

Case Example from HKU

Subject area: English Literature

As a teacher, Dr. Liz is committed to creating and facilitating a safe learning space for students so that they can participate in whatever way they can. She leverages student diversity through initiating small group discussions first and then moving on to large group discussions and scaffolding students using questions designed at multiple levels. In her discussion-based classroom, Dr. Liz often asks students to start small discussions with their peers, report back to the larger class, and then join a larger group discussion. She reflected that this class discussion strategy would give the quieter students an opportunity to share their thoughts and that it is also the most immediate form of feedback a teacher can give. She also structures her questions in different formats to which students with different abilities or backgrounds can respond. For example, a discussion of a piece of literature may begin with some factual questions such as “Who was this character?” or “What is the story?”, followed by some close reading questions and then more abstract and critical questions. She encourages students to apply the unfamiliar context in postcolonial literature to their own concepts. This allows students to share their own backgrounds and experiences with others in the classroom while getting connected with the literature. Despite the fact that there may be differences in competence among students, every student can still be the authority in certain contexts and no one is irreplaceable.



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