Scenarios for teachers of NNS international students

Seminar 1
10 students, all Chinese non-native speakers.

The seminar leader wants there to be a discussion. The students don’t say very much. After a few weeks, the seminar has become more of a mini-lecture, with the leader doing most of the talking. At the end of the seminar, there’s always a group of students who have questions.

- What might the scenario reveal about the expectations the students have?
- How might the seminar leader interpret the situation and why?
- How can the seminar leader bring these different perspectives together?
- What could the seminar leader do to address the situation and stimulate greater participation?

Seminar 2
8 students, 6 Europeans and two Japanese.

There are problems for the students to work through and solve, generally topics in the daily papers. The 6 Europeans do all the talking. The two Japanese say very little.

- What reasons could there be for the uneven spread of contributions?
- Who needs to change in this situation and why?
- How can the seminar leader achieve desired changes?

Seminar 3
12 students, half non-native speakers - Arabic speakers, Europeans, a few Chinese and Koreans.

Near the end of the seminar, an international student asks about one of the assignments for a core module. The assignment is a reflective diary type, with an extensive assignment brief and lots of links to online guides about reflective writing. The leader tries to explain, but time runs out. The home students leave, but the international and EU students stay - it turns out that most of the students are very worried about this assignment. Some of them are visibly upset.

- What might the scenario reveal about the expectations the students have?
- How might the seminar leader interpret the situation and why?
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- What could the seminar leader do to address the situation and stimulate greater participation?