

## **Introduction to the International Classroom**

### **Further Resources I Spain**

#### **Ana's international classroom**

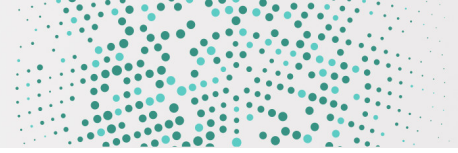
Ana Martínez is a Spanish associate professor at Complutense University of Madrid, with 10 years of research and teaching experience. Last year she was asked to teach her first course in English. She had enjoyed teaching the Spanish version of this seminar-based course to Spanish students in previous years, and had developed a number of effective teaching and learning activities over the years, including group discussions, short writing assignments, and student presentations. Her main concern was about teaching the course in English. She felt that she was pretty good at speaking English and was used to reading research literature in English, as well as sometimes writing in English. However, she did not feel entirely comfortable with the idea of teaching in English as she was not certain that she would be able to express herself precisely enough.

Nevertheless, since she had so much experience teaching the same material in Spanish, she was cautiously optimistic about the outcome. Similar to previous years, there were about 60 students in class. This time, however, the class consisted of 35 Spanish students and 25 international students, a few from other European countries but mostly from Asia (mainly China). Although she felt she was working harder this time in comparison with the past, all in all, Ana felt happy with the lectures and other teaching activities. At the same time, she noticed some considerable changes in the classroom dynamics:

(1) The Chinese students and the Spanish students spontaneously formed separate discussion and project groups. At first this did not seem to be a problem but Ana noticed that the Spanish students were using Spanish and the Chinese students were speaking in Chinese, and she couldn't understand what the latter were saying. There were also some other international students who seemed to refuse to work in pairs, keeping silent when paired with another student.

(2) She also noticed that, in the class discussions, some of the international students said very little and asked no questions. As the class seemed to be more "silent", the Spanish students also refrained from making any contributions, ruining any attempts at interaction.





(3) At the end of the course, some of the Spanish students told Ana that, while they liked the international students and in principle didn't mind having them in class, they also thought it was a waste of time working with some of these international students because they didn't contribute any opinions in group discussion.

Ana realized that there were quite a few things she needed to change next time she was to teach this course.

version June 2019



The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



You are free to share, copy, redistribute and build upon this work provided that a clear reference to the source is given, which is:  
[www.equip.eu](http://www.equip.eu)