**Should the accommodation to teaching vary from one academic department to another?**

Teaching in student diversity is an issue that has become of paramount importance with increasing number of international students in universities (Yourn BR et al, 2003). I suppose attention to this may vary depending on the percentage that international students make up to, for the course. It might be more of a concern in Management department than in others such as Biological sciences. According to Brown P, et al (2008) we must avoid teaching practises that limits the learning of students from diverse culture, social and economic background.R Freeland (1998) recommends general principles that respond well to student diversity and they include not using idiomatic English language, not calling out on students to represent their entire group and to not assume students prior knowledge. In Biological sciences majority of the areas are largely objective rather than subjective therefore cultural variation in terms of learning or feeling sensitive over discussing a topic is less of an issue. In other subject such as arts and humanities or social sciences there are more intense debates and discussions taking place on matters that may be sensitive or could involve conflict between students coming from diverse cultures. In addition I very rarely in the last three years have noticed a student that has difficulty in speaking English language. A lot of the international students coming in have been to coaching schools already where they learn much in the environment that resembles teaching of those from western countries. Some of them coming over to study in Biological sciences have actually been funded by the government for their brightness and intelligence**.** Then on the other hand the UKBA criteria only grants visa to those that show evidence of some level of English knowledge. So considering all of this how far should the teachers try to accommodate their teaching for international students in departments such as mathematics and other sciences?

Having mentioned that, it is also important to recognise that even though the factual information may help in reducing problems associated with students from diverse cultures, there is some cultural variation that still manages to persist even in subjects such as mathematics and other sciences. For example, the student’s unwillingness to participate or to speak out loud can be used to assume that they may not know much and may be underestimated in their academic abilities. This unwillingness to participate could simply be a cultural trait, as being quiet in the classroom and not showing off is considered respectful in many Asian cultures. International students may be able to speak the English language well but they may not be able to keep up with the speed or pace of the lecturers (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997). These misunderstanding and complications of language barriers is and can be avoided by recording lectures and posting them on communication portals between lecturers and students. In addition important topics or areas difficult to understand could be made more visual and demonstrated with illustrations. Not only will this help international students but will also benefit learning of many of the local students. However, this approach also has its drawbacks, as posting lectures on communication portals may discourage students from attending classes; nevertheless I suppose that is a choice that students will have to take some responsibility for.

I do agree with the above post on encouraging students from various cultures to participate and express their views so that other people from their own cultures can hear their perspectives. There should be a full round discussion so that everyone is heard, this will only help increase knowledge and reduce complexity and allow students to gain a more deeper insight into other cultures. Student diversity in a class is a positive change and should be used to enrich the learning environment of the class as a whole. Yes, the teaching strategies must not offend or limit the learning of the students but the teachers must also be careful to not overprotect them. Students from diverse cultures needs must be appreciated but they must also not be cocooned in the new environment as the greater the exposure there is the easier the adaptation into the new culture there is.

**References**

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