



Case Example from HKUST

Subject area: Social Science

Course:

SOSC1850 Understanding Society
SOSC2740 Gender and Society
SOSC2130 Education and Society
SOSC1662 Contemporary Hong Kong: Society
MGMT5920 Managing Diversity in Business Organizations

Prof. Julian Groves sees diversity and internationalisation as something more than just having an international mix of students. It also means understanding how to create environments which are inclusive. Cross-cultural comparisons have been built into his Common Core courses to cultivate a mindset of differences. He guides his students to see things from the perspectives of different and often marginalized groups.

In his classes, for instance Julian drew examples to illustrate assumptions about gender from local and international perspectives. He asks students to reflect on why, in offices, women can often be seen shivering in thick sweaters or cardigans whereas men walk around in light shirts. Referencing Carol Criado Perez's book, *Invisible Women*, he explains that the temperature in most offices has been determined by a formula that was based on the metabolic resting rate of a 70kg man. And this is why women often feel cold in the modern office. Students are encouraged to reflect on other ways in which particular groups are rendered "invisible" in society.

Another strategy is to make use of the class dynamics of local and international students by asking them to complete particular exercises in their own languages. Language is a tool for thought and much can be learned from the language used to describe the behaviours of men and women as well as different ethnic groups. This kind of class activity allows students to contribute their cultural knowledge to the class while reflecting critically on people's perceptions of sensitive topics between discourse systems, cultures, and nations.

Service-learning is another way to learn and appreciate differences. Julian embedded service-learning in his course as an opportunity for his students, both local and international, to help migrants in Hong Kong. It creates a genuine interaction for students of all backgrounds to develop the ability to understand, illustrate, collaborate, and communicate with others more effectively as well as a sense of having participated in something meaningful. The point, he says, is never to tell students what to think or do, but rather to give them information to help them make better decisions.



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