Assessing in-class participation as motivation for Chinese students to speak up in class

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As China’s economy grows, the number of Chinese studying at universities at home and around the globe is increasing. Existing research and personal experience in the classroom tell us that Chinese students are often very reluctant to speak up in class. I want to share experiences from introducing the assessment of in-class participation as a means to motivate Chinese students to speak up in class at a Sino-British institution.

At the unconference I want to...

... contribute results from a 300-student pre-post-survey that found students’ shyness and English skills most explanatory for in-class grades1 and also mention result of a 700-student follow-up study (collected this week)2.

... learn about unconference participants’ experiences with Chinese students and discuss how we can learn from each other: Which good practices are transferable and why?1

... question if, when, and how much feedback students should obtain on their in-class performance3 – our school advises that we should not communicate a separate in-class participation mark3, but participants in a 12-student case-based masters module saw this as a key area of potential improvement when interviewed after class3 (*)

... share the particular conditions at our institution that resulted from a negotiation process between the Chinese campus that initiated the introduction of an in-class participation mark, the British ‘parent’ campus, and its external examiners: Classes are often only held once a week for 50 minutes with 60-70 students. The requirements that have been developed stipulate that students must be assessed in at least 9 out of 12 sessions (but not in the introduction and revision session), and only the 4 highest marks of these 9 count towards the final score.3

... discuss the findings from studies with students who were assessed under these conditions1 and discuss with unconference participants how empirical results must be framed in order to avoid reviewers saying: “The conditions under which you introduced this new assessment method were so stupid that the study results have no meaning beyond the borders of your institution.”1,3

... engage participants in reflection on the most thought-provoking angles on assessment of in-class participation that would make it possible to be published in a top level journal.

... debate what one can do if all the research in the area of interest is based on collections of single item measures? Sure, develop scales ... but realistically?

1 This is a question.
2 This represents an empirical idea.
3 This is a concern.

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