Empowering International Students: Facilitating Inclusive Student Experiences through Co-participation

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Introduction

Overview:
International students often face challenges in assessment literacy, including:

- Language Barriers[1,2]
- Unfamiliarity with Academic Expectations[2]
- Limited Exposure to Assessment Practices[1]

Solution:
A co-participation model[3] is proposed to address these challenges, encouraging collaboration between students to foster inclusivity, enhance digital literacy, and improve communication skills.

Methodology

Study Participants:
13 postgraduate students, with 12 being international from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Assessment Task Design:

- Peer-led microlearning group project based on the application of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Transport Infrastructure Projects.
- Two integrated components:
  - ✓ Blogpost using Microsoft Sway for a non-technical audience.
  - ✓ 30-minute Group Presentation for a technical audience

Facilitating inclusive student experience:

Group Creation

Action: Students self-form groups

Purpose: Promote collaboration and ownership.

Co-created Work Schedule

Action: Groups plan tasks and deadlines together

Purpose: Fostering accountability and organization skills.

Co-learner/Co-teacher Roles

Action: Students alternate between co-teaching and co-learning during project time

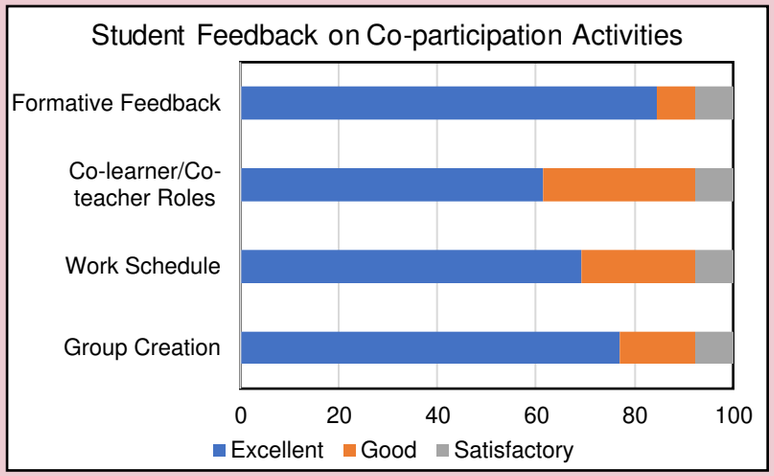
Purpose: Fostering peer-to-peer learning, building confidence, and enhancing communication skills.

Formative Feedback

Action: Groups receive formative feedback in week 6 and access to past student success examples.

Purpose: Guidance to refine their work and gain a clearer understanding of expectations.

Results & Discussion



- ✓ Student confidence improved from 60% to 85%, showing the model's effectiveness in enhancing communication skills.
- ✓ Formative feedback significantly improved student performance, increasing their average scores from 56% to 79%, while helping them refine their work and better understand expectations.

"Being able to collaborate with peers and see their approach to the tasks made me more confident in expressing my own ideas. The feedback was crucial in guiding me towards better outcomes."

"Seeing examples of past students' projects really helped me set clear expectations and reduced the anxiety of working in a group for the first time."

- ✓ Co-created schedules helped students balance workloads, improving time management and productivity.

"The weekly work schedule really helped me manage my time better. Having a clear plan for tasks made it easier to balance this project with my other commitments."

- ✓ Switching between co-learner and co-teacher roles improved students' understanding and communication skills for different audiences.

"Teaching my peers not only reinforced my own understanding but also helped me improve how I explain complex topics to different audiences"

Implications for Future Practice

- ➢ Initial Discomfort with Self-directed Group Creation
  Strategy: Organize an ice-breaker event to help students familiarize themselves with peers.
- ➢ Unfamiliarity with Academic Expectations
  Strategy: Provide examples of successful past projects to clarify expectations.
- ➢ Hesitation in Taking Co-teacher Roles
  Strategy: Create opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and provide scaffolding through formative feedback to build confidence.
- ➢ Unfamiliarity with digital tools
  Strategy: Offer asynchronous learning resources and one- on-one support for digital tools (if necessary).

References

[1]Fenton-Smith, B., 2012. Facilitating self-directed learning amongst international students of health sciences: The dual discourse of self-efficacy. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 6(1), A64-A76.
[2]Stewart, R. A., 2007. Investigating the link between self directed learning readiness and project-based learning outcomes: the case of international Masters students in an engineering management course. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 32(4), 453-465.
[3]Tobin, K., Mcrobbie, C., 1999. Co-participation In Science Classrooms. *Examining Pedagogical Content Knowledge: The Construct and Its Implications for Science Education*, *6*, p.215.