



Case Example from HKUST

Subject area:

English Language

Course title(s) and/or Programme:

English for University Studies II and Centre-based Experiential Learning Activities

Course code(s):

LANG 1003

It is argued that internationalising a big course has long been a formidable task. However, Ms. Megan, our CoP – ITL member from HKUST, who teaches and coordinates LANG 1003 – a compulsory English course for all first-year students – managed to internationalise her class by drawing on interesting and thought-provoking examples from all over the world and presenting multiple perspectives to students when exploring global issues. This semester, beauty and happiness were selected as the themes of the course. Specifically, the teacher used videos from Mauritania in western Africa that contrast with the dieting phenomenon in Asia to illustrate how women of different sizes are regarded as beautiful, in addition to bringing in worldwide reading materials that introduced students to different perceptions of beauty. Moreover, the teacher included topics on male beauty and talked students through how males undergoing cosmetic surgery are perceived and interpreted worldwide. Another major topic covered in the course is happiness. After watching videos from different sources, students were guided to compare and contrast how happiness is defined in Bhutan, Denmark and America.

Students were assessed in a way that could advance their intercultural learning. Students had to submit an argumentative essay with their own theses. They could base their theses on the issues and phenomena in their home countries. Ms. Megan noted that a Korean female student once wrote about how beauty had been conceptualised in such a patriarchal society as Korea. Following the argumentative essay, students were also asked to participate in oral discussion over how to promote happiness in Hong Kong and worldwide. In order to encourage multicultural interaction, the teacher reminded the students that they should try

their best to communicate with classmates of different backgrounds because any of them might be their group mates in the assessed discussion.

In addition to promoting an intercultural learning environment in course level, the Centre of Language Education is committed to designing co-curricular activities that enable culturally diverse groups to interact with one another. Offering courses and workshops on intercultural communication aside, the third language courses were popular among students as well as faculty members and staff. According to Ms. Megan, the conversation groups and courses were similar to a microcosm of internationalisation in the University. The Centre also adopts the English Language Buddy Scheme. Organising activities such as fishing, cooking and hiking for locals and internationals are believed to be a strategy to develop intercultural competence outside the classroom.



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