



Skills for the International Classroom

In the spirit of Amsterdam and the late Eberhard van der Laan, the University of Amsterdam strives to provide a safe, enriching and inclusive learning environment for all students and staff. The increasing internationalization and diversification of both the students and staff provides both opportunities and challenges in this regard. The international classroom and the (exemplary) role of the teacher therein are at the heart of meeting both these opportunities and challenges.

Developing international skills and intercultural sensitivity starts with creating awareness. Awareness of our own cultural lenses, of the many dimensions of diversity (e.g. nationality, religious and political orientation) and the specific didactical challenges and opportunities in an international environment. Also, it requires teachers to develop and share (with each other and the students) skills and strategies that can help them to deal with these challenges, to create a soft landing for (international) students and to bring the diversity discussion onto the table in a constructive and exemplary manner. Below are some of the questions that will be explored during the course.

- How can international and cultural differences impact learning experiences and didactic strategies;
- how can we deal with both the challenges and opportunities that international classroom provides;
- how can I bring a sensitive topic such as diversity and intercultural differences onto the table in a constructive manner;
- how can we create a soft landing for international (and national) students?

Participants

Teachers who work with diverse and international groups.

Didactic approaches used in the course

Reflection and personalized case-based learning

The challenges and opportunities that internationalization brings are diverse. Teachers will encounter different challenges based on faculty, student-population and whether they (mainly) teach bachelor or master-level courses. As such, a substantial part of the course consists of personalized case-based learning.

During the course, there will be many opportunities to share best-practices, tips and tools. The idea is to create a 'living' document (that participants can update after the course) to collect these tips and tools. In order to fill this toolbox, participants will get input from both their colleagues and the trainers.

Learning goals per session

This course consists of 4 sessions of 4 hours.

Session 1

After this session:

- Participants are aware of their own cultural lenses and assumptions that influence their interaction with others;
- participants are familiar with concepts such as biases and stereotyping, and how these could influence their teaching practice;
- participants are familiar with diversity dimensions (e.g. power distance, dealing with feedback) that are relevant in the classroom, and have an idea on how to take these dimensions.



Session 2

After this session:

- Participants will have identified some of their own strengths and challenges in relation to their International classroom skills;
- participants have discussed several practical tips, tools and strategies for dealing with challenges related to internationalization (e.g., creating a soft landing, creating a safe space for discussion, lowering the threshold for non-native speakers to engage in conversations etc.).

Session 3

After this session:

- Participants will have learned how to handle diversity in the classroom;
- participants will have learned how to overcome difficult situations in the classroom;
- participants will have formulated a personalized action plan.

Session 4

After this session:

- Participants will learn to look through the international students' cultural lenses;
- participants will have adjusted their Intended Learning Outcomes to the needs and wants of international students;
- participants will know how to involve colleagues from their programs / institutes / faculties.



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