consider their response and communicate that in English.
- Structure group tasks so that international and domestic students are grouped together. Assign roles for each member of the small group, including discussion leader, timekeeper, note-taker, and person to report back. This allows everyone to have a role in the group.
- As is acknowledged in strategies for effective small group teaching, quizzes and pair work encourage interaction among students.
- Organise group activities so that diversity of experience and knowledge are necessary for successfully completing the task.
- Where possible, develop tasks that increase opportunities for domestic and international students to interact.
Supporting students in developing critical thinking skills

(Taken from Arkoudis, 2006)

It is often suggested that students from Confucian heritage cultures find it difficult to think critically. However, like most stereotypes, this is unlikely to be true. Research has found that students from CHC are capable of high-level critical thinking (Biggs, 2003). It is not the international students’ cognitive skills that are in question but their English language ability that influences their reading, understanding, interpretation and evaluation of the material that is demonstrated in either written or oral expression. As we know, developing critical thinking skills is equally challenging for domestic students.

Teaching critical thinking skills can be useful in assisting students to develop learning strategies to avoid plagiarism. Classroom activities that model critical thinking skills in our discussions, create learning opportunities for students to develop their skills and offer feedback can guide students’ development of critical thinking skills. These may include:

- Explain and demonstrate what critical thinking skills are required in your disciplinary area. Different disciplines define it in slightly different ways.
- Clearly the reading process can be difficult for students who have English as a second language. It may be useful to highlight the importance of the reading material to the content of the course. This will assist students to access the main ideas presented in the text.
- When setting required reading, offer questions for students to guide their reading of the text. Stage the questions to include literal meaning (describe, define, explain), interpretive meaning (analyse, test, calculate, apply, demonstrate) and applied meaning (evaluate, compare assess). This will help the students to think beyond the literal understanding and develop their skills as strategic and critical readers.
- Develop students’ critical thinking skills through classroom discussions. Questions such as ‘In what situations would this work?’ ‘Can you think of any situation in which this would not apply?’ ‘How does this relate to other theories/concepts we have discussed?’ can be used as prompts for students to present different points of view.
8. Tips for international tutors

Every new tutor faces challenges. For the international tutor the role includes reaching across different cultural values and assumptions, different educational systems, different native languages, and non-verbal communication systems. As a tutor you have the opportunity to develop a sophisticated command of English and work in an important part of Australian culture, the educational system. Furthermore, you are invited to enter into a meaningful, cooperative relationship with your students, giving both them and yourself a memorable, enriching experience.

Language Skills

You may think that your biggest problem as a tutor will be your English. If you have trouble expressing yourself in English, if students have trouble understanding you, or you have trouble understanding them, make every effort you can to improve your English pronunciation. Specifically, make sure that you speak English as much as possible, every day. Seek out English-speaking co-workers, and friends and refer to the learning Development Centre. On the first day of class explain that English is not your first language and ask them to let you know if they don’t understand.

Ensuring your Students Understand You

1. Do not speak quickly.
2. Repeat and paraphrase to emphasise important ideas.
3. Ask your students to raise their hands when they don't understand what you are saying.
4. Check the dictionary for pronunciation of key words, and practise them.
5. Practise your presentation out loud.
6. Watch yourself speak into a mirror or use a tape recorder.
Cultural Differences

You may also be surprised at the informal behaviour of students in class and in other interactions with their lecturers and tutors. For instance, students may wear casual clothes to class. During the tutorial they may talk with their friends. They may arrive late or leave early. They may call the tutor by his or her first name and ask questions which seem to challenge the tutor. Such behaviour may shock or offend you, if you are accustomed to a culture in which students are overtly deferential and respectful toward their lecturers and tutors.

Recognise that your students are not acting disrespectful of you personally or of you as from another culture. Rather, their behaviour is normal for them. Indeed many students may behave informally with tutors they like and respect. However this does not mean that you must tolerate any behaviour that appears disruptive to the class, such as students shouting.

Student Expectations


Students expect and appreciate a variety of things from their tutors, for example.

- they expect tutors to explain everything to them very fully, particularly assessment tasks;
- they value tutors who are friendly and open, communicating something about themselves as people;
- they want tutors to interact with them in class, encourage student participation and deal gently with incorrect responses;
- they prefer tutors who make their classes interesting by using a lively presentation style, examples, and humour;
- they respect tutors who are knowledgeable, but who are willing to admit that they do not know something when that is the case.
9. Marking and giving feedback

Guidelines for marking

(Taken from, *A Tutor’s Guide to Teaching and Learning at UQ, 2010*)

- Be sure you use criteria and standards that are congruent with those established by the lecturer in charge of the course – they should have clearly explained this to you, so if they haven’t, make sure you arrange to meet with them to discuss this. It is important that you check your understanding of the criteria and standards for marking, especially with regard to giving 'part-marks'.
- Explain the assessment criteria and standards to your students.
- Check your school's policy on plagiarism and explain it to students.
- Be vigilant about cheating and copying.
- When marking, make comparable judgements across students and groups – eg. cross-marking with other tutors (each tutor marks a few assignments, making a note of the marks given, and then exchanging these assignments with another tutor who then marks them without knowledge of the tutor’s marks – the tutors can then discuss their assessment of the students performance and they marks the have allocated, checking that they have a shared understanding of the criteria and standards for the assessment task for that course).
- It’s often useful to check back over your marking of students work, particularly if the length of time between marking the first few and the last few was quite long. Sometime your ideas change as you go through, and it’s important to ensure that your judgements were consistent throughout the marking process.
- Provide meaningful, timely feedback – but choose an appropriate amount or detail of feedback according to the importance and length of the assessment task (e.g., a short 1-2 page report should not require as many comments as a 1500 word essay).
- Consider giving generic feedback to the whole class (such as a summary of overall performance on assessment and common strengths/weaknesses) – but ensure that generic feedback is meaningful. For example, if the worst results were for a particular question of a test, or aspect of an assignment, explain why and how students’ work for this particular task could be improved.
- Provide examples of good and poor assignments, and have students use the marking criteria to identify the difference between their own work and these examples.
Giving feedback

Feedback is one of the most important aspects of teaching and learning. It should occur while content is being taught and learned and should continue throughout the period of learning to inform the teacher of what his or her students know or do not know.

Feedback can perform several functions: Correct errors; Develop understanding through explanation; Generate more learning by suggesting further specific study tasks; Promote the development of generic skills by focusing on evidence of the use of skills rather than on the content; Promote meta-cognition by encouraging students’ reflection and awareness of learning processes involved in assignment; & Encourage students to continue studying.

Effective feedback

➢ Sufficient feedback is provided, both often and in enough detail
➢ Feedback focuses on student performance (learning and actions – things under student control), rather than on student characteristics
➢ Feedback is timely – received by students while it still matters and in time for them to apply it or ask for assistance
➢ Feedback is appropriate – in relation to students’ understanding of what they are supposed to be doing
➢ Feedback is received and attended to by student
➢ Feedback is acted upon by student

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words and/or ideas of others – authors, critics, journalists, academics, artists, lecturers, tutors, other students, and so on – without giving them proper acknowledgement. In short, plagiarism is presenting the words and/or ideas of others as though they were your own. It is important to note that whether information is plagiarised intentionally or unintentionally, it is still considered plagiarism. For this reason, you need to

➢ provide a reference whenever you include information from other sources in your work, and
➢ be aware of the academic conventions concerning referencing.
Academic Consideration

Academic consideration is a process to intended to minimise the impact of serious or extenuating circumstances beyond a student's control which significantly impact a students' ability to complete an assessment task on or by the due date as stipulated in the Subject Outline, or to progress academically in a subject relevant to their course of study. Students apply for academic consideration online using the academic consideration application service available from SOLS.

The responsibility to approve/denial academic consideration requests from your students is negotiated with your subject coordinator you will required SMP access. Usually the subject coordinator will retain control of academic considerations.

If you need to attend to a request, a flag appears on the SMP class list for these students to indicate that an application has been received and you need to click on that flag to deal with the application. How to respond to a request for academic consideration is contained in the Student Academic Consideration Guidelines. There are a number of responses available to you in providing consideration for a student, which are set out in the policy.
10. Information & services for teachers at the University of Wollongong

Evaluating and improving your teaching

UOW provides a process which enables teachers to formally obtain feedback from their students on their teaching for use as evidence in academic probation and academic promotion applications. For more information (including how to request a teacher evaluation) please see the UOW Teacher Evaluations page http://www.uow.edu.au/asd/tsse/index.html

Relevant policies/guidelines


- **Code of Practice – Casual Academic Teaching**
  Provides a useful framework and guideline for faculties and schools

- **Code of Practice Teaching and Assessment**
  The responsibilities of casual academics are detailed in this code of practice

- **University Code of Conduct**
  This code spells out responsibilities in relation to conflicts of interest; close and personal relationships; financial interest; acceptance of gifts or benefits; discrimination or harassment; occupational health and safety; public comment; protecting confidential information; electronic communication and information; use of official facilities or equipment; intellectual property; copyright; reporting on corrupt conduct; The University's approach to complaints; Relevant legislation.

- **Academic Integrity & Plagiarism Policy**
This policy sets out the University’s commitment to Academic Integrity, with particular reference to plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct.


➢ **Student Conduct Rules**

These Rules outline the required conduct of students of UOW, and direct staff and students to University Rules, standards, codes, policies, guidelines, procedures and other requirements which specify acceptable and unacceptable student conduct, and the management of alleged student misconduct.


➢ **Student Academic Considerations Policy**

This Policy sets out clear and defined requirements allowing for transparency, ease of interpretation and implementation.


➢ **Student Academic Considerations Guidelines**

These Guidelines support the Student Academic Consideration Policy and are intended to assist students and staff in the management of applications for academic consideration.


➢ **Good Practice guidelines – Leading teaching teams**

Provides useful guidance to faculties and subject co-ordinators in relation to their roles and responsibilities leading casualised teaching teams.


**Services for student referral**

There is a range of services UOW provide to support students. See UOW Service Supporting Students http://www.uow.edu.au/student/services/index.html
11. Suggested readings/ References


