The Quick Guides provide an introduction to transnational teaching at RMIT University. They are designed to address the professional development needs of academic and teaching staff engaged in the design, delivery and evaluation of RMIT courses and programs in onshore and offshore locations.

The twenty-two Quick Guides consolidate the experiences of the College of Business in transnational education, and provide introductory-level information across the themes of institutional context, teaching practice, assessment and feedback, and teaching scholarship. The underpinning professional development framework is designed to ensure competency and consistency in the delivery of RMIT courses and programs in multiple locations and/or to transnational student cohorts. This framework is also supported by the recommendations of the 2005 Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) Offshore Quality Project Report, A Professional Development Framework for Academic Staff Teaching Australian Programs Offshore (http://www.unisa.edu.au/academic-development/teaching/documents/offshore_framework.pdf).

Further information about each topic is provided in the resource or reading list of each Quick Guide. Enquiries about learning and teaching can be directed to your College Academic Development Group or Learning & Teaching representative, and to the Deputy Head (Learning and Teaching) in your School. The College of Business Academic Development Group welcomes your feedback about the usefulness of the guides, and suggestions for additional topics.

Finding Direction - Introduction to RMIT University
Finding Direction - RMIT International University Vietnam
Finding direction - Shanghai University of International Business and Economics
Finding Direction - Singapore Institute of Management
Teaching Practice - Approaching Cultural Diversity
Teaching Practice - Approaching Student-centred Learning and Teaching
Teaching Practice - Developing Lesson Plans
Teaching Practice - Engaging Students in Lectures & Large Classes
Teaching Practice - Engaging Students Through Learning Activities
Teaching Practice - Equivalence and Comparability
Teaching Practice - Preparing to Teach
Teaching Practice - Promoting Deep Learning
Teaching Practice - Teaching with Technology
Teaching Practice - Understanding & Interpreting Program & Course Guides
Assessment and Feedback - Academic Integrity & Plagiarism
Assessment and Feedback - Assessing Students
Assessment and Feedback - Providing Student Feedback
Assessment and Feedback - Understanding the Course Experience Survey (HE)
Assessment and Feedback - Understanding the Course Experience Survey (VE)
Scholarship of Teaching - A Scholarly Approach to Learning & Teaching
Scholarship of Teaching - Community of Practice
Scholarship of Teaching - Enhancing the Quality of Teaching through Reflective Practice

Finding direction - Introduction to RMIT University

About RMIT

RMIT University is a global university of technology and design. RMIT is:

- Global in outlook and action, offering students and staff a global passport to learning and work.
- Urban in orientation and creativity, reflecting and shaping the cities of the 21st century.
- The first choice provider of work-relevant learning in Australia, preparing students for professions and vocations of the future.
- One of Australia’s top research universities, internationally known for an applied focus and for excellence in research and research education in its chosen fields.

RMIT is a member of the Australian Technology Network [http://www.atn.edu.au], a coalition of five Australian universities that share a common heritage.

Global in outlook & action

RMIT is an international university recognized for providing its students with a global passport [http://www.rmit.edu.au/globalpassport]. Learning and teaching at RMIT is informed by international best practice resulting in vocational and academic qualifications that are recognised and well-regarded globally.

RMIT’s approach to the internationalisation of curriculum [http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=gm6ykr21905lz] focuses on cultural inclusion where intercultural and international dimensions are integrated into courses and programs.

International students from over 100 countries make up approximately 55% of the total student population of the University. Undoubtedly this highlights the significance of academic and teaching staff who are able to work in culturally diverse environments.

Urban in orientation & creativity

RMIT has three main campuses in Melbourne and two in Vietnam. Offshore partner institutions are located in Singapore, China, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong.

around the world. It addresses the challenge of sustainability, resilience, security and adaptation in the Asia-Pacific region.

RMIT has a reputation for creativity and innovation, and it is a place where experimentation is supported. Students and staff are an enormous resource for ingenuity, energy and great ideas that are backed by supportive educators who understand the value of creativity in our communities.

**Work-relevant**


**Applied focus**

RMIT is the product of a long history of applied teaching and practical knowledge. The programs of study are developed in consultation with industry and the professions, resulting in courses and programs that relate to specific professions and careers. RMIT creates and disseminates knowledge to meet the needs of industry and the community and foster in students the skills and passion to contribute to and engage with the world. As a member of RMIT’s academic and teaching staff, the quality of your teaching is integral to RMIT’s ability to achieve this vision.

**About the Colleges**

RMIT University offers VE (Vocational Education) and HE programs through its three Colleges.

**College of Business**

Comprising six teaching schools and over 400 staff, the College of Business is one of the largest business teaching facilities in Australia. With programs offered in Vietnam and significant teaching partnerships in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, the College of Business attracts approximately 23,000 students in the Asia-Pacific region. The College provides industry responsive programs relevant to both students and the future needs of employers with a wide range of award programs, executive education and training that can be tailored for the workplace. Alongside established programs covering international management education, financial markets, and international accounting and law, specialist programs such as entrepreneurship and logistics are offered.

http://www.rmit.edu.au/bus/about

**College of Design & Social Context**

The Colleges eight schools encompass RMIT’s art, communication, design, education, humanities, property and social science discipline areas. Schools are located across three Melbourne campuses and offer programs locally
and internationally. The College has over twenty one thousand local and international students and a team of over a thousand dedicated academics and teachers. The individual development of students is central to the philosophy of the college and we are committed to fostering an environment which transforms and advances knowledge and professional practice. Our programs range from certificate through to PhD levels. Programs work in a well established educational tradition dedicated to student creativity and learning and engage in new forms of intellectual and cultural activity. Studies are designed specifically to meet the personal, professional and vocational needs of the student with a focus on academic excellence and employment outcomes. http://www.rmit.edu.au/dsc

College of Science, Engineering & Health

The College of Science Engineering and Health (SEH) incorporates the fields of Sciences, Engineering, IT and Health and Medical Sciences. Comprising ten academic Schools (eight Higher Education schools and two schools of Vocational Education), the College delivers a broad range of programs at apprenticeship, certificate, bachelor, masters and PhD levels. Many programs articulate between Vocational Education and Higher Education, creating pathways for further study. Employing close to 1,000 staff, the College provides onshore and offshore programs to approximately 20,000 students. http://www.rmit.edu.au/seh

Getting started

Three important steps should be taken by all new RMIT academic and teaching staff:

1. Familiarise yourself with RMIT’s policies and procedures by visiting Discover RMIT [http://www.rmit.edu.au/staff] This site is designed to provide staff with a greater understanding of RMIT and the support and services available. The site contains a wealth of information and is an excellent resource for both new and long-serving staff.

2. Complete the Online induction [http://www.rmit.edu.au/staffinduction] The Induction is set out in sections that should be completed over your first month at RMIT. This is a generic induction designed to complement the Induction activities you will do within your local work area. Your manager will support you with a local induction.

Induction for Melbourne-based staff include three essential online modules:

• Occupational Health and Safety
• Equal Opportunity
• The way we work at RMIT

Summary

It is important that you become familiar with the policies, procedures and the induction resources available to you. Understanding how your teaching contributes to the position of RMIT University and its ability to achieve its vision will give you a foundation upon which you can build your skills and contribute to the university’s efforts of providing responsive, effective and quality education.
Useful resources

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

RMIT University Staff Website
http://www.rmit.edu.au/staff

College of Business Information for Staff
http://www.rmit.edu.au/bus/staff

College of Design and Social Context
http://www.rmit.edu.au/dsc

College of Science, Engineering and Health staff intranet
http://www.rmit.edu.au/seh/staff

Discover RMIT Campus Tour is a helpful activity where you can develop networks whilst familiarising yourself with the range of services and facilities available, and the activities that take place on all three campuses. Register at http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=zmcujovI6x6q

Global Passport
http://www.rmit.edu.au/globalpassport

RMIT University Online Induction Program
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=2po0q56minuq

RMIT University Policies and Procedures:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/policies

RMIT University Learning and Teaching website
http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching

RMIT's Industry Engagement Strategy
http://www.rmit.edu.au/engagement

RMIT International University Vietnam
http://www.rmit.edu.vn/

RMIT University-SIM academic programs
http://www.simge.edu.sg/gePortalWeb/appmanager/web/default?_nfpb=true&_st=&_pageLabel=pgProgrammeFinder&menu_country=Australia

SUIBE-RMIT International Business School
http://eng.suibe.edu.cn/default.php?mod=article&do=detail&tid=673553&md=72f0a2

Work Integrated Learning at RMIT
About RMIT Vietnam

RMIT Vietnam is the Asian hub of RMIT University. RMIT Vietnam offers diverse academic programs, regionally based research projects, new business and government partnerships, and growing numbers of students and academics moving between RMIT Vietnam and campuses elsewhere in the region.

All programs offered at RMIT Vietnam are the same degrees that students undertake in Melbourne. These programs are relevant to business and industry and foster essential skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, time management and communication.

In today’s international business environment, employers are demanding graduates who are “job-ready”. Internship placements with industry give RMIT Vietnam students valuable on-the-job experience and help them put theory into practice.

Addresses

RMIT Vietnam has two campuses. The largest is in Ho Chi Minh City where programs are offered by RMIT’s three academic colleges. A new campus was developed in 2007 in Hanoi.

RMIT International University Vietnam Saigon South Campus - 702 Nguyen Van Linh, District 7, Ho Chi Minh City

RMIT International University Vietnam Hanoi campus - Handi Resco Building, 521 Kim Ma, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi
Teaching model

RMIT Vietnam staff are employed separately to those of RMIT in Melbourne and while not technically members of any RMIT school, Vietnam academics are school colleagues for teaching purposes. The Vietnam teaching model differs from that of Melbourne, particularly because the student learning experience is generally facilitated in classes of around 30 students with few large lectures. Melbourne Course Coordinators liaise with a single course leader in Vietnam who coordinates the teaching and learning in both Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi campuses.


Organising your trip

The Travel Policy and Procedure is available at:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=a432vidd01411

The Procedure applies to all RMIT staff and students, and to anyone who undertakes travel on behalf of RMIT or funded in whole or part by the University. It consists of the following parts:

• Approval and class of travel policy
• Authority and responsibility for authorising staff travel
• International travel to countries identified as high risk protocols for RMIT staff - protocols
• Leisure and business travel - adding leisure travel to a business trip
• Long term offshore assignments procedure
• Short term offshore assignments procedure
• Staff travel - per diem procedure
• Taxation and records of expenditure guidelines
• Taxi travel procedure
• Travel and entertainment expenditure: tipping
• Travel policy
• Travel procedure
• Use of personal vehicles
• Vaccinations and traveller health - guidelines
• Vietnam travel procedures and guidelines
• Working offshore procedure

Note the special travel procedures for Vietnam:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=5guozewrgrv

Facts about Vietnam

The following facts about Vietnam are consolidated from Expat Focus, Smart Traveller, Vietventures, World Travel Guide, International SOS and Wikipedia.

Location

Officially called the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Vietnam is the easternmost country on the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia. China borders it to the north, Laos to the northwest, Cambodia to the southwest, and the South China
Sea (referred to as East Sea by the Vietnamese) to the east. It has a population of over 86 million, making it the 13th most populous country in the world.

Ho Chi Minh City
Formerly called Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City is Vietnam’s largest city. The city centre is located on the banks of the Saigon River, 60 kilometres from the South China Sea. The city is administratively separated into 12 districts and six suburban areas. The city centre where most of the main hotels and best quality restaurants are located, is in District 1 (which is the actual area known as ‘Saigon’), and most key buildings are within a short taxi ride from one another.

RMIT Vietnam’s Saigon South campus is located 7km from the city centre.

Hanoi
Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam and lies on the right bank of the Red River. It is situated at 1760 km north of Ho Chi Minh City. It has four inner precincts: Hoan Kiem, Ba Dinh, Hai Ba Trung and Dong Da. Hoan Kiem is the main business and administrative district. Most government offices, foreign embassies and Ho Chi Minh’s mausoleum are located in Ba Dinh. Dong Da and Hai Ba Trung are mainly residential areas.

RMIT University’s Hanoi campus is located in the Ba Dinh District.

For more information on RMIT international University in Vietnam visit: http://www.rmit.edu.vn/677_ENG_HTML.htm

Climate
Vietnam’s varied topography and countryside allows for a varied weather experience, ranging from very hot in the South to bitterly cold and even snowy (on rare occasions) in the mountains near the Chinese border. In July the average temperature in Hanoi is 28.6°C and in Ho Chi Minh City 27.6°C. In the South the rainy season lasts from May to November; in the summertime the midday heat and humidity (that reaches 90%) is mitigated by sudden showers and by an occasional cool tropical breeze. Along Vietnam’s central coast, the driest season runs from June to October. Visitors to North Vietnam are often surprised by the region’s distinct seasons; summers are hot and humid while winters are invigoratingly cool.

Time zone
GMT + 7 (GMT + 6 from last Sunday in March to last Sunday in October).

Getting around
Taxis are the usual modes of transportation in Vietnam for visitors. Reliable metered taxis are readily available in both Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. Hotels can organise taxis for you. There is a taxi rank at the Saigon South campus or ask a receptionist to call a taxi on your behalf. Drivers may not speak English so it is advisable to have a map with the destination written in Vietnamese to show the driver. Tipping cab drivers is neither customary nor expected. Visitors should choose a new and clean vehicle with air conditioning. Depending on the taxi company used, flag fall rate is usually about 18,000 dong (AU$1) for
the first two kilometres, with every subsequent kilometre costing between AU$0.45 and AU$0.60. If meters are not used, a fare will have to be agreed with the driver prior to departure; a short journey within the city centre should cost no more than 50,000 dong (AU$2.80). Taxis can be hailed on the street but do check fares for longer journeys with hotel or campus reception staff. Mai Linh Taxi, Vina Taxi, Saigon Tourist and Vinasun Taxi offer good services.

Public transportation is available at all price levels from non-air-conditioned and older buses to high comfort travel vans. However, in urban areas they can be crowded and are not recommended for business travellers.

Health Tips
Travel vaccinations for Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Typhoid are recommended.

The telephone number of International SOS Assistance Centre in Vietnam is: +84 8 3829 8520. City-specific contact details are listed below and available at: https://www.internationalsos.com/en/about-our-clinics_vietnамdetails.htm

In **Hanoi** the International SOS clinic is located in the heart of West Lake. It is near Noi Bai International Airport and only a short 15-minute drive from Hoan Kiem Lake, the centre of the tourist district.

International SOS Clinic
51 Xuan Dieu
Hanoi
Phone: +84 4 3934 0666

The **Ho Chi Minh City** clinic is conveniently located at the intersection of Districts 1 and 3, at the city centre and not far from Tan Son Nhat International Airport.

International SOS Vietnam, Ltd.
167A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia St, District 3
Ho Chi Minh City
Phone: +84 8 829 8424

Pharmacies, called “nha thuoc” in Vietnamese, can be found on almost every square block of the city.

Tap water is generally unsafe. Opt for bottled water or carbonated drinks. Ensure all food is cooked even in larger hotels and restaurants. Try to avoid food from street vendors and markets.

Malaria is present in some areas. Routine vaccinations, e.g., Tetanus-diphtheria, Measles-mumps-rubella, Influenza, Polio, and Varicella (chicken pox) should be up to date.

Emergency Contacts

The Australian Embassy is located at:

8 Dao Tan Street, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi
Phone: +84 4 3831 7755
Fax: +84 4 3831 7711;
Website: http://www.vietnam.embassy.gov.au/

In Ho Chi Minh City, the Australian Consulate-General is located at:

20th Floor, Vincom Centre
47 Ly Tu Trong Street
District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Phone: +84 8 35218 100
Fax: +84 8 35218 101

Wherever you are in Vietnam, below are the phone numbers for emergencies:

Ambulance - 115
Police - 113
Fire - 114


Resources

The RMIT Vietnam Manual: A Practical Guide for Staff
### Travel checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flights and accommodation – contact Travel Arrangers for bookings, travel dates and other arrangements</td>
<td>To get your flights and accommodation arrangements sorted, you can access the Trobexis system [Sabre Online Booking Tool and a list of RMIT-preferred travel agencies] on the RMIT Travel website or, if you are a member of the Business College, you can have the arrangements made on your behalf by the Travel Arrangers at Business. <a href="mailto:Travel@rmit.edu.au">Travel@rmit.edu.au</a>. You should also familiarise yourself with the policy and procedures detailed on the College of Business Travel Intranet site <a href="https://sites.google.com/a/rmit.edu.au/college-of-business-intranet/travel">https://sites.google.com/a/rmit.edu.au/college-of-business-intranet/travel</a>. To engage the Travel Arrangers you should complete the “Travel Request for a Quote” form on the Business Intranet, ensuring you complete all relevant sections including the Internal Order Code. “3 Steps to Book Travel Guide” also provides comprehensive explanations on how to arrange your travel <a href="http://mams.rmit.edu.au/v6x5va2qp1d1.pdf">here</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa</td>
<td>To ensure your VISA requirements are met you should access the VISA LINK website (<a href="http://www.visalink.com.au">http://www.visalink.com.au</a>) and follow the prompts. If a letter of introduction is required, contact your Travel Arranger with your dates and travel purpose and a suitable signed letter will be prepared for you. You can have the documents collected and delivered to a site of your choice or the Travel Arrangers will do this for you. You can pay for this service with an RMIT credit card or seek reimbursement from your school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Diem</td>
<td>Travellers eligible for a Per Diem should complete the details on the Trobexis Web site or seek assistance from the Travel Arranger. RMIT Per Diem Procedure: <a href="http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=exy2zl0084nz">here</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel insurance</td>
<td>Travellers insurance is covered by RMIT and is conditional on trip approval. More information on Travel Insurance can be found at the Travel Insurance page on the RMIT website <a href="http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=w6e7h8dbild9z">here</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm bookings, travel dates, accommodation and other arrangements with Travel Administrator.</td>
<td>Ensure all your tickets agree with your itinerary, departure and arrival times are compatible with any connecting flights/transfers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with Course Coordinator regarding materials for class.</td>
<td>Locate directions on how to get to the partner campus (as well as having the details of a local contact person). Other logistical information such as getting from the airport to the hotel, location of the hotel in relation to airport and campus will also be useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies of guide books and maps.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emergency information

Compile a list of contacts, phone numbers and websites. An SOS card is available from your college travel coordinator. Make photocopies of your documents, itinerary, airline tickets, credit cards, birth certificate, and travel insurance documents. Leave a set of copies with someone at home, and take a copy with you but keep them separate from the originals while you are travelling.

Organise money credit/debit cards and travellers cheques

Convert money to overseas currency

Mobile phone, charger and adaptor

Find out what can’t be brought back to Australia

Arrive at the airport at least two hours before your flight is due to depart

COUNTRY SPECIFIC VISA REQUIREMENTS

Further details available from http://www.visalink.com.au

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>REQUIREMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| CHINA    | • Invitation letter from Client University.  
|          | • Special conditions apply for travellers born in China and for repeat visitors. |
| VIETNAM  | • Beware of Unauthorised VISA brokers. Refer to http://vietnamconsulate.org.au/  
|          | • Introductory letter from RMIT to Vietnam Embassy |
| SINGAPORE| No VISA required for Australian Citizens |
| INDONESIA| • Introductory letter from RMIT to Indonesian Consulate  
|          | • Invitation letter from Client University. |
About Shanghai University of International Business and Economics (SUIBE)

The Shanghai University of International Business and Economics (SUIBE) is an institution for higher learning specialising in international business. The SUIBE teaching faculty employ modern educational approaches drawing from their extensive links to international education and the business community. In the past decades, SUIBE has produced international business professionals that provide the backbone to multinational and foreign enterprises.

SUIBE comprises two campuses in Gubei and Songjiang. RMIT programs are delivered at the Songjiang campus, which is approximately 37km from the city centre in the modern Songjiang University Town.

RMIT University programs at SUIBE

In partnership with SUIBE RMIT University offers the following programs through the SUIBE-RMIT International Business School:

• Bachelor of Business (International Business)
• Bachelor of Business (Logistics & Supply Chain Management)
• Diploma of Commerce
Address & location map
Address: Wenxiang Road 1900, Songjiang, Shanghai, China
Webpage: https://www.google.com.au/maps/place/Shanghai+Institute+of+Foreign+Trade/@31.046445,121.217176,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x0:0xcfbe4761f6db537

Teaching model
Programs offered at SUIBE conform to RMIT Partnered Delivery of Coursework Awards Policy [http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=d9pzvx1en25w] RMIT academic and teaching staff contribute ongoing advice and support to their counterparts in Shanghai, moderate assessment tasks and approve results. Some RMIT courses at SUIBE are taught entirely by SUIBE staff using teaching and assessment resources provided by RMIT. For other courses offered at SUIBE, Melbourne academics or teaching staff may provide 15 hours of face to face tuition and follow up discussion with students over a four day teaching visit.

SUIBE Staff teaching into RMIT academic programs may also be employed to teach into other academic programs offered at SUIBE.

Academic & administration
Library online resources - Melbourne
The RMIT Library’s information resources and online databases, e-journals and e-books are accessible from offshore locations via the Library website at www.rmit.edu.au/library using your RMIT University staff (NDS) login where requested.
Library facilities - SUIBE

The Information Center Building houses a library, a language center, a business internship center, a computer center, an internet center, a multimedia education software design center, as well as conference halls.

Online course resources

The Learning Hub is the point of entry to online teaching and learning resources for staff at RMIT. The Learning Hub is located at:

http://www.rmit.edu.au/learninghub

Practical help guides are located at the following Blackboard site:

LSTS Learning Systems Technical Support

Student access to online learning resources is provided via the Studies tab at the myRMIT Studies student portal http://www.rmit.edu.au/myrmitstudies

Copyright

Copyright is taken very seriously by RMIT University. Ensure that all materials you provide are copyright-compliant. Simple copyright guides are located on the Copyright Management Service website http://www.rmit.edu.au/copyright

Useful guides include:

Offshore delivery of copyrighted materials:

http://mams.rmit.edu.au/6n9nlb5dypdwl.pdf

Student feedback & evaluation

Convey any student feedback you receive during your visit to our SUIBE contacts as a matter of courtesy. At the end of your visit SUIBE staff may administer a student survey. This evaluation will be sent to the RMIT Academic Program Coordinator.

RMIT University contacts for offshore deliveries

- **Academic Program Director** is the overall coordinator of academic programs, and provides academic guidance, course assignments and examinations.

- **Academic Course Coordinator** provides learning support and continuous assessment instruments.

- **School administrative staff** assists in the overall student and program administration of the programs.

- **Academic Registrar’s Group** has responsibility for offshore academic policy, student administration, graduations and Special Consideration.

SUIBE contacts

Should you need assistance while in Shanghai, the following SUIBE staff may be contacted:

- Ms Kitty Zhang
  - Administrator, RMIT Programs
  - +86 21 6770 3234
Organising your trip

The Travel Policy and Procedure is accessible at:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=1n74125y1tu3z

This procedure applies to all RMIT staff and students and to anyone undertaking travel on behalf of RMIT or funded in whole or part by RMIT. The RMIT Travel Procedure encompasses the following:

- Travel Portal
- Responsibilities of Travellers and Arrangers
- Domestic & International Travel Procedures
- Accommodation
- Staff expense reimbursement procedure (per diem)
- Corporate credit card and policy procedures
- Vaccinations and traveller health guidelines
- Passports, visas and other services guidelines
- Travel Insurance
- Travel Approval Matrix

Facts about Shanghai

The following facts about Shanghai are provided in consolidated form from Expat Focus, Executive Planet, Smart Traveller, World Travel Guide and Wikipedia.

Location

China is the world’s third-largest country, after Russia and Canada. It is located in the north-eastern part of Asia, along the Pacific Ocean coastline. China’s landscape consists of basins, foothills, lakes, rivers, plateaus, and plains. Nearly two-thirds of the country is mountainous.

Shanghai is the largest and most developed metropolis in China. It lies at the mouth of the Yangtze and is located at the middle part of the coast of mainland China. Shanghai can roughly be divided into three main areas:

a) Pudong, which lies across the Huangpu river from the main city, is rapidly developing as the city’s financial centre and an upscale residential district.

b) the downtown area around Nanjing Road, which is the main tourist and shopping area; and

c) the western suburbs towards the airport where the offices of many foreign companies are located.

Climate

China has a variety of climates due to its size and diverse geographic features. There are four distinctive seasons in the central region, around the Yangtze and Huaihe river valleys, and the Shanghai area to the east. Summers are long and humid, but winter temperatures fall well below freezing. This region also includes the cities of Wuhan, Chongqing and Nanjing.
Getting around

The Shanghai Metro is a convenient and inexpensive mode of transportation. The system includes both light railway and subway/underground lines. Tickets or smart cards can be purchased at the ticket offices or from the automatic ticket machines at the stations. The metro platforms are entered through a turnstile. The ticket/card is necessary to exit stations.

Fares for a single ride vary between RMB3 and RMB11, depending on distance. A standard ticket allows the passenger to take Lines 1 to 11 in one trip. A one-day ticket provides 24-hour access to Lines 1 to 11. The Smartcard allows access to the metro system as well as transfers to some buses and taxi. For more information on fares, routes and timetables, visit the Shanghai Metro [http://www.shmetro.com/EnglishPage/EnglishPage.jsp](http://www.shmetro.com/EnglishPage/EnglishPage.jsp) or Travel China Guide at [http://www.travelchinaguide.com/cityguides/shanghai/transportation/subway-ticket.htm](http://www.travelchinaguide.com/cityguides/shanghai/transportation/subway-ticket.htm).

Shanghai metro route map

Travel to and from the Pudong International Airport is very quick on the Maglev Train. The connecting station to and from the metro system is on Longyang Road via Lines 2 and 7. The official Shanghai Maglev train website [http://www.shmetro.com/EnglishPage/EnglishPage.jsp](http://www.shmetro.com/EnglishPage/EnglishPage.jsp) provides information on fares, timetables and travel time.

Taxis are a relatively cheap form of travel in metropolitan Shanghai. Travel by taxi in the downtown area is difficult and time consuming, especially during peak periods. Should you decide to travel by taxi, it is best to have the address of the destination written in Chinese characters on a piece of paper to show the driver or show the destination using a map. Drivers are obliged to use the meter; standard fares start at about RMB13 for the first 3 kms. RMB2.4 for each additional kilometer within 10kms. Different rates apply after 11pm.

Health Tips

There are no immunizations required for Shanghai however it is recommended to have vaccinations for Hepatitis A and B. For up to date information on health and safety check [http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/China](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/China).

The medical care available for business visitors and expatriates in the main cities is satisfactory. In Shanghai, Guangzhou, Beijing and other cities, there are hospitals which employ international medical staff and have VIP wards in which foreigners can be treated.

For urgent medical care, International SOS in Shanghai can be contacted at:

- International SOS (China) Ltd. Shanghai Branch
  Unit 2907-2910, 2 Grand Gateway
  3 Honggiao Road
  Xu Hui District
  Shanghai, PR China 200030 China
  Admin Phone: +86 (0)21 5298 9538
Obtaining Western medicine can be a challenge in Shanghai – even for over-the-counter medicines. China has strict rules on importing medicine and it is not unusual for the Western pharmacies attached to the clinics to have limited medication or standard medication at very high prices. Visitors should take supplies of health care products and copies of prescriptions especially when staying in China for a period of time.

Food in China is varied. It is advised that you take care about eating seafood and meat from smaller restaurants during the summer. Take care when eating at small street-side stalls or hawker restaurants where standards of hygiene may not be high by western standards.

Tap water is generally unsafe and best avoided even when boiled. It is recommended that you drink and brush your teeth with bottled water. Unless one is in a quality restaurant, consider foregoing the salad. Fruit should be thoroughly washed with bottled water and preferably peeled before eating.

Emergency contacts
In general emergencies can be reported by dialling 110 (In Shanghai, an alternative contact number for foreigners is +86 21 63215380). To call for an ambulance, call 120. To report a fire, call 119 or +86 21 53213535.

The Australian Consulate-General office in Shanghai is located at:
Level 22, Citic Square
1168 Nanjing West Road, Shanghai.

Telephone: +86 21 2215 5200; Fax: +86 21 2215 5252

For up to date information on health and safety visit:
http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/China

Resources
RMIT Partnered Delivery of Coursework Awards Policy
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=d9pzvx1en25w
## Travel checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flights and accommodation – contact Travel Arrangers for bookings, travel dates and other arrangements</td>
<td>To get your flights and accommodation arrangements sorted, you can access the Trobexis system [Sabre Online Booking Tool and a list of RMIT-preferred travel agencies] on the RMIT Travel website or, if you are a member of the Business College, you can have the arrangements made on your behalf by the Travel Arrangers at Business. <a href="mailto:Travel@rmit.edu.au">Travel@rmit.edu.au</a>. You should also familiarise yourself with the policy and procedures detailed on the College of Business Travel Intranet site <a href="https://sites.google.com/a/rmit.edu.au/college-of-business-intranet/travel">https://sites.google.com/a/rmit.edu.au/college-of-business-intranet/travel</a>. To engage the Travel Arrangers you should complete the “Travel Request for a Quote” form on the Business Intranet, ensuring you complete all relevant sections including the Internal Order Code. “3 Steps to Book Travel Guide” also provides comprehensive explanations on how to arrange your travel <a href="http://mams.rmit.edu.au/1v6x5va2qpl1d1.pdf">http://mams.rmit.edu.au/1v6x5va2qpl1d1.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa</td>
<td>To ensure your VISA requirements are met you should access the VISA LINK website (<a href="http://www.visalink.com.au">http://www.visalink.com.au</a>) and follow the prompts. If a letter of introduction is required, contact your Travel Arranger with your dates and travel purpose and a suitable signed letter will be prepared for you. You can have the documents collected and delivered to a site of your choice or the Travel Arrangers will do this for you. You can pay for this service with an RMIT credit card or seek reimbursement from your school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Diem</td>
<td>Travellers eligible for a Per Diem should complete the details on the Trobexis Web site or seek assistance from the Travel Arranger. RMIT Per Diem Procedure: <a href="http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=exy2zvl0084nz">http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=exy2zvl0084nz</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel insurance</td>
<td>Travellers insurance is covered by RMIT and is conditional on trip approval. More information on Travel Insurance can be found at the Travel Insurance page on the RMIT website <a href="http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=w6e7h8dild9z">http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=w6e7h8dild9z</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm bookings, travel dates, accommodation and other arrangements with Travel Administrator</td>
<td>Ensure all your tickets agree with your itinerary, departure and arrival times are compatible with any connecting flights/transfers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with Course Coordinator regarding materials for class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confirm bookings, travel dates, accommodation and other arrangements with Travel Administrator.

Ensure all your tickets agree with your itinerary, departure and arrival times are compatible with any connecting flights/transfers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copies of guide books and maps.</td>
<td>Locate directions on how to get to the partner campus (as well as having the details of a local contact person). Other logistical information such as getting from the airport to the hotel, location of the hotel in relation to airport and campus will also be useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency information</td>
<td>Compile a list of contacts, phone numbers and websites. An SOS card is available from your college travel coordinator. Make photocopies of your documents, itinerary, airline tickets, credit cards, birth certificate, and travel insurance documents. Leave a set of copies with someone at home, and take a copy with you but keep them separate from the originals while you are travelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organise money credit/debit cards and travellers cheques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convert money to overseas currency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone, charger and adaptor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out what can’t be brought back to Australia</td>
<td><a href="http://www.daff.gov.au/biosecurity/FAQs">http://www.daff.gov.au/biosecurity/FAQs</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrive at the airport at least two hours before your flight is due to depart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COUNTRY SPECIFIC VISA REQUIREMENTS**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHINA</strong></td>
<td>• Invitation letter from Client University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Special conditions apply for travellers born in China and for repeat visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VIETNAM</strong></td>
<td>• Beware of Unauthorised VISA brokers. Refer to <a href="http://vietnamconsulate.org.au/">http://vietnamconsulate.org.au/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introductory letter from RMIT to Vietnam Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SINGAPORE</strong></td>
<td>No VISA required for Australian Citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INDONESIA</strong></td>
<td>• Introductory letter from RMIT to Indonesian Consulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Invitation letter from Client University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM)

SIM is the largest provider of private tertiary and professional training in Singapore. SIM caters to the diverse and lifelong learning needs of its students, and extends learning beyond formal classroom lectures to networking sessions through which real life insights and experiences are shared and exchanged.

The SIM Group provides its core services through three educational brands:

SIM University (UniSIM) is the first privately-funded local university dedicated to the learning needs of working professionals and approved by the Ministry of Education (MOE) to issue its own degrees in a comprehensive range of disciplines;

- SIM Global Education (SIM GE) offers degree programmes through its partnerships with established international universities and institutions from the US, UK, Australia and Switzerland. Some of these university partners include University of London, RMIT University, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York and International Hotel Management Institute. SIM GE offers full-time and part-time programmes, and its student profile comprises school leavers and working adults. Its enrolment stands at 19,500.

- SIM Professional Development provides short-term programmes and workshops for executives and customised in-company training to its corporate clients.

SIM HQ is equipped with state-of-the-art educational technology and supports a comprehensive range of student development programmes and activities. In 2008, SIM launched a new campus – the SIM Global Education Campus at Ulu Pandan. This campus, which comprises residential, sporting and recreational facilities, is the most comprehensive private tertiary campus of its kind in Singapore. Combined with the current SIM campuses at Clementi Road and Namly Avenue, SIM now has the biggest campus facilities for a private tertiary institution in Singapore.

RMIT University programs at SIM

In partnership with SIM, RMIT offers the following programs at SIM HQ:

- Bachelor of Applied Science (Property Construction and Project Management)
- Bachelor of Communication (Professional Communication)
- Bachelor of Business (Accountancy)
- Bachelor of Business (Management)
• Bachelor of Business (Economics and Finance)
• Bachelor of Business (Marketing)
• Bachelor of Business (Logistics and Supply Chain Management)
• Bachelor of Design (Communication Design)
• Bachelor of Applied Science (Aviation)

Address & location map
Address: Singapore Institute of Management Headquarters (SIM HQ)
461 Clementi Road, Singapore 599491

Teaching model
RMIT Melbourne academic and teaching staff provide all teaching and assessment material and contribute ongoing advice and support to their counterparts in Singapore. Staff teaching into RMIT academic programs at SIM are typically employed on a sessional basis and may also be employed to teach into other programs offered at SIM. To conform to RMIT Partnered Delivery of Coursework Awards Policy Policy [http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=d9pzv1en25w], a Melbourne academic or teacher will typically teach 25% of each course and will support and coordinate the delivery of the remaining 75%. This may take the form of a three day visit during which time three, three-hour lectures are delivered and follow up discussion with students.

Library online resources - Melbourne
The RMIT Library's information resources and online databases, e-journals and e-books are accessible from offshore locations via the Library website at: www.rmit.edu.au/library using your RMIT University staff (NDS) login where requested.

Library and computing facilities - SIM
The Tay Eng Soon Library is located at SIM HQ. Photocopying, scanning, binding, faxing and CD copying services are available in the photocopy room. Access to computers and discussion rooms is also provided.
The lecturer’s lounge on level 5 of SIM HQ provides computer access. The electronic lock access code is 0519. To access RMIT Email via GoogleApps visit http://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/it/email

Online course resources
The Learning Hub is the point of entry to online teaching and learning resources for staff at RMIT. The Learning Hub is located at: http://www.rmit.edu.au/learninghub

Practical help guides are located at the following staff Blackboard site: LSTS Learning Systems Technical Support

Student access to online learning resources is provided via the myRMIT Studies student portal http://www.rmit.edu.au/myrmitstudies

Copyright
Copyright is taken very seriously by RMIT University. Ensure that all materials you provide are copyright-compliant. Simple copyright guides are located on the Copyright Management Service website http://www.rmit.edu.au/copyright

Useful guides include:

Student feedback & evaluation
Convey any student feedback you receive during your visit to your SIM contacts as a matter of courtesy. At the end of your visit SIM staff may administer a student survey. This evaluation will be sent to the RMIT Academic Program Coordinator.

RMIT University contacts for offshore deliveries
- Academic Program Director is the overall coordinator of academic programs, and provides academic guidance, course assignments and examinations.
- Academic Course Coordinator provides learning support and continuous assessment instruments.
- School administrative staff assists in the overall student and program administration of the programs.
- Academic Registrar’s Group has responsibility for offshore academic policy, student administration, graduations and Special Consideration.

SIM contacts
Contact your School’s offshore administrator for a current list of contacts at SIM.

Organising your trip
The Travel Policy and Procedure is accessible at http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=1n74125ytu3z

This procedure applies to all RMIT staff and students and to anyone undertaking travel on behalf of RMIT or funded in whole or part by RMIT. The RMIT Travel Procedure encompasses the following:
Facts about Singapore

The following facts about Singapore are provided in consolidated form from Expat Focus, Executive Planet, Smart Traveller, World Travel Guide and Wikipedia.

Location

Singapore is officially known as The Republic of Singapore. It is located at the southernmost tip of the Peninsular Malaysia and lies 136 km north of the equator.

The entire territory of Singapore consists of the island of Singapore and approximately sixty islets some of which are inhabited. The main island is about 42 km from east to west and 23 km from north to south. Singapore Strait separates Singapore from Indonesia and Straits of Johor separates it from Malaysia.

The main city area of Singapore is nestled along the shores of the Singapore River. Its Central Business District (CBD) actually spreads across both the central and southern parts of the island.

Climate

Singapore's climate is relatively uniform temperatures with no major seasonal shifts throughout the year. It is warm and humid all year round. The temperature ranges between 23°C to 35°C with humidity levels varying between 60% and 90%. The hottest months are June to August. Between December and March, the Northeast Monsoon season brings rain and thunderstorms throughout the island.

Timezone

GMT +8

Getting Around

Singapore's public transportation system consists primarily of the Mass Rapid transit (MRT), Light Rapid Transit (LRT) and bus services. There are plenty of taxis that can be hailed anywhere in the city.

To encourage the use of the public transportation system, a common pass, EZ Link, can be used on the MRT, LRT and buses. The EZ Link card also offers rebates on transfers. Transport fares are relatively low cost. Public transport companies often revise their fares, check visit http://www.transitlink.com.sg or http://www.smrt.com.sg for current fares.
Taxis are clearly-marked, regulated and safe. They are air-conditioned and can be flagged down on the street except in the CBD where passengers should use the official taxi stands. During heavy rainstorms and rush hour, taxis may be scarce. To book by telephone, the fee is S$2.30 during daytime off-peak hours and the fee increases during rush hour and at night. Comfort.Citicab and SMRT Taxi offer reliable services. Fares begin at around S$3 for the first kilometre and increase S$0.22 for every additional 400m. All surcharges will be shown on the meter and on printed receipts which can be requested from the driver. See www.smrt.com.sg/Taxis/FaresSurcharges.aspx for updates.

Health tips
Routine inoculations (i.e., tetanus-diphtheria, measles- mumps-rubella, influenza, polio, varicella [chicken pox]) should be up to date. Hepatitis B vaccination should be considered.

Medical care in Singapore is excellent. Residents and visitors are free to choose from among government or private providers and can walk in for a consultation at any private clinic or government polyclinic. Most general practitioners in Singapore will dispense medication as part of the consultation. General practitioners can be found in many neighbourhoods and shopping centres. Some general practitioners work in medical groups or chains (e.g., the Raffles Medical Group chain), while others work in privately-owned and managed offices.

The International SOS Assistance Centre in Singapore is open 24/7. The emergency number is +65 6338 7800. https://www.internationalsos.com/en/

International SOS Pte Ltd
331 North Bridge Road
#17-00 Odeon Towers
Singapore, Singapore 188720 Singapore
Admin Tel: +65 6338 2311
Admin Fax: +65 6338 7611

Ambulance services and 24-hour emergency departments located are in the government hospitals.

For prescription services, pharmacies are available in numerous outlets, including supermarkets, department stores, hotels and shopping centres. Pharmacies such as Guardian Pharmacy and Unity Pharmacy are usually staffed with a pharmacist and several assistants. Medications that do not require prescriptions are available off-the-shelf in pharmacies and local convenience stores such as Watsons.

Emergency contacts
Ambulance: 995
Fire: 995
Police: 999

Australian High Commission in Singapore
25 Napier Rd, Singapore
Telephone: +65 6836 4100; Fax: +65 6737 5481

## Travel checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ☐ Flights and accommodation – contact Travel Arrangers for bookings, travel dates and other arrangements | To get your flights and accommodation arrangements sorted, you can access the Trobexis system [Sabre Online Booking Tool and a list of RMIT-preferred travel agencies] on the RMIT Travel website or, if you are a member of the Business College, you can have the arrangements made on your behalf by the Travel Arrangers at Business. Travel@rmit.edu.au. You should also familiarise yourself with the policy and procedures detailed on the College of Business Travel Intranet site [https://sites.google.com/a/rmit.edu.au/college-of-business-intranet/travel](https://sites.google.com/a/rmit.edu.au/college-of-business-intranet/travel)

To engage the Travel Arrangers you should complete the “Travel Request for a Quote” form on the Business Intranet, ensuring you complete all relevant sections including the Internal Order Code. “3 Steps to Book Travel Guide” also provides comprehensive explanations on how to arrange your travel [http://mams.rmit.edu.au/lv6x5va2qp1d1.pdf](http://mams.rmit.edu.au/lv6x5va2qp1d1.pdf) |
| ☐ Visa | To ensure your VISA requirements are met you should access the VISA LINK website ([http://www.visalink.com.au](http://www.visalink.com.au)) and follow the prompts. If a letter of introduction is required, contact your Travel Arranger with your dates and travel purpose and a suitable signed letter will be prepared for you.

You can have the documents collected and delivered to a site of your choice or the Travel Arrangers will do this for you. You can pay for this service with an RMIT credit card or seek reimbursement from your school |
| ☐ Per Diem | Travellers eligible for a Per Diem should complete the details on the Trobexis Web site or seek assistance from the Travel Arranger. RMIT Per Diem Procedure: [http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=exy2zvl0084nz](http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=exy2zvl0084nz) |

You may be reimbursed for costs so keep your receipts. |
| ☐ Travel insurance | Travellers insurance is covered by RMIT and is conditional on trip approval. More information on Travel Insurance can be found at the Travel Insurance page on the RMIT website [http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=w6e7h8dbild9z](http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=w6e7h8dbild9z) |
| ☐ Confirm bookings, travel dates, accommodation and other arrangements with Travel Administrator. | Ensure all your tickets agree with your itinerary, departure and arrival times are compatible with any connecting flights/transfers. |
| ☐ Consult with Course Coordinator regarding materials for class. | |
- **Copies of guide books and maps.** Locate directions on how to get to the partner campus (as well as having the details of a local contact person). Other logistical information such as getting from the airport to the hotel, location of the hotel in relation to airport and campus will also be useful.

- **Emergency information**
  
  Compile a list of contacts, phone numbers and websites. An SOS card is available from your college travel coordinator. Make photocopies of your documents, itinerary, airline tickets, credit cards, birth certificate, and travel insurance documents. Leave a set of copies with someone at home, and take a copy with you but keep them separate from the originals while you are travelling.

- **Organise money credit/debit cards and travellers' cheques**

- **Convert money to overseas currency**

- **Mobile phone, charger and adaptor**

- **Find out what can’t be brought back to Australia**
  

- **Arrive at the airport at least two hours before your flight is due to depart**

---

**COUNTRY SPECIFIC VISA REQUIREMENTS**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHINA</td>
<td>• Invitation letter from Client University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Special conditions apply for travellers born in China and for repeat visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introductory letter from RMIT to Vietnam Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SINGAPORE</td>
<td>• No VISA required for Australian Citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDONESIA</td>
<td>• Introductory letter from RMIT to Indonesian Consulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Invitation letter from Client University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching culturally diverse students

Many factors will influence the effectiveness of transnational education whether you are teaching in offshore settings or with students from diverse cultures in an Australian classroom. This guide provides an overview of the key considerations in preparing to teach culturally diverse students in transnational settings.

Understanding cultural differences

Understanding the cultural differences that exist between teachers and students, or within student cohorts, will assist you to achieve good teaching outcomes by:

- Minimising misunderstandings or confused communication.
- Effectively engaging students in classroom discussions and activities.
- Reducing the risk of student attrition.

Adjusting your teaching approach to accommodate cultural differences will enhance the quality of your teaching, and foster student engagement and learning.

Preparing to teach in culturally diverse settings

Developing intercultural skills or intercultural competence requires:

- A good understanding of your own culture and the impact this has on your approach to teaching.
- An appreciation of how cultural nuances impact student behaviour.
- An understanding of how to present to your students in different cultural contexts without losing the educational value of your message.

If you have been educated in Australia and your employment experience is limited to Australia or other western countries, it is important to remember that you will not share the same frame of reference as your students particularly when you teach offshore. As with Australian students, students at our offshore campuses and partner institutions will usually expect ‘local examples’, ‘useful cases’ and ‘actual experiences’ to present and illustrate concepts and theories. To be meaningful these must be relevant to the students’ own frames of reference and have practical applications in their own local contexts.

There are a number of things you can do to prepare to teach culturally diverse students.
Contextualising content

- Be aware of cultural assumptions embedded in Australian or Western textbooks.
- Contextualise curriculum content for offshore students through local examples or case studies to demonstrate the theoretical principles explained in textbooks. For example, citing business studies of Haier in China or Temasek Holdings in Singapore can stimulate interesting discussions about local businesses.
- You can also contextualise the curriculum by drawing on your students’ familiarity with their own country and culture. This can be achieved by asking the students questions that provide information about local contexts and practices that will be useful for the whole class.

If referring to aspects of Australian and/or Western popular culture such as advertisements, slogans, TV shows and colloquial expressions to explain a concept to your students, it is helpful to carefully explain their meaning.

Overcoming language challenges

Language challenges are common for staff teaching in transnational settings.

- Pay special attention to your verbal communication to ensure it is clear.
- Use simple language to elaborate on ideas or concepts.
- Carefully select and articulate words.
- Find alternative words to explain an idea or concept if you have selected word/s unknown to students.
- Slow down your speech if you tend to speak quickly.
- Ensure you project your voice so that it can be easily and clearly heard.
- Consider providing lecture slides as handouts.
- It may help to give your students an idea of what is to be discussed in the next class. This will help prepare them for what they will hear. It also provides opportunities for students to read materials in advance, which can assist with comprehension.
- Be aware that it may take students additional time to complete reading assignments. Shorter and more frequent reading assignments tend to be more effective than providing lengthy readings. Highlight any textbook features that are student-friendly such as chapter overviews and summaries, review exercises and glossaries.

Facilitating student participation

In traditional Asian classrooms, lectures are the usual method of instruction. Class discussions and group work are not commonly used. When students do not actively participate in class it is common to assume that they are uninterested, passive or have not completed the reading assignment or prepared for class. These assumptions are often incorrect. Motivating your students to participate in class may be achieved by accommodating their cultural differences. For instance:
• Tap into collectivist preferences by asking students to work in small groups to consolidate a group perspective on an issue or answer to a problem.

• Be aware of differences in student status — it is not uncommon for a student to defer to a student perceived to be more senior or of higher status.

• Create a safe learning environment. In many cultures ‘saving face’ (prestige, honour, reputation) is important. Students may not participate in activities if they feel they may lose or cause a loss of face. It is important to be aware that students might not willingly participate in activities they fear may cause embarrassment to them or another, especially to another of more senior status.

Students from some cultures have a low tolerance for uncertainty. These students will avoid ambiguity and risk, and function more effectively when provided with clearly defined structures and information about what is about to happen. If you are teaching at RMIT’s offshore campuses or partner institutions it may be helpful to adopt a structured approach to your classes. Arkoudis (2006) discusses how teachers can make lectures more accessible by providing a lecture outline and making links to other topics covered in the material. Concept maps, diagrams and schematic representations are also helpful tools.

Students need to feel that they can actively contribute in class and that their contribution is acknowledged. It is always helpful to explain how the lessons will be delivered as well as the benefits of discussion and group work. It will be helpful to gradually ease students into class activities they may not be familiar with by keeping early activities short and simple and then building their complexity once students have developed a level of confidence in learning through discussion and group work.

**Differing perspectives on academic integrity**

The concept of academic integrity is culturally dependent. You should explain and reinforce the concept of plagiarism, and be explicit about the University’s policy on academic integrity in general and plagiarism in particular.

**Teaching transnational students in Melbourne**

Most of the challenges experienced by our academic and teaching staff working offshore are very similar to what is encountered in culturally diverse classes in Melbourne.

An emphasis on lectures and teacher–centred approaches in some schools and universities may result in limited mastering of critical thinking and analytical skills. International students may also have difficulty relating to ideas and examples that are culturally bound to Australian contexts.

International students can face language barriers which may lead to limited confidence to contribute in large group discussions. Discussing ways to make group work productive checking for understanding and eliciting the opinions of those who have not contributed can help facilitate inclusiveness. Teachers can also capitalise on the knowledge international students bring by extracting interesting and useful information. By valuing international students’ input, we model inclusive behaviour for all our students.

“…it was precisely because of the professor’s expertise in intercultural communication coupled with opportunities presented by the course-content that cross-cultural adjustment was possible for the students and professor alike and that a mutually empowering, ethical and effective learning environment was negotiated.” (Crabtree, R. & D. Sapp (2004:124)
Interacting with offshore colleagues (local teachers working in RMIT offshore campuses)

When people move between countries and cultures it is common to seek out a set of do's and dont's. However, these do not provide reasons for appropriate or inappropriate behaviour, making it difficult to negotiate situations that are not covered. It is more helpful to have a broader perspective and understanding of the cultures and sub-cultures of the country. This allows us to focus on the situation at hand and make informed choices about what might be appropriate.

The most important cultural attributes that we might see operating in organisations in countries like China and Vietnam are formality, consensus building and harmony. Behaving with decorum and avoiding public embarrassment ensures a sense of harmony. We expect to spend time building personal relationships and getting to know our colleagues. Understanding our offshore colleagues’ communication style is essential for us to establish rapport and understanding. Communication styles in countries like China and Vietnam may be less direct than those typically encountered in Australia. This means that individuals often speak in a circuitous way by being more general and tactful. Non-verbal communication assumes a very important role in providing cues and clues. During meetings for instance, if an individual disagrees with someone else’s opinion, he/she will remain quiet to avoid a loss of face. Both parties lose face if one speaks up and disagrees publicly. As non-verbal communication is very nuanced, there is a reliance on facial expression, tone of voice and posture for cues. Note the impassive expression of the Chinese while communicating. A frown while someone is speaking may imply disagreement. Looking straight into another person’s eyes might be considered disrespectful. To maintain their privacy in crowded situations Chinese and Vietnamese people may avoid eye contact.

Summary

An awareness and understanding of the diverse cultural backgrounds and learning approaches, styles and preferences of your students helps to provide an enriching educational experience. This requires that you get to know your students and how cultural influences have shaped their approach to learning. You can then consider how you might adapt your teaching style and approach to accommodate the cultural norms and the preferred learning styles of students.

Useful resources

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

RMIT University’s practical guides to teaching will help you to plan and improve your teaching practice:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/practical

Helpful websites on inclusive teaching practices (curriculum, assessment and cultural diversity) are provided at the RMIT University’s School of Science Engineering & Health:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/seh/staff/inclusiveteaching
Working with Students from China is a helpful online resource produced by Monash University. It puts into context the experience of international students, particularly those from China, studying in Australia. It also presents issues that teachers deal with when teaching international students and how to address them:

Glauco De Vita (2000) writes in the context of international business education with a focus on culturally inclusive pedagogies and provides practical suggestions on communicating effectively with and engaging international students to actively participate in the classroom:
http://alh.sagepub.com/content/1/2/168

http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/resources_teach/teaching_in_practice/docs/international.pdf - This online guide, prepared by Dr. Sophie Arkoudis of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne, provides comprehensive advice on teaching international students and enhancing their learning.

RMIT’s video series “Perspectives on Learning and Teaching” presents short vignettes about student-centred learning, learner diversity, student engagement and preparing to teach:

References


Turner, Y. 2009 ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You, Is There Nothing We Can Do? Pedagogic challenges in using group work to create an intercultural learning space’, Robert Gordon University http://jsi.sagepub.com/content/13/2/240
Embracing student centeredness

Academic and teaching staff can adopt two orientations in their teaching: a teacher centred/content orientation or a student centred/learning orientation (Kember, 1997). At RMIT we promote student-centred learning approaches so it is important to be familiar with what it means to adopt a student-centred or learning orientation.

The term student-centred learning implies a conceptual shift from I will tell you this and therefore you will learn to I want to help you learn in ways which are effective for you and to meet your needs.

Transnational academic and teaching staff need to be aware that some students may be more familiar with teacher-centred approaches. When teaching in RMIT programs, part of your role will be to assist students transition from a teacher-centred approach to a student-centred approach to learning.

Optimising the conditions in which all students can learn effectively is an important function of teaching. This requires you to:

• Create a psychologically safe learning environment
• Build supportive and constructive teacher/student relationships, and
• Accommodate the diversity of learning styles and needs that exist within your student group.

Creating psychologically safe learning environments

Students need instructional and emotional support to learn effectively and successfully. They need to:

• Feel comfortable with you and with other students.
• Feel that you and other RMIT staff care about their learning and success.
• Feel confident that they can take risks and will not feel shame or embarrassment when they make errors or display initial incompetence.
• Be confident that they will be treated fairly and with respect.
• Feel that there is sufficient flexibility in learning approaches that will allow for them to construct meaning in their own unique, individual way.
• Believe that they can be successful in the program.

If we value independence, if we are disturbed by the growing conformity of knowledge, of values, of attitudes, which our present system induces, then we may wish to set up conditions of learning which make for uniqueness, for self-direction, and for self-initiated learning.

Carl Rogers
All academic and teaching staff must be sensitive to the impact that feelings of anxiety, shame and embarrassment may have on a student’s willingness to engage in classroom activities. If teaching in a transnational setting, you need to be aware that in many societies respect for seniority and the need to save face may impact on the level of confidence students have in participating in some classroom activities. More information about how culture may impact on a student’s sense of psychological safety is available from the Transnational Teaching Quick Guide Approaching cultural diversity.

In 1968 Rosenthal and Jacobson demonstrated in their “Pygmalion in the Classroom” study that “teacher expectations can act as self-fulfilling prophecies because student achievement comes to reflect their expectations” (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996, p.347).

Students need to feel part of their learning community and you must create an atmosphere that encourages them to support one another in their learning. To create this sense of belonging in the group you need to encourage active communication between students through team work and communication activities, and through your own encouragement of them as part of your community.

Build supportive & constructive teacher/student relationships

A constructive teacher/student relationship is important for optimal learning. Students need to feel respected and that their learning needs are accommodated. It can be difficult to get to know all students personally if you have a large class however even when you have a large class it is worth paying attention to both the common and diverse characteristics of the student group.

When designing learning activities it is important to consider the diverse range of life experiences that students bring to the classroom. These life experiences will influence the way students process new learning; they will often search for meaning and analyse and interpret the concepts and ideas you present based on their past experiences and what they already know.

You can gain an appreciation of your students’ past learning and experiences by engaging them in dialogue about how their past learning and experiences may shape the way they think about the knowledge and information you present. Vella (2001) presents some useful ideas on how you can do this. Examples of questions or tasks you use include asking students to:

- Think about how the topic relates to their own life experiences.
- Identify something that stands out for them in the new knowledge presented.
- Underline key words they would like to discuss with the group.
- Engage in dialogue about the new knowledge.
- Engage in an activity that helps them to construct their own content.
Understanding differences in preferred learning styles

Along with diverse life experiences and considerable variation in students' knowledge, skills, cultural background and levels of maturity, students also come to the classroom with a range of preferred learning styles. As a result teachers need to thoughtfully select a variety of learning activities and tools that will engage all students in learning.

A student’s preferred learning style will influence which learning activities they will respond best to so it is necessary for teachers and academic staff to use a range of learning approaches and activities.

Adult learning theorists Wolf and Kolb (1984) have provided useful models to assist understand the differences in learning styles. Wolf and Kolb’s model describes the four learning styles reflected in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style of Learner</th>
<th>Engagement strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activists</strong></td>
<td>Respond to a challenge, new experiences and problems, excitement, sense of freedom in learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>To accommodate Activists</strong> design learning experiences that enable students to get involved in a hands-on, practical project. Structure learning activities allowing time to observe, reflect and think.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflectors</strong></td>
<td><strong>To accommodate Reflectors</strong> provide students with readings, case studies and examples. DVD clips and audio recordings that provide students with the opportunity observe or listen to others with a depth of experience in the field of study and then discuss their reflections can also be very useful. You might provide discussion questions to guide student reflection and discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theorists</strong></td>
<td>Appreciate clear aims and logical structure with time for methodical exploration and opportunity to question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>To accommodate Theorists</strong> provide lectures or presentations that logically outline theories and conceptual frameworks. Theorists also enjoy learning through reading well-research books and articles so it is worth providing additional readings or references for these students. Provide relevant and relevant and practical learning activities where theory can be put into practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A variety of learning styles requires a variety of learning activities
**Style of Learner** | **Engagement strategy**
---|---
Pragmatists | To accommodate Pragmatists provide succinct, practically-orientated readings. You may also need to help students put new learning to practical use. Pragmatists will respond well to real-life projects and like to get feedback and advice on specific things they can do to improve.

*Adapted from “Learning Styles” in Fry, H., Ketteridge, S., & Marshall, S. (1999)*

**Cultural background**

The cultural backgrounds of students will influence their expectations of teachers and how they engage in the classroom. A more in-depth discussion of ways of structuring classroom activities to accommodate cultural differences is available in the Transnational Teaching Quick Guide: Approaching Cultural Diversity.

**Useful resources**

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

RMIT University’s practical guides to teaching will help your plan and improve your teaching practice:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/practical


The Learner-Centered Teaching Series of the University of Oregon provides helpful links to a variety of discussions, strategies and tips on the student-centred teaching classroom:
http://tep.uoregon.edu/workshops/teachertraining/learnercentered/learnercentered.html

RMIT’s video series “Perspectives on Learning and Teaching” presents short vignettes about student-centred learning, learner diversity, student engagement and preparing to teach:
Lesson plans

A lesson plan provides a map or guide for each class, lecture or tutorial. It identifies the objectives and the methods you intend to use to teach a lesson. A lesson plan ensures your lessons are relevant, well-structured and considered so that you can engage students effectively.

The following template will guide you to develop a lesson plan.
http://mams.rmit.edu.au/pxlde3idvc8z.docx

Setting lesson objectives

Each lesson you deliver should achieve specific learning or lesson objectives. Objectives for each lesson must be aligned to the course learning outcomes identified in the Course Guide.

Your lesson objectives and course learning outcomes should provide information about:

- What you want students to know at the end of the lesson.
- The skills you want students to learn, practice or develop (for example, oral presentations, teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking).
- How you will build the development of these skills into your lesson.
- What you want students to be able to do with what they have learned.
- How this lesson will assist students to achieve the course learning outcomes.

Structuring the lesson

A good lesson structure typically ensures that:

- Time is allowed for reviewing last week’s lesson.
- The key priorities, concepts or theories to be covered in the new lesson are identified.
- The type of activities you intend to conduct and the time you have allocated for each activity are appropriate.
- Time is allowed for reviewing and concluding the lesson in a way that reinforces the main points.
- Time is allowed for you to obtain feedback from your students and provide feedback to your students.
Preparing lesson content

Academic and teaching staff should tailor each lesson to ensure the content is relevant to:

- The **characteristics** of the student cohort and their learning styles
- The **local contexts** of transnational students
- Contemporary industry **practice**

Lesson content should align coherently and logically with the content you intend to cover in the course.

Engaging, practical and contextualised examples and cases should support an internationalised curriculum, be relevant to student contexts and be up-to-date or historically relevant.

Audiovisual supports, handouts and online resources should be thoughtfully selected so that they are relevant and clearly support student learning.

Consider preparing additional material that can be used if for some reason your planned activities do not consume the time allowed or an activity cannot be conducted.

Academic and teaching staff must have a good knowledge and understanding of the concepts and theories to be covered in the lesson. This includes ensuring you can answer the tutorial questions that your students are expected to answer.

Reviewing the effectiveness of your lesson plan

It is important to take time each week to reflect on and review your teaching practice and the effectiveness of the lessons you have planned and presented. Consider the following questions:

- What did I do that worked well?
- What did not work well? Why not?
- How well did I involve the students in active participation?
- Did the timing of each activity go to plan? Did I get through all that I had planned?
- What could I improve for the next lesson?
- Do I need to find more resources to support my teaching?
- Do I need to seek additional support to help my students with any learning challenges?
Useful resources

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

RMIT University’s practical guides to teaching will help your plan and improve your teaching practice:

http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/practical

Planning your classes — RMIT University
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=an6p46dgm7vc

Inclusive Teaching — RMIT University
http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/inclusive

Preparing a lesson plan — Honolulu Community College
http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/teachtip.htm#lessonplan

Writing lesson plans — Huntington University
http://www.huntington.edu/education/lessonplanning/Plans.html

Introduction to Planning a Class Session — Penn State University
http://serc.carleton.edu/files/NAGTWorkshops/careerprep/teaching/lesson_planner.pdf

Course planning — University of the Sciences in Philadelphia
http://www.usciences.edu/teaching/tips/planning.shtml

Good Practice Principles: Learning and Teaching Across Cultures — the Office for Learning and Teaching, Australian Government
Transnational Teaching
Quick Guide

Teaching practice - Engaging students in lectures & large classes

The challenges of lectures & large classes

Teaching large classes at RMIT typically involves presenting to a large group of students in an appropriately configured learning space. A lecture is a common teaching method at universities, and most academic and teaching staff will present lectures at some point in their career. Lectures are useful means of presenting information or delivering content to a large group of students in a cost-effective and efficient way. As a method of teaching and learning however, lectures do have their limitations. Unless academic and teaching staff have thoughtfully structured a lecture in order to optimise student engagement it may be very difficult to hold the attention of students and achieve lesson and course objectives.

Engaging students

The Griffith Institute for Higher Education (GIHE) Good Practice Guide provides some useful considerations when preparing lectures:

- The first 20 minutes of a lecture is the most crucial time to engage students.
- Student learning is more effective if students are asked to think about the information you are presenting so that they actively engage with the information.
- Students need to be encouraged to apply the information you are presenting to real life experience so that they make the connections.
- If there is no application of the lecture content there is a likely drop in the information retained in the days following the lecture.
- If there is no participation during a lecture there is limited opportunity to obtain and provide ongoing and timely feedback about student understanding.

There are a number of ways to engage students in lectures. The following points, adapted from Twenty Ways to Make Lectures More Participatory and developed by the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University, provides ideas that should help you to structure interesting and engaging lectures.

Beginning the lecture

- Explain how you intend to present your lecture and your expectations about student participation.
• To engage students from the outset you could begin your lecture by posing a question or a problem that elicits several answers or solutions from students. Alternatively, you could ask students to jot down answers to one or more questions on their own and then to combine answers in a small group.

**Encouraging student participation**

Recognise that attention span can be limited. Divide your session into a few 15-20 minute lecture chunks dispersed with student activities. Consider whether any information could be delivered through role-playing, outside readings, online discussions, in-class writing or any other methods that can vary routines and stimulate learning.

- Always deal tactfully with student contributions irrespective of the accuracy of their responses.
- Come out from behind the lectern and move closer to students.
- If you have a relatively small student group try to use students’ names (you may need name cards to facilitate this). As a general rule, draw on the more outgoing students’ contribution first until quieter students have developed confidence. Then draw them into discussions by asking them for their thoughts.
- Invite and encourage students to discuss your ideas and the information or perspectives you present.
- When a student asks a question, instead of answering yourself, invite other students to respond to the question.
- Ask questions throughout the lecture so that the lecture becomes more interactive. Along with asking questions you can also ask students to raise their hands if they agree or disagree with propositions.
- The most fruitful questions are thought-provoking and require students to really think. It is helpful to prepare a range of stimulating questions before the lecture.
- Show students a multiple-choice question based on the material you are covering and ask them to indicate which answer they think is correct and why. You could ask students to vote on the right answer and then turn to their neighbors to persuade them of the answer within the space of two minutes. When time is up, ask them to vote a second time. Usually far more students arrive at the correct answer when voting the second time.
- If readings have been assigned for a class, refer to them. Ask questions about the readings or have small groups of students prepare short presentations of their interpretations of the readings.

**Ensure students can hear & understand**

- In a large group, always repeat a question or paraphrase a response before going on, so that all students can hear and understand (this is especially important when students in the class are not native English speakers.
- Pause in the lecture after making a major point.
• When using slides, maps or handouts, ask students what they see before you tell them what you see. Use these devices to help students think about a problem as you introduce it.

**Use small group activities**

• Break students into small groups and have them contribute to:

  - Discussions – ask students to nominate a spokesperson to report back on the key themes arising from their discussion. If there are a number of small groups ask one group to present their discussion or findings and then ask other groups to report “by exception” i.e. only report information that is different.

  - Debates - form two opposing teams in each group and ask that they take opposing viewpoints.

  - Case Studies - cases are particularly useful for applying knowledge, problem-solving or showing how experts solve problems.

• Quizzes – these may be used throughout the lecture but are especially helpful at the end of the lecture to review material.

• One-minute papers – these are another useful way of reviewing the materials covered in the lecture. Ask students to write down what they consider are:

  - The key ideas presented in the class.

  - The key question they still have as they leave.

• The key questions students have at the end of the lecture can be used as the basis for beginning the next.

**Useful resources**

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

RMIT University’s practical guides to teaching will help you to plan and improve your teaching practice: [http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/practical](http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/practical)

*Teaching Large Classes: Challenges and Strategies* was prepared by Dr Lynn Burnett and Professor Kerri-Lee Krause as part of the GIHE Good Practice Guide. It discusses guidelines and provides tips in the context of large class instruction in university: [http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/118924/GPG-tlc.pdf](http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/118924/GPG-tlc.pdf)

The Australian Universities Teaching Committee (AUTC) Teaching Large Classes project website offers guidelines for teaching large classes. It has four sections: planning and teaching, planning and conducting assessment, administration and management, and tutoring and demonstrating: [http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/LargeClasses/](http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/LargeClasses/)

Teaching large classes by the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education draws on the experiences of teachers who have had to learn to teach large classes creatively and enjoyably and offers practical tips on teaching large classes particularly in Asian settings: [http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/095/Teaching_Large_Classes.pdf](http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/095/Teaching_Large_Classes.pdf)
The Derek Bok Center at Harvard University suggests ways to improve lectures and elicit student participation in both small and large classes: http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/TFTlectures.html

Six ways to make lectures in a large enrollment course more manageable and effective - University of California, Berkeley http://teaching.berkeley.edu/large-lecture-classes


Using Web-Based Lecture Technologies – Advice from students provides an overview of some of the findings of a survey of over 800 students from four Australian universities. It collates students’ qualitative responses into advice on how to use web-based lecture technologies (WBLT) effectively in terms of the structure and content of lectures, the lecturing process and managing the technical aspects of WBLT: http://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/12165/1/advice_from_students.pdf

Dave Dusseau on Teaching Large Classes is a video featuring Professor Dave Dusseau speaking about teaching large classes and learner-centered teaching at the University of Oregon’s College of Business: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7QV_iWzA0o

Additional References


Dyson, BJ 2008, Assessing small-scale interventions in large-scale teaching: a general methodology and preliminary data. The online version of this article can be found at: http://alh.sagepub.com/content/9/3/265

Young, MS, Robinson, S & Alberts, P 2009, ‘Students pay attention!: combating the vigilance decrement to improve learning during lectures’, Active Learning in Higher Education, 10(1), pp. 41-55, The online version of this article can be found at: http://alh.sagepub.com/content/10/1/41
Creating a dynamic learning environment

The quality of your teaching relies on your ability to structure and design class activities that are engaging and support student learning. The range of activities you use should accommodate all learning styles and encourage students to assume responsibility for their learning. You can create a dynamic and flexible learning environment that accommodates individual learning needs by using interactive activities. Such activities should provide students with opportunities to share ideas, test their thinking and examine different perspectives on issues. If you are teaching offshore it is important to consider how culture influences the way students may respond to different classroom activities. It is also important that you integrate local content and examples that will be relevant to and meet the needs and interests of local students.

How can I do this?

To ensure activities are relevant and achieve optimal student engagement and learning, when designing learning activities consider:

• The course and lesson objectives, and learning outcomes
• The cultural characteristics and diversity of the student group.
• The subject matter – this will influence the extent to which teaching activities are appropriate.
• The size of the class and the facilities and resources available to conduct activities.

Course and lesson objectives

When considering which activities to use in a lesson it is important to ensure the activity is relevant, learner-centred and will contribute to achieving the lesson and course objectives. When designing classroom activities you should articulate how the learning outcomes link to lesson objectives.

Cultural characteristics and diversity of the student group

The activities used in a lesson and course should be designed to accommodate the diversity of your students. It is useful to get to know your students and their cultural sensitivities and modify classroom activities accordingly. Cultural aspects that may impact on the effectiveness of classroom activities include:

• Attitudes towards teachers and authority.
• Gender, perceived differences in seniority or student status.
Collectivism and low tolerance for uncertainty.
Saving face.

Attitudes towards teachers & authority
Students may come to a university classroom having limited experience of student-centered learning. Your students may regard you as the expert and are therefore unlikely to challenge your views. RMIT’s student-centred approach may feel strange and confusing to some students when they begin an RMIT program. As a result, trying to engage students in a class discussion that involves critical thinking, and challenges to your ideas, may be difficult.

Gender & perceived differences in seniority or student status
In some university classrooms it may be common for female students to defer to males. If the student group is made up of mature-age professional students they may defer to a student who holds a senior position in an organisation. The implications are that some students may be reluctant to express their views before the more ‘senior’ or male students have expressed theirs. Students may be hesitant to present a contradictory view. By thoughtfully structuring activities teachers can still engage all students. In a group discussion you might group all the men or students of high status together so everyone can freely contribute to a small group discussion.

Collectivism
Many cultures have a collectivist orientation. Students might be more comfortable working together to form a collective view on a topic and present the thoughts of the group rather than express their own individual thoughts.

Low tolerance for uncertainty
Some societies tend to have a low tolerance for uncertainty. In the classroom this means students will like to know exactly what is expected of them. It also means they might prefer routines over surprises. If you plan to use new and innovative activities that may be different from anything they have experienced, you should think carefully about how you will prepare students.

Saving face
A person’s image or status within a social structure, or face, is an important aspect in many cultures. In the classroom the fear of losing face might arise when students do not understand your instructions or explanation, which can result in their reluctance to ask questions.

Other considerations
It is important to vary activities to accommodate the individual student learning styles.

In order to present a class using a student-centred approach that accommodates student diversity:

- Decide how students will best learn a new piece of information or skill rather than simply concentrating on how you will present it.
- Design activities carefully to engage students’ curiosity, enthusiasm and participation.
Subject matter

The subject matter being taught will influence the choice of teaching method and the suitability of learning activities. For example, while knowledge-based courses may be best presented through lectures and discussions, skills-based topics may be more effective if presented through experiential activities and narrative.

Class size, facilities and resources

When selecting activities it is important to consider the logistics. For example, you may need to consider whether there will enough students to conduct an activity, or there may be too many students to make the activity effective. It is also important to consider whether the activity is viable given the room/s and equipment available.

Examples of learning activities

A range of learning activities is necessary to engage students in learning and to appeal to different learning styles. Common activities include in-class discussions, demonstrations, case studies, debates, small group work, quizzes and simulations.

There are hundreds of useful resources that can provide you with ideas to optimise learning. You may also find that your teaching colleagues may have useful ideas and suggestions for tried and tested activities. With experience you can modify and adapt activities to suit your classes and your teaching style.

The following list of popular teaching methods and classroom activities is adapted from Honolulu University Teaching Tips Index. This list also provides comments on the strengths and limitations of each method and the preparation required.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strengths</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weaknesses</strong></th>
<th><strong>Preparation required</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture with discussion</td>
<td>Involves audience at least after the lecture</td>
<td>Time may limit discussion period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audience can question, clarify &amp; challenge</td>
<td>Quality is limited by quality of questions and discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel of Experts</td>
<td>Allows experts to present different opinions</td>
<td>Experts may not be good speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can provoke better discussion than a one person discussion</td>
<td>Personalities may overshadow content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequent change of speaker keeps attention from lagging</td>
<td>Subject may not be in logical order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest Speakers</td>
<td>Personalises the topic</td>
<td>May not be a good speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breaks down audience's stereotypes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
<td>Listening exercise that allows creative thinking for new ideas</td>
<td>Can be unfocused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourages full participation because all ideas equally recorded</td>
<td>Needs to be limited to 5 - 7 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Draws on group's knowledge and experience</td>
<td>People may have difficulty getting away from known reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spirit of congeniality can be created</td>
<td>If not facilitated well, criticism and evaluation may occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One idea can spark off other ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>Entertaining way of teaching content and raising issues</td>
<td>Can raise too many issues to have a focused discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keeps group's attention</td>
<td>Discussion may not have full participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looks professional</td>
<td>Only as effective as following discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stimulates discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Discussion</td>
<td>Pools ideas and experiences from group</td>
<td>Not practical with more than 20 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective after a presentation, film or experience that needs to be analysed</td>
<td>Few people can dominate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allows everyone to participate in an active process</td>
<td>Others may not participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Is time consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can get off the track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group Discussion</td>
<td>Allows participation of everyone</td>
<td>Needs careful thought as to purpose of group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People often more comfortable in small groups</td>
<td>Groups may get side tracked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can reach group consensus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies</td>
<td>Develops analytic and problem solving skills</td>
<td>People may not see relevance to own situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allows for exploration of solutions for complex issues</td>
<td>Insufficient information can lead to inappropriate results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allows student to apply new knowledge and skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Plays</td>
<td>Introduces problem situation dramatically</td>
<td>People may be too self-conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides opportunity for people to assume roles of others and thus appreciate another point of view</td>
<td>Not appropriate for large groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allows for exploration of solutions</td>
<td>People may feel threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides opportunity to practice skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Back Sessions</td>
<td>Allows for large group discussion of role plays, case studies, and small group exercise</td>
<td>Can be repetitive if each small group says the same thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gives people a chance to reflect on experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each group takes responsibility for its operation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires / Surveys</td>
<td>Allows people to think for themselves without being influenced by others</td>
<td>Can be used only for short period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual thoughts can then be shared in large group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Useful resources

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

A Community of Practice - you may find your peers can provide you with invaluable ideas for activities they have successfully used in a transnational setting.

RMIT’s “Coffee and Cookies: Conversations on Good Teaching - Motivating Students and Stimulating Their Interest” is based on actual “conversations” with RMIT lecturers from 44 courses who shared their time and teaching experiences as part of the CES Analysis Project. http://mams.rmit.edu.au/u22gsuasd4pq.pdf

RMIT’s Inclusive teaching practices (curriculum, assessment and cultural diversity) provides a useful list covering a range of topics relating to student differences and engagement. http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/inclusive

Student-centred learning – provides a useful checklist to determine if your approach to teaching is student-centred: http://mams.rmit.edu.au/e8unxk9vkjtpp.pdf

101 Things You Can Do the First Three Weeks of Class is an excellent compilation of resources that includes "suggestions for college teachers who are looking for a fresh way of creating the best possible environment for learning.” http://www.uvu.edu/retention/practices/101_THINGS_YOU_CAN_DO_2006_1_.pdf

The University of Oregon’s Teaching Effectiveness includes links to resources on various topics related to teaching methods: http://tep.uoregon.edu/resources/index.html

Teaching tips Index -Honolulu University http://www2.honolulu.hawaii.edu/facdev/guidebk/teachtip/teachtip.htm

RMIT’s video series “Perspectives on Learning and Teaching” presents short vignettes about student-centred learning, learner diversity, student engagement and preparing to teach: https://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/bus/public/goodteaching/

References


Zepke, N & Leach, L 2010, ‘Improving student engagement: ten proposals for action’, *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 11 (3), pp 167-177. The online version of this article can be found at: [http://alh.sagepub.com/content/11/3/167](http://alh.sagepub.com/content/11/3/167)
Introduction

Transnational education (TNE) highlights the need for effective quality assurance processes. A key challenge for transnational delivery is maintaining academic standards and ensuring the Equivalence and Comparability (E&C) of courses delivered in multiple onshore and offshore locations. The proposed College of Business E&C model is guided by Equivalence measures and Comparability conditions. The model is implemented through a course review process held in all course offering locations. A subsequent annual group course review consolidates the results of local reviews in order to produce an action plan to assure academic standards.

This Quick Guide provides an introduction to Equivalence and Comparability, and is supported by the College of Business Equivalence and Comparability Website. Visit the website for detailed information http://www.rmit.edu.au/bus/adg/equivalenceandcomparability

Guiding principles

Equivalence

A measure of quality determined by maintaining defined standards with regard to capabilities and learning outcomes; WIL and Internationalisation strategies; teaching quality; and, course management for all offerings of a single course.

Comparability

The condition that exists when a course offering has been contextualised and customised to suit local factors and the specific student profile, while maintaining equivalence with other offerings of the same course.

Contextualisation (a subset of comparability)

The adaptation of one or more elements in a course offering to increase its cultural, personal, professional, and global relevance to students in that offering.

Customisation (a subset of comparability)

The alignment of a course offering’s learning design and materials with its students’ profile to promote effective learning.
Equivalence and Comparability framework

The university requires that all offerings of a course including those at offshore locations and within the dual hub are equivalent and comparable.

Equivalence
Elements related to Equivalence must comply with RMIT predetermined standards for all course offerings (Measured by direct reference to policies, procedures, guidelines and strategic directions)

Comparability
Elements related to Comparability may be adapted to suit local factors and the student profile (Measured by fitness for purpose)

Contextualisation
What are the elements related to contextualisation?

- Capabilities and Learning Outcomes
- Learning Activities
- Learning Resources
- Assessment requirements & types
- WIL strategies
- Internationalisation strategies
- Teaching quality
- Course management

Customisation
What are the elements related to customisation?

- Assessment tasks
- Content relevance (all media)
- Learning activities
- WIL activities
- Internationalisation of content

Guiding Principles

Equivalence
A measure of quality determined by maintaining defined standards with regard to capabilities and learning outcomes; WIL; Internationalisation strategies; teaching quality; and course management, for all offerings of a single course.

Comparability
The condition that exists when a course offering has been contextualised and customised to suit local factors and the specific student profile, while maintaining equivalence with other offerings of the same course.

Contextualisation
(a subset of comparability)
The adaptation of one or more elements in a course offering to increase its cultural, personal, professional, and global relevance to students in that offering.

Customisation
(a subset of comparability)
The alignment of a course offering’s learning design and materials with its students’ profile to promote effective learning.

Equivalence and Comparability Review Process

Prepare for review
Obtain Equivalence and Comparability Guide and Checklist, and previous CES/Offshore student survey data including grade distributions. Data to represent previous equivalent teaching period, i.e. S1-2009 and S1-2010

Conduct LOCAL REVIEW
Location specific course review of all Equivalence and Comparability elements. Occurs prior to next offering. Task completed individually by local coordinator or jointly with other local teaching staff.

Share review outcomes
Share outcomes of Local Review with other course team members at all locations 2 weeks before Group Review.

Participate in GROUP REVIEW
Course team members at all locations:
- Verify Equivalence and Comparability
- Produce and implement Action Plan

Archive documentation

Figure 1. The Equivalence and Comparability model
**Equivalence & Comparability framework**

The E&C framework comprises elements that define equivalence and comparability. All elements should be considered during course reviews.

### Elements of Equivalence

The elements require compliance with strategic directions, policies, procedures and guidelines. The elements are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capabilities Learning outcomes</td>
<td>The knowledge and skills to be developed in a course are identified in Part A Course Guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning activities Learning resources</td>
<td>The learning experiences and resources provided in the classroom or online are identified in Part A Course Guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment requirements and types</td>
<td>The nature of assessment and criteria for measuring or assessing student learning are identified in Part A Course Guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIL strategies</td>
<td>A WIL course offered in multiple locations must meet the same learning outcomes through approved WIL activities, and fulfil the minimum course credit point requirements for programs. The RMIT WIL approved activities are available at: <a href="http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=o9gmyatdq9ao1#_List_of_approved">http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=o9gmyatdq9ao1#_List_of_approved</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalisation strategies</td>
<td>The RMIT Implementation Plan for Internationalising the Curriculum represents the knowledge and skills that equip students to succeed in globalised professional environments by integrating different cultural experiences, practices and knowledge systems into the learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching quality</td>
<td>All offerings will be measured in terms of teaching organisation, teaching delivery, assessment and feedback practice, assessment moderation, academic integrity and usage of eLearning or educational technologies. These are derived from RMIT policies and the Course Experience Survey (CES).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course management</td>
<td>All offerings of a course will be evaluated on the Part B approval process, eLearning/educational technology management, and communication with the principal course coordinator.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elements of Comparability

Comparability allows for contextualisation and customisation of local factors and specific student profiles.

Contextualisation

Contextualisation contributes to an increase of the cultural, personal, professional, and global relevance for students. The appropriateness of such variations will be an outcome of the group review and the final action plan. The elements of contextualisation are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment tasks and learning activities</th>
<th>The requirements of a specific assessment task or learning activity may need to be contextualized for a particular cohort of students in a specific location.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content relevance</td>
<td>Content may need to be contextualised to suit local contexts, (e.g. conceptual understanding may be enhanced through the use of localized themes in learning activities, illustrations, and examples).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIL activities</td>
<td>WIL activities may need to be contextualised to suit local contexts and industry expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalisation of content</td>
<td>Considerations about cultural, economic and industry expectations should be aligned with the learning needs of local students to equip them with global knowledge and skills relevant to their own needs. For example, students at Singapore might benefit from knowledge of Australian business practices, while students in Melbourne would benefit from knowledge about the unique characteristics of conducting a business transaction with Asian business partners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Customisation**

The elements of customisation seek to align a course offering's learning design and the media used for presentation of materials with the students’ profile to promote effective learning. The elements are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment tasks and learning activities</td>
<td>Tasks and activities may need to be adapted in view of students’ language proficiency and study preferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning resources</td>
<td>A particular student cohort might require learning skills and writing support or specific library resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content presentation</td>
<td>The design of content affects student comprehension. Language proficiency and learning preferences are factors to consider. ‘Content Presentation’ seeks to adapt the way content is presented. For example, the use of media rich content or the use of audio to complement lectures can promote effective learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course delivery and Teaching model</td>
<td>Adaptations might be required for different offerings that are affected by class scheduling, class size, learning spaces, professional development of staff and the teaching model. A seminar delivery model might be appropriate in one setting but not so in another, resulting in different pedagogies being adopted between the two offerings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning support</td>
<td>The degree of learning skills needed might vary among different student groups. Support for report writing, referencing and research skills might need to be adjusted in different offerings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Equivalence & Comparability Review Process**

The E&C review process requires a local review and a group review for every transnational course offering.

**Local review**

The local tutor or Associate Course Coordinator conducts a local review of the offering. The review is carried out by completing and submitting an online checklist. The purpose of this review is to match the current status of each element of equivalence against the standards listed on the online checklist. The elements of comparability may need local adaptation. The responses are stored online and form the subject of the group review held annually with the Principal Course Coordinator.
**Group review**

The Principal Course Coordinator, local tutors and Associate Course Coordinators meet annually for a group course review. This meeting may be conducted by teleconference or video conference. The notes collected from the previous local review are discussed and a joint action plan is developed to make adjustments to the course so as to comply with equivalence standards, and to contextualise or customise the course as needed for each offering location.

The action plan contains an implementation timeline and is a resource to inform the next set of local reviews. At the next group review the principal course coordinator signs off on the plan before a new one is developed.

**Resources**

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or Learning & Teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.


Come prepared

Good preparation and organisation are essential for professional teaching. By investing time in preparing to teach a course you will ensure you instruct and present professionally. Our transnational students often hold academic and teaching staff in high esteem and with that esteem comes high expectations. The experience students have in your first class may impact the way these students engage in learning activities throughout the semester.

The first steps are:

• Familiarise yourself with the course objectives, design and content outlined in the Course Guide (Refer to the Transnational Quick Guide – Understanding & Interpreting program and Course Guides).

• Be very clear about the structure, content and assessment requirements of the course, including assessment due dates, so that you can confidently inform students about the course requirements and handle student’s questions.

• Develop a lesson plan for each lesson including the introductory lesson. A well planned introductory lesson is particularly important as it provides you with a framework for future classes. (Refer to the Transnational Quick Guide – Developing lesson plans)

• Consider how you will stimulate and maintain student interest in the course and ensure this is reflected in the first class (Refer to the Transnational Quick Guides relating to student engagement and student centered learning)

Before you commence

Before commencing your teaching assignment, it is important that you become familiar with the course and learning support systems, classroom facilities and your student cohort.

Course information & learning support systems

• Review the course guide.

• Review RMIT’s Student Charter
  http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=tkn8wtd23h84z

• Clarify the standards that are expected of you as an academic staff member Academic & research policies & procedures
  http://www.rmit.edu.au/policies/academic
• Familiarise yourself with Blackboard. Learning hub http://www.rmit.edu.au/learninghub for staff access, MyRMIT for student access. Refer to the quick guide Teaching with Technology.

• Familiarise yourself with the learning & teaching resources available to support your students, such as the Learning Lab http://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu.

• Locate the contact details of your course coordinator

Classroom facilities

• Locate the teaching space and the time it will take to arrive.

• Ensure you have the correct keys for the teaching space.

• Familiarise yourself with the room equipment and their use.

• Review the layout of the teaching space and determine its flexibility (this may impact on the activities you have planned).

Student cohort

• Locate the student list.

• Identify the programs students are undertaking.

• Determine the demographics and characteristics of your student cohort i.e. are your students exiting Year 12, mature age, full/part time, articulating from a TAFE program, local or international?

• Clarify the standards you expect from your students.

• Determine the pronunciation of student names.

Your first class

The following suggestions will help build rapport with your students and create a constructive learning environment.

Introduce yourself – briefly tell your students about your background, areas of interest and write your name, email address and phone number on the whiteboard. Let students know when you are available for student consultations. This will help create connections between you, the course and your students.

Introduce the students – If you think that the group has not worked together before, help your students to get to know each other and begin to learn their names. There are many ways that you can do this:

• Ice breaker activities.

• Students can introduce themselves in pairs or small groups.

• Name tags.

• Names written on paper and placed in front of the student.
Clarify roles and expectations – Set the ground rules about:

- Completion of required reading or exercises.
- Class behaviour – respect for each others’ views and backgrounds.
- Importance of active participation.
- Punctuality.
- Preferred ways to communicate with you – phone or email?
- Mobile phone etiquette in class.

Introduce the course – Begin this introduction by explaining:

- The aims and objectives of the course, which are explained in the course guide.
- The relevance of the course to the overall program, discipline or professional field.
- Your own interest in the course or discipline.
- Assessment strategy and assessment procedure, which are explained in the course guide.

Build on students’ knowledge

One principle of good teaching practice is building on your students’ existing knowledge. What do your students bring to this course? Knowing this will assist you to gauge the level of instruction required. The Course Guide will specify the prerequisites for the course which will help you to establish students’ existing knowledge. During your first class ask students to write a few of paragraphs about their experiences or interest in the course or discipline – this activity will also assist you in determining the level of their written communication skills.

Course Coordinator

One of the most helpful things you can do is establish a good working relationship with the Course Coordinator. The Course Coordinator can provide guidance and support if you are unfamiliar with teaching in a new environment.

Useful resources

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

RMIT University’s Practical Guides to Teaching will help you to plan and improve your teaching practice: http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/practical

Examples of lesson plans by RMIT academic staff:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=an6p46dgm7vc
The following sites offer suggestions to welcome your students and draw their attention to effective working relations from the first day of class:

Getting Started - North Carolina State University

9 Things to Do on the First Day of Class - College of Business, Colorado State University
http://www.biz.colostate.edu/mti/tips/pages/9ThingsFirstDayOfClass.aspx

Ice Breaker Activities - Honolulu Community College
http://www2.honolulu.hawaii.edu/facdev/guidebk/teachtip/teachtip.htm#firstday

RMIT’s video series “Perspectives on Learning and Teaching” presents short vignettes about student-centred learning, learner diversity, student engagement and preparing to teach:
Deep & surface learning

Marton and Saljo (1976) examined learning patterns of students and identified two key approaches: deep and surface learning. Deep learning is the type of learning that sees students reflecting on their learning, applying it to real life experiences, making connections and analysing and evaluating concepts. Surface learning is related to rote learning, which suggests memorizing facts for exams and passively receiving information. Surface learners do not necessarily relate new knowledge to real life.

It is acknowledged that learners use both types of learning. Learners should not necessarily be categorized in one group or the other:

“Deep and surface learning approaches are used by students depending on their perception of the task being completed. Students may, in fact, swap from one approach to another according to the demands of the task.” (Wee, Sep 8 2010).

RMIT University promotes engaging students in deep learning. Your role as a teacher is to guide students through meaningful learning experiences that enhance their professional lives.

As a transnational teacher, you must consider how you might develop students as deep learners.

Strategies to develop deep learning

There are a number of strategies academic and teaching staff can adopt to develop deep learners:

- Actively involving students in their learning and assessment and allowing them to make choices and provide input. Consider how you could allow students to make choices about learning and assessment activities so that the activity is more relevant to them.

- Engaging students through structured activities that are relevant to the course and are localised to take into account issues and problems that are real and meaningful. It is important to ensure students understand the holistic nature of what they are learning and how it fits into the big picture. Where possible use actual and contextualised cases and examples so students can see the relevance of the subject matter.

- Engaging students in reflection and reflective writing that personalises their learning. You could ask students to keep a blog or journal on their learning journey so that they are able to reflect on how they changed over time. This is particularly useful when they take part in group
activities as you can see how each student has synthesised the learning experience.

• Providing a supportive environment where students are not fearful of making mistakes and where they learn from their peers as well as from you. One of the most important requirements of teaching is to construct a safe learning environment where students are happy to take risks in their learning. Students may quickly lose motivation if they fear embarrassment or punishment.

• Demonstrating a passion for the subject and encouraging students to do the same.

• Designing integrated assessments which allow students to bring together key concepts from different subject areas or areas of interest.

• If you are involved in the design of assessment activities, design tasks that encourage students to solve problems and to integrate new knowledge using existing knowledge. Find ways to assist students put the new knowledge into context. Wee (2010) suggests that students should have the opportunity for group involvement, discussion, and reflection with their peers for assessment purposes.

Supporting transnational students

Cultural differences amongst students must be accommodated. You can assist students who might be more familiar with surface learning to transition to deep learning by:

• Creating a supportive environment and allowing time for students to adapt to deep learning activities.

• Introducing reflective writing with support from academics and teacher and fellow students.

• Using group learning rather than individual competition in learning tasks.

What actually enhances deep learning?

Research and practice indicates that the required elements to enhance deep learning include:

• Active student involvement in course concepts and ideas

• Interest in the subject by both students and teachers

• Possession of sound background knowledge and skills

• Ability to make connections and links

• Ability to reflect on one’s own learning

• Well constructed and thought provoking assessment tasks

• Reflective analysis of learning and assessments

• Positive and supportive learning environments which allow students to explore new concepts and new knowledge without fear of failure.
**Useful resources**

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

RMIT University’s Practical Guide to Teaching will help your plan and improve your teaching practice:

http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/practical


http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2010.06.001

Getting Smart Blog Series - Leading for Deeper Learning: 10 Proven Strategies

http://gettingsmart.com/2013/08/leading-for-deeper-learning-10-proven-strategies/


http://epubs.scu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=educ_pubs
Introduction

At RMIT University a variety of educational technologies are employed to support learning and teaching in onshore, offshore and online course and program deliveries. It is essential that you become familiar with the range of tools available to you and the numerous opportunities they provide in enhancing student engagement and your teaching practice.

This quick guide provides an introduction to teaching with technology and is supported by the more comprehensive Guide to Teaching with Technology website http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/technology

Blackboard

Blackboard is RMIT’s learning management system. All undergraduate courses delivered onshore and offshore have an associated course site that is used for various learning and teaching activities:

- Distributing and organising information and course content (documents, presentations, links, lectopia audio/video recordings, etc.), using customisable course areas and folders.
- Communicating with students using announcements, discussion boards and blogs.
- Student collaboration via wikis.
- Conducting online assessment with tests, quizzes and assignment submissions.
- Recording and distributing student grades.

For staff, onshore and offshore partner course sites are accessed via staff login at the RMIT Learning Hub http://www.rmit.edu.au/learninghub

Vietnam course sites are accessed via staff login at http://online.rmit.edu.vn

To register and access the Blackboard sites for courses you are teaching onshore or at offshore partners, contact your Course Coordinator to request registration via the IT helpdesk helpdesk@rmit.edu.au

Staff help guides are available at the LSTS Learning Systems Technical Support Blackboard site, which is accessed via staff login at the RMIT Learning Hub http://www.rmit.edu.au/learninghub

A useful resource is the Top 10 tips for blackboard http://mams.rmit.edu.au/mp56owgqij3rz.pdf

For students, course sites are accessed via the student portal MyRMIT.
Online library references and databases

The RMIT University Library subscribes to a range of online databases, which provide onshore and offshore students and staff access to over 40,000 available online journals and e-books.

To find information in the Library http://www.rmit.edu.au/library

Individual librarians are appointed to serve as the liaison for each school and study area at RMIT. For further information visit http://www.rmit.edu.au/library/librarians

Blogs

Blogs are simple websites and originated as a platform for online journals, and provide an excellent tool for student reflection and review. RMIT has a blogging facility available through Blackboard, which features an easy-to-use interface and can be configured in various ways — including group blogs for collaborative work, or individual blogs for private comment/reflection.

More about blogs

Wikis

A wiki is a very basic webpage (or collection of pages), which can be accessed and edited by multiple contributors. Wikis can be used in education to assist with the creation, collaboration and dissemination of resources — and can therefore provide an essential tool for online group work.

More about wikis
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=p6ritk11ihp1

ePortfolios

Physical portfolios are well-established within certain academic disciplines as a means of collating student work for assessment, presentation or showcase purposes. ePortfolios work along the same principles, but the resources collected/shared are electronic rather than physical. RMIT uses PebblePad — an ePortfolio system which offers a range of opportunities for learning, assessment, communication and promotion.

More about ePortfolios

Podcasts

‘Podcasts’ are audio files distributed online to students and other audiences. The technologies used to produce, distribute and access podcasts result in a portable and convenient means of providing students with lectures, memos, announcements, guest speakers and other course material. Podcasts can be produced using a variety of equipment and software: an excellent way to get started is to utilise the University’s Lectopia system, which can automatically record lectures in over 65 venues across all four campuses onshore. Podcasts can also be sourced from various external sources for use as supplementary
lecture material. Many universities and organisations make podcasts publicly available at no cost via the internet or services such as iTunes U.

More about Lectopia


Lecture Capture - Lectopia and Echo

Lecture capture can record audio and visual presentations, e.g. accompanying PowerPoint presentations, in enabled lecture theatres across RMIT. Recordings are made available in a variety of formats including streaming, download, podcasting and no special software is required to view them. They can also be directly linked into Blackboard.

Lectopia is the old system that is gradually being upgraded to the newer system, Echo. They both provide the same service, however, Echo has extra features that can be utilised. This technology is known as Lecture Capture to avoid confusion between the two systems. The booking and capture processes are the same. Staff teaching in a lecture capture-enabled venue [http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/technology/lecturecapture/venues] can book the system in advance to make customised recordings of a single lecture, or an entire semester’s classes.

Portable audio recorders are also available for capturing audio for upload/distribution in venues which are not Lectopia-enabled. In Melbourne, portable audio recorders can be booked via the IT Helpdesk [http://www.rmit.edu.au/its/ithelp].

More about Lectopia and Echo


Blackboard Collaborate

Blackboard Collaborate is a real-time, multi-functional virtual classroom or web conferencing environment that gives you and your students the opportunity to meet online to learn, rather than in a classroom. Students log on at the same time for a live classroom session with you.

More about Blackboard Collaborate


eSimulations

Virtual simulations (or ‘eSimulations’) refer to any technology-enabled simulated learning activity which occurs in an online setting. This might include text-based role plays facilitated by a lecturer using a blog or discussion board (in Blackboard, for example); purpose-built virtual organisations, which serve as models or case studies, and computer games which demonstrate principles and applications, while adding an element of discovery/engagement.

More about eSimulations

[http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/esimulation]

Personal response systems

Personal response systems (PRS; also known as student response meters)
or ‘clickers’) are a method of collecting instant feedback from students in a classroom/lecture theatre, using small handheld keypads. A lecturer/teacher can use a PRS to deliver surveys, quizzes and tests during a class in order to gauge students’ understanding or opinions: eg. a ‘pop quiz’ on a particular topic, or revision of previous material. A PRS can increase students’ sense of input and involvement: particularly in a large class. PRS devices are also available to RMIT staff travelling to teach offshore.


Turnitin

Turnitin is an online text-matching service which can be used to prevent plagiarism and encourage academic integrity. Registered lecturers, teachers and students can submit assignments and articles to Turnitin, which are compared line-by-line to previous submissions and other database content (webpages, online e-journals, etc). A report is generated identifying similarities between the submission and previous material, allowing teachers and students to review the citation and paraphrasing used throughout the assignment to see if any improvements are needed. The approach taken at RMIT to the use of Turnitin is one of promoting academic integrity, rather than policing plagiarism.


Resources and assistance

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

Guide to teaching with technologies
http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/technology

Professional Development – IT and educational technologies
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=8n1i07oxh5i

The Educational Technology Advancement Group (EduTAG) provides multimedia design and development in support of the learning and teaching needs of the RMIT community
http://www.rmit.edu.au/edutag

RMIT helpdesk
helpdesk@rmit.edu.au or +613 9925 8888

Blackboard help guides – LSTS Learning Systems Technical Support Blackboard site, accessed via staff login at the RMIT Learning Hub
http://www.rmit.edu.au/learninghub
Defining ‘Program’ and ‘Course’ Guides

When you begin teaching at RMIT, you will need to familiarise yourself with the Program Guide and various Course Guides. Program Guides will assist you to gain a sense of the principles underpinning the design and structure of a program. Course Guides provide you with a learning framework for each course, which also form contracts between the university and students.

At RMIT the term ‘program’ refers to the qualification in which a student is enrolled. The term ‘course’ refers to the individual components of study that comprise a program.

Program guides

Program Guides provide structured information about RMIT programs and comprises the following components or elements:

- External Accreditation and Industry Links
- Purpose of the Program
- Program Learning Outcomes Statement and Program Learning Outcomes Matrix
- Work Integrated Learning statement
- Approach to Learning and Assessment
- Program Structure
- Articulation and Pathways
- Entrance Requirements
- Resources

The program guide is written primarily for current and prospective students and is accessible to other interested parties via the web http://www.rmit.edu.au/programs (enter the Program title in the Program Search text box). Please note the program guide published for students does not include the Program Learning Outcomes Matrix.

Course guides

Each Course Guide also provides summary explanations of relevant RMIT policies and procedures, such as those relating to plagiarism, student feedback, student progress, and special consideration.

A Course Guide helps to ensure that:

- You design, develop and deliver a course that achieves the course objectives or learning outcomes.
• Students are provided with a clear overview of the course and the learning outcomes so they can appreciate how learning activities and assessment tasks helps to achieve the learning outcomes of the course.

• Students are able to plan their work and organise their workload over the duration of the course.

• Students understand the expectations you have of them.

The Course Guide is useful in academic planning for Course Coordinators, lecturers and tutors. It is the first point of reference for structuring and delivering your instruction. It informs what you teach, the way you teach and the way in which you will assess students.

You should be familiar with the content of the Course Guide. Variations to content or assessment methods identified in the endorsed Course Guide must be avoided as such changes are very likely to create uncertainty and confusion. Students are entitled to complain about variances between the Course Guide and actual classroom activities and assessments. You must check with the Course Coordinator if you are unsure.

Students should receive a copy of the Course Guide no later than the first class of the semester.

Course Guide Part A

Part A is written by the Course Coordinator and provides an overview of the course’s features. Part A is designed for infrequent updating. It comprises the following components or elements:

Pre-requisite courses and assumed knowledge and capabilities

Programs are designed to build increasing levels of knowledge and skills through units of study or courses. Pre-requisite courses ensure that students have the required and assumed capabilities to progress through programs successfully.

Course Description

The course description provides you with the overall purpose of the course within a particular program or discipline.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Capability Development

A learning outcome is a clear statement about what students will know and be able to do at the completion of the course. Learning outcomes also guide you in the design, development and implementation of learning activities and assessments. They are instructional and learning goals for you and your students.

Overview of Learning Activities

Learning activities relate to the learning experiences provided in the classroom or online. Course Guide Part A identifies the type and purpose of the various activities rather than providing specific descriptions of each activity. Details about learning activities will be provided to students in the related Part B.
Overview of Learning Resources

The learning resources component lists the types of resources available to assist student learning in all course offerings, for example, textbook, notes, reference lists, library resources, laboratories and relevant software.

Overview of Assessment

The assessment strategy is described broadly in this section, identifying the types of assessments for measuring student learning, such as written reports, research papers, and problem solving tasks.

Course Guide Part B

Part B includes all elements of Part A with additional and more specific details relating to a course offering or student cohort. Each course offering will have one Part B written by a Course Coordinator or Associate Course Coordinator.

Part B comprises the following additional elements:

Details of Learning Activities

Learning activities describe the specific activities that will be undertaken in lectures, tutorials, and laboratories or online. This section also highlights any special learning experiences (such as field trips, work placements, intensives) students may be exposed to in the course.

Teaching Schedule

The teaching schedule identifies the weekly topics, learning activities and readings during the teaching period in which the course is offered.

Learning Resources

Learning resources identifies the specific resources students must access, such as prescribed textbooks and other selected readings.

Assessment tasks

Assessment tasks provide students with the specific details about how they will demonstrate their learning in the course. It outlines the assessment tasks or activities, their weighting and due dates, and provides the assessment or marking criteria for each task.

Other relevant information

Other course-specific information that is relevant to a particular location or mode of delivery. For example, student feedback, special consideration, and appeals.
Useful resources

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

RMIT University’s practical guide to teaching will help you to plan and improve your teaching practice: http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/practical

Program Guide Guidelines

Guidelines for course guides, course delivery, assessment, and penalties

Step-by-step Guide to the Course Guide System
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=a5aorf1t48foz

Using Your Course Guide
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=jz512vdoeki

Guidelines for Writing Higher Education Part A Course Guides
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=u8cdul6w5dk11

Guidelines for Writing Vocational Education Part A Course Guides
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=m2jny1153im

Part B Guidelines for Course Guide - for HE and VE
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=z66ehgn9rlo7
RMIT academic and teaching staff play a critical role in promoting scholarship and academic integrity. This can be facilitated by:

1. Consistently encouraging and rewarding students who openly demonstrate they have researched widely, acknowledging their sources and demonstrating how this research has shaped their thinking.
2. Reminding students of the expectations to comply with RMIT’s standards of academic integrity, especially in relation to plagiarism.

**Academic integrity**

RMIT defines academic integrity as:

“Honesty and responsibility in scholarship through respecting the work of others whilst having the freedom to build new insights, new knowledge and ideas.”

**Encouraging academic integrity**

Students may unintentionally plagiarise material due to limited knowledge about correct referencing. If assessment requires students to write researched papers, essays and reports teachers can remind students to reference all materials. You can assist students by demonstrating the correct referencing method: [http://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/bus/public/referencing/](http://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/bus/public/referencing/)

RMIT subscribes to Turnitin, which is an online text-matching service that can assist both academic and teaching staff and students review written work to determine if the materials used have been referenced correctly. Registered lecturers, teachers and students can submit assignments and articles to Turnitin, which are compared line-by-line to previous submissions and other database content such as webpages and e-journals. A report is generated identifying similarities between the submission and previous material or database content, allowing teachers and students to review the citation and paraphrasing used throughout the assignment to see if any changes are needed. TurnItIn is an excellent tool to prevent plagiarism when used educationally or developmentally.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is defined by RMIT University as stealing somebody’s intellectual property by presenting their work, thoughts or ideas as though they are your own. It is cheating. It is a serious academic offence and can lead to expulsion from RMIT.
Plagiarism can take many forms (written, graphic and visual) and includes the use of electronic data and material used in oral presentations. Plagiarism may occur unintentionally, such as when the source of the material used is not correctly cited.

What constitutes plagiarism?

Under RMIT’s charter, students may be accused of plagiarism if they do any of the following:

- Copy sentences or paragraphs word-for-word from any source, whether published or unpublished (including, but not limited to books, journals, reports, theses, websites, conference papers, course notes, etc.) without proper citation.
- Closely paraphrase sentences, paragraphs, ideas or themes without proper citation.
- Piece together texts from one or more sources and add only linking sentences without proper citation.
- Copy or submit whole or parts of computer files without acknowledging their source.
- Copy designs or works of art and submit them as their own original work.
- Copy a whole or any part of another student’s work.
- Submit work that someone else has done as their own.

More detail on what constitutes plagiarism is found in the RMIT University Policy on Plagiarism
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=sg4yfqzod48g1

Students should also be made aware that it is unacceptable to enable plagiarism. Enabling plagiarism is ‘the act of assisting or allowing another person to plagiarise or to copy your own work’.

Both plagiarising and enabling plagiarism are deemed to be misconduct and a serious academic offence under RMIT Student Conduct Regulations Part 2, Division 2 – Academic Misconduct
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=r7a7an6qg93

Cultural differences & plagiarism

Transnational students may plagiarise material inadvertently because of differences in attitudes towards authorship and ownership. Academic and teaching staff teaching offshore must be aware of the following:

Some cultures place different value on the western concept of ‘ownership’ of an idea or intellectual property. In some cultures students are encouraged to memorise and use long segments from works by famous authors or experts. This practice of using the experts’ words without referring to them is construed as showing respect for the expert and is considered more appropriate than using the student’s own words (Song-Turner, 2008).

Students students might also view ‘helping’ classmates do well as more important than competing with them. Consequently students may not
distinguish between helping a classmate with his/her assignment and helping him/her finish a take-home exam. Reporting a classmate who cheats can be very difficult in some cultures where it is considered poor form to take action that upsets an interpersonal relationship.

**Penalties for plagiarism**

All academic and teaching staff are required to ensure students understand the concept of academic integrity, the actions that constitute plagiarism and the penalties that apply if a student is charged with plagiarising material.

Penalties for plagiarism include:

- Reprimanding the student
- Recording of a failure for all or any part of any assessment
- Requiring the student to repeat the assignment
- Cancellation of any or all results
- Suspension from the program
- Expulsion from the program

**Useful resources**

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

More detail on what constitutes plagiarism can be found in the RMIT University Policy on Plagiarism

http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=sg4yfqzod48g1

RMIT Student Conduct Regulations Part 2, Division 2 – Academic Misconduct

http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=r7a7an6qug93

RMIT University Student Charter

http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=tkn8wtd23h84z

RMIT University Library referencing guide (all referencing models)

http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=8rwjnkcmfoeez

Harvard method interactive online referencing resource – This is an easy to use tool that provides you with referencing rules, examples of the rules, and interactive exercises


College of Business ‘Guidelines for referencing and presentation in written reports and essays’ – This detailed guide offers information on citing references, avoiding plagiarism, and essay and report writing.

http://prodmams.rmit.edu.au/s9sx559hurvc.rtf

Study and Learning Centre – The Learning Lab

http://emedia.rmit.edu.au/learninglab/content/referencing
Suggested readings

This paper discusses strategies and tips to help reduce the incidence of plagiarism.

This paper proposes a theoretical framework for understanding student behaviour and suggests improved learning and teaching strategies.


Assessment relates to the methods, activities or tasks that measure the achievement of course learning outcomes and a student’s academic progress.

Assessment should:

- Provide a meaningful learning experience.
- Measure and report achievement of capability.
- Determine capabilities of students against learning outcomes.
- Identify learning needs.
- Provide feedback on learning.
- Increase students’ ability to assess and reflect on their own learning.
- Report on progress and achievements.
- Assist in the evaluation of the learning experience, including the assessment design.

RMIT programs use a range of assessment methods, which include formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments provide formative feedback to students during the learning cycle to assist them to identify how their learning is progressing. Summative assessments are typically provided at the end of the learning cycle to measure student performance against the standards provided by the course learning outcomes. Common examples of formative and summative assessment tasks are essays, presentations, written assignments and reports, wikis, blogs, test, examinations and case studies.

Transnational students may come to RMIT with the expectation that learning will be assessed through formal examinations requiring them to memorise and recall information presented in class. Academic and teaching staff should pay special attention to explaining and clarifying the assessment requirements at the beginning of the course and be prepared to assist students reframe their approach to the course, particularly when exams are not the main method of assessment.

Assessment defines what students regard as important, how they spend their time and how they come to see themselves as students and then as graduates.

(Assessment by Brown et al, 1997)

Assessment is at the heart of the student experience.

(Assessment by Brown, S & Knight, P, 1994)

Shaping behaviour & establishing expectations

Assessment is often the most powerful element of the curriculum. Assessment establishes expectations and shapes student behaviour by:

- Providing structure or a roadmap for their learning activities
- Giving students signals about the kinds of activity that is valued
• Influencing the energy and attention students give to a task
• Helping students develop disciplined learning and study skills.
• Assisting students to make connections between what they do in class and what they need to know.

The way a course is assessed is outlined in the Course Guide. At RMIT assessment tasks are usually set by the Course Co-ordinator in Melbourne. It is therefore important that transnational academic and teaching staff consult with the Course Co-ordinator to ensure they have an accurate understanding of the assessment tasks. Academic and teaching staff should be able to explain to students how the assessment task relates to the course learning outcomes.

**Fundamentals of effective assessment**

When designing assessments it is worth considering The Centre for the Study of Higher Education’s Fundamentals of effective assessment: Twelve principles.

The principles are:

1. Assessment should help students to learn.
2. Assessment must be consistent with the objectives of the course and what is taught and learnt.
3. Variety in types of assessment allows a range of different learning outcomes to be assessed. It also keeps students interested.
4. Students need to understand clearly what is expected of them in assessed tasks.
5. Criteria for assessment should be detailed, transparent and justifiable.
6. Students need specific and timely feedback on their work - not just a grade.
7. Too much assessment is unnecessary and may be counter-productive.
8. Assessment should be undertaken with an awareness that an assessor may be called upon to justify a student’s result.
9. The best starting point for countering plagiarism is in the design of the assessment tasks.
10. Group assessment needs to be carefully planned and structured.
11. When planning and wording assignments or questions, it is vital to mentally check their appropriateness to all students in the class, whatever their cultural differences.
12. Systematic analysis of students’ performance on assessed tasks can help identify areas of the curriculum which need improvement.
Writing assessment tasks

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga has designed a useful summary of commonly used methods of assessment, which is adapted below. The complete resource is available at:
http://www.utc.edu/walker-center-teaching-learning/faculty-development/online-resources/test-design.php

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Good for...</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Tips for writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Multiple Choice  | Application, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation levels | Question/Right answer Incomplete statement Best answer | • Stem should present single, clearly formulated problem.  
• Stem should be in simple, understood language; delete extraneous words.  
• Avoid “all of the above” - can answer based on partial knowledge (if one is incorrect or two are correct, but unsure of the third...).  
• Avoid “none of the above.”  
• Make all distractors plausible/homoegenous.  
• Don’t overlap response alternatives (decreases discrimination between students who know the material and those who don’t).  
• Don’t use double negatives.  
• Present alternatives in logical or numerical order.  
• Place correct answer at random.  
• Make each item independent of others on test.  
• Way to judge a good stem: student’s who know the content should be able to answer before reading the alternatives  
• List alternatives on separate lines, indent, separate by blank line, use letters vs. numbers for alternative answers.  
• Need more than 3 alternatives, 4 is best. |
| Short Answer     | Application, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation levels |                            | • When using with definitions: supply term, not the definition for a better judge of student knowledge.  
• For numbers, indicate the degree of precision/units expected.  
• Use direct questions, not an incomplete statement.  
• If you do use incomplete statements, don’t use more than 2 blanks within an item.  
• Arrange blanks to make scoring easy.  
• Try to phrase question so there is only one answer possible. |
| Essay            | Application, synthesis and evaluation levels | Extended response: synthesis and evaluation levels; a lot of freedom in answers Restricted response: more consistent scoring, outlines parameters of responses | • Provide reasonable time limits for thinking and writing.  
• Avoid letting them choose from a choice of questions (You won’t get a good idea of the broadness of student achievement when they only answer a set of questions.)  
• Give definitive task to students - compare, analyze, evaluate, etc.  
• Use a checklist point system to score with a model answer: write outline, determine how many points to assign to each part.  
• Score one question at a time - all at the same time. |
Using assessment criteria

To ensure that assessment is conducted fairly and equitably, standard criteria improve objectivity and minimise variability in marking. Assessment criteria are typically presented in a marking guide, an assessment rubric or matrix. These may be presented in a table format and set out the different levels of achievement. Useful resources are listed below to assist you to develop your skills in assessing student’s work.

Your Course Coordinator will provide you with established assessment criteria from which to work. Should the criteria not be available, you may be able to contribute to the development of a marking guide with your Course Coordinator.

Moderating assessment

Moderation of assessment is a quality assurance process that is designed to ensure that assessments are marked with accuracy, consistency and fairness. This is often conducted in pre-marking and post-marking meetings. The RMIT moderation policy outlines the process which assures consistent moderation practices that promote fairness, consistency and reliability of assessment grading and comparability of assessment within courses across multiple markers, campuses, sites and student cohorts (offshore, onshore, online) Assessment results can provide academic and teaching staff with information about the effectiveness of their teaching. The quality of understanding displayed by students through their assessment tasks may indicate how effectively teachers have motivated students and facilitated their learning. Lang (2010) suggests questions that may be useful to reflect upon as part of your assessment review process:

• What did you learn from planning, designing and implementing your assessment?
• What kinds of learners did you encourage/nurture because of the ways you designed your assessment?
• What patterns of student performance occurred across the course cohort? Do these patterns indicate any feedback on your assessment design?
• How/what will you change in the assessment and/or curriculum next time you deliver this course? Why?

If your responsibilities include designing assessment you should consult RMIT’s Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual.

Assessment policies & procedures

Academic and teaching staff must ensure they are familiar with RMIT’s Assessment Policies which is located at: http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=m7g4i18jk1bpz
The Guide provides useful information relating to:

- Assessment Policies & Principles
- The Assessment Charter
- Types of Assessment
- Designing Assessment
- Moderation & Validation of Assessment
- Grading of Assessment
- Managing Borderline Fails
- Special Consideration & Reasonable Adjustments
- Supplementary Assessments and Re-sit Assessment
- Applications for Extensions
- Appeals against Assessment
- Academic Progress
- Providing Feedback to learners
- Assessment Procedures
- Feedback from students
- Academic Integrity

Useful resources

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

Good practice in assessment - University of Wollongong: http://www.uow.edu.au/about/teaching/goodpractice/UOW008524.html

Diversity of Assessment Strategies
http://mams.rmit.edu.au/xlw8ng/1cxsxgIz.pdf

Thinking about assessment design:

RMIT Assessment policies:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=m7g4I18jk1bpz

Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne discusses strategies for academics to explain the process for arriving at a grade to international students who are unfamiliar with assessment practices in Australian higher education:
http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/intstaff.html


RMIT Practical Guide to Teaching:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=oq000188g4ja1
References


Feed up, feed back & feed forward

Student feedback is the advice teachers provide to students about their assessable work. It is an important part of the learning process because it provides students with:

- A sense of their progress against course objectives, learning outcomes and standards of assessment.
- The means to identify gaps in their knowledge or skills that require improvement.
- The motivation to continue to learn by recognising their achievements.
- Information that can support student’s future, ongoing learning.

Hattie & Timperley (2007: 86) identified three important questions that provide the basis of good feedback, which they labelled in turn – Feed Up, Feed Back and Feed Forward:

- Feed Up - What are the learning objectives and outcomes articulated in the Course Guide?
- Feed Back - What progress have I made towards the goal?
- Feed Forward - What further improvements need to be made to advance my progress?

Some students may appear to be most interested in what they need to do to pass a course and indeed the feedback you give students should assist them to perform well in assessment tasks. At RMIT we encourage teachers to include “Feedback” and “Feed Forward” comments when assessing students’ work. This involves providing feedback that indicates how the student can improve in their performance in subsequent tasks. These subsequent tasks might be future assessment tasks undertaken during the course or the program or in the way the student might approach tasks in future professional roles.

Psychological safety & assessment

RMIT aims to “create an environment where students feel comfortable enough to practice, make honest mistakes, and learn from them” i.e. to create a psychologically safe learning environment. This has implications for the ways academic and teaching staff provide feedback. Feedback should be provided with sensitivity and in a manner that does not cause embarrassment. Some cultures are particularly sensitive to receiving feedback that highlights flaws and errors in their work. A strengths-based approach to providing feedback can be helpful. In essence, a strength-based approach emphasises recommendations for improvement e.g. “aspects of this are good, it could be even better if…..”
Getting started

Providing effective feedback to students requires you to:

- Design and develop assessment and feedback mechanisms that align appropriately with course objectives and learning outcomes. If you have not collaborated on assessment design it is important to know what the Course Co-ordinator has planned for the course and are able to explain how the assessment tasks align to the course objectives and learning outcomes.
- Ensure students understand the assessment requirements.
- Examine assessable work against the established assessment criteria.
- Promptly return assignments to students.
- Provide comments which are clear, succinct and focussed.
- Provide feedback about aspects of the task that were handled well. The assessment moderation process will allow you to develop and understanding of common themes.
- Provide meaningful comments to students indicating how they could improve their work.
- Offer students information about where they may obtain additional resources and assistance.
- Conduct group feedback by commenting on areas of the assessable work that students commonly handled well and where students typically failed to meet the expected standards. Peer-review discussions may also be helpful. Posting these comments on the course blackboard site will ensure that all students have access to your feedback.

Enhancing the quality of student feedback

- Establish or join a community of practice in your school where feedback strategies are discussed.
- Have students self-assess their work. This can be done by asking students to:
  - Submit a self-evaluation sheet with their assignment.
  - Demonstrate how they have incorporated your feedback from their last assignment into the current one.
- Provide students with a list of comments given to a similar assignment or essay. This could form a tutorial activity in which a discussion takes place that will better prepare students.
- Using Blackboard, provide students with the generic feedback comments prior to them receiving the actual mark.
- Keep a database of comments about your students’ performance as a ready reference when making comments on each assessment.
- Ask students to write and submit a short action plan based on your feedback comments. This provides confirmation that they have read your comments, and will indicate how they are planning to use your advice in relation to their next assignment.
- Ask students to reflect on the feedback you have provided and to tell you what they think they could “stop doing, start doing and continue doing” to enhance the quality of their work.
• Reduce over-emphasis on written feedback and provide feedback orally, either in person or in digital audio format as an attached file.
• Offer students the opportunity to submit drafts, in order to obtain formative feedback.

Summary

Learning is enhanced when students engage with and apply feedback. Your feedback should encourage students to reflect on feedback comments, and then consider ways to apply the feedback in future assessment or workplace tasks.

Useful resources

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

Student feedback policy http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=9pp3ic9obiks7

Coffee and Cookies: Conversations on Good Teaching - Providing feedback to students http://mams.rmit.edu.au/adxtwpjshimkz.pdf


References


Providing informative feedback for students by using the grade centre within Blackboard VLE, Professor Helen Higson, Pro Vice Chancellor External Relations of Aston University in the UK, shares one of her best practice in learning and teaching in a short video CLIPP: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8XHMn43Kng
Student feedback & the Course Experience Survey

RMIT University has standardized the collection and reporting of course level student feedback in accordance with the university’s Student Feedback Policy [http://www.rmit.edu.au/policies/studentfeedback]. This policy together with other factors requires the University to systematically and transparently obtain student feedback at individual course level. The Course Experience Survey (CES) is used for this purpose. [http://www.rmit.edu.au/ssc/courseexperiencesurvey]

Survey forms have two sections. The survey questions in Section One of the forms address the following themes:

- Feedback
- Quality of the Teaching and Learning environment
- Learning Objectives
- Clear Goals
- Assessment – workload
- Commitment of staff – pastoral care
- Course interest
- Overall Student Satisfaction
- Preparedness for the workplace

Additional question items can be added by individual staff to gather information of interest from a specific course or class.

Section Two of the form has spaces for student comments, and tick boxes for basic student demographic information. Student comments in Section Two complement the quantitative responses elicited from Section One to build a picture of the student’s course experience for a specific teaching period.

The Survey Services Centre (SSC) has a comprehensive online FAQ [http://www.rmit.edu.au/ssc/ces/faq] about the CES. This webpage also has contact details for key staff who can answer questions about the CES.

Administering the Course Experience Questionnaire

The CES is administered online each time a course is offered. The survey is administered between weeks 9 to 12.

Each semester the SSC contacts schools with a list of courses to be surveyed. Schools validate the information and the SSC prepares the survey.
Understanding the results – (HE)

Schools receive a document summarising the results for each class set of survey forms processed by the RMIT Survey Services Centre. Information at the top of page one includes staff name and course code and title. Useful demographic details on the cohort surveyed include age distribution, distribution of number of hours per week studied in the course, and the numbers of fulltime, part time and local or international students. These details provide background information against which to interpret the later results. From S1 2013, reliability bands will be published on all teacher reports.

The second part of page one gives a summary of responses to the survey items. The survey comprises 13 items with responses coded from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree'. All items are worded positively, so that higher scores indicate greater student satisfaction.

The summary graph shows the percentage of respondents who answered in the top two categories ('agree' or 'strongly agree') for each item. Note that the scale displayed for these graphs varies according to the highest percentage achieved. Anyone scanning a number of these summary documents should be careful to take note of the scale used. As a general rule, any item achieving less than 65% agreement should give cause for reflection.

The final piece of information on the summary page is the Good Teaching Scale score, comprising items 8 to 13. This gives an overall indication of student satisfaction, and is the same scale used in program surveys including Student Experience Surveys.

The remaining pages of the document give the results for individual items, including the additional items that may have been included by the teacher. These must obviously be examined with the additional information of the wording of the items as provided separately to the students. Each individual item has a bar graph showing the response distribution together with a mean score based on the numerical values given to the responses. A mean of 4 or higher indicates a positive student response (an 'average' in the 'agree' to 'strongly agree' range).

Staff reflecting on their feedback results should first consider the overall Good Teaching Scale score, and then look at responses to individual items. Consistently low percentage agree scores or mean response scores in items grouped under a particular theme can indicate a need to focus on strategies for improvement in that area.

Interpreting & informing practice

The items in the Course Experience Survey can be classified into themes. These are listed below, together with some suggestions for staff to consider when formulating responses.
Teaching style – Organisation
1. The learning objectives in this course are clear to me
Do you:
• Align learning objectives, learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment? Do you evaluate this alignment? For example, do you know if there are gaps in it? Do you assess what you teach? Does your content contribute to the stated objectives of the course?
• Explain and discuss with students how the learning activities and assessments help them to achieve the learning objectives and outcomes?

Teaching style - Delivery
8. The teaching staff are extremely good at explaining things
10. The teaching staff in this course motivate me to do my best work
11. The teaching staff work hard to make this course interesting
Do you:
• Chunk your lecture into coherent sections? Introduce each section with an overview and explanation of where it fits with what has gone before? Summarise key points of each section at the end?
• Engage the students by seeking informal feedback at intermediate points in the class?
• Think about how the students engage with your material – do they just sit and listen?
• Provide opportunities through the lecture for students to make active responses?
• Provide work related examples to your students so that they may make the link between theory and practice.
• Organise guest speakers to give a lecture in your course which may add value to the content? How often do you invite a guest speaker?
• Use relevant examples of concepts (from current events, popular culture, etc) so students can connect to the content?
• Value-add to what is in the textbook? How do you do this?
• Allow for active student participation in tutorials using problems, case studies, questions, exercises?
• Provide plenty of opportunities in tutorials for students to raise and discuss questions with you?
• Use student centred teaching styles? Do you know on a weekly basis where your students are in relation to the learning outcomes of the course? Do you use micro evaluation techniques, such as asking your students on a regular basis: “What is the key thing you have learnt today?”, “What was the key thing you learnt in the last session?”
• Get feedback from different student groups, for example, international students, students from different programs?
Assessment & feedback

9. The teaching staff normally give me helpful feedback on how I am going in this course.
3. Assessment tasks in this course require me to demonstrate what I am learning.
4. The amount of work required in this course is about right.
12. The staff make a real effort to understand the difficulties I may be having with my work.
13. The staff put a lot of time into commenting on my work.

Do you:

- Look at the teaching and assessment schedule. Are the assessment tasks evenly placed through the semester? Is there sufficient time between introducing a concept and assessing it? Is the student workload spread fairly through the semester (within and between courses/programs in your School?)
- Provide opportunities for regular formal and informal feedback throughout the semester?
- Align the learning objectives, learning outcomes and assessment?
- Use strategies for providing bulk feedback. For example, using technology (e.g., Blackboard) to give comments on assessment strengths, deficiencies, common problems or issues?
- Provide a mark sheet to return with assignments which lists the assessment criteria, so students can see their performance against each criterion and how the overall mark was awarded? Do you provide feedback on each main criterion?
- Provide model answers, peer review and/or peer assessment opportunities? Do you know how to provide these opportunities in ways that benefit you and the learner?
- Explain written feedback with students upon request?
- Use specific strategies with students from non-English speaking background or students with comprehension and learning difficulties?
- Use teaching and learning assessment/plagiarism support packages such as Turnitin?

Capabilities & workplace readiness

2. This course contributes to my confidence in tackling unfamiliar problems.
5. I can see how this course will help me in the workplace.

Do you:

- Use real life examples from the workplace in your lectures?
- Encourage students in the final year of their program to reflect on their co-op experiences and share them with fellow students as they relate to the particular subject matter?
- Teach students to be reflective practitioners? How do you assess this?
- Relate the content of your course to other courses in the program / common core as appropriate?
Useful resources

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

The CES results may highlight areas for strengthening your teaching practice. There are a number of resources available to assist you with interpreting your CES results, including:

- The CES Analysis Project:
  http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/cesanalysis

- Survey Services Centre (SSC):
  http://www.rmit.edu.au/ssc
Student feedback & the Course Experience Survey

RMIT University has progressively standardized the collection and reporting of course level student feedback in accordance with the university’s Student Feedback Policy [http://www.rmit.edu.au/policies/studentfeedback]. This policy together with other factors requires the University to systematically and transparently obtain student feedback at individual course level. The Course Experience Survey (CES) is used for this purpose. [http://www.rmit.edu.au/ssc/courseexperiencesurvey]

Survey forms have two sections. The survey questions in Section One of the forms address the following themes:

- Feedback
- Quality of the Teaching and Learning environment
- Learning Objectives
- Clear Goals
- Assessment – workload
- Commitment of staff – pastoral care
- Learning Resources
- The balance of theory/instruction and practice
- Course interest
- Online – computer based materials
- Overall Student Satisfaction
- Preparedness for the workplace

Additional question items that can be added by individual staff to gather information of interest from a specific course or class.

Section Two of the form has spaces for student comments, and tick boxes for basic student demographic information. Student comments in Section Two complement the quantitative responses elicited from Section One to build a picture of the student’s course experience for a specific teaching period.

The Survey Services Centre (SSC) has a comprehensive online FAQ [http://www.rmit.edu.au/ssc/ces/faq] about the CES. This webpage also has contact details for key staff who can answer questions about the CES.

Administering the Course Experience Questionnaire

The CES is administered online each time a course is offered.

Each semester the SSC contacts schools with a list of courses to be surveyed. Schools validate the information and the SSC prepares the survey.
Understanding the results

The Head of the School receives a document summarising the results for each set of survey forms processed by the RMIT Survey Services Centre. Information at the top of page one includes staff name and course code and name. Useful demographic details on the cohort surveyed include age distribution, distribution of number of hours per week studied in the course, and the numbers of fulltime / part time and local / international students. These details provide background information against which to interpret the later results. The most important piece of data in this top section is the number of surveys completed. Staff may wish to calculate a percentage response rate to use alongside the total number of survey responses when considering the survey results.

The second part of page one gives a summary of responses to the survey items. The survey comprises 13 items with responses coded from 1 = ‘strongly disagree’ to 5 = ‘strongly agree’. All items are worded positively, so that higher scores indicate greater student satisfaction. The summary graph shows the percentage of respondents who answered in the top two categories (‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’) for each item. Note that the scale displayed for these graphs varies according to the highest percentage achieved. Anyone scanning a number of these summary documents should be careful to take note of the scale used. As a general rule, any item achieving less than 75% agreement should give cause for reflection.

The final piece of information on the summary page is the Good Teaching Scale score, comprising items 8 to 13. This gives an overall indication of student satisfaction, and is the same scale used in program surveys including Student Experience Surveys.

The remaining pages of the document give the results for individual items, including the additional items that may have been included by the teacher. These must obviously be examined with the additional information of the wording of the items as provided separately to the students. Each individual item has a bar graph showing the response distribution together with a mean score based on the numerical values given to the responses. A mean of 4 or higher indicates a positive student response (an ‘average’ in the ‘agree’ to ‘strongly agree’ range).

Staff reflecting on their feedback results should first consider the overall Good Teaching Scale score, and then look at responses to individual items. Consistently low percentage agree scores or mean response scores in items grouped under a particular theme can indicate a need to focus on strategies for improvement in that area.

Course teams can also make comparisons with program and School aggregated data on the Survey Services Centre site – though this is not available until all course surveys are processed, usually after semester assessment cutoff dates. The items in the Course Experience Survey can be classified into themes. These are listed below, together with some suggestions for staff to consider when formulating their response to the student feedback.
Interpreting & informing practice – Technical & Further Education (VE)

Teaching style – Organisation

1. The learning objectives in this course are clear to me
8. My instructors have a thorough knowledge of the course assessment

Do you:

• Understand the competencies and performance criteria from the Training Package competencies relevant to your course?

• Incorporate these competencies and performance criteria into your learning objectives and outcomes?

• Clearly articulate the relationship between course content, learning and teaching resources, key competencies and relevant training packages?

• Align learning objectives, learning outcomes, and assessment? Do you evaluate this alignment? For example, do you know if there are gaps in it? Do you assess what you teach? Does your content contribute to the stated objectives of the course?

Teaching style – Delivery

9. My instructors provide opportunities to ask questions
10. My instructors treat me with respect
12. My instructors communicate the course content effectively
13. My instructors make the course as interesting as possible

Do you:

• Chunk your lecture into coherent sections? Introduce each section with an overview and explanation of where it fits with what has gone before? Summarise key points of each section at the end?

• Engage the students by seeking informal feedback at intermediate points in the class?

• Use relevant examples of concepts (from current events, popular culture, etc) so students can connect to the content?

• Value-add to what is in the textbook? How do you do this?

• Think about how the students engage with your material – do they just sit and listen? Are there opportunities through the lecture for students to make active responses?

• Provide work related examples to your students so that they may make the link between theory and practice.

• Organise guest speakers to give a lecture in your course which may add value to the content? How often do you invite a guest speaker?

• Use student centred teaching styles? Do you know on a weekly basis where your students are in relation to the learning outcomes of the course? Do you use micro evaluation techniques, such as asking your students on a regular basis: “What is the key thing you have learnt today?” “What was the key thing you learnt in the last session?”
Assessment & feedback

2. Assessment tasks in this course require me to demonstrate what I am learning
3. The amount of work required in this course is about right
11. My instructors understand my learning needs

Do you:

• Look at the teaching and assessment schedule. Are the assessment tasks evenly placed through the semester? Is there sufficient time between introducing a concept and assessing it? Is the student workload spread fairly through the semester (within and between courses/programs in your School?)

• Provide opportunities for regular formal and informal feedback throughout the semester?

• Align the competencies required for the training package under study with appropriate learning objectives, learning outcomes and assessment?

• Do you evaluate the above alignment? If yes, how?

• Use strategies for providing bulk feedback. For example, using technology (eg Blackboard) to give common comments on assessment deficiencies, common problems or issues?

• Provide a mark sheet to return with assignments which lists the assessment criteria, competency criteria, and training package criteria so students can see their performance against each criterion and how the overall mark was awarded?

• Provide model answers, peer review and/or peer assessment opportunities? Do you know how to provide these opportunities in ways that benefit you and the learner?

• Cross course assess?

• Explain written feedback with students upon request?

• Use specific strategies with students from non English speaking background or students with comprehension and learning difficulties?

• Use, or are you aware of, contemporary teaching and learning assessment/plagiarism support packages such as Turnitin?

Competencies & workplace readiness

5. I can see how this course will help me in the workplace
6. This course prepares me for working in a global and international setting

Do you:

• Use real life examples from the workplace in your lectures?

• Do you relate the content of your course to a particular training package and/or competencies? Do you relate your content to other courses in the program as appropriate?

• Evaluate your students’ recognition of the alignment between your course content, competency based teaching requirements, and particular training packages? If yes, how!
Resources & facilities

4. The web-based (online) materials for this course are effective in assisting my learning.

Do you:

- Check your slides for accuracy and readability?
- Update your readings regularly? Are your content and teaching tools relevant to your students’ experiences? Are they relevant to particular competencies and training packages that inform your course? Are they up to date? Do you look for new readings each year?
- Is your Blackboard site maintained regularly? Do you know where to go to receive Blackboard training?
- Direct students to relevant external websites?
- Know how to make full use of the technology that is available to you in the classrooms?
- Actively direct students to library and learning support resources as appropriate?
- Use mobile learning techniques to support your teaching style and student learning? For example, podcasts of key course concepts that students find difficult to grasp; Blogs to receive student information and to offer online feedback?
- Present your content around a small number, no more than three, key concepts that are crucial to the course, and/or that previous student evaluations/assessments have highlighted as problematic areas of student learning?
- Use the online learning and teaching support services that are available to ALL academic staff?

Useful resources

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

The CES results may highlight areas for strengthening your teaching practice. There are a number of resources available to assist you with interpreting your CES results, including:

- Survey Services Centre (SSC): http://www.rmit.edu.au/ssc
Defining the scholarship of teaching

The scholarship of teaching involves research into classroom related activities and assessment to improve teaching and to add to a body of useful knowledge about practice. It is informed by educational philosophy, self-reflection and a review of teaching delivery and resources, and includes peer collaboration and feedback. Transnational education is a rapidly growing discipline that has distinct challenges. Given this, it is important that academic and teaching staff teaching offshore become actively engaged in the scholarship of teaching by developing their personal expertise as a transnational teacher as well as contributing to RMIT’s ability to continually improve the quality of transnational education.

Developing a scholarly approach to teaching

The most valuable resource you have in developing your scholarship as an academic or teacher is your experience, insight and passion as an educator. Engaging in scholarly activities involves continuous reflection on your practice and making decisions about improving the quality of your teaching. There are a range of activities that can help you deepen your knowledge about your discipline, and your teaching skills in a transnational environment:

- Look for opportunities to involve yourself in research, to present and publish your work at conferences, workshops and in publications. Author or co-author with colleagues.
- Build relationships with colleagues, engage in collegial discussions and activities like peer assessment and mentoring. Is there a willing mentor with whom you could undertake action research of your teaching?
- Engage in an action learning cycle with colleagues and students to improve teaching approaches offshore – for yourself and others. Review or redevelop existing resources to your suit transnational contexts.
- Promote your teaching and research through grant and award activities.
- Keep up to date with research publications about teaching in your discipline and in higher education.
- Design scenarios, models or case studies that suit your transnational context, and have them peer reviewed.
- Develop a list of journals, websites and newsletters to help you stay in touch with developments in teaching in your own discipline or profession.
- Seek out and participate in seminars, courses or conferences that focus on learning and teaching.

“What we urgently need today is a more inclusive view of what it means to be a scholar – a recognition that knowledge is acquired through research, through synthesis, through practice, and through teaching.”

(P. Palmer cited in Boyer, 1990: 24)
What are others doing?

An e-portal for best practice in study tours
This project designed and developed a study tour e-portal to store and disseminate curriculum resources. The E-portal and blogging technology is being used within RMIT Australia before being extended to offshore academics and enterprises. http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=rlailpqeue76z

Models of industry feedback for WIL programs
A model for industry supervisor feedback was developed for Work Integrated Learning (WIL) courses and activities. Samples, templates and guidelines were designed after consultation with students, industry supervisors and academics. It grew from an earlier Learning & Teaching Investment Fund (LTIF) project. http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=o84120ttbjb6z

Using online simulation for small, medium & large class
Online role-plays are an authentic learning and teaching strategy that allows students to participate in simulated ‘real life’ world experiences that connect with industry relevant scenarios. Students enrolled in three courses in the School of Accounting and Law, and in the School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning were asked to participate in as well as design the role-plays. The online tools used included e-journals, wikis, blogs and e-portfolios. http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=tbydlpqeue76z

Summary
The pursuit of quality teaching at RMIT requires an active commitment to:

- Continuous improvement in teaching practice
- Maintaining currency of knowledge and contributing to new knowledge
- Critical reflection, review and analysis of trans-national teaching delivery
- Contributing to communities of practice to share your good practice and ideas
- Dissemination of successful trans-national teaching approaches and strategies

Useful resources
The Academic Development Group or Learning & Teaching specialist in your College or School will be able to assist you in contacting the most appropriate staff specialist. Areas of scholarship include:

Transnational education – Teaching strategies, issues and successes, contextualisation and internationalisation of curricula.

Lectopia, Blackboard and e-learning pedagogy– Lecture and presentation recordings, online learning management systems, e-learning, blended learning and pedagogy.

e-Portfolios – Evidencing formal and informal learning, and evidencing graduate and professional capabilities.

Team-based Learning – Team-based multiple choice questions, Case studies and peer evaluation

Browse RMIT Professional Development programs
http://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/professionaldevelopment

Academic awards and grants:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=sdtb88vs65i21

Learning & Teaching Investment Fund (LTIF):
http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/ltif

Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT)


What is a Community of Practice?

A Community of Practice (CoP) is defined as a group that forms to share resources, experiences and learnings for the purpose of developing its members’ professional practice. Communities of Practice are recognised as useful tools in supporting and developing academic and teaching staff who are new to transnational teaching. They can provide access to staff who have experience with unfamiliar contexts. This can also assist in quickly grasping the differences that may impact on teaching and learning.

As a method of professional development a CoP may involve academic and teaching staff working together to reflect on aspects of their teaching experience. Typically, CoP participants meet face to face or online to discuss their experiences and teaching challenges, approaches to dealing with new challenges and recurring problems and new research findings.

Wegner (2006) outlines three crucial characteristics of a CoP:

1. **The domain:** A community of practice is not merely a club of friends or a network of connections between people. It has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership implies a commitment to the domain and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes participants from others.

2. **The community:** In pursuing their interest in their domain, participants engage in joint activities and discussions, provide assistance and share information and experiences. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other.

3. **The practice:** A community of practice is not merely a community of interest. Participants in a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources, experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction.

Why join a CoP?

Peer collaboration and review are at the heart of enhancing transnational teaching practice. Offshore teaching staff new to RMIT programs will benefit from focussed discussions with more experienced colleagues. Academic and teaching staff who are teaching offshore for the first time often find the advice from someone who taught the same course last semester very valuable. By engaging in a community of practice you can develop your own teaching practice as well as share ideas, enjoy peer support and contribute your own experiences to enhance the teaching knowledge and practice of other participants.

Wenger, 1998

That members interact, do things together, negotiate new meanings, and learn from each other is already inherent in practice – that is how practices evolve.

Wenger, 1998
Common CoP activities

You could become part of a community of practice by:

• Speaking with your colleagues and asking questions about their experiences of teaching in RMIT programs offshore.

• Sharing your offshore experience by speaking to others or presenting your ideas and experiences at a meeting or workshop.

• Presenting a case study of your own experience and having others offer their ideas about how they might approach the issue.

• Finding a mentor or mentoring and supporting others.

• Becoming involved in induction training programs for new transnational staff.

• Suggesting an informal meeting of the teaching team, of which you are a member, to share teaching tips or to discuss teaching issues and challenges.

• Using the CoP network to find new contacts who may be able to assist to obtain information or resources.

Various communities and networks exist nationally and globally to support and encourage learning, teaching and academic practice, you can find some of them at RMIT:

http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/support/communities

In one RMIT example, the School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning developed a community of practice to explore the destinations of graduates, their employability upon graduation and the relationship between field placements and subsequent employment.


Getting started

The pursuit of excellence in teaching is accentuated by the dialogue and exchange of ideas between staff in various communities of practice. There are a number of ways in which you can do this:

• Find out whether there is a teaching interest group in your School or College that meets regularly to discuss common transnational issues and approaches to teaching and learning.

• Talking to your School’s teaching and learning representative or staff in the Academic Development Group who will be able to provide you with advice and support or connections to the various interest groups.
Useful resources

Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.


This paper proposes ways to support inclusive communities of practice across diverse educational, cultural and geographic settings.


‘RMIT University Communities of Practice’ is a 2-minute video wherein Pauline Porcaro of the Academic Development Group, College of Business presents a case study using communities of practice.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaytFu3UTgw
Reflective practice

Reflective practice involves reviewing and analysing your experiences for the purpose of learning from that experience. Reflective practice is an integral part of action learning. Action learning involves producing a plan of action (e.g. a lesson plan) or designing an experiment (e.g. a new activity). Boud et al., defines reflection as ‘a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations’ (Boud et al., 1985, p. 19). The cultural and didactic challenges inherent in transnational education make reflective practice a particularly important aspect of course delivery. The action learning cycle provides a structured approach to reflective practice and it can be a very useful tool to enhancing the effectiveness of your teaching.

Academic and teaching staff who are new to transnational teaching often find themselves on a steep learning curve. Experience is often a primary source of learning. As a result adopting the discipline of reflective practice can assist in quickly integrating the lessons of experience.

Becoming a reflective practitioner

The starting point for reflection is usually the individual’s own experience. Practitioners must draw from different experiences and contexts, and identify linkages to critically analyse their own beliefs and assumptions relating to their own practice. Katy Newell Jones provides some insights into the global dimensions of higher education in the 21st century and the challenges and opportunities we face:


There are several ways in which to become a reflective practitioner:

• The most critical factor in effective reflective practice is making the time to do it. Set aside a regular time to reflect on your experiences.
• Establish a structure to assist your reflection. The structure could involve setting yourself some specific goals in areas of teaching practice you want to develop such as teaching styles and methods, assessment and feedback methods, assumptions about students and the learning process.

• Use a learning journal to record your experiences and focus your reflections.

• Document the ways in which you have attempted to improve and extend your knowledge of your teaching. What has worked? What hasn’t? Why? Where to next?

• Consider engaging a mentor or peer to assist your reflective practice. Others may help you to focus and to think about your experiences more broadly.

• Reflections may also include ideas and learnings that come from relevant literature and any professional development activities you undertake.

• Create a blog or online discussion group focussing on the development of best practice in teaching in your discipline.

• Periodically evaluate the rigour and effectiveness of your reflective practice.

Sample reflective practice
Take time each week to reflect on and review your teaching practice. You can ask yourself questions such as:

• What am I trying to achieve? What actions am I taking to achieve it?

• How effective are my actions?

• What impact is this having on my students?

• How can I do it better?

The reflective practice online guide provides an example of how one staff member uses tasks such as reviewing content and writing and moderating assessments cause her to reflect on her practice

http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=42y49n66wmp1

Useful resources
Support is available from your Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching) or equivalent. Your College Academic Development Group or learning & teaching specialist can also provide advice, support and professional development.

For additional information on the process of reflective learning and teaching and fundamental benefits of the practice, visit:

Cornell University’s online teaching evaluation handbook discusses way to improve teaching practice through reflection and feedback, and presents case examples http://www.cte.cornell.edu/documents/Teaching%20Evaluation%20Handbook.pdf
References


