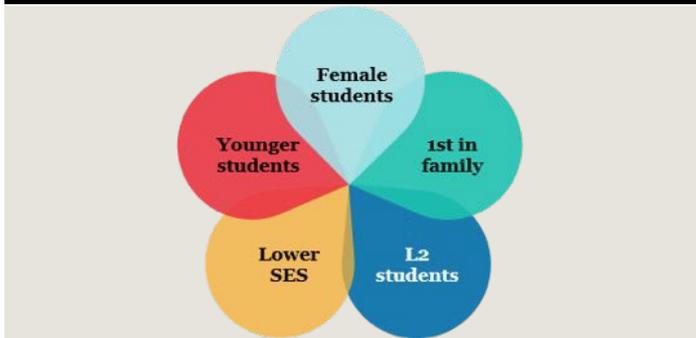


Students who engage in discussions and classroom activities tend to have better academic outcomes and a higher satisfaction with their studies. Therefore, it is important to strive for wider classroom participation.

STUDENT FACTORS

Some student groups tend to participate less in the classroom. These include female students, younger students, first-in-family, lower SES students, students whose first language is different from the language of instruction.

Student demographic factors



REF here. Image: CREDIT HERE.

There are strategies teachers can use to counter these factors. This includes:

- Make students aware of research findings on learning gains and pass rates due to participation. Sometimes mere awareness helps to incentivise participation.
- Pre-empt the tendency of female students being given 'note-taking' in groupwork.
- Get students to talk in pairs and small groups.
- Stress that examples from school, sport or community are just as relevant as more 'professional' examples.
- Provide resources, such as lecture slides or handouts beforehand.
- Use polling and other tools to allow students to respond in writing and, ideally, anonymously.
- Assume that most students will be 1st in family and demystify university and its processes.
- Consider costs likely to be borne by students and seek to provide or allow open or online alternatives (costs may relate to travel, equipment, materials, proprietary software or books). Refer students to the equity grant programme: <https://goto.mq/grants-loans>

TEACHER AND CLASS FACTORS

Teacher behaviour plays an important role in students' willingness to participation in classroom discussions. The makeup and size of the class also impact student's willingness to participate. Strategies teachers can use to encourage participation:

Wait time: Defined by Rowe (1986) as the time between a question and a follow-up (either answering the question or further prompts). Most teachers, including university teachers, would benefit from extending their 'natural' wait

time, which tends to be short, to longer pauses to let students think deeper before they respond (Tobin, 1987).

Active learning: A large body of research shows that employing active learning strategies has a positive impact on student participation and student outcomes (Krusche, Seitz, Börstler, & Bruegge, 2017).

It is important to include a wide range of techniques, such as individual, pair and small group work or polling to promote a wider participation.

Smaller Groups: The larger the class size, the more reluctant university students are to participate (Cornelius, Gray, & Constantinople, 1990; Monks & Schmidt, 2011), especially women (Crawford & MacLeod, 1990). It is important to include individual, pair and small group activities in your larger classes.

Teacher self-disclosure: A moderate amount of teacher self-disclosure can have a positive impact on classroom participation (Cyanus, 2004; Goldstein & Benassi, 1994) thanks to interpersonal and reciprocity effects.

Teacher communication style: The teacher can signal a willingness to communicate using verbal and nonverbal immediacy, such as gesturing, varying voice pitch and tempo, smiling, leaning towards students and body position. These have a correlation with the willingness of students to participate (Christensen, 1995; Menzel & Carrell, 1999).

Avoid exuberant praise: Using "Perfect", "What a fabulous answer!", "Yes. You got it. Absolutely!" of each response can decrease student participation because this can inadvertently signal to others that it is impossible to build on or exceed on this 'wonderful' response (Tanner, 2013). It can also elevate the status of students willing to participate early in the discussion (Cohen, 1994).

Cold calling: If done sensitively, cold calling can be helpful to increase classroom participation. If using cold calling, warn students about it beforehand, allow thinking time (wait time) and frame errors as an opportunity to learn. Call on pairs of students rather than individual students can also decrease stress.

Explore this topic further ...

Also - refer to the extensive reference list via the link below.

REFERENCES

See <https://bit.ly/studentparticipationreferences>

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