

**Good Practices in Teaching and Learning
Identified from Common Core Course Cycle Reviews 2019-20**

The Committee on Undergraduate Core Education (CUCE) noted from the Common Core Course Cycle Review exercises the following good practices in teaching and learning from courses in different areas. Through sharing these with the Schools/Departments/Units and placed on the Common Core Program website, common core instructors may consider these where appropriate for enhancing the teaching and learning effectiveness in their courses. The letters in brackets indicate the common core area of the course from which the practice is identified.

Class Preparation

Prepare course materials

- Prepare a short newspaper article on the topic to be discussed at each lecture and ask students to comment on how the viewpoints highlighted could be analyzed from the perspective of the subject matter. This enables students to apply their learning to real and up-to-date issues in the society. (SA)
- Discuss current market news and trends at each chapter to help students connect the real world applications with theories that they have learnt in class, and to encourage students to follow the latest development in the financial market. (SA)
- Use films as a teaching material makes a literature course more interesting and engaging. The course instructor used films instead of readings to deliver course concepts by the end of the semester in order to reduce students' workload and allow more time for them to prepare for their final projects. These were welcomed by students. (H)
- Show a variety of independent documentary films from different regions, such as Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and elsewhere to allow students gain an international perspective on modern Chinese culture and identities; and to conduct comparative analyses. This also makes the course more appealing to students from different regions with different cultures, thus making the course more internationalized and diversified. (H)
- Use documentaries screening to help students, especially those who have never been to any of the Southeast Asian countries, get certain sense about local cultures in these countries. (H)
- Show excellent videos to enliven imagination. (SA)
- Use a lot of daily life examples with clear explanations to illustrate difficult philosophical concepts. (C-Comm, H)
- Video-tape lectures and make them available to students so that they could watch the videos after class for revision and make further clarification on the concepts they are not clear of. (QR)
- Supplement workshop and class materials with such additional resources as online materials and publication / resources provided by the DSTO to maximize the educational goals. (HLTH)

Class Management

(a) Manage class timetabling and activities

- Offer the course in Winter terms for students who failed and retook the course – this was proved to be effective. The intense teaching schedule with small class size enabled instructor to closely engage with students and clarify the concepts with them. Quizzes in every lesson encouraged students to make regular revisions of the topics and helped them understand their own learning progress. (QR)

- Carefully decide timetable of the classes in terms of duration, frequency and physical intensity with reference to the health and fitness requirements. Adequate time for changing of sports attire was allowed and essential equipment was provided such that students found no difficulty in joining the events despite their busy academic schedule. This arrangement was welcomed and affirmed by students as revealed by the end-of-course evaluations. (HLTH)
- Offer a wide variety of sports skill classes by recruiting in-house professional instructors and outside professional associations. With the support of appropriate facilities, students could select and experience various sports, even new sports, at the classes. This arrangement was treasured by students, and in turn, affirmed the effort made by the DSTO to organize the classes based on their responses from the end-of-course evaluations. (HLTH)

(b) Manage classroom setting

- Enhance student participation and engagement by blocking off last ten rows in the class to direct students to come closer to the front. (SA)

(c) Develop and maintain a friendly relationship with students

- Memorize the students' names to significantly reduce the distance between the instructor and students. The instructor could remember around 80% of the students' names at the end of the semester which was deeply impressed by students. (S&T)

Course Delivery

(a) Design teaching pedagogy

- Adopt flipped class activities which makes the course more interesting and interactive. The use of WeBWorK for on-line exercises and the availability of Math Support Center for informal tutorial support help enhance students' learning effectiveness. (QR)
- Adopt a teaching model with repetitive rounds of 15-minute talk, exercise, and explanation instead of the traditional lecture format. (SA)
- Combine teaching of theories with illustration of experiments in classes. Students were in particular impressed by the demonstrations / experiments at the end of each lecture to prove the concepts that they had just learnt. This helps to close the loops between the class materials and the reality; and to stimulate students' motivation and interest in the study of physics. (S&T)
- Deliver the course in hybrid mode (in-class lecture plus live Zoom meeting) and produce a series of short videos so that the instructor can spare more time on Q&A during the live Zoom meetings. (SA)

(b) Involve students in the learning process and promote interactive teaching and learning

- Design all workshops / classes with lots of self-assessment and group discussions / activities to encourage student engagement and to promote an enjoyable and active learning atmosphere. These were well received by students. (HLTH)
- Arrange group-based activities (with members being constantly rotated) to allow students to discuss their thoughts and questions in depth before presenting them to the class. This is less threatening for some students who are less confident in speaking in public. It also allows students to get to one another very quickly after just a few weeks for the development of a sense of community for the class. (H)
- Adopt a Socratic style in teaching which includes lots of questions and answers between the course instructor and students to allow students to express their own views, perspectives in a deep and intimate level as well as to allow classmates to directly raise follow-up questions, respond or challenge further. (H)

- Create an atmosphere which encourages students to answer questions. In Asia, students are very shy. The instructor had bought a bear (doll) to address this issue. During the class, the instructor blindly threw the bear to a student, whoever got it can choose another student to answer the question. This created a happy and positive atmosphere for students to pay attention in the class and to answer questions. This was welcomed by students as reflected in the SFQ. (S&T)
- Assign a significant portion of the class in asking and answering students' questions to achieve a highly interactive teaching. From time to time, students were asked in the class whether what has been discussed makes sense. It was far too easy for students to think that they understand the content. However, if the instructor stops and challenges the students with a simple question, it could easily find that most of them do not really understand that well. It was a good trick to pause the class a bit. First, this pause helped to gain back students' attention. Second, it helped to make sure if students indeed understand the course materials. It was found that most students like this, which was also reflected in the SFQ. (S&T)
- Require students to take turn in presenting designated readings, followed by open discussion, in each class to engage students more actively in the process of learning and to contemplate how the major philosophical concepts they had learned are relevant to them. This also enables students to deepen their understanding and learn from each other. (H)
- Arrange tutorial or in-class discussion to allow students to interact with the course instructor as well as among students themselves. (H)
- Encourage students to participate in small group discussion to explore their own ideas and styles of self-expression. (H)
- Use brainstorming discussion to help students connect the dots in concepts covered in class. (SA)
- Arrange group discussion of students' own assignments which helps students learn from each other. (H, SA)
- Adopt peer review of classmates' on-line homework which engages students in active learning and trains their critical thinking skill while reading over other's work. (QR)
- Promote interactive teaching and learning through seminars alongside lectures to help students digest what they had learned. (SA)
- Arrange interactive learning via debates. (SA)

(c) Adopt various teaching tools to enhance effectiveness of course delivery

- Use iPRS for testing at the beginning of each session to ensure students are prepared for the class. (SA)
- Use iPRS during the lecture to test students' understanding of the concepts taught and to break down the pace a bit. (SA)
- Use an interactive software, Socrative, to engage students in class. (SA)

(d) Enable students to have first-hand experience via field study

- Arrange field trips to allow students to understand the local environment, communal culture and social practice which facilitates students' understanding of the relationship between culture and environment. (H)
- Organize a field trip to the Folk Culture Park in Shenzhen to enable students acquire first-hand information about the cultural diversity in China which greatly stimulates students' interests in and passion for learning human diversities. (H)

- Arrange off classroom session to allow students to gain on-site experiences on how to make use of different shooting equipment in different environments. (Arts)
- Encourage students to conduct oral interviews with the elderly on their own history in order to humanize and personalize “history” as a topic of study. (H)

(e) Invite guest speakers for sharing of real-world and professional experience

- Invite leading Chinese poets to lectures and writing workshops to provide valuable advices to students on their poems as part of the assessments. These poems were subsequently compiled as a poetry anthology. Students welcomed this arrangement in enhancing their abilities in aesthetic appreciation and poem writing. (H)
- Invite exhibiting artists of an ink painting exhibition at the University library to give guided tours, talks and demonstrations to students. This was a good learning experience for students to interact with the artists. (Arts, H)
- Invite guest speakers to share their real-world experience or specific professional experience. (SA, S&T, HLTH)

(f) Provide additional support to students

- Offer additional help to students with extra tutorials to address the issue of diverse student background. (SA)

(g) Use student feedback to adjust teaching plan

- Conduct mid-term survey to obtain students’ feedback on the course and adjust course content and teaching pace accordingly. (SA)

Assessment

(a) Adopt different assessment methods to comprehensively evaluate students’ performance

- Ask students to write a comparative paper which is useful for students to articulate the grounds for comparison and use scholarly vocabulary and resources to formulate and support their own theses and arguments about Chinese films, cultures and identities. (H)
- Ask students to write a creative gothic story for a gothic imagination course to enhance their creative thinking skill. (H)
- Request students to engage in a creative group project in constructing ways to integrate poetry and poetics into their everyday life. (H)
- Assign a short writing assignment, in lieu of a mid-term, in midst of an academic term to help students pick up the vocabulary and perspectives relating to the course. This was proved to be helpful and effective. (SA)
- Ask students to produce short videos to illustrate themes the instructor covered in class in the group assignments with a reward of the videos being used by the instructor in class. (SA)
- Assign photo-essay which gives students the opportunity to capture some human behaviors and to further rethink the meanings of those behaviors. (H, SA)

(b) Provide feedback to students

- Provide detailed written feedback on examinations and papers to students. (H)

(c) Allow flexibility in assessment

- Adopt a flexible approach in the mid-term examination arrangement by allowing students to choose their preferred timeslot within the examination week. (S&T)
- Offer retake of mid-term examination to allow students to learn from mistakes and make improvement on grade. (S&T)

Management of Teaching Team

Organize sharing sessions among instructors

- Conduct sharing and reflection on each type of workshops / classes by instructors in addition to the end-of-activity evaluations. There are also regular teaching demonstrations and curriculum review meetings among instructors to improve the activities as well as delivery of the workshops based on feedback from students. (HLTH)