

Session A Key Input: Lecture 1
Teaching Heterogenous L2 Students: Challenges and Potentials
Lecture Transcript

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Hello everyone, my name is Sari Karmina. In this lecture, I will talk about teaching heterogenous L2 students. This lecture is divided into 2 parts. In Part 1, I will discuss what a heterogenous class is and the challenges and potentials of teaching heterogenous EMI class, and in Part 2, I will talk about the strategies in dealing with heterogenous class.

Let's first discuss about the definition of a heterogenous class. In the context of English language teaching, Penny Ur (2005) argues that a heterogenous class consists of students with different English proficiency, motivation, learning styles, and age. You may find that some of your students' English proficiency falls into 3 categories: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. The more proficient students might have higher motivation than the less proficient ones. In addition to that, it is very likely that our classroom will consist of students with different learning styles such as visual learners, auditory learners, or analytic learners. Let's discuss briefly about each of them.

Some of your students might be visual learners. They respond well to information on the whiteboard, flashcards, videos, or computer graphics while others work better with spoken instructions and oral activities. These auditory students will not need to see written words to learn. You might find that some of your students are analytic learners. They focus on details of language such as grammar rules. They respond better to well-structured and clear lessons, and activities that require analysis such as matching exercises, puzzles, missing letters, and so on. Of course, you will need different strategies to facilitate students with different learning styles.

Research has found that heterogeneity in EMI classes creates challenges for the lecturers. In Taiwanese context, for example, lecturers have reported that it is challenging teaching local and international students in one class in which the local students' proficiency level is lower than the international ones (Hou et al., 2013; Huang, 2015). Similarly, Fenton-Smith et al. (2013), reported that the biggest challenge Taiwanese lecturer experiences in EMI classes is the student's low English proficiency and mixed ability students. Research in Indonesia has found similar results. For example, Gustiani (2019), she reported that the challenges in teaching EMI class was teaching students with different learning styles, different motivation, and engagement due to the students' English proficiency, and instructional strategies and learning materials.

However, despite the challenges, heterogenous class offers potentials. Research has revealed that low proficient students benefit from heterogenous groups because there are more academic resources available to them (Cohen & Lotan, 2014; Lou et al., 1996). In addition, heterogenous class enhance participation of less proficient students, create more collaboration, and increase respect among students, and improve learning skills of high proficient students.

Ok, we have covered the definition and the challenges and potentials in teaching heterogenous class. In the next lecture, I will discuss the strategies in dealing with heterogenous class. Thanks for watching.

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