



Case Example from HKUST

Subject area(s):

Science

Chemical and Biological Engineering

Course title(s):

Great Ideas in Science

Global Health Ethics Case Studies

Course code(s):

SCIE 1110

BIEN 6930A

The teacher is dedicated to facilitating students' intercultural and interdisciplinary engagement by designing meaningful learning opportunities in his class. One example was role play, during which students were randomly assigned to groups and played the roles of different stakeholders – such as pharmaceutical companies, families of rare disease patients and governments – to defend their views and explore multiple perspectives. To encourage interchange of ideas on significant science topics, the teacher prompted students to debate on daily-life science and public health issues and allowed them to have a high degree of flexibility to express themselves and adopted a non-judgmental approach to their opinions. As a case in point, students were invited to share what they valued most in the case of curing rare disease patients – some insisted on saving individual lives while some emphasised the wise allocation of public health resources.

The teacher also incorporated elements of internationalised contents which helped widen students' international horizons and develop their intercultural competence. Drawing on international comparative case studies, the teacher attempted to enhance students' awareness of respecting various local cultures and practices. Examples of cases ranged from comparing the international and local public health standards of Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong during the 1970s to examining the different vaccine experiment standards adopted by Thailand and some African countries.

Moreover, BIEN 6930A is an online course involving universities in the United States, Mexico, the Philippines and Hong Kong. According to the teacher, students were active in sharing their views with peers from different countries in the virtual environment of the course. This might be related to the features of virtual platform that non-verbal judgemental indicators were absent. As he observed, students respected each other's opinions even if those opinions were very different from their own on the online platform.



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Cite this item:

CoP – ITL. (2018, Sept). *Case example of Prof. King-lau Chow*. Retrieved from <https://www.cetl.hku.hk/cop-itl/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ProfKingLauChow.pdf>.