

SCENARIOS FOR DISCUSSION
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Scenario 1: The lecture

You are teaching a lecture-based course that typically enrolls 80-120 freshman students. You have taught for many years, and enjoy it, and you frequently intersperse stories of your own experiences in graduate school as a way to begin to acculturate students into the academic world view of the subject matter. You also frequently intersperse cartoons into your PPTs and students have seemed to enjoy that. However, recently a group of international students came up to you after class saying that they don't understand your lectures and don't know how to study for the exams. They asked if you could explain the ideas in a simpler way for them.

This request has taken you by surprise and—to be honest--made you angry. Coming as a group made you feel ambushed. Between the students with insufficient English and the others on their smartphones while you talk, you aren't sure if you like teaching any more.

Scenario Questions: What is your responsibility to these students as their teacher? How much should you change a well oiled course to accommodate them? Is there a relationship between the international students and the others on their smartphones? Think of several different approaches to respond to the students' request.

Scenario 2: The Midterm

You are teaching an undergraduate course in which you usually give at least two essay exams, one midterm and one final. To avoid plagiarism, you have developed a policy of giving in-class exams only. There are about thirty students in the course, including several international students. One of them, a female student from Jordan, who has come to every class but has never spoken in discussions, failed the midterm exam and came to you in tears. She had done all the reading in the course and showed you her underlined textbooks and notes from the lectures. She received an "F" on the exam because she only answered three of the four questions, and then only partially, and made numerous mistakes in English. In your opinion, her work was unacceptable.

Scenario 2 Questions: What is your responsibility to this student as her instructor? Will you try to help her? What can you do? How should you evaluate grammatical mistakes in English? How could you have designed the course or assessments differently to have avoided this situation? Think of several different approaches.

Scenario Three: The Paper with a Problem

A Chinese student in your Introduction to Psychology course has been coming regularly to class, and doing the work, which includes writing weekly journals where students choose selections from the readings and respond personally to them. At first, her comments were primarily summaries, but after you explained in detail what you were looking for and gave some examples, her work on this assignment improved from C- to B.

She scored a C+ and B- on the first two tests, which were mostly multiple choice and matching, with some short answers. Her writing included many grammatical inaccuracies, but you were more concerned with the meaning and gave her the benefit of the doubt.

The last paper was a ten page paper on the topic of learning and motivation, and you were looking forward to reading her thoughts on this topic. However, you felt when reading it that the writing style was smoother than expected, and when you typed passages into the web, you found whole paragraphs had been taken from an article on this topic. In fact, nearly 40% of the paper was taken from another source.

You gave her a score of 0 for the paper, and a D for the course. She has begged you to give her another chance because she did not understand what plagiarism is.

Scenario 3 Questions:

How can you evaluate whether she understood what plagiarism meant in this course context? Should you give her a second chance? What are the ramifications of reporting this case to the Judicial Board? What could you have done to avoid this situation?

Scenario 4: The Group Project

You will be teaching a course that has traditionally been mostly U.S. students but now enrolls up to 25% percent international students, mostly from Asia. You plan to assign at least one major group project and presentation where all members of the group get one grade. This course is a continuation of a curricular sequence, and you know that U.S. students went to the department chair in the prior term complaining about having to work with international students, saying that they contributed less to their projects and brought down their grade. You have also heard that the international students complained that they were not equal partners in the groups and that the U.S. students went ahead and appointed themselves CEOs of the groups.

Scenario 4 Questions: What can you do to facilitate success (academic and social) among the students on this project?

How will you design the project and presentation so that the international and U.S. students bear equal responsibility? Think of several different approaches.