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### **1. What do you teach? And who do you teach?**

I am based at the Department of Language and Communication and I teach different courses for English Studies, Cand Negot (Business and Humanities) and International Business Communication. I am currently teaching a subject called 'Professionalising English', a graduate course for English Studies, which emphasizes the study of English as a discipline of particular skills, such as reading comprehension and writing rather than a degree in knowledge of literature, history and language structure. The course presents English as a discipline in literate expertise, gaining specific skills in literacy and showing that it's not only little kids in school who need to enhance reading comprehension but also thinking about experts like physicists who could have poor reading strategies and comprehension skills that hinder their own work. For English studies, I also teach 'philosophy of science', I just have the language part, the linguistics, whilst colleagues teach the literary and history part. In the spring, I teach Strategic Writing and Communication' for International Business Communication, also at graduate level and sometimes other subjects. I also teach Intercultural Communication for Negot studies.

### **2. What are your class sizes?**

Intercultural communication at Bachelors level usually has about 80 students.

### **7. How do you support the students with course assessment? Do you use: formative assessment, rubrics, aligned model, feedback, peer assessment or review, self-review or assessment**

I was advised to send the course outline for the Intercultural communication course into the EU and it was accepted as a benchmark for best practice but the problem is it does not always work in reality. There were a lot of activities but the formal assessment here at SDU is a written exam so the notion of alignment I think is problematic. So I have had to change the course plan. For the past years I've had an emphasis on 'writing to learn' as a pedagogical strategy and there are two parts to it. At the beginning of the semester, around week 3, they have the opportunity to turn in a 'writing to learn' exercise about one and a half to two pages where they get written feedback a week later from me. I give them questions to further their own thinking on the subject matter and also because they are learners of English, I circle language mistakes but I don't tell them what type of mistake it is.

Later in the semester they can do a second voluntary 'writing to learn' exercise and it's like a practice exam and here they don't turn in anything to me. They show up with their paper, maybe two to three or four pages, and I read it aloud to them and then we discuss things like 'what do you mean here?' 'What are you trying to say here?' I think this dialogue is a very good way to help them think about how they convey their ideas. About 30 students opt for this. Each student gets about 20-30 minutes. It takes a lot of time but the benefits are really good. I know this makes a difference because I see the pass rate is higher than it used to be. The students' feedback on the dialogic sessions has convinced me that it's worth spending the time doing this. A student said it helped her with the writing process because she was writing for a reader now. I would ask questions like, 'you are saying this but I thought you might be saying that, why do you say that?' The students who are in the middle group have really benefited the most because they have gone from middle grades to higher grades by this dialogue. Yet it's interesting to see that not all of them dare to do it, some of them think of it as crossing some boundaries, to read aloud because they maybe feel vulnerable or silly. So I think that's why one or two of them said 'can't you just read my stuff and give me

your feedback?’ When it comes to advising students on their Bachelor projects or Masters Thesis, I insist if they want me as an adviser this is what we are going to do. Sometimes I get students who have full time jobs and then I relax my own rules because a lot of advising is done over email. This dialogical process helps the weaker students too. The structure I think helps them.

This year in Intercultural Communication it will be interesting because I have changed it again, in past years I’ve had really hard times getting students to make presentations. One of the course requirements is that we look at a region of a culture/language like France, China but also Afro-American culture within the USA and in the past I’ve asked them to come up with their own region. But regarding doing the presentation, what happened is that not all groups or group members would show up to do the presentation. This year they don’t have to do the presentations as part of fulfilling the obligatory assignment. Instead they all have to do an individual project report where they have to report on the group work they did in the student groups. So the obligatory part is not on the content of the presentation but on working in diverse groups. Learning to deal with diversity in work groups is a part of intercultural communication. So I intentionally assign the groups in order to mix them up so each group had at least one international students. So now they have to reflect on working with differences. The reflective report on diverse group is mandatory. So in order to have data, they have to do the project and the presentation. Since beginning this form of activity, all the students are making presentations and the presentations have improved a great deal. The experiential reports went very well. And conceptualizing their own activities prepared them well for the final written exam. Out of 70 exams, only two students failed. One student had turned in a blank and the other student had been studying abroad. In the past, about 10 percent would fail.

There are 4 elements in the experiential reports: a description of what went on, a description of their expectations about the group work and then a third section using concepts from the course to reflect on and interpret what was going on and then how they did their best to learn from the experience. Dignity has been the theme of the course and so they were expected to act for other people’s dignity. Acting with dignity towards themselves would also help them develop and express themselves. Enacting dignity involves not being overly concerned about how one is viewed by social groups. Dignity tends to be free of social norms.

The students have made Facebook groups for the course. For the first time I’ve involved students from abroad and they also have to contribute to the student presentations via collecting data. For example, if the presentation is on Russia and there’s a student in France they need to collect data on how French people see Russians.

In the course Strategic Writing and Communication for the International Business Communication studies, I also offer individual feedback. They can turn in weekly assignments but in class of 30 I only have 5 or 6 that do it. So in class whilst they are working on assignment I call them up for individual feedback. They submit a product portfolio and a reflection on their writing and why they made the changes they have made and which papers worked the best and why. I think it’s very important for the students to develop categories for their meta-reflection. It helps their learning and these categories are a part of their professionalism as communication practitioners.

In an English course in the past I made it a requirement that students have a writing partner and they all expressed the benefits of having a writing partner, sharing their work with somebody. But in another course where I do not make peer review requirement, students did not do it. It seems that they have to be forced sometimes. Yet it may also depend on the culture of the class or they feel uncertain and anxious about how they are viewed by other students.

When using student presentations in the classroom, I assign tasks for the student audiences. They have to listen for information about specific knowledge from the course material, for example culture, and another

group will have to listen for information on communication. And I tell them it's not about making a value judgment, just tell us what you heard and then we will get the ideas out in the air. And then we do the same type of questioning towards the ideas in the air as I do on their written work in order to further our thinking on the material.

**5. What is your rationale for using active learning approaches?**

I've used concept mapping by giving them the keywords from a reading they were given. And then they had to draw connections between them. It took a long time and I've learnt from that not to give them too many key words. And it was interesting because when I was observing them creating the concept maps I found out three interesting things about the students: one was worried about not knowing enough and I told her for you to move forward you don't have to know everything to know something, another was very philosophical or abstract and I told him he needed to find something concrete to anchor his thoughts and another was just the opposite. He was very impressionistic and he needed to have a framework for his ideas. So in that sense the activity helped me learn a little more about my students.

**6. And your rationale for using e-learning tools?**

In the course Intercultural Communication, the students have to use the Journal Tool to keep reflective diaries. I tell them they are not assessed and I don't read them. I just check to see they are doing them. And I use the Journal Tool because non-one else can see them and I feel this is important because their inhibitions in the classroom may have a lot to do with not losing face.