BISC’s Specialized Program in International Law and Politics

Overcoming the Challenges of Teaching Very Small Classes with Active Learning Opportunities
Presentation Outline

* Queen’s Bader International Study Center (BISC)
* Specialized Program in International Law and Politics
* Pedagogical Approach
* Student Dynamics during Class Discussions
* Fostering Positive Learning Environment via Active Learning

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The Bader International Study Centre

- Small classes
- Arts, Science and Commerce courses
- Experiential Learning Opportunities
- Mid-Term trip to Europe
Specialized Program in International Law and Politics (POLS 398)
A 12-week intensive course

- Three 3-hour classes per week
- January Module: International Law and Politics
- February Module: Genocides, Crimes against Humanity, and War Crimes
- March Module: Law and Politics of Armed Conflicts.

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Module 2: Genocides, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes

- International Criminal Law and Comparative Genocide Studies
- Active learning in the classroom
- Experiential learning outside campus
- Class discussions
- Case studies
- Problem solving
- Debates
- Cooperative learning
- Oral presentations

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Class Discussions

How to get to this ...

When you have a little disengagement ...

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Or open confrontation when debating contested topics.
Active Learning to the Rescue

* Fostering a Positive Learning Environment despite challenging student dynamic
  * Think-Pair-Share
  * Facilitator Duties
  * Classroom Set-Up

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Think-Pair-Share

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Facilitator Duties

- The importance of clear expectations
- Instructor Assessment

Variations
- Scribes
- Spokespersons

- Peer Assessments
Classroom Set Up

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Many Possibilities ...
More options ...

Oral Presentation

Case Study Analysis

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MTT
Berlin-Krakow-Nuremberg

Seven-day ELO
Seminar held after every ELO
Students connecting visited sites with required readings as well as making extensions... the best possible learning outcome.
Take Away Lessons

- Never too early or too late to take action
  - Think-Pair-Share variation
  - Facilitator Role
  - Classroom Set Up
- Other possibilities

- Active learning approach as an effective tool to positively modify class dynamic, and foster collaborative learning among students.
Thank you