# A transcultural dance: enriching work-based learning facilitation

*Dr Tony Wall and Dr Ly Tran*

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In this chapter you will learn:

- What it might mean to be an 'international student', and position students as bringing a vibrant array of different perspectives which can be rich learning assets.
- A pedagogic model of facilitation that moves towards mutual adaptivity in learning contexts where both you and your learners learn new ways of thinking and acting as well as different professional practices across cultures.
- Strategies to integrate diverse examples and cases, connect to and validate diverse experiences and prior knowledge and accommodate diverse needs
- Strategies to enable and sustain a learning environment for work-based learning success.

## Being 'international'

The internationalisation agenda continues to stimulate contemporary and fiery debate within higher education (see Shaw, 2014) but often outside the specific context of work-based learning courses. But internationalisation is alive and has grown in a number of ways including attracting full time and distance students from overseas, sending domestic students abroad on work placements and study, off-shore delivery through establishing overseas campuses or other trans-national partnerships and joint education programmes, staff mobility and the internationalisation of the curriculum. As a work-based learning tutor, you may well have had to facilitate learning with students from around the globe, but what does it *really* mean to be an 'international student'? To facilitate our thinking about this, let us start off with what should be an easy quiz. The students referred to below are real and are studying on a work-based learning course in the UK, facilitated at a distance.

**Exercise 1: Spot the international student**

**Question 1. Imagine that you are a tutor on a work-based course at a university in the UK. In your opinion, which of these students are likely to be international students? Tick if you think they are international.**

A  ❑  A serial entrepreneur in Brisbane, Australia
B  ❑  An educational manager in Dubai
C  ❑  A director living / working in London (born in Thailand)
D  ❑  A marketing manager living / working in London (born in China)

**Question 2. Thinking about the international students you have identified above, what do you think is the single most defining feature of an international student:**

……………………………………………………………………………………

Let us now review the answers: Student A is an international student; Student B is classed as a domestic student because he has property and permanent residence in the UK; Student C is classed as a domestic student because she has right to remain in the UK; and Student D is classed as international because she did not have permanent residency in the UK. These probably do not reflect the answers you have because they are rather precarious and counter intuitive to what we might typically understand by the term 'international'. Importantly, these real examples serve to illustrate that the term 'international' is often an administrative label universities use to help abide with the complex immigration regulations of a specific country (and of course apply different fee levels). Whether a learner has a particular immigration status or has property in a particular country are not pedagogic issues and cannot tell us about the needs of individual learners. Students C and D, for example, may well have similar academic writing needs but have been classed differently. Similarly, all of the students might be new to the concept of work-based learning and reflective practice for academic purposes so all might have similar needs regardless of nationality and place of residence.

Even though a number of research studies now demonstrate that international students can actually 'outperform' domestic students (see Green and Farazmand, 2013; Rienties, Beausaert, Gronert, Niemantsverdriet and Kommers, 2012), much research and practice in Anglophone universities has tended to approach these so-called 'international' students "as 'problems' to be solved". Ryan (2011: 637) critiques this stereotype which typifies such students as being "passive, rote learners, lacking in critical thinking and independent learning skills and prone to plagiarism". Given the homogenising effects of the 'international' label above this is an untenable claim, but is symptomatic of a **deficit model** of students. Contrary to this view, research has also found that the "*the* Asian learner" and "*the* Chinese learner" are myths (Marambe, Vermunt and Boshuizen, 2012, and Run and

Richardson, 2012, respectively), along with their supposed "propensity for rote learning" (Marambe, et al, 2012: 299). Indeed, "Sri Lankan students made the least use of memorising strategies" (ibid: p299) of a variety of groups including domestic students.

Even within the specific context of experiential learning pedagogies such as inquiry based learning (IBL), Bache and Hayton (2012: 421) found that there were "Wide ranging expectations and past experiences amongst international students, and differing levels of adaptation to, and enthusiasm for, an IBL approach". A key message here is made by Fritz, Chin and DeMarinis (2008: 244) who argue that "international students with culturally diverse needs should not be considered as one homogenous group". In other words, it is not so much that approaches to learning are culturally determined, but that there are a "variety of contextual factors that affect these students' capacity to adapt" (Run and Richardson, 2012: 313). This ability to adapt is core to a strand of research into student success in distance learning (see, for example, Baxter, 2012; Subotzky and Prinsloo, 2011; Gebhard, 2012), where academic success is largely determined by how much a student adapts to their course in terms of how to 'think, write and act' creatively – and – how much they integrate study into their daily life.

Even if, as a tutor, you feel you have minimal influence in changing university systems, you do have a central role in *orchestrating* many of the 'contextual factors' that influence this adaptivity, alongside other learning resources within the university. As you will soon see, there is an array of practical tips which span from minimal effort and involvement that can be applied immediately in your daily practice, through to ideas which might need some time and energy to implement. Importantly, however, enabling this adaptivity has been, under the deficit model, about teaching the student a 'superior way' to think or write; tutors might send the students to writing classes with English as a Second or Other Language specialists, or give the students additional support materials on the common approaches to critical reflection in specific disciplines. The pedagogic issue in taking this approach is that it can ignore a student's current localized knowledge and understandings, and marginalizes those who do not share a common grounding in a 'Western' context. In turn, this can affect student (and tutor) motivation, engagement and academic achievement, as shown in the real example below. It positions an 'international' student as someone who is in a Western university to learn about the 'superior' Western ways of doing things.

> **Example 1: Enabling personal writing styles to shine and grow?**
>
> Shui is a learner in Indian studying a work-based MA. After writing one of her first essays for her course, she sent it to her tutor for feedback. She was shocked when she received her feedback: her tutor had criticised Shui's writing for not being clear and direct enough in the introduction. The tutor wanted Shui to state her argument in the introduction and then explain how she would achieve it. Shui, however, valued a style which engaged more curiosity in the reader and arrived at the argument at the end of the piece. Shui felt her confidence was deeply affected by the feedback and felt demotivated as a result

of the comments from her tutor. Shui did adjust her writing style but did not value it as much as the creative style she had developed over many years of writing.

An alternative model of facilitation is based on valuing the diversity of perspectives that are brought to a learning experience; the **diverse asset** model. Here, adaptivity might be interpreted as a mutual or collaborative enterprise where both tutor and students find and develop new ways of thinking or writing which emerge from the interaction – it becomes a genuine educational experience for both (see Ryan, 2011). Enabling opportunities for students to share their current localized knowledge and understandings helps to position them as active co-constructors of knowledge and boost their agency and therefore motivation to engage. The resources within both models may well be very similar, but the purpose and even attitude of engagement is different; the first is for the purposes of *replication* (the deficit model), whereas the latter is for the purposes of *co-development* (the asset model). This pedagogy challenges much conventional practice in teaching international students, but shifts the grounds on which both tutor and student can engage educationally – towards 'Fellow Travellers' on a mutual journey of discovery (Trahar, 2010).

*Example 2: Recognising diversity in personalised academic practices*

Juan was an experienced work-based learning tutor, but was shocked when he found that a draft from one of his Middle Eastern learners, Noureen, was mostly copied from internet sources and books. Rather than reprimanding Noureen about plagiarism, he wanted to find out how she had developed the draft. He was surprised to find that Noureen had developed her own way of developing her assignments through the medium of English: she would first scan key literatures and copy large chunks of text and place them in an order that made sense to her. She would then integrate and synthesise the material into her own words, and it would be through this process she would learn how concepts compared and contrasted. After various iterations of amending the piece, she would then submit a piece which was her own work.

Within a positive frame, Juan provided his feedback along with a very gentle reminder about the requirement for the work to be in her own words, and to his surprise, found that she did actually produce an acceptable final version. Juan realised that the formative feedback had interrupted her well established writing processes, and that there may be different approaches to writing especially when the learner's first language is not English. As a result of this insight, Juan is making his formative assessment strategy more flexible to respond to the needs of all of his learners, and allowing each student to decide what they want to share with him at formative stage.

The box below summarises the two models, and the rest of this chapter focuses on practical strategies within the asset model.

**Tip: Two models of understanding learners:**

- **A homogenous deficit model** – where 'international students' are a supposed homogenous group who are 'problems to be fixed'.

- **A transcultural asset model** – where there are a diverse group of learners, each bringing learning assets (e.g. cultural experiences and perspectives) to the learning experience (see Ryan, 2011).

**Exercise 2: Reflecting on your practice**

Think of a time you found a learner doing something different to what you expected or instructed. Perhaps something slightly or even majorly unorthodox. What was your reaction?
How might this have influenced how the learner felt or engaged?
What might have been the outcome if you had reacted differently?
What responses might you experiment with next time if this happened again?

**A transcultural dance: a metaphor for mutual adaptivity**

A productive metaphor that can guide how we, as tutors, facilitate work-based learning emphasises this mutual learning journey; *a transcultural dance*. Facilitation as a transcultural dance positions tutor and student(s) in a way which both respond and adapt to each other in a learning environment – a *pedagogic* dance which requires sensitivity to each others' needs, preferences and experiences which cross cultural boundaries. Alike learning any new dance, it takes time, energy and effort from both the tutor and student – we might step out of sync, or accidentally step on each other – but it is the *adaptivity* to learn the intricacies which drives the learning (of both and all) forward. Adaptivity is about finding creative ways of facilitating learning which positively enable learners to use their own cultural background, knowledge and values , but which also means they are enabled to meet the requirements of the specific work-based learning course on which they are studying – just like Juan in Example 2. Practically, there are different strategies for tutors to engage in a transcultural dance, some requiring less challenge than others. Four strategies (see Tran, 2012) will be discussed next:

- **Integrating** examples and cases from different cultural settings within a learning experience
- **Connecting** to the diverse experiences of learners and *validating* them

- **Accommodating** the needs of a diverse learning group
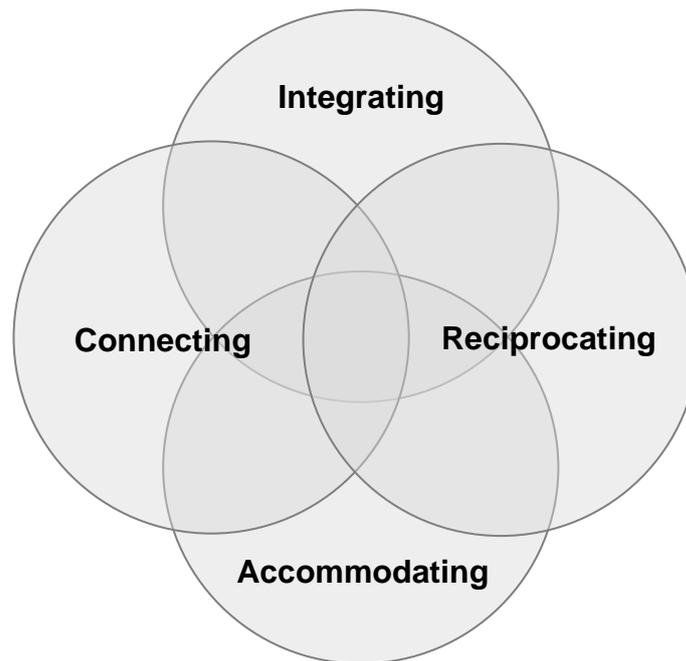- **Reciprocating** the learning of alternative cultural perspectives.



Figure 1. Four strategies of adaptivity

**Integrating**

One of the easiest and quickest strategies to encourage adaptivity is to include examples and cases from different cultural contexts. This might involve you undertaking research about professional practices in different cultural settings, but it might also involve your students doing such investigation. If this is the case, you can also link it to your research skills learning activities and reinforce the importance of research skills. Overlaying this with one of the many theoretical frameworks about organisational culture (one is provided in box 1 below) can provides insight into how a learner might plan out a work-based project; who to involve, who not to involve, which formal procedures or processes to follow, and so on. For example, this might mean getting approval for their own project (e.g. a teaching assistant getting permission to test a new approach to supporting learning in the classroom) or ensuring the outcomes are implemented after a project (e.g. a marketing assistant involving directors in a project to get buy in to a new digital marketing strategy).

**Box 1. Features of culture**
*(based on Flores, Zheng, Rau and Thomas, 2012)*

**Participative decision making** – this is about whether the team, department or organisation the student is trying to influence, allows its staff to:
- Share their views on what the problems are
- Share information and ideas about solutions
- Share the implementation of solutions

- Share the evaluation of results
  …or whether a specific individual or small group of individuals do these tasks.

**Openness** – this is about how easy it is to consult with others and share information within and outside the organisation.

**Learning orientation** – this is about whether the team, department or organisation the student is trying to influence:
- Encourages people to learn new things at work
- Encourages people to learn without fear of mistakes
- Has processes to evaluate and improve results at work

**Transformational leadership** – this is about whether the team, department or organisation the student is trying to influence has leaders who:
- Communicate a clear sense of strategic direction of where the team / department or organisation is going
- Encourage people to learn and develop new skills
- Encourage new ideas and innovative problem solving

Additional tips are summarised in the box below.

**Tips for Integrating**

1. Find out about different professional practices from multiples cultural settings. Examples include:
   - How might a manager approach improving the performance of a single team member?
   - How might a member of staff give feedback to a colleague?
   - How industry or role specific tasks are completed, e.g. how might a nurse speak to a patient? How are accounts processed?
2. Design learning activities to encourage students to investigate and analyse different practices across cultural contexts. This might include:
   - How people might prefer to learn at work
   - How people might prefer to reflect and analyse at work
3. Utilise online discussion boards and blogs to initiate and build banks of examples for your future usage (ensure you request permission from the learners).
4. When using cases and examples of work-based projects across cultures, encourage learners to reflect on the organisational culture factors when designing a work-based project (see box 1 above). Questions to ask might include:
   - Who should be involved to ensure the project is allowed to happen?
   - Who should be involved in the project to ensure it makes an impact afterwards?
   - What processes should be used to involve these people?

**Connecting**

While integrating can be generic to a group of students, connecting is about becoming aware of the specific prior experiences of individual students within the learning experience – and – *validating* that prior experience as a useful learning asset. Valuing the student and their history in this way makes them feel like a valued member of the learning community but it also enriches the learning experience with cross cultural examples and cases (as is the aim of the integrating strategy above). Here, you can design learning activities to systematically become aware of a wide range of information: practices across cultural contexts, preferred study patterns, preferred academic writing practices, and so on. Specifically, asking students to reflect on the organisational culture of their own working context can also help elucidate design features of work-based learning projects, but it is important to withhold judgement and appreciate that things may work differently in different contexts. Consistently connecting and validating in this way takes practice and more effort than integrating, but provides much more information and a stronger rapport to facilitate engagement.

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*Example 3: Revitalising students' transformative capacity*

Andrew is a teacher in Hospitality Management with a few years' experience. At the centre of his teaching is his endeavour to help international students see the intimate link between their courage to engage in cross-border education in a foreign language and their potential capacity to transform their own learning and develop life-enhancing skills. Through discussion with his international students, Andrew engages his international students in critical self-reflection and self-discovery of their strength and determination to undertake an international education, and its implications for learning in his course. Andrew uses the following strategies:

- raise student self-awareness of their own abilities to change and boost their confidence during tuition time (and outside of it where possible):
    - convey admiration for students' courage to undertake cross-border education and for their capacity to cross cultural and academic boundaries
    - show them how they have the capacity to work outside their comfort zone (i.e. by identifying when they have done so in the learning experience)
    - engage them in critical self-reflection on their 'hidden' transcultural strength and possible strategies to continue to validate and build on this in the new learning context
- increase the awareness of individual students' professional interests and career expectations during tuition time.
- make an explicit connection between the learning content and students' professional interests where relevant.

- be sensitive to students' facial expressions that may indicate their uncertainty about new concepts.
- explain information in multiple forms, including through practical demonstrations and visual aids such as pictures, drawings and involving students in drawing a picture to illustrate the learning concept.

Some additional tips to help you connect are provided in the box below.

**Tips for Connecting**

1. Design learning activities to enable learners to share their existing knowledge of academic and professional practices. For example, find ways to encourage your students to reflect on how they currently approach their academic writing. This might start from describing how they write a piece of academic work from **start to finish**. This may then form the basis of discussing what might be *the same* for your course, or might need to be *different.* Examples questions include:
   1. how did you decide what to focus on?
   2. how did you decide what to read?
   3. how many published sources did you read?
   4. what did you read which was given to you by your teachers?
   5. how did you plan your writing?
   6. how did you decide what to comment upon?
2. Find ways to validate or appreciate academic or professional practices with which you are not familiar without judgement or criticism. This can be a springboard to suggest how things might be different on your course.
3. Find ways to validate or appreciate the positive intentions and efforts of individual students.
4. Encourage learners to reflect on the features of the organisational culture (see Box 1) in which they work and use this information to design work-based projects. Withhold judgement, but encourage the learner to consider how it might be different in different settings.

**Accommodating**

Another strategy for adaptivity is where you become aware of any specific learning needs of students within your learning experience and accommodate these needs. At the start of your course, quizzes or reflective diagnostics are useful in stimulating discussion about these needs (see Examples 4 and 5 and the Tips for Accommodating boxes, below). Accommodating these needs might involve ensuring that your expectations of thinking, writing and acting are as explicit and as clear as possible, and are consistently communicated in a variety of ways during the learning

experience. For example, reflective writing and how to engage with a work-based learning tutor may be unfamiliar to *all* learners and will need modelling through examples and practice. Tran (2008) found that learners used the following strategies to find out about the requirements of their course:

- Reading the guidance posted on the course website
- Asking for advice and guidance from tutors
- Getting advice from student skills development tutors
- Getting advice from English as a Second Language tutors
- Reading 'example' essays, portfolios or presentations from their course

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***Example 4: Enabling students to be aware of their own cultural assumptions***
By Yoshimoto Oikawa, Executive HR Advisor, Yamato Holding Co. Ltd. (Japan's leading logistics company)

Kitaru is a student from Japan on a work-based learning course in global leadership. At the start of his course, his teacher asked him to complete a 'PICO' (Personal Intercultural Change Orientation) diagnostic. This helps identify assumptions related to living and working in an environment with multiple cultures. PICO required Kitaru to select between two statements such as a) Fairness requires that everyone follows the same rules – or – b) Fairness requires that we make exceptions to the rules. Using PICO, Kitaru identified a range of cultural assumptions which were different from others and enabled him to better adapt to, and appreciate, different ways of thinking and acting during study and work.

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Beyond initial diagnostic tools (Example 4), you can also involve key pedagogic tactics to help communicate key concepts to learners from diverse backgrounds. Example 5, <mark>below</mark>, shares some examples.

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***Example 5: Continuing adaptivity and accommodation of needs***

Having been involved in teaching for four years in Melbourne, Ana Rosa feels passionate about the transcultural interaction to which she is exposed in her international classes. Born in England and migrating to Australia, she has some transcultural experience in living and thinking, which greatly assists with her teaching. Continuing adaptivity has been at the heart of her pedagogic journey in teaching and accommodating the transcultural needs of international students. Specially, she adopts these key strategies in her teaching practices:

- raise self-awareness of the cultural communication norms that international students bring into the classroom through openly and continuingly discussing with them

- avoid using slangs and language that is inappropriate to international students based on her understanding of their cultural values and traditions
- use plain language to explain work-based concepts but avoid talking in childish language as this can be regarded as disrespectful to students
- use quizzes at the beginning of the teaching period to gain understanding of students' learning needs and explore how to adapt teaching methods accordingly (see the Tips box below for examples)
- design ice-breaking activities for students to experience intercultural situations through:
  - allowing international students to respond in their native language and domestic students to guess the meaning
  - encouraging domestic student to imagine themselves to be speaking another language and be in another country.

Learners may not be aware of what they need to aid their academic success at the start of a programme, especially if they are returning to education. Research into student identity and academic success is useful here to help you develop other strategies for accommodating needs. Key themes that have been linked to academic success include:

- Whether learners are spending **enough, regular time** on their studies. This has been found to predict academic grade (Mo and Zhao, 2011; Ren and Hagedorn, 2012), alongside how much time learners spend on a course site (Sun and Rueda, 2012). Busy work-based learners need to balance work, home and study (Selwyn, 2011; Baxter, 2012; Sun and Rueda, 2012), and the two aspects here are: firstly, making *regular* time available for studies, so that it becomes part of life, and, secondly, that this is *enough* time (Park and Choi, 2009; Subotzky and Prinsloo, 2011; Baxter, 2012; Gebhard, 2012).

- Whether learners have a strong and supportive **personal learning resource network**. This is another predictor of student success (Park and Choi, 2009; Baxter, 2012; Subotzky and Prinsloo, 2011; Gebhard, 2012), and is linked to the first point: work-based learners will often depend on their network to fulfil all of their responsibilities.

- Whether learners take a **self-reflective and self-leadership approach to their studies**. Apart from using reflection within their work-based learning studies, taking a reflective approach to their performance as a student also influences success (Subotzky and Prinsloo, 2011; Gebhard, 2012). This includes being able to **motivate themselves** throughout their studies (Masjuan and Troiano, 2009; Baxter, 2012) and well as being able to **believe they can succeed** (Subotzky and Prinsloo, 2011; Sun and Rueda, 2012). Encouraging this reflective approach during formal tuition and course evaluation is one useful way to systematise learners reflections about whether they are spending enough, regular time on their studies, and have put in an appropriate personal learning resource network.

Some additional tips for accommodating the needs of your learners are in the box <mark>below</mark>.

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**Tips for Accommodating**

1. Use quizzes / diagnostics at the start of the learning experience to identify learning needs. Examples include the Kolb / Honey and Mumford Learning Styles Inventory, Visual-Auditory-Kinaesthetic preferences, PICO (Personal Intercultural Change Orientation), and so on. This can also stimulate debate and reflection around the validity of these diagnostics to illustrate critical thinking.
2. Be explicit about:
   - the ways of thinking you are wanting to promote on your course, such as the use and application of theory, use of multiple texts or perspectives, evaluation of theory and the evaluation of the student's own (or others peoples') thinking and behaviour.
   - The core focus of learning and assessed tasks and the expectations associated with engaging with them. For example, are you expecting the students to primarily reflect on an experience, primarily review theory, both? Are you expecting the students to read multiple sources and engage with multiple perspectives?
3. Consider ways of integrating academic writing development within course design, including the design of shorter assessment pieces and formative feedback.
4. Present information in different formats so the students have the opportunity to interpret from different and multiple angles.
5. Select a range of books for different reading abilities, and make it clear which books are useful starting points (springboards to make sense of other texts).
6. Encourage learners to become aware of and build their own personal learning networks, and make it easy to find contacts in all documentation. Also see tasks in Wall and Tran (2014).
7. Encourage students to be clear about the strongest reasons for why they are studying. Validate these in and outside of formal tuition.
8. Encourage learners to reflect on their performance in their studies, perhaps as part of course evaluation. Specifically, ask learners to reflect on their own strengths and the extent to which they think they are spending enough, regular time for their studies.
9. Be mindful of stereotypical views of international students that may exist within the settings the students might find themselves in.
10. Space out tuition and assessment periods to enable learners to be able to digest and process and new information, bearing in mind full time work loads.

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**Reciprocating**

The final set of strategies for adaptivity can perhaps be the most challenging as they are about becoming open to learning multiple perspectives, often beyond your own familiarity and experience. Not only is the learner learning about new perspectives

from yourself, but *you* also learn about alternative ways of knowing, reflecting and writing. This involves you navigating creatively between and amongst cultural contexts you come into contact with, and the requirements of the course you are delivering and assessing. Practically, this might involve revisiting some of the very basic assumptions about the academic practices you are seeking to develop with your learners. Returning to Example 1 above, where Shui felt alienated from her 'curiosity building' style of writing: could Shui have written in this way and still have achieved the same learning outcomes? Could Shui's tutor have enabled her to utilise her current practices just like Juan enabled Noureen to in Example 2? This depends on how flexible you have designed your assessment briefs, but within a reciprocation strategy, you would question the flexibility of the assessment brief.

Another key academic practice that might develop through transcultural interaction is critical reflection and analysis. When you ask a learner to critique a theory or reflect on a course of action in practice, are you imposing particular ways of reflection or analysis which do not respect the learner's own cultural values such as harmony? In the same way as Example 2, we can allow learners to find their own creative ways to appreciate the strengths and limitations of theories or of a particular course of action. This might be enabling learners to find very subtle expressions of comparisons, where, for example, the learner expresses similarities and differences rather than weaknesses, limitations and drawbacks. When faced with such parameters, learners do demonstrate their own agency to find creative ways to express critical reflection and analysis (see Tran, 2013a), as shown in Example 6.

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**Example 6: Nurturing new styles of critical reflection**

Xuân was a learner from Vietnam who was studying a professional course in Australia. She found it particularly difficult to understand the 'Western' concept of critical thinking; within her culture, comments on others' work should focus on "good thing, not bad thing" to preserve harmony in communication and in life. To her, it did not seem sensible to be 'critical' of the person who had the authority of a writer of a book and was thus more knowledgeable than her.

Xuân found her own way to do critical thinking by finding the **mismatches** among different authors. By focusing on identifying the **strong points** of each author's work. She used her strategy of **comparing and contrasting** but focused on the good points of the author's work. Though she still found it difficult to evaluate an author's work, this approach seemed to demonstrate the sort of thinking that was required on her course, but also gave her more confidence in writing. In this way, Xuân found a way to find her voice as a Vietnamese learner, respect her cultural values, and engage in thinking and writing for her course.

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**Case study: Reciprocating and connecting in transcultural learning**

Melissa teaches Law in Sydney, Australia, with over twenty years' experience. She is from an Anglo-European background, and is very conscious of building a mutual learning environment in which all class members learn together. Reflecting on her pedagogies in a transnational classroom, Melissa says:

> We can capitalize exponentially on the learning in both the locals with the internationals and both gain… the internationals don't sit in one place and the locals sit in the other. We share, we learn, we work together!

Melissa stressed that one of the key pedagogical principles underpinning her practice is to validate and build on students' cultural knowledge, experiences and understandings of professional practices in their home contexts. Here, she places emphasis on integrating international and domestic students in co-building knowledge. When learning activities are designed in a way that enables international students to actively share their knowledge and experiences, they often feel more motivated to learn and reflecting on what is connected and meaningful to them.

Yet Melissa also demonstrates that developing culturally inclusive practices involves climbing her own a learning curve about cultural practices in other countries and in raising students' awareness of the diverse and alternative practices shaped by different national context. She actively learns about examples of disciplinary work-based practices in different countries through the media including newspapers and multicultural television channel, SBS (Special Broadcasting Service), to enrich the teaching and learning for both her domestic and international students. In other words, reciprocating and repositioning herself as an 'international learner' in the teaching process are also embraced in Mellissa's pedagogic practice:

> I try to read widely the papers.  I like to know the national leaders.  I try to refer to the history of the country as best I can… A news junky.  I watch SBS news and find information out all the time.  Just when it comes up, I'm a great believer in using examples.  And if I can say, well, in China you do it this way, but here we do it this way.  And I always try to say, it's like Road A and Road B getting to Blacktown, we'll both get there but we'll go a different way and try and make it simple like that.  And then if the students are interested, they ask more questions, that kind of thing and we can take it from there.

As a teacher, Mellissa has tried to internationalize her teaching by consciously learning about and then integrating international examples into her teaching. In so doing, she engages not only herself but all her students in transnational knowledge connection and helps them develop global awareness. Her positive culturally inclusive approach also makes international students feel valued because they are not ignored but are given the opportunity to share their cultural knowledge and play a role in enriching the intercultural and professional knowledge of these involved in the educational context.

Some additional tips you can use to reciprocate in your practice are outlined in the box below.

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**Tips for Reciprocating**

1. Enable learners to develop different and creative ways to express their understandings of the strengths and limitations of theories or of particular courses of action in reflection.
2. Enable learners to express and build their arguments in different ways, but in ways which still achieve the learning outcomes of the course.
3. Enable the development of different writing styles through example essays or excepts and giving constructive feedback through the 'feedback sandwich' (positive points – development points related to learning outcomes – positive points again).
4. Reflect on your own expectations and practices of assessment and consider how it might be possible to expand how learners might achieve the required outcomes in different ways.

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A useful way to start to identify areas in your practice to further develop your own transcultural dance is by doing a self-check on your own practices. The exercise below provides a useful tool before, during and after sessions or for online materials.

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**Exercise 3: Self-Check**

After reading the different strategies outlined above, reflect on your own practice to do a quick self check. Useful times you might do this include:

- Before a session
- During a session
- After a session
- Outside of a session, checking your online learning materials

Take copies of the template below so you can do self-checks at various points.

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Session date/time:

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❏ Before session | ❏ During session | ❏ After session | ❏ Online materials

| Strategies | Examples of strategy used | Never | | | | Consistently, throughout |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accommodating | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Integrating | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Connecting | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Reciprocating | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Once you have completed the above self-check, reflect on:

- Which strategies do you feel worked/might work most productively for your outcomes?

- Which strategies might need tweaking or changing in some way?

- Which strategies might you use more consistently throughout your sessions or in online learning materials?

- What are your key actions as a result of your reflections above, and when will you try them out in your practice?

**Conclusion**

All learners can join you in an enjoyable transcultural dance, where each individual brings a different set of moves learnt from multiple cultural milieus – if we allow them

to. These moves may be different to your own, and there can be effort and energy involved in learning new moves in ways that work for both you and your learners. But an important starting point is to be willing to operate with the assumption that all learners bring with them a diverse set of learning assets for us to tap into for all to benefit from. From this starting point, a powerful array of practical strategies and tips open up for you to rethink your practice in new and exciting ways. Though this can involve changing the way you conceive of relatively stable and familiar concepts such as critical reflection and analysis, which might be challenging and take some time to work through, there are also simple but effective tactics that you can start with immediately. So, this leaves an important final question for this chapter: what is your next move in your own transcultural dance?

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