# Chapter 2: Teaching and Classroom Management

## 2.1 Individual Learning Experience

All teachers were once students, so we can often look back on our experiences as students to provide insights as teachers. Before explaining how good teaching is based on the research that is available through SoTL, I would like you to consider your experience of learning. To do this, look at the list of possible classroom activities listed below and order them from the most effective in helping you learn (1) to the least effective in helping you learn (7), if we define "learning" as retaining information long-term so that you can use it and apply it in the future. When doing this exercise, one can assume that these activities are being incorporated into a lesson effectively, meaning the teacher has organized the activity in such a way that students have the information and knowledge necessary to perform the required task.

### 2.1.1 What way do you learn best?

**Directions:** List the classroom activities below from 1 to 7 with 1 being the most effective way of learning and 7 being the least effective way of learning based on your experience.

_____ Discussing
_____ Practicing doing something
_____ Reading
_____ Listening to lectures
_____ Teaching others
_____ Watching a video
_____ Seeing a demonstration

It is important to remember that students have different learning styles meaning that some may learn better through different modes. While learning styles have been described in a variety of ways, Fleming's (1995) classification of learning styles is one of the easiest to understand, and thus I will rely on it in this description. According to Fleming, there are four distinct styles, which people may prefer for learning. Some learners may be able to learn better by seeing something (visual learners), by hearing something (auditory learners), by reading or writing down information (read/write learners) and by touching and manipulating something (kinesthetic learners). Thus, there is no "correct" order to the list above. This is also important to remember because as teachers we should try to incorporate a variety of different techniques that will help students that learn in different ways. That being said, the majority of teachers who have answered this question in my workshops come up with an order similar to the one shown below.

### 2.1.2 Most effective in-class activities for the majority of learners

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Teaching others |
| 2 | Practice doing |
| 3 | Discussing |
| 4 | Seeing a demonstration |
| 5 | Watching a video |
| 6 | Reading |
| 7 | Listening |

Again, I will stress that if you ordered the way you learn differently from the list provided above, you are not incorrect. You just have a different learning style to the majority of

learners. For example, if you have selected "Reading" as the most effective way of learning, you are probably an active reader, who is always asking yourself questions that help you to stay engaged with the text. As for myself, "Reading" would come low on my list because my mind wanders as I read. We can think much faster than we can read meaning that the possibility of our minds taking a detour is ever present. When I read, I often find myself stopping and having to go back because I can't remember what I had just read.

It is understandable why pedagogical practices in higher education have not changed much over the years. Until recently, very little emphasis has been placed on the actual art of teaching especially in large research institutions where research is the main, if not only, emphasis. This is beginning to change, but the institutions that stress improvement of teaching are few. With little in the way of help with teaching and few faculty reaching out for help now that it is available, faculty have relied on the way they were taught, the way they learned best, the way they believe they learn best, or familiarity and comfort to guide their teaching practices. While this has been shown through a wide variety of research, Cox (2014) synthesizes this research extremely well. However, there are flaws with all of these. Because of this situation, the majority of teaching remains in the traditional lecture format, which is the least effective.

If you look at the list of activities above more globally, you can divide them into two distinct categories: Active (1-3) and Passive (4-7). The "Active" activities require the students to do something, while the passive ones have them just receiving information. This shows that, intuitively, we are aware of the most effective ways of learning.

## 2.2 Teacher-centered/Student-centered

Research also supports our intuition. In summarizing the extensive research in this area, Felder & Brent (2016) state, "*Of all instructional methods, nonstop lecturing is the most common, the easiest, and least effective. Studies show that most students cannot stay focused throughout a lecture*." One such study by Bunce *et al.* (2010) showed through student self-reporting that students' attention wandered the most in lectures vs. classes that used clicker questions and classes that used demonstrations.

These research articles along with numerous others show the benefits of engaging our students rather than spoon-feeding them information. Based on educational research on good teaching and learning in colleges and universities, Chickering & Gamson (1987) developed the following list of best practices.

**Good practice in undergraduate education**

1. Encourages contact between students and faculty.
2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students.
3. Encourages active learning.
4. Gives prompt feedback.
5. Emphasizes time on task.
6. Communicates high expectations.
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Figure 9: Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987)

Although the list above is over thirty years old, these practices have withstood the test of time, and thus, best teaching practices have moved from a teacher-centered approach to a

more student-centered approach where Active Learning (AL) is the focus in the classroom.

There are various definitions of AL, but the one provided by the University of Michigan on their homepage resonated with me. It states, "Active Learning is a process whereby students engage in activities, such as reading, writing, discussion, or problem solving that promote analysis, synthesis and evaluation of class content." For me this emphasizes a few things about AL that I think are important to remember. Firstly, that although many people associate AL with group-oriented activities, AL can also be achieved individually as "reading, writing" would suggest. In addition, this definition also stresses the need to use information in someway with the clause, "…that promote analysis, synthesis and evaluation of class content."

## 2.3 Bloom's Taxonomy

It is the latter part of the definition provided by the University of Michigan that brings us to the importance of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). Bloom's Taxonomy is merely a classification of cognition, or thinking, into levels of complexity. However, it is important because it can help teachers design appropriate activities for students so that the students will be able to meet the course objectives and identify skills from the simplest to the most difficult. In its original form, the six levels of the taxonomy were represented using the following nouns: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The wording was changed from nouns to verbs to show the more active nature of the various levels, and a reordering of the two most complex classifications of the taxonomy was performed by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001).

The new classification used the wording that follows: *remembering*, *understanding*, *applying*, *analyzing*, *evaluating*, and *creating*. It is the revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy that I will use throughout this text. While Bloom's Taxonomy is usually represented in a triangular shape as shown below with the least complex at the bottom and the most complex at the top, it should be noted that this visual representation does not signify one level being any more important than another. Every class will most likely want to encompass all of the levels at some point since having the necessary lower order thinking skills are necessary in order to use this information for higher level thinking skills to be undertaken.

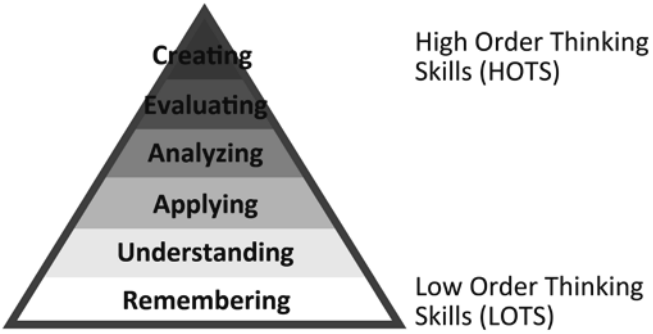



Figure 10: Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)

In each category within Bloom's Taxonomy, a variety of verbs can be used to elicit the desired level of thinking that the teacher would like an activity to elicit from the students. "*Lower Order Thinking Skills*" refers to the categories that take less mental processing and can lead to only surface learning. Surface learning is often apparent when students cram for tests. They

keep the information in short-term memory long enough to call it forth for a test, but the knowledge disappears afterwards. "*High Order Thinking Skills*" are those cognitive levels where mental processes are put to work when students are asked to do something with the knowledge. This leads students to move that information into long-term memory and makes it available for use much further into the future. Below are listed some of the verbs associated with each level of Bloom's Taxonomy along with how these verbs might be incorporated into a question to elicit the type of cognitive activity the instructor desires.

Below are listed some of the verbs associated with each level of Bloom's Taxonomy along with how these verbs might be incorporated into a question to elicit the type of cognitive activity the instructor desires (For example: Pohl, 2000; Decker & Davidson, 2006; etc.).

### 2.3.1 **Remembering** - Recalling or recognizing specific information

Verbs that can be used to elicit this level of cognitive activity include the following: *describe*, *list*, *label*, *recall*, *name*, *find*, *identify*, and *select*.

Some activities that these verbs could be used with may include: making a timeline of events, listing items from a story or demonstration, creating a list of items students remember from a previous lecture/demonstration/video, and making a chart showing specific aspects of something.

***Possible question and sentence forms***

- *How would you describe…?*
- *Can you list four of the most important factors…?*
- *In the diagram below, label the parts of the…*
- *Can you recall the…?*

- *Name the five steps to…*
- *Find the five… and identify each by name for your partner.*
- *Please select the most important factor for…*

### 2.3.2 **Understanding** - Comprehending given information

Verbs that can be used to elicit this level of cognitive activity include the following: *explain*, *interpret*, *classify*, *paraphrase*, *summarize*, *compare*, and *infer*.

Some activities that these verbs could be used with may include: explaining the reason for something, interpreting a chart or graph, outlining the important features of something, classifying a collection into specific components, summarizing a story or lecture, and providing examples.

***Possible question and sentence forms***

- *Can you explain what is happening in the experiment/ video/diagram?*
- *Interpret what is represented in the chart/graph.*
- *How would you classify the kind of…?*
- *How could you rephrase the main message of the…?*
- *Provide a summary of the…*
- *How would you compare and contrast this… (experiment/story) to... (the one we did last week/the previous one)*
- *What can you infer about what will happen next based on previous activities we have done in class?*

### 2.3.3 **Applying** - Using information to achieve something

Verbs that can be used to elicit this level of cognitive activity include the following: *use*, *apply*, *carry out*, *execute*, and *implement*.

Some activities that these verbs could be used with may include: demonstrating something, illustrating a process, performing an activity, simulating a situation, and presenting the process and results.

***Possible question and sentence forms***

- *Can you provide examples of…?*
- *How would you use… to do…?*
- *Can you make use of the facts to…?*
- *Apply what you have learned in today's lecture to design…*
- *In what way would you implement an experiment to take into account…?*

### 2.3.4 **Analyzing** - Separating information into components

Verbs that can be used to elicit this level of cognitive activity include the following: *analyzing, attributing, outlining, organizing, comparing, deconstructing, and integrating.*

Some activities that these verbs could be used with may include: analyzing a chart or graph, outlining the important aspects, integrating multiple sources of information into a report, and attributing information to specific categories.

***Possible question and sentence forms***

- *How would you compare certain ideas or people?*
- *Can you attribute the different parts of… and organize them according to importance?*
- *What evidence can you find for…?*
- *What is the relationship between the first three topics we discussed?*
- *What motive is there to…?*

### 2.3.5 **Evaluating** - Judging the value of something (ideas, methods, materials)

Verbs that can be used to elicit this level of cognitive activity include the following: *evaluating, judging, critiquing, checking, testing, hypothesizing, and detecting.*

Some activities that these verbs could be used with may include: creating criteria to judge, debating an issue, evaluating

the merits/demerits of some research, and critiquing the efforts of other students' presentations.

***Possible question and sentence forms***

- *How would you justify…?*
- *Make a judgment about…*
- *Which is better, to… or to…? Explain.*
- *What information would you use to support your view?*
- *How would you rate the…?*
- *Determine the pros and cons of doing…*

### 2.3.6 **Creating** - Developing an original idea/creative thinking

Verbs that can be used to elicit this level of cognitive activity include the following: *creating, producing, constructing, designing, inventing, making and planning.*

Some activities that these verbs could be used with may include: creating an advertisement, planning for an event, constructing a portfolio, inventing a new game, or producing a new story.

***Possible question and sentence forms***

- *What would you do to improve…?*
- *Can you think of an alternative to…?*
- *What could be done to eliminate the negative effects of…?*
- *How would you test…?*
- *Design a…*
- *Create a similar story with different characters.*

A useful graphic, "Bloom's wheel," which provides easy reference for teachers to create activities at each level of Bloom's Taxonomy can be found at the following website:

- Bloom's Wheel (Johns Hopkins Whiting School of Engineering) https://goo.gl/KNPFSP

### 2.3.7 Examples of Bloom's Taxonomy

In an effort to make the idea of developing questions at different cognitive levels easier to understand, two examples are provided below. The first is based on a common aspect of society today, Twitter, that almost everyone is familiar with. The second is from the natural sciences.

As can be seen in the example in Figure 12, by using the verbs that are associated with different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, the teacher can create questions that target specific cognitive categories using the same information.

Another example regarding the solar system:

- Using Bloom's Taxonomy in Science (Lesson Planet) https://goo.gl/6tL2bV


Figure 11: 22 Ways to Use Bloom's Taxonomy with Twitter. Source: Aditi Rao (2013). *TeachByte*, March 25, 2013.
Accessed at: https://goo.gl/dEE7wf (on November 8, 2017).

**Bloom's Taxonomy and Tropical Cyclone Intensity Scale (TCIS)**

**- Remembering:**
What are the six intensity classifications of the Tropical Cyclone Intensity Scale (TCIS)?

**- Understanding:**
Which TCIS level would a storm fulfilling the necessary criteria for a tropical cyclone and having sustained wind speeds of 55 knots be classified as?

**- Applying:**
Look at the data for a weather system, what (if any) classification should it receive on the TCIS and why?

**- Analyzing:**
Compare and contrast the storm data provided with the six main requirements for tropical cyclones. Do you believe there is a high likelihood of a tropical cyclone developing? Why or why not?

**- Evaluating:**
You have been given the data and forecast made from that data for a typhoon. Critique the forecast based on the data provided.

**- Creating:**
From the data sets provided, determine the typhoons path and predicted intensity for a weather forecast

Figure 12: Examples of Questions based on Bloom's Taxonomy

## 2.4 Outcome Statements

Using Bloom's Taxonomy, the teacher can clearly describe what he or she wants the students to accomplish in the class. For most teachers, merely remembering the information is not the goal, but rather using the information to accomplish something such as *applying*, *analyzing*, or *creating*, is the desired outcome. To ensure that the teacher and the students are focused on what the teacher wants to accomplish in the class, the teacher needs to write clear course objectives that will appear in the course syllabus. It is now common to write course objectives starting

with the phrase below to put the focus of the class on the students and what they should be able to do with the information presented.

"*By the end of this course, student will be able to …*"

Some examples of clear course objectives are provided below.

**[Example 1]**
*By the end of this course, you will have an understanding of chemicals and chemical transformations and their role in our society and economy. You will be able to analyze whether or not a chemical/chemical product is "green" and sustainable or not. You'll be able to make recommendations on how chemicals and chemical products can be improved to be greener.*

From: Yale Courses, Introduction to Green Chemistry (Paul Anastas) Available at: https://goo.gl/v9V3PN (Accessed on 11/10/2017)

**[Example 2]**
***Learning Objectives:***

Upon successful completion of 3.091SC, students will have accomplished the following **general** learning objectives.

**General**

- Predict the **properties** and **interactions** of chemical substances by understanding their **composition** at the atomic level, making connections to **structure**, **bonding**, and **thermodynamics** as necessary.
- Determine and apply **principles of materials science** (specifically microstructure design and selection) to the selection of materials for specific **engineering applications.**
- Assess the quality of text and graphics in textbooks and other published sources, and understand the advantages and limitations of **different models** proposed to explain each concept.
- Understand and identify the similarities and differences among important classes of materials including **glasses**, **metals**, **polymers**, **biomaterials**, and **semiconductors.**

***Note:** For this course, more specific objectives are also provided and can be found on the following website. From: MIT 3.091 Introduction to Solid State Chemistry, Fall 2010. Accessible at: https://goo.gl/QS6VGz
Video accessible at: https://goo.gl/5JyrkH

## 2.5 Curricular Alignment

Having clear course goals that express what the teacher expects students will be able to do once they have finished the course will help dictate the activities that need to be done in class to ensure that students can meet the objectives and the assessments set forth by the teacher. These activities will give students practice, which is an essential component to learning. This is referred to as constructive alignment, or curriculum alignment. A visual representation of this process is provided below.

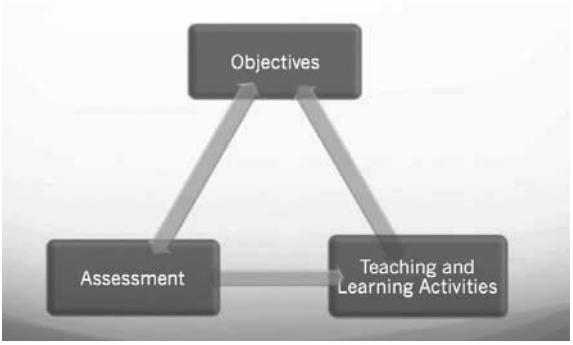



Figure 13: Curricular Alignment Diagram (Based on Biggs, 2003)

Two key aspects of constructive alignment are: 1) *Learners are constructing meaning by taking part in relevant activities*, and 2) *The teacher is facilitating learning by aligning the outcomes with the classroom activities and the assessments for the class*. Teachers and students have different perspectives when viewing a class. A teacher usually writes the learning objectives, followed by the

activities, and lastly designs the assessments. These assessments may even be designed later in the term right before the quiz or test is given. However, there is a danger in approaching course design in this way. It could cause the instructor's assessments to not be aligned with the overall goals of the course. It may be helpful for the instructor to look at the course from the students' perspective (as seen below) when addressing course design (Biggs, 2003).

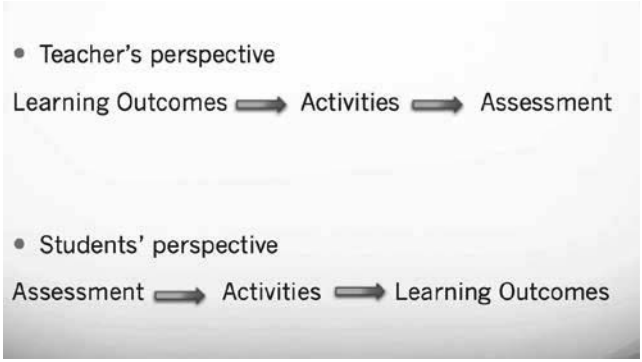



Figure 14: Teacher vs. Student Perspectives of Approaching a Class

Students first of all look at what the assessments in the class will be and decide on what activities they will do to meet those assessments most effectively.

A perfect example of what happens when a system is not aligned is English language education in Japan. Many people question why, after six years of English language education, the majority of the students entering university are unable to communicate effectively in even the most basic conversations in English. While there are likely a variety of factors at play, the major one is the misalignment between MEXT's stated goals and objectives and assessments.

When compared with other countries, Japan ranks toward the bottom in English proficiency. This fact leaves many baffled when they consider the amount of time students spend on English language studies. Mulligan (2005, p.33) states, "Japanese students study 3-5 hours a week or more, anywhere from 6 to 10 years, yet Japan has one of the lowest levels of English proficiency of any developed country in the world." MEXT has also shown concern about this issue since the late 1980s when it placed importance on communicative ability. They addressed this issue in part by starting the Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) program, which hires native-English speakers to work with the English teachers in junior high schools and high schools. In 2004, Samimy & Kobayashi (2004, p.246) indicated that MEXT was emphasizing the importance of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) activities in the classroom.

While MEXT is trying to make changes to the curriculum to make the classes more communicative, the ultimate assessment the stakeholders are focused on are the entrance examinations for high school and university. The Center Test along with the majority of entrance examinations into university do not have any communicative aspects to them, rather the students are required to know vocabulary and grammar for reading, translation, and writing. Thus, the stakeholders (the students, the parents, the teachers, and the school), all of whom are affected in some fashion by the students' results on these examinations, are focused on preparing for the entrance examinations.

## 2.6 Benefits of Active Learning

Because we intuitively understand that learning for the majority of students is accomplished better through active rather than passive classroom activities, a fact that is also extensively supported through research in SoTL, and our objectives in class tend to be on the more complex cognitive skills, a move has taken place in education over the years from a traditional, teacher-centered classroom where lecturing was the sole activity to a more student-centered classroom in which students are required to be more active in their learning.

The benefits of incorporating Active Learning into the classroom are clear through numerous studies and have been enumerated in Prince (2004). These benefits include improved:

1) **Attention in class**

   A generally accepted believe in education is that students can only concentrate for 15-20 minutes before their minds begin to wander (Wankat, 2002; Hartley & Davies, 1978). While various researchers have brought the length of time students can concentrate into question, both teachers and students agree that staying engaged in a lecture becomes more and more difficult over time. Common sense should tell us that a person will lose his/her ability to stay engaged in any activity, especially a passive one, over an extended period of time. By interjecting variety in the form of Active Learning at intervals throughout a lecture, the teacher is breaking from routine and bringing the students' focus back.

**2) Student/Faculty interaction**

The more students have an opportunity to interact with their instructors, the more comfortable they will be talking with their instructors. As mentioned earlier, students value a teacher who is approachable and who they feel they can talk with and ask questions of. Later in this handbook, the importance of building community in the classroom will be explored. A key factor in helping students feel they are appreciated and valued, both of which foster this feeling of community, is their relationship with their instructor.

**3) Student/Student interaction**

Giving students the opportunity to talk with a number of their classmates helps them not only build their understanding of the material but also build relationships that can help them throughout their studies at the university. Both the relationships they have with faculty and students alike helps students feel that they are part of a community. It cannot be overstated how important this is. "*Retention studies conducted over the last two decades in higher education suggest that one of the most crucial factors in helping students complete their studies is creating an atmosphere of community*" (McGlynn, 2001, p.55).

**4) Academic Achievement**

A growing number of studies (Desauliers *et al.*, 2011; Hake, 1998; Redish *et al.*, 1997) show that by incorporating Active Learning into a more traditional lecture-style class students retain the information better and thus score better on tests.

5) **Attitude toward the subject and thus motivation to learn**

As one would expect, with success comes an improvement in the way one looks at things and a belief that one can succeed in the future.

6) **Interpersonal/Teamwork skills**

Having roles and understanding the rules and responsibilities the team must function under are key factors identified in teams that perform well. Giving students practice forming teams, and deciding on the leader and other key roles helps them see the importance of these aspects of teams and be able to apply this framework to other teamwork outside of the classroom. The very act of working in a team gives them practice with interpersonal skills and conflict resolution.

7) **Communication skills**

Being able to communicate effectively is very much related to the interpersonal skills mentioned above. Students can gain practice making themselves understood through the pair and group work often associated with Active Learning.

8) **Self-esteem**

When students are actively constructing meaning in a student-centered environment, they can more readily see that they are capable. Active Learning allows them to build not only their knowledge but also their skill in applying that knowledge. Wilke (2003) points out that with the development of these two aspects, students are likely to feel confident which also leads to being more motivated.

**9) Level of anxiety**

Again, the idea of community building comes into play. As students get to know their instructors and other students in the class better and also understand the supportive nature of a well-designed student-centered class, their comfort level in the class improves dramatically. It becomes a friendly environment rather one that is an unknown quantity.

**10) Class attendance**

When students can perceive that they are valued as a member of a community and they are engaged actively in their own learning, they are more likely to look forward to attending class rather than dreading it.

**11) Understanding of professional environment**

Part of the higher education experience is gaining maturity and understanding of responsibility as working members of society. Practice giving presentations, working in groups, critically thinking about topics, and debating those topics are all skills that apply directly to their working lives after university.

While all of these things are attainable when Active Learning is implemented effectively, frustration for the teacher and the students can be the outcome when AL is not done well. For Active Learning to succeed, students need to be given enough information so that they understand why the teacher is having them undertake such activities and so that they can carry out the task efficiently and effectively.

It is well documented in SoTL research that the more information students are given the better they will perform. Robert Diamond in the forward of Grunert O'brien *et al.* (2008, p.xi) "The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach (2nd Edition)" states, "*The research on teaching and learning is consistent: the more information you provide your students about the goals of a course, their responsibilities, and the criteria you will use to evaluate their performance, the more successful they will be as students and the more successful you will be as a teacher.*" While this quotation is referring specifically to syllabus design, it holds true for classroom activities. Thus, teachers should provide students with a detailed syllabus at the beginning of the term that includes most of, if not all of, the categories listed below. However, the teacher should also provide detailed explanation of activities for the students especially if an activity is new.

## 2.7 Student-centered Syllabus

The statements below regarding syllabus design may very well go against our beliefs of what a syllabus should be because our institutions often dictate what our syllabi should look like for a course syllabus book and online course syllabus guide, which are designed to help students when picking a course. I view these institutional guides as skeletal outlines of what the students actually need to know for my class and, thus, give the students much more detailed information when they arrive in my class on the first day. In order to provide some perspective on the difference in what is required by the institution and what should be on a syllabus, below is an example of a class syllabus provided in the course catalogue at one of the institutions where I teach.

英語（C）

English (C)

**担当教員：**ENSLEN Todd(ENSLEN Todd)

**担当教員の所属：**人文学部非常勤講師

**開講学年：**1年　**開講学期：**前期　**単位数：**1単位　**開講形態：**演習

**開講対象：**　**科目区分：**

**【授業概要】**

**・テーマ**

English (C) aims to help students to improve basic communication skills such as listening, conversation and written composition. Along with these skills, students will also develop their thinking about topics through discussion.

**・到達目標**

By the end of course, students will improve their skills and vocabulary and be able to enable smooth communication. Specifically, they should be able to:

Listening: understand sentences of a reasonable length, provided speech is slow.

Speaking: talk about familiar topics without undue effort; have a short conversation.

Writing: write simple phrases and sentences about their environment.

**・キーワード**

Discussion

**【科目の位置付け】**

大学での学修や研究および社会生活において必要とされる英語の，実践的な基礎力を養成する。（基盤教育の基本方針より）(English II (Intermediate))

**【授業計画】**

**・授業の方法**

**・日程**

Week 1: Orientation/Casual Conversation 1
Week 2: Discussion 1: Model
Week 3: Discussion 2
Week 4: Discussion 3
Week 5: Discussion 4
Week 6: Supplementary Activity: Casual Conversation 2
Week 7: Discussion 5
Week 8: Discussion 6
Week 9: Discussion 7
Week 10: Supplementary Activity: Problems in your country
Week 11: Discussion 8
Week 12: Discussion 9
Week 13: Discussion 10
Week 14: Discussion 11
Week 15: Final Homework Due

**【学習の方法】**

**・受講のあり方**

・授業時間外学習へのアドバイス

【成績の評価】

・基準

Students are expected to attend class and use English for the speaking and listening practices conducted in class in order to receive high marks for class participation. Homework, which usually consists of related grammar and reading assignments will be assigned to review the concepts covered in class. All homework assignments must be turned in at the beginning of the following class to receive credit. Late assignments are not acceptable. The midterm test will cover the first four chapters of the textbook and the final test will cover the last four chapters.

・方法

TOEIC 20%, Preparation Worksheets 30%, Participation in Discussions 30%, Vocabulary and Listening Quizzes 20%, Final Homework 20%

Attending a minimum of 2/3 of the classes is mandatory and those who fail to do so will be given 0 points for the course.

【テキスト・参考書】

All materials will be prepared by the teacher and distributed in class.

Figure 15: Example of Syllabus for University Use

This is followed by a description of what actually a student-centered syllabus could contain, and examples of what I provide the students on the first day of class.

### 2.7.1 Student-centered syllabus contents

Below (Figure 16) is a list, which was created from the analysis of numerous syllabi from universities in the US that are provided online, of the types of information that can and possibly should be provided to students at the beginning of the class. I encourage the reader to consult "The Course Syllabus: A Learner-Centered Approach (2nd Ed.)" by Grunert O'brien *et al.* (2008) for a much more detailed analysis of the learner-centered syllabus.

**Components of a Learner-centered syllabus**

- **Course Title**
- **General Information** – Instructor, Instructor's office, e-mail address, phone number, office hours
- **Course Description** – May include questions that guide the course
- **Course Requirements** – What, if any, prerequisites there are
- **Teaching Philosophy** – Your personal beliefs about teaching and learning
- **Learning Outcomes** – What students should be able to do upon completion of the course.
- **Readings** – What textbooks and journal articles students must read for the course.
- **Classroom policies** – attendance, etiquette, what technology is allowed or not allowed in class, etc.
- **Late assignments and extensions** – what rules there are regarding delays in submitting assignments
- **Assignments** – descriptions of assignments the students will submit during the term
- **Grades** – How the students' scores will be calculated
- **Academic Integrity** – a statement which defines cheating and plagiarism and the penalties involved for each
- **Disability Accommodation Statement** – How physical impairments will be compensated in the class
- **Statement of Unity and Inclusion** – Ways you intend to involve everyone equally in class
- **Course Calendar** – The dates of the classes with corresponding topics and assignments
- **Advice for students for self-regulating their learning** – suggestions for studying, reviewing and succeeding in class
- **General information about the teacher** – A personal statement about interests and life outside of academia

Figure 16: Components of a Leaner-centered Syllabus (Grunert O'brien *et al*., 2008)

Since syllabi are becoming multiple-page documents with a host of information, some teachers are compiling this information into course guides and providing more immediate

concerns of the class on a first-day handout. Depending on your own beliefs about which format will be most effective for your students, you should select whichever format works best for you.

In my own discussion-based classes, I use a short first-day handout to give the students the basic information about the class, which includes the teacher's contact information, a brief description of the class, the general guidelines for evaluation and the course schedule. This serves as a quick reference to the topics that will be covered in class so that they can locate the necessary materials easily. I have included a copy of this first-day handout below. Please note that the topic selections are not included on the handout because students are given a choice of which topics out of the approximately 20 that have been prepared that they want to discuss during the term. On the first day of class, the students review the topic guide that they are given for the class and vote on the topics that interest them the most. The topics that receive the most votes are the ones that are used in the course.

### 2.7.2 First-day handout example

As one can see in Figure 17, my first-day handout closely matches the syllabus that was submitted for the syllabus book, but it contains more details about instructor contact information and specific dates.

However, this first-day handout clearly is lacking in many of the categories detailed above in what a student-centered syllabus should contain.

**English S (Discussion-based Communication Course)**
**Department: 人文 Day/Period: Wednesday 3** **Classroom: 128**
**Instructor**: Todd Enslen **E-mail:**
**Telephone:**

**Course Material:** Teacher prepared materials, Internet

**Course Objectives**

Students will expand their English vocabulary, improve their English listening and comprehension ability, improve their paragraph writing ability, develop their thinking about topics and discuss them, and improve their general English speaking ability.

**Class Format**

1. Discussions about an assigned topic in groups of 3-4 students
   Discussions will be based on written articles and videos freely available on the Internet.
   Students will do written preparation about a topic, discuss the topic with other students in class, and write a concluding reaction about the topic and what they learned from other students.

2. Supplementary activities

Students are expected to come to class on time, be prepared for the class, and participate positively.

**Assessment criteria:**

1. Attendance Policy:
   Absence （欠席）
   You must attend a minimum of 2/3 of the scheduled classes.
   Missing class 2-3 times will significantly lower your grade.
   Tardy(遅刻)
   As a rule, 1-30 minutes late will be counted as 0.5 of an absence. （原則として0.5の欠席）
   As a rule, more than 30 minutes late will be counted as an absence. (原則として欠席)
2. Preparation worksheet + listening comprehension- 30%
3. Reaction Papers - 20%
4. Participation in Discussions and Supplementary Activities - 20%
5. Vocabulary Quizzes - 20%
6. Final homework - 10%

| | Date | Content | Discussion Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 10/4 | Introduction / Supplementary activity (Casual Conversation 1) | |
| 2 | 10/11 | Introdution (Model) Discussion 1 | |
| 3 | 10/18 | Discussion 2 | |
| 4 | 10/25 | Discussion 3 | |
| 5 | 11/1 | No Class | |
| 6 | **11/8** | Discussion 4 | |
| 7 | 11/15 | Discussion 5 | |
| 8 | 11/22 | Supplementary Activity: Problems in Your Country | |
| 9 | 11/29 | Discussion 6 | |
| 10 | 12/6 | Discussion 7 | |
| 11 | 12/13 | Discussion 8 | |
| 12 | 12/20 | Supplementary Activity: Casual Conversation | |
| 13 | 1/17 | Discussion 9 | |
| 14 | 1/24 | Discussion 10 | |
| 15 | 1/31 | Supplementary Activity | |
| | 2/7 | Final Homework | |

Figure 17: First-day Handout Example

Many of these categories along with more detailed descriptions of the students' roles and the teacher's role in the class are covered in the Course Guide that can be accessed at the following website:

- Discussion-based 4-Skills English Course Guide (Daniel Eichhorst) https://goo.gl/FGosEv

Useful information regarding syllabus writing and examples of student-centered syllabi can be found at the following websites:

- Syllabus Sample (4Faculty.org) https://goo.gl/HFazDu
- Faculty Roles and Responsibilities (Kent State University) https://goo.gl/vsSRj2
- History 185: Survey of Middle East History (by Dr. Stephen Cory) https://goo.gl/Wrnvnx
- Syllabus Example – Classroom Course (University of Hawaii Honolulu Community College) https://goo.gl/G111vM
- Writing a Syllabus (Cornell University) https://goo.gl/8dMEjX

### 2.7.3 Syllabi expressions and vocabulary

In an effort to help instructors understand important terminology a list of words and expressions that might appear on a syllabus or may come up when students ask you about testing or grading for a course have been compiled. Match the terms on the left with the definitions on the right. The terms (1-31) on the left side of the page have been repeated on the second page for the reader's convenience. The answers are provided at the bottom of the second page.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Make-up policy<br>2. Grading on a curve<br>3. Rules of conduct<br>4. Supplementary readings<br>5. Rubric<br>6. Comprehensive exam<br>7. Objective questions<br>8. Prerequisite<br>9. Class roster<br>10. Open-book test<br>11. Closed-book test<br>12. Subjective questions<br>13. Outcomes<br>14. Participation<br>15. Excused absence<br>16. Review session<br>17. Elective<br>18. Extra credit<br>19. Drop<br>20. Summative assessment<br>21. Criterion-referenced<br>22. Take-home test<br>23. Norm-referenced<br>24. Accommodation for disabilities<br>25. Intellectual integrity<br>26. Academic misconduct<br>27. Audit<br>28. Tentative schedule<br>29. Formative assessment<br>30. Pass/Fail<br>31. Due date | **a.** _____ A course that must be completed before a more advanced course can be taken.<br>**b.** _____ A course that is not required but can be taken to fulfill the number of hours needed to graduate.<br>**c.** _____ A test/assessment given during the course to check on student progress on an assignment before completion.<br>**d.** _____ The day and time when an assignment must be submitted to the teacher.<br>**e.** _____ Following academic standards and rules of giving credit for information one uses in their academic writing and speeches.<br>**f.** _____ An examination for which students can look at their notes or textbook to help them answer the questions.<br>**g.** _____ Taking a course without officially enrolling or getting credit.<br>**h.** _____ A policy that takes account of students who are at a disadvantage in the classroom due to physical problems or handicaps.<br>**i.** _____ A situation when a student has permission or a valid excuse to not attend class and to do any of the work they missed while they were gone.<br>**j.** _____ A list of criteria, created by the teacher, that specifies what standards students need to meet in order to get a specific grade.<br>**k.** _____ An exam that students do outside of class and submit at a later date.<br>**l.** _____ A student's withdraw from a class by canceling his/her registration<br>**m**. _____ A non-letter grade for completing a course which is not included in the student's grade point average (GPA)<br>**n**. _____ A student's grade is based on a normal-distribution curve, or how well they do compared to other students in the class, not on set criteria.<br>**o**. _____ A test taken in class without the use of textbooks or notes.<br>**p**. _____ Guidelines for students on how they should behave in class, or what is appropriate and inappropriate in class.<br>**q**. _____ A list of all of the students in a class. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Make-up policy<br>2. Grading on a curve<br>3. Rules of conduct<br>4. Supplementary readings<br>5. Rubric<br>6. Comprehensive exam<br>7. Objective questions<br>8. Prerequisite<br>9. Class roster<br>10. Open-book test<br>11. Closed-book test<br>12. Subjective questions<br>13. Outcomes<br>14. Participation<br>15. Excused absences<br>16. Review session<br>17. Elective<br>18. Extra credit<br>19. Drop<br>20. Summative Assessment<br>21. Criterion-referenced<br>22. Take-home test<br>23. Norm-referenced<br>24. Accommodation for disabilities<br>25. Intellectual integrity<br>26. Academic misconduct<br>27. Audit<br>28. Tentative Schedule<br>29. Formative Assessment<br>30. Pass/Fail<br>31. Due Date | **r**. _____ Additional credit students can earn by doing extra work for a course.<br>**s**. _____ A set of rules that stipulates when students will be allow to do work that they missed or to turn in work late.<br>**t**. _____ A list, which may possibly change in the future, of the class meetings with what will be done on each day.<br>**u**. _____ A test that comes at the end of the term, or possibly a unit, that covers material for the entire period.<br>**v**. _____ A test that covers all of the material discussed in the class up to that point.<br>**w**. _____ A test on which the questions have one correct answer and will be marked either right or wrong.<br>**x**. _____ A test on which the teacher must make judgments as to how correct an answer is and partial credit is often given.<br>**y**. _____ Printed materials that the students are not required to read, but the instructor recommends for additional study.<br>**z**. _____ A student's activity and involvement in the course as judged by the instructor.<br>**aa**. _____ A process of comparing students to peers for the assigning grades and is the basis for curving grades.<br>**bb**. _____ Stated goals about what the teacher expects the students to be able to do upon completion of the course.<br>**cc**. _____ An optional extra class for students that want to go over material that will be covered on a test.<br>**dd**. _____ Behavior that does not follow the rules of the school or the class. It is also referred to as cheating or plagiarism.<br>**ee**. _____ The assignment of grades based on a specific set of criteria. |

**Answers:** a-8, b-17, c-29, d-31, e-25, f-10, g-27, h-24, i-15, j-5, k-22, l-19, m-30, n-2, o-11, p-3, q-9, r-18, s-1, t-28, u-20, v-6, w-7, x-12, y-4, z-14, aa-23, bb-13, cc-16, dd-26, ee-21

Along with explaining activities in detail, students need to become accustomed to activities that will take place, especially when the activities are unfamiliar. With the discussion class introduced above, students are given a model on the first day of class so they understand how the discussions should proceed and the role of each person in the group.

Active Learning often involves some type of pair or group work and many first-year Japanese college students have had little experience with this type of classroom activity. Thus, the students should get used to this style of education from the very first day of class. This means getting comfortable with group work and getting to know other students in the class. McGlynn (2001, p.55) points out that "*...we need to pay attention to more than how we best present course material." "Effective teachers create an atmosphere of trust and warmth between themselves and their students.*" This idea comes from retention studies that indicate an atmosphere of community is one of the most critical factors in helping students to persevere throughout their studies. "Community" refers to creating an environment where the students feel like valued members by the teacher and other students in the class. Thus, much of the focus in education has shifted to the affective aspects of the class.

## 2.8 Community Building

In order to build a community in the classroom, interaction between the teacher and the students and among the students in the class must take place. The idea behind community building is to have students feel as though they are a part of the entire class and feel a connection with the other students and the teacher in class. This can only be achieved if the students have

an opportunity to interact with everyone in class not just a select few members. Thus, the way the teacher creates the groupings in class is vitally important to whether a community is actual built or not.

The interaction between students must be organized by assigning students to pairs or groups. All too often teachers who have little experience with group work will form groups in what they see as the easiest, least time consuming and least disruptive way, which is having the students talk with other students near them. The teacher might say, "*Please turn to the person next to you and discuss…*" However, this is problematic because there are only four different people (the person in front, the person to the left, the person to the right, and the person behind them) whom any one student can interact with in the class. In addition to the limited number of people to interact with, students tend to sit with people they already know when they first enter a class. Therefore, having students interact with people near them often does not help them meet others or get different opinions to the ones they may already be exposed to.

Of course, in very large classes, the dynamics of having everyone move make grouping within the class limited, so the teacher must stick with the method of students talking with people near them. However, for most teachers, our classes are of more manageable sizes, which permit more creativity with group formation. I have personally used the methods outlined below with classes of up to 50 students as long as the classroom is large enough to allow rearranging to take place.

### 2.8.1 Methods for forming groups

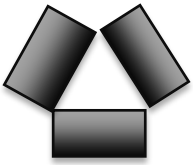
First of all, the teacher must decide how many students per group are desirable. I, personally, like groupings of three because the students can share information relatively quickly. The methods described below can also be used for forming pairs if that is what the teacher prefers.

For the purposes of the examples below, we will imagine that we have a class of 40 students that need to be grouped for class discussions. Since I want to group students in threes as much as possible, I will divide the number of students by 3. This gives me 13 groups with one student left over. Thus, one of my groupings will have to have four people. These thirteen groups can be formed in a number of ways, but two quick and easy methods for getting students into randomly assigned groups are detailed below.

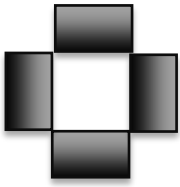
#### Numbering Method

Since there are thirteen groups, the students can be numbered off in a random order from one to thirteen three times with the last student receiving the number one making group number one the odd group with four members. The teacher should show the position of each group in the classroom by writing the numbers of the groups on the blackboard in the arrangement that is the most desirable. The teacher should also indicate with a diagram on the blackboard or a physical demonstration how the desks should be arranged in each configuration (3-member groups and 4-member groups). If this is not done, students will do the least work possible and just move their chairs making for odd speaking arrangements and difficulty taking notes. My own

preference for grouping students is shown in the diagram in Figure 18.



Three-Person Grouping



Four-person Grouping

Figure 18: Grouping Configurations

***Example Explanation from the Teacher***

***"****For the next activity, we will be talking in groups of three. However, since we have 40 students here today, one group will have four people. There will be 13 groups with group 1 having four members and the rest having three. I will give you a number from one to thirteen. Please remember the number you are given. When everyone has a number, you should group yourselves according to the group numbers listed on the board."*

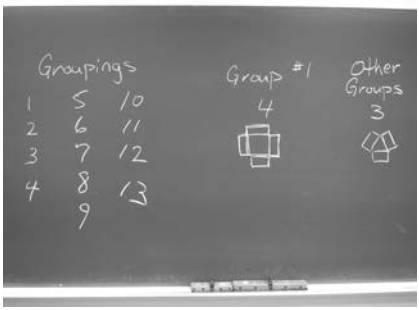



Figure 19: Groupings by Numbers for Student Reorganization

**Using Playing Cards**

Another method for grouping students is by using a standard deck of playing cards. Since the desired configuration is three person groups. The teacher can use three suits from the deck of cards, for example diamond, clubs and hearts. With the example of 40 students, one extra card (possibly the joker) could be inserted to make 40 cards. The cards are then distributed to each student. The teacher can then instruct the students to group according to the card they are holding, for example 10s or kings. The groupings can be indicated on the blackboard much as in the diagram shown below, but card names instead of numbers will need to be written. One benefit of using this method is that the students have the card in their possession, so there is never a problem of anyone forgetting which group he or she is in.

***Example Explanation from the Teacher***

*"For the next activity, we will be talking in groups of three. However, since we have 40 students here today, one group will have four people. There will be 13 groups with group 1 having four members and the rest having three. I will give you a playing card. You will receive a heart, diamond, club or a joker. Once everyone has a card we will group according to what appears on the face of your card. For example, the aces plus the joker will be group 1, the twos will be group 2, etc. Use the diagram on the blackboard to determine where your group is located."*

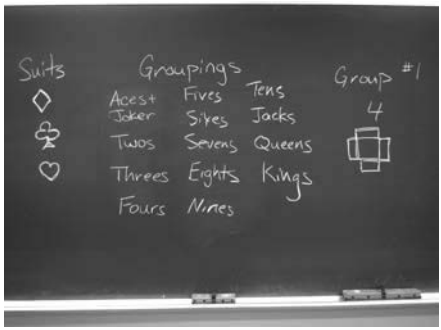


Figure 20: Groupings by Playing Cards

If you would like to have the students regroup during the class period, just repeat the process above to form other randomly assigned groups. As I alluded to earlier, randomly assigning groups can lead to students not having a chance to interact with every class member or students from the first group or pair meeting up in the third pairing or there after if you change groupings more often.

While the way the teacher puts students into groups might seem like a minor or troublesome detail, I am always surprised at how well received it is by the students, especially first-year students. These students often don't know anyone when they first come to class and are shy and reserved because of the unfamiliar situation. These types of groupings allow them to meet the vast majority of their classmates, which helps them to build connections that assist them even outside the classroom and with other classes.

I have even had students express regret that they hadn't had a chance to talk with all of the members of the class. Since random assignment does not ensure that everyone has a chance to talk with everyone else, I began changing the way I assigned students to groups toward the end of the class.

To deal with this problem, I have incorporated a couple of ways to make groupings less random. I often use these grouping methods at the end of the semester for some variety. First of all, if the students are working in pairs, the leaders can be required to move back one seat, while their partner remains behind. The person who remained behind is the then the leader for the next discussion. When it is time to change partners again, the leaders are told to move forward (the opposite direction from the last group), thus ensuring the original pairings are moving in

opposite directions from one another so that they will not meet again. This rotation system can be used for however many pairings the teacher desires without the fear of students meeting previous discussion partners again. If an odd number of students attend the class, one group can consist of three people. One of the students from this group should be considered the odd man out and that person can be treated differently than the other students who rotate in pairs. This "odd man out" can be rotated among groups so that he/she does not have the same speaking partners. The language a teacher could use to introduce this grouping system is presented below.

> **Teacher:** *We will change our way of grouping today to ensure that everyone talks with different people. I would like the leader of each pair to please stand up. The people who are standing will move back one place and the people at the back of each row will move to the front of the next row over. The person in the back corner will move to the front corner on the opposite side of the room. The person who did not move will be the leader of the new pairing.*

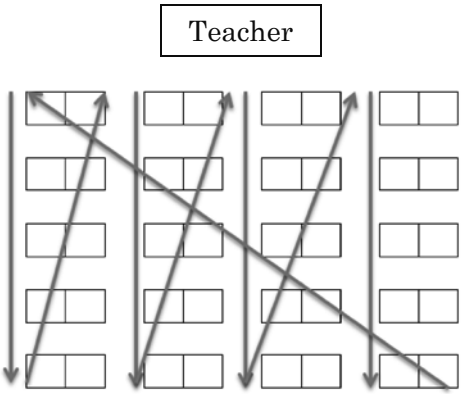



Figure 21: Pair Rotation Method (Part 1)

After the discussion that follows the next grouping, the following can be used:

> **Teacher:** *We will change groups the same way we did last time. Therefore, the leader of the last group should stand. However, instead of moving back to make your new pairing, you will move forward with the person at the front of each row moving to the back of the next row over. The person at the front of the last row will move to the back corner of the row on the opposite side of the room.*

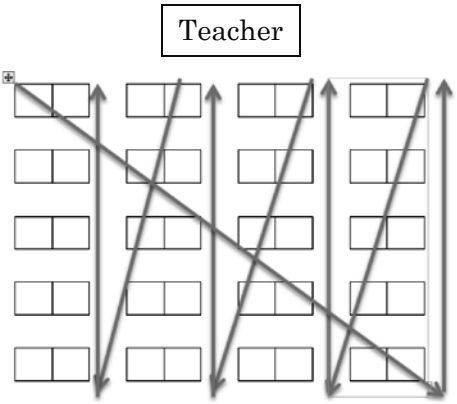



Figure 21: Pair Rotation Method (Part 2)

When the students are working in small groups of three or four, the above mentioned rotation system does not work. Thus, in order to give students the opportunity to speak with students they may not have otherwise been able to meet, I have the leaders of the groups stay behind and instruct the other students to find a new group where they have not talked to or had few opportunities to discuss with the leader. This gives the students a chance to meet up with students they do not know well and have not had a chance to talk with. A teacher can use the language below to group students in this way.

> **Teacher:** *To give you a chance to talk with classmates, you may have had little opportunity to talk with in class, we will do our groupings a bit differently this time. I would like the leaders to stay where they are. The other members of the group should move to another group where the leader is someone they have not talked to very much in this class.*

### 2.8.2 Assigning roles within groups

Another issue with groups is assigning roles within the group. If the teacher just assigns a task, such as answering a question, and tells the students to talk about it in their groups, confusion and silence are usually what follows. When students are unfamiliar with one another, they are reluctant to take the lead and organize the group; thus, it is up to the teacher to do so. In my classes, a leader is decided through a game of "rock, scissors, paper" where the loser of the game becomes the leader of the group. The teacher may also want to assign a note taker whose responsibility is to report on what the members of his/her group discussed. An example of the wording you might use to get students to perform this task is provided below.

> **Teacher:** *Now that you are in groups, we need to decide on who will be the leader for the group. In this class, we will use the lucky loser leader system. Please play a game of "rock, scissors, paper" (jyanken) with your group members and the loser of the game will be the leader. The person who comes in second to last will be the note taker.*

After the leader has been decided, the teacher can say something like:

> **Teacher:** *The leaders role will be to ask the question of all of the group members and get their responses. The leader will then also answer the question for the rest of the group. The note taker will write a brief description of what everyone else replies and report on this to the rest of the class after your discussions.*

### 2.8.3 Issues related to interaction and group work

As the classroom becomes more interactive, problems will arise that the teacher will have to deal with. One issue that invariably arises when asking students to respond to questions posed in class is having students who are overly active wanting to answer every question and other students who are passive and reluctant to answer questions even when specifically requested to do so. The teacher must have strategies they can use to deal with these problems.

#### Dealing with overly eager and passive students

The teacher might emphasize at the beginning of class that everyone is expected to participate in class discussions, and therefore the teacher will try to call on all of the students during class discussions. By setting the rules for engagement at the very beginning of the class, it will be easier to stop overly eager students from dominating the discussions and to get passive students to more willingly participate. By making your expectations of the class clear, students know what to expect and can then figure out ways to adjust their behavior to meet these expectations. The teacher might use the following wording to emphasize this idea on the first day of class.

> **Teacher:** *It is my belief that everyone should participate equally in the class. Therefore, I will try to call on all of the students to provide responses when we have class discussions. Some of the students are less enthusiastic about participating than others, but we can help each other come up with a response in our group discussions to make the prospect of giving a response less threatening.*

If problems arise after this introduction or a similar introduction, simply say to the student:

**[For overly active students]**

**Teacher:** *Thank you for your enthusiasm in class. However, please remember that we need to give others a chance to answer in order to help them develop their thinking and speaking skills. I promise that you will have a chance to answer in the near future.*

**[For passive students]**

**Teacher:** *Since these are not your ideas but rather ideas gathered by your group, just use your notes to help you explain.*

While each situation requires a different approach, the following websites should provide you with some ways to help alleviate any situation that might arise.

- 4 Ways for Dealing with Dominant Students (Teaching English in Berlin) https://goo.gl/hx8vn4

### 2.8.4 Ways to build a community in the classroom

**1) Begin the term with some type of icebreaker -** The term "icebreaker" refers to getting to know one another and thus breaking through the tension, "ice," that often exists when one is with a group of unfamiliar people. The activities that can be used as icebreakers are numerous and can either focus on just getting to know one another or can focus on the subject material of the class. I often mix the two so that students can find commonality amongst themselves on certain issues while the teacher can gain a bit of information that will be helpful in organizing the class. In this section, I will provide a few examples of different types of icebreakers and also give websites where teachers can go for more ideas on this topic.

Since icebreakers require students to get into groups for the first time, the grouping method above can be used.

**Example 1** **Sharing something interesting or unusual about yourself**

**Teacher:** *In this activity, I would like you to introduce yourself by giving your name, telling your partner where you are from, and the most interesting thing about your hometown. In addition, include something interesting or unusual about yourself. For example, if I were introducing myself, I would say,*

> *"My name is Todd Enslen, and I am from Charleston, Illinois in the United States. Charleston is a very small Mid-western town of about 20,000 people. The most interesting feature is a 30-foot statue of Abraham Lincoln. As for something unusual about myself, my first job after graduating from college with a degree in zoology was working on foreign fishing boats off the coast of Alaska as a biologist."*

*Now, it is your turn. Decide who will begin by playing a round of "rock, scissors, paper". The loser will begin by introducing himself/herself based on the information written on the board.*

Note: It is best to write the list of things that you would like the students to talk about on the blackboard at the front of the room or show them on a slide so that students can refer to it as they are working. People tend to forget what they are being asked to do. In addition, you will notice in the example above that I provided an example of how I would introduce myself. This not only helps students to understand better how they should introduce themselves, it also provides them with some personal information about the teacher, which may help them to feel a closer relationship with him or her.

This can be extended into a more complex activity in a number of ways. Below is a list of a couple of possibilities along with the language that might be helpful.

**a. Sharing group member's information with others:** If you are planning to do this extension activity with the students, the students should be informed at the very beginning that they

should take notes about the other students in their groups because they will have to share that information later. The students can be regrouped by giving new numbers as discussed earlier for ways of grouping students. Once students have decided who will begin through playing "rock, scissors, paper", the teacher should say:

> **Teacher:** *Now that you have a leader. The leader will begin by introducing himself/herself followed by introducing the members from the previous grouping. Members should ask questions. Once the leader has finished introducing the three people, the person to the left of the leader will introduce his previous group members, and so forth.*

**b. Sharing with the class:** The teacher could also call on a few students at random and ask them to introduce their group members to the rest of the class. The teacher can use the following language to extend this activity.

> **Teacher:** *I will now call on a few people to introduce their group members. Listen carefully. If you have any questions, please speak up.*

Note: If students ask questions that the speaker cannot answer about his/her group members, the person who the question is referring to should be asked directly. By doing this, you are giving further opportunity for both the teacher and the students to get to know others in the class better.

**Example 2 What do you already know?**

> **Teacher**: *In the next ten minutes, I would like you to introduce yourself to your group and then explain what experience you have had so far with the topics that will be covered in this (course/chapter/section). Someone should take notes so that your group can report to the rest of the class. Thus, the leader should assign someone as the note taker.*

**Teacher:** *Okay! Time is up. I will now ask each of the note takers to give me a summary of what their group talked about and we can discuss these ideas further.*

Below are a few links to websites that offer other ideas for icebreaker activities for college students. A simple search of "icebreakers for college students" on Google will provide you with numerous other possibilities.

- Icebreakers for College Students (Icebreaker Ideas) https://goo.gl/4SYLbt
- 12 Icebreakers for the College Classroom (The Ohio State University) https://goo.gl/kU3SK6
- Pinterest: Results for a search on "大学 アイスブレーカー" (Pinterest) https://goo.gl/TktMdp

While icebreakers are one of the first ways to start building a community amongst the students in the class, it is equally as important to break the ice between the teacher and the students. Often times, the gap between the teacher and the students because of preconceptions the students may have about the status of the teacher or the unfamiliarity with the teacher can be off putting. I have tried to alleviate this issue by devoting time at the end of an icebreaking activity for students to ask questions of me, their instructor. I often pose the following question to the students.

**Teacher:** *Now that you know a bit about each other. I am going to give you a chance to learn about me. Brainstorm with your group members for two minutes to come up with a few things you would like to know about me. At the end of the two minutes, I will ask the leader from each group to ask me a question?*

Many of the students will ask quite personal questions and you can reserve the right to reject any question if it is too personal. I generally try to turn their curiosity about me into a

light-hearted game. If they ask me something personal, like my age, I might counter with a question like, "*Well, how old do you think I am?*" before actually answering.

**2) Learning students' names -** Another key to building a connection between the teacher and the students is for the teacher to learn the names of the students in the class and to promote other students to learn the names of their peers. Students feel valued when the teacher cares enough to try to learn their names. If you have numerous classes or teach large introductory classes, your immediate reaction might be that it is impossible to learn everyone's name and that might be true. However, there are ways in which you can help remind yourself. A few of the ways I have done this over the years are listed below.

**a. Have the students make name cards:** This is my preferred method of being able to call my students by name because I don't actually have to remember all of the students' names and it also helps the other students to know others' names. Because group discussion is a central component of my class and I have students form groups with different members three times, tent cards not only help me to call students by name but they also eliminate the need for introductions when new groups form. When I did not use name cards, students tended to not introduce themselves, thus, making the community building of group work less effective. They

would often just say "How about you?" or nod toward the person they were talking to rather than use names. To make name cards, simply distribute index cards to everyone in the class and ask them to fold them in half lengthwise to form a tent. On each side of the card, they can write their names in whatever form you desire, just make sure to indicate how they should write their names and any other information. When I have them create name cards, I draw a rectangle on the blackboard representing the card, show where the students should fold the card with a dashed line, write my name on the card in the appropriate place to show the name order that I want them to use, and have them put their student numbers on the back of the cards. I also have them write the topic number choices they are interested in talking about in class near their student numbers when voting on topics. I do the last two things in this list so that I can use their name cards as a class registration system and also gather necessary information. At the end of the first class, I collect the students' name cards so that I can then create a class roster. The cards are then returned to the students the following week and they keep them in their folders from then on.

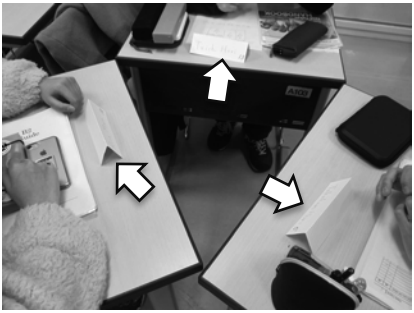


Figure 22: Name Cards

**b. Give student name tags:** This is very similar to (**a**) but instead of creating tent cards for their desks, the teacher can

print out name cards that fit into tags that pin onto clothes or have straps on them that fit over their necks. For large classes, learning all of your students' names is not an option. However, you can still call them by name if they have some type of identification card on them or near them.

**c. Student ID card copies:** Explain to the students that you would like them to make a copy of their student ID cards and submit them in the next class so that it can help you remember their names. Point out that this picture is for the teachers use only and that the students can cross out any information they do not want the teacher to know. The only information the teacher actually needs are the students' names and pictures. Once the teacher has received these copies, they can be organized in a folder for easy reference.

**d. Seating chart:** I have found it helpful in the past for students to sit in the same seat at the beginning of class for easy distribution of homework and learning student names. By having students fill out a grid representing the seats in the classroom with their names, I can easily associate names with faces and distribute homework before moving into groupings. Of course, once students move into groupings, the seating chart is no longer of help. Thus, I also usually require students to report on information that their partners have given by first stating their partner's or group members' names initially before giving their responses.

**3) Engage students informally before and after classes -** By going to the class 5-10 minutes before class starts and walking around in the class interacting with students, the teacher can help build a

sense of camaraderie and familiarity with the students. The students will invariably have something about them or be doing something the teacher can comment on. For example, students may have injuries, be working on other class assignments, or eating lunch, which are all subjects that the teacher can ask them about. Some common questions that I have used to strike up a conversation with students are listed below. However, the list of possibilities is endless.

- *What happened to you?* (Pointing out an injury)
- *You look really tired. Why?*
- *What is that book you are reading?*
- *That looks like an assignment for class. What is it about?*
- *What game are you playing on your smartphone?*
- *Are you doing anything for the school festival?*
- *Is that your breakfast? What is it?*
- *What does it say on your shirt? What does that mean?*

**4) Be responsive to students:** Whatever the interaction with the students may be, the teacher needs to do things in a timely manner to show that they value students' time and their concerns.

> **a. Homework:** The goal should always be to give feedback as quickly as possible so that students' misconceptions regarding the subject matter do not have time to take root in their minds. One of the main benefits of Active Learning is that students are receiving immediate feedback. Thus, they leave the classroom with a clearer, more accurate understanding of what was covered in the class.

Of course, even in a classroom where Active Learning is being implemented to a high degree, students will have assignments to complete outside of class to check on their understanding and progress. With any assignment submitted to the teacher, the teacher should try to get the assignments graded and returned by the next class period if possible. When teaching large classes, the use of teaching assistants becomes a necessity.

Talking with students over the years, I have been surprised to learn that it is not uncommon for students not to receive any feedback at all, not even a grade or the return of their work, when they submit reports for class. This makes me wonder what the point of doing the assignment actually was since gathering information for the report was the only possible learning that could have taken place in such a situation. If learning and helping students to achieve their academic goals is our main objective as teachers, providing feedback is not an option. It is our responsibility.

**b. Personal communication:** With personal communication via e-mail or any kind of messaging system, respond or post messages as quickly as possible to acknowledge their messages/requests and to show attentiveness to the students. It is also important to follow up on anything that you say you will do in any type of personal communication. For example, if you tell a student that you can't give a complete answer to a question without checking some source material, you need to find the information and give the student a response as quickly as possible.

**5) Provide positive reinforcement -** As explained earlier, how we interact with students is important and can have a big impact on their self-confidence and motivation in the course. By being approachable and having a positive attitude towards the students, they are going to be more likely to try in the future.

Adapted from McGlynn, A. P. (2001). *Successful Beginnings for college teaching: Engaging your students from the first day.* Madison: Atwood Publishing.

**6) Give students a voice in their learning -** In the typical classroom, most, if not all, of the decisions about what will take place in the classroom are made by the instructor. By giving students more of a voice in their own learning, they will feel more invested in the class. There are a few ways that I have used or have heard of other teachers using to hand over some of their power to the students.

**a. Students decide on the content of the class:** Depending on what you teach, it may be possible to allow the students to decide on the topics that will be discussed in the classes. In the discussion-based English classes that I teach, a variety of topics are prepared (usually about 20) and the students vote on which ones they would like to discuss in the class.

**b. Groups form the policies adhered to in class:** I have heard from other teachers of the great success they have had with this strategy. On the first day of class, students are put into groups to brainstorm rules that will be followed in the class. The teacher may guide these discussions by giving them topics to focus on, such as attendance, participation, the use

of technology, absence during tests and deductions for late assignments. After brainstorming in groups, the teacher calls on groups for their ideas regarding the topic areas and writes them on the blackboard, a whole class discussion can follow to negotiate a final agreement from everyone regarding the rules.

Teachers have reported that students tend to be much harsher on themselves than the teacher actually would have been. In addition, the rules are much easier to enforce since the students feel there is less room for argument since they created the rules themselves.

**c. Providing a choice of assessments:** The teacher can provide students with a choice in the way they are assessed. For example, students may be able to write an essay on a given topic or take a test over the material presented in class. Some students have test anxiety or feel they are not good at examinations for other reasons and providing choices regarding assignments would give especially these students a sense of the teacher trying to give equal treatment to all of the students in the class.