

Workshop for Teaching Staff: Notes

Workshop Objective: to help tutors and other teaching staff to anticipate and address problems encountered by overseas students on UK PG courses.

Aims:

- To predict and identify potential problems of overseas PG students
- To identify and discuss differences in educational practice of a specific nationality group
- To generalise from these to other nationality groups
- To identify areas in which practice can be adapted or students assisted
- To discuss strategies and systems for addressing the problems

Resources:

- Video clip (Educational Practices in Greece, India or China)
- Guide sheet for viewing (Worksheet 1,2, or 3)
- Action worksheet (Worksheet 4)

Duration: 1- 1.5 hours

Procedure:

1. Set out session objectives and aims.

2. Predictive pre-viewing activity.

a. Participants in small groups or pairs to make list of areas in which PG students from overseas might experience problems due to different educational and/or cultural background. The aim is to get them thinking about and remembering students they have dealt with in the past, and exchanging ideas with group members.

b. Workshop leader elicits contributions to build up a list on whiteboard/OHP slide. Expect to come up with something like the following points:

- Expectation of role of tutors/lecturers
- Type of assignments/skills required
- Conventions of written work
- Range/type of resources used
- Form and culture of assessment
- Form of study/level of interaction and commitment
- Support systems – academic and personal
- Linguistic competence

3. Viewing of video clip.

Participants are going to watch a video presentation highlighting significant features of undergraduate study in Greece, India or China. Depending on numbers/venue this can be done as whole group or in small groups using separate monitors. Worksheets 1,

2, or 3 (depending on which clip is used) can be used to guide viewing and aid memory for later discussion.

An alternative is to use all 3 video clips so that different groups are viewing different clips. This option would require more time as discussion and feedback will be more complicated, but the basic procedure and development of the workshop will remain the same. **Tip:** if you follow this option, copy the separate viewing guides (worksheets 1, 2 and 3) on different coloured paper to minimise confusion. Then you can tell at a glance which groups are working on which clip.

4. Initial feedback from viewing, anything surprising?

Link the findings from this activity with the list made in step 2 above. What are the potential problems arising from the differences in undergraduate experience? e.g. Indian students may expect more personal support and interaction from tutors leading to feelings of rejection and dissatisfaction on the part of the student and undue pressure for the tutor.

5. What action can we take to address these issues?

Participants in groups discuss possible strategies using Worksheet 4. In the 1st column (headed '**Potential problem**') the group should specify particular problems and add to those suggested under the general heading. In the 2nd column (headed '**Suggested strategy**') the group should note **what action** could be taken to address the problem e.g. Clear explanation of system of 'office hours'. In the 3rd column (headed '**Monitor**') the group should consider **who** would be responsible for implementing or monitoring the strategy e.g. course secretary, course tutor, student representative, librarian etc.

Another option, if time is limited, is to assign one problem area to each group, or groups could produce an OHP slide with suggestions to present to the whole session.

6. Keeping up with ongoing changes.

As the video clips make clear, the HE systems in the countries featured continue to evolve. Participants should be encouraged to consider ways of monitoring these changes e.g. student representatives, sustainable contacts in foreign institutions etc. This could be a discussion activity in groups where each group has a clear goal to come up with at least one suggestion. These can be collated by the workshop leader onto an OHP slide to be reproduced and circulated as a handout later.