Examples of Commerce curriculum initiatives that develop global awareness as a graduate attribute

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1. Extra tutor training in first-year core papers

Objective of this extra tutor training

- To discuss and plan with tutors how to develop international perspectives among students—during tutorial sessions
- To create a sense of team among tutors as well as ownership of tutorial learning

Activity

SLSS ran a 2-hour extra tutor training session for tutors in first-year core courses: Management 101, Econ 130 and 140, and Info 101.

First we told the tutors about our project of building cross-cultural understanding among local and international students through enhanced teaching and learning practices in the Commerce Faculty.

We explained we were running extra training as a way of brainstorming together how best to develop international perspectives among students. We told them we wanted to hear their ideas and encouraged them to be as creative as possible. (We also knew that they were more likely to try on different activities if they had created them.) We brainstormed together these questions:

- How can we ensure that everyone in our tutorial knows each other?
- How can we ensure people are comfortable and see the environment as safe?
- How can we ensure participation from everyone, and at the same time maintain relevance to course content (all the while achieving our aim of international perspectives)?

The tutors came up with excellent ideas. They recorded them during the sessions and we later typed them and distributed them back. Some examples of suggestions from Info 101 tutors for encouraging participation and developing international perspectives are listed below.

- Give participation marks to groups rather than individuals.
- Assign roles to group work.
- Introduce some competition to activities (eg, when covering ‘info security management’, have challenge/response session where one group gives ‘act of god’ type challenges and the other comes up with responses/solutions).
- Encourage spontaneous google/youtube reports in class—relating to topics discussed. (‘People have ipods, laptops, cell phones in class and we may as well use this technology—we’re info tutors after all’.)
- Create a rap song around content such as ‘competitive advantage’. Make up some lines and get students to fill in the rest. Put music on and eventually get everyone singing. Have a tutorial ‘rap off’ the last day of lectures.
- Use role playing.
- Use speed dating to pass on content summaries.
- Ask students to bring news articles, stories from their own cultures.
- Choose a country or continent to focus on each week and do as above.
- In a tutorial at the end of trimester, have students write and present about how info technologies are, or could be, used in their chosen career or industry they’re interested in.
- Record students’ answers to set questions and place them back on blackboard. Have students do this recording.

Tutors are trying out these activities as the trimester progresses. Most info tutors set up diverse groups at the start of the trimester and are keeping students in these groups each tutorial.

**Extra materials used**

We gave tutors a handout from an Australian universities working group and suggested they might want to use this handout in their tutorials to stimulate a discussion among students about the value of gaining international perspectives and increasing interaction among diverse groups.

This handout is entitled ‘Making connections’. It is found on page 53 of ‘Finding Common Ground: enhancing interaction between domestic and international students, Guide for academics’. Authors are Sophie Arkoudis, Xin Yu, Chi Baik, Helen Borland, Shanton Chang, Ian Lang, Josephine Lang, Amanda Pearce and Kim Watty. (Support for the original work of this document was provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd.)

**Learning outcomes achieved**

Visits to tutorials by SLSS advisers are finding that students definitely seemed to be interacting well. All students, both international and local, seem to be participating fully in most tutorials. Students and tutors seem to know each others’ names.

Simon Park gave his info 101 students an informal feedback questionnaire at mid-trimester. It includes questions such as:

- How comfortable is your tutorial environment? (Do you feel comfortable enough to participate freely)
- How often do you participate in your tutorials (discuss, ask questions, etc)?
- What helps you learn in your tutorials?
- Have the tutorials given you international perspectives on topics discussed in class?

We’ll collate students answers at the start of next trimester when Simon is back from conference.

**Possible extensions/variants**

Work with all commerce first-year tutors. Film tutors in action to show at next year’s tutor training.
Note: We can use our migrant staff as resources to enhance learning about international perspectives

In the tutor training for the Info tutors, Simon Park, the course’s Korean lecturer and course coordinator, came in at the start of the session and showed a short powerpoint he had made on stereotyping. His objective was to make the students aware of any prejudices they might have, and to prepare them for the activities to follow. This visit from Simon was invaluable as it:

- endorsed our training
- gave the students an understanding of how it felt to be an international student
- created a sense of team (Simon’s sharing of his own stories created relatedness and it inspired the tutors).

2. Intervention in HRIR 306 class using ExcelL-type activities

Objectives:

- To help students identify and analyse their own cultural perspectives and behaviours relating to performance issues and pay rise requests
- To provide awareness and some understanding of different cultural perspectives relating to performance issues and pay rise requests

Activity:

SLSS advisers worked with the lecturer of this Human Resource Management course, Geoff Plimmer, to create a 2-hour session where students (approx 80) engaged in experiential learning related to seeking a pay rise. The class was discussing gender and cultural barriers to pay equity. First, Geoff gave a 20-minute presentation on gender and culture and how these relate to pay design and negotiation processes. Next, we put students into co-national groups. Each group was told to create a roleplay of an employee asking for a pay rise. Students were asked to consider cultural values as they created their roleplay. Next, representative groups presented their roleplays to the class and students filled out cultural map templates, stating words used, body language and underlying values. After each roleplay, the class questioned the representative group about behaviours, values, etc, in order to understand how and why people in different cultures behave the way they do.

As the class was mostly made up of local students, we recruited other nationalities to come along to the class and help with the activity. We mostly recruited from the Victoria International Leadership Programme. We did this recruitment in advance of the session, and managed to bring in students from Cambodia, Malaysia, Africa, Germany, and Russia. We had an American in the class.

Learning outcomes

The experiential nature of the activity meant that the students thought carefully about their own behaviour and got a sense of how their own cultural norms and values play out. Hopefully they got a sense of the fact that their way of doing things is just one way and that different cultures may
approach this request very differently. Hopefully they also got a sense of the fact that there is no right and wrong, good or bad, but just different.

Student feedback was mostly very positive but some students thought the session was drawn out and there wasn’t time to connect back to course content (and an upcoming assignment).

**Possible extensions/variants**

In future we’ll do fewer roleplays and have more time for discussion at the end—relating the learning back to course content.

We could film roleplays from some cultures so that we don’t need to spend so much time recruiting representatives of different nationalities.

We could do the experiential work before the mini lecture rather than the other way around.

### 3. Intervention in IBUS 201 class using Excell-type activities

**Objectives**

- To help students identify and analyse their own cultural perspectives and behaviours relating to business practice
- To provide awareness and some understanding of different cultural perspectives relating to business practice
- To help students begin to value other cultural ways of doing things.

**Activity**

SLSS advisers ran an experiential learning activity during a 50 minute lecture slot with a class of 120–130 students. Lecturers, Yang Yu and Val Lindsay, helped facilitate this activity. The IBUS 201 course is an introduction to international business, and the lecturer, Yang, was keen to develop some awareness and understanding of cultural difference early on in his course. This intervention took place in week 4.

First, we asked students to form a human continuum around the lecture room—based on the country they grew up in. This enabled us to identify which different nationalities we had in the room. We next divided the whole class into 4 large groups, ensuring that each large group had at least 2 pairs of students from countries other than NZ. Each facilitator took one of these large groups away to a booked space. (We used Rutherford House mezzanine floor.) Once in the designated space, students were asked to pair up with a co-national and prepare a role play according to scenario cards. (These scenario cards involved refusing an invitation to meet and discuss a proposed business collaboration.) Students then presented these roleplays to the group. The group filled out cultural maps and questioned those roleplaying in order to understand fully the different cultural behaviours and values relating to this scenario. The group asked questions such as:

- ‘Why did you do...?’
- ‘What cultural values are you possibly adhering to?’
‘Do you think your behaviour is representative of your culture?’

Finally the whole group did a quick pair-share and feedback to the group on ‘What I learned from this activity’.

**Learning outcomes**

This activity seemed to go well and students commented that they liked the active learning and change to routine. Hopefully students gained some awareness of their own cultural behaviours and values, and they should have gained awareness of marked cultural differences in relation to refusing requests. We told the students that we were hoping to make them aware of the fact that people from different cultures often did things differently, and that there was no right or wrong, just different. The experiential nature of the activity should have helped students gain this understanding at a deeper level than would have been possible had students been given this information in a lecture.

**Possible extensions / variants**

Next time we’ll endeavour to recruit more facilitators from the pool of ExcelL-trained staff on campus. This would enable us to have smaller groups, which in turn would enable more discussion and more people presenting roleplays, ie more engagement in general.

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4. **Discussion with IBUS 306 class using ExcelL-type activities**

**Objectives:**

- To provide active, experiential learning about cross-cultural communication
- To create an integrated community of learners
- To use international students as resources in the classroom as an attempt to internationalise our curriculum

**Activity**

SLSS learning advisers ran an interactive session in Val Lindsay’s IBUS 306: Experiencing Management Across Cultures class of about 40 students. Students were working on GEE: Global Enterprise Experience. In order to prepare them for their role as leaders in their GEE teams, Val thought it would be good to raise awareness of cultural differences towards leadership, teamwork, etc. At the start of the session we told students we were going to do an activity that would help them become more aware of cultural differences in team behaviour. We asked them to try to take off their cultural blinkers or lenses and be open to what they were to observe. We brought in pairs of students from several cultures and used some of the international students in the class. We asked our different cultural pairs to roleplay a scenario relating to giving feedback. The scenario related to a noisy neighbour and a request for less noise at night in order to sleep well.

After the series of roleplays we asked students what they’d noticed. We elicited information for a continuum that we put on the whiteboard—showing individualistic behaviours at one end and
collectivist behaviours at the other. Next we asked students to brainstorm challenges these cultural differences might pose for GEE. Finally we had students brainstorm solutions to these challenges.

**Learning outcomes**

Students received good comparisons of different cultural behaviours and values. The students who participated in the roleplays said they had learned a lot. However, running this session in a regular lecture theatre might not have been a good idea. The majority of students were relatively passive and did not engage fully in the discussion.

**Possible extensions/variants**

Next time we would ensure the students all knew each other well before beginning. Maybe we could involve everyone in roleplays and use the different nationalities in the class more, rather than bringing in outsiders.

Next time we should read out to students some of the previous years’ GEE blogs—to help with the brainstorming of challenges.

### 5. Name game

**Objectives:**

- to create a sense of belonging and inclusiveness among first year students in tutorials
- to encourage active participation from the start
- to challenge assumption or prejudices.

**Activity**

INFO tutors experimented with using an extra tutorial early on in the trimester to enable everyone to get to know each other. They had students interview each other in pairs. Students asked each other where they got their names, the meanings of their names, and whether they thought the meanings suited them. Then they introduced each other to the class.

**Learning outcomes**

Often local students didn’t know the meaning of their names so info tutors found a different way of making this activity interesting—using an online identity finder. Tutors reported that it might have been more useful to run a discussion on why we should make connections with students of different backgrounds—before launching into this activity.

**Possible extensions/variants**

We could use the *Finding Common Ground* discussion sheet referred to in No 1 of this document. We could use this discussion sheet in advance of the name activity to fulfil the tutors’ suggestion above.

We could continue with the name theme, but add in more questions such as:
• the country/region they come from
• personal questions such as their favourite two musicians, a hero (living or dead)
• their goals at university/why they’re doing a commerce degree.