



# **Deploying student diversity as a microcosm of the world:**

Teaching work and employment issues in an internationalised classroom

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## **Introduction/overview**

- Aim: to outline and evaluate the contribution of two mechanisms to internationalising the curriculum and classroom
  - 1. Team-based learning (TBL)
  - 2. Critical reflective journal assignment
- Internationalised classrooms vs internationalisation of curriculum

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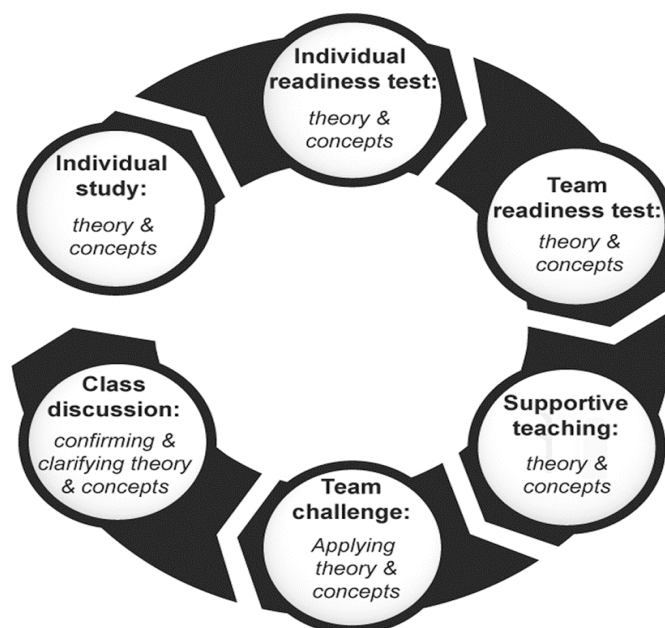


**Q When faced with internationalisation issues in the classroom, most educators presently take an approach characterised as:**

- ☞ A positive perspective
- ☞ A perspective focussed on 'what students do'
- ☞ An intercultural perspective
- ☞ A 'deficit' perspective

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## Team-based learning (Michaelson-style: Michaelson et al 2004 )



Source: <http://teaching.econ.usyd.edu.au/tbl/>

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## Critical reflective journal assignment (& methods)

- Cross-culturally matched student pairs
- Ongoing journal relating to the themes of the course plus experiential knowledge
- “Surface” underlying values, beliefs and assumptions

**Methods:** 4 UOS (3 different subjects), customised student questionnaire survey, focus groups (10 students each in 2 UOS), USE qualitative data.

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## 9 research questions re students' perceptions of TBL & journal assignment

### TBL

Do students perceive that TBL:

- 👉 helps them take responsibility for their learning?
- 👉 assists them to develop critical thinking skills?
- 👉 helps them to collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds?
- 👉 helps them enhance their communication skills?


### Critical reflective journal assignment

Do students perceive that the journal assignment:

- 👉 assists them to develop critical thinking skills?
- 👉 helps them to collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds?
- 👉 helps them enhance their communication skills?
- 👉 facilitates blending of relevant lived (personal) knowledge and formally-learned knowledge?
- 👉 Do students perceive that being partnered with another culturally contrasting student for the journal assignment assists their learning?

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## Participating units



Year	Semester	Level *	Students Enrolled	Unit Code	Unit Name
2007	2	PG	67	WORK1	Human Resource Strategies
2008	1	PG	140	WORK2	International Dimensions of Human Resource Management
2009	1	UG	38	WORK3	Work and Globalisation
2009	2	PG	142	WORK4	International Dimensions of Human Resource Management

	WORK1	WORK2	WORK3	WORK4
Female	69%	74%	59%	70%
Male	31%	26%	41%	30%
Local	47%	18%	74%	26%
International	53%	82%	26%	74%

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## TBL: The fundamentals

### **TBL was perceived by students to help:**

- Take responsibility for learning: 63-90% s/agree
- Engage with learning materials: 72-84% s/agree
- Encourage critical thinking: 68-79% s/agree  
(WORK3 = 56%)

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# TBL and cross-cultural collaboration (1)

## Team-based learning encouraged me to collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds

	WORK1	WORK2	WORK3	WORK4
S/Agree	85%	86%	81%	82%
Neutral	11%	13%	13%	13%
S/Disagree	4%	1%	6%	4%

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# TBL & cross-cultural collaboration (2)

- “[B]ecause there are a lot of people from different countries and when you listen to them and how things have evolved and are evolving in different areas it does add a lot of value to it...I think the more you do peer-to-peer it sort of engages people with each other...Peer-to-peer feedback was very valuable in this course” (Focus group participant, PG)
- “[M]aybe 80% of the knowledge (from this course) I already know... What I’m gaining is the ability to sit down with some people I do not know, understand their perspectives, appreciate what they have to contribute, give them the opportunity to speak up and...become team members, understand how different cultures interact, *because for the first time I was linking with some people who were from some countries I’ve never interacted with.*” (Focus grp PG)

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## TBL and communication/negotiation skills

- TBL was perceived by students to enhance **communication** skills: 67-79% s/agree (WORK 3 = 56%)  
"It was a challenge to deal as a group with different cultural backgrounds coming across with people who might not be too comfortable in presenting their ideas, who might be shy...[or] think that it's not a good idea to speak their mind. What we did in our group was actually encouraged them to speak and give them more leadership or opinion leading opportunities. We had the chance to evaluate our team during the course of the semester also in terms of highlighting what strengths and weaknesses everybody brought to the team." (Foc grp, PG)
- "[D]ouble-testing helped me practice **negotiating** skills, by trying to convince others that my answers were correct. But also useful as I have had to practice listening to others and why they chose a particular answer" (USE feedback, PG)

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## Critical reflective journal assignment (1 UOS)

### **Journal assignment was perceived by students to help:**

- Active engagement with learning materials: 60% s/agree
- Encourage critical thinking: 60% s/agree
- Collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds: 70% s/agree
- Enhance communication skills: 63% s/agree

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# Conclusion

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- Study shows TBL and the reflective journal assignment are perceived as contributing significantly to unlocking the resource represented by a diverse, multi-cultural student body.
- This teaching approach allows classroom student diversity to be deployed as a microcosm of the world in which students will eventually work.
- Corroborates University of Michigan research: aspects having greatest success in facilitating internationalisation of T&L were the use of reflective journals and working as part of a culturally diverse team (Miller and Ferenandez, 2007)