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- **Research Field:**
International law, New fields of law
- **Subjects:**
Globalization and Law,
Asia Pacific and Human Rights,
Specialized Practice,
Graduation Research

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Tips



1. Prepare and distribute handouts
in advance
2. Ask challenging questions
3. Use "Idea Notes" for review

Q: *How do you decide on the level of your classes?*

A. When I oversee 100-level classes such as "Introduction to APS," I try to connect the knowledge students have learned in high school with the "questions." When I oversee "International Law" and "Human Rights" as 200-level subjects, I try to teach the basics of these disciplines. I think that students find these courses a little difficult because many different topics are covered in their classes. If a student focuses too much on individual issues, they may lose out on the whole process of learning such as acquiring a legal mindset. However, I teach these courses systematically without compromise as a knowledge base so that students can return to these concepts and ideas they learned in International Law and Human Rights in their 3rd and 4th year. The 300-level "Globalization

becomes visible to the instructor. These steps ensure the quality of the process of learning throughout 14 classes. I also assign a final report, which is used to measure the result of learning and assess whether students have achieved the course objectives.

Q: *What methods do you use to give preparation and review assignments?*

A. I use manaba. For the preparation assignment, I provide short texts or materials related to the class theme, and ask students to take multiple-choice quizzes which would be easy to answer after doing the assigned readings. These preparation assignments also increase incentive to attend the class after gaining some knowledge on the topic. I try not to overburden students with these assignments, and I am still searching for the right

and Law" is at a more applied level, so it covers social issues and theoretical questions, and is more topic-based and thematic rather than systematic.

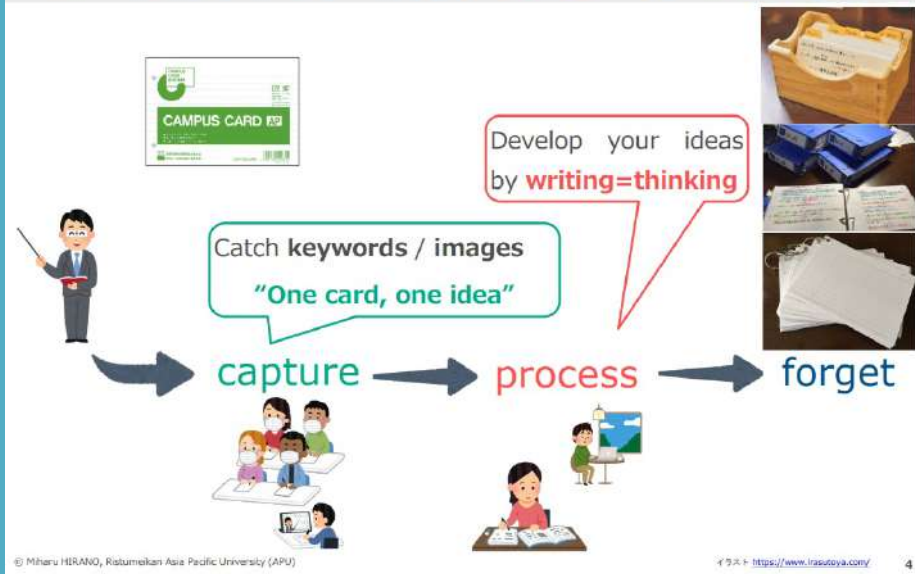
Q: *What do you do to improve the quality of student learning?*

A. I pay attention to **the balance between input and output**, and to **the flow in the sequence of lectures**. For input, I ask the students to come to each class after answering a simple set of quizzes as a preparatory assignment. During class, I use handouts distributed in advance for explaining contents and for discussions. For output, I assign around five review assignments per course, which require the students to produce ideas through writing. Through writing, the students can actually see what they have learned in class and how they built up their own knowledge, and this process also

balance between the amount of content and volume of work. When selecting materials for preparation work, I try to choose materials that are basic and reliable, with an emphasis on being easy for students to read and understand. This process is straightforward when there is a textbook, but as no textbook matched the content perfectly for this semester's courses, I have been experimenting with different materials.

For review, students are asked to write what I call **"Idea Notes."** Idea Notes are not answers to questions that I pose, but are short pieces of writing in which students freely develop their own thoughts or form questions based on what they have grasped through the lecture and found interesting. Students are then instructed to summarize what they have learned in class in their own words and develop their ideas. The requirements are: 1) they must be

How to use *idea notes* / 情報カードの使い方



Q: What innovations have you made increase students' motivation for learning?

Idea 1: Connect the knowledge to students' own lives

I try to provide students with the basic knowledge of international law which is the foundation of our society, rather than niche knowledge that only a few people would know. In "Globalization and Law," we discuss international legal rules of trade which are relevant to our daily lives. Other times, we talk about current events. I often introduce movies to give the students an image of a social issue before we get into the content of international law and human rights. I think these methods motivate the students to see the relationship between what they have learned in the lectures and the world they are

living in.

Idea 2: Ask challenging questions and discuss them in an open-ended forum

There are often students who try to make black and white judgments about certain social issues, or who would like me to share my personal opinion. However, **what is important is to understand the rationale that each position stands for, and to be able to logically develop one's own arguments.** So, in the lecture, I ask the students what they think about issues with divided opinions (e.g., is the WHO doing enough to deal with the spread of COVID-19?), and after listening to the students' ideas, I explain the scope of the WHO's authority and their decision-making mechanism, and then ask them to think again about whether the question was formed appropriately in the first place.

based on the lecture content, 2) the writing must be in the student's own words, 3) one Idea Note must be limited to one idea, and 4) each Idea Note must be at least 100 words. For the review, I ask students to submit around two to four Idea Notes for two or three classes. If students look back on the Idea Notes they write throughout the course, they will be able to see how much they have actually learned.

I started using Idea Notes because there are many students who write their reports for the teacher. Instead, **I would like students to develop and store knowledge for themselves.** The existence of students who copy and paste information is a known problem, but I feel that the cause lies in the fact that they have not learned the techniques to develop their own ideas in the first place. I believe that university-level education should encourage **the first step of producing one's own knowledge.**

However, producing knowledge is a very difficult task. Even a small report on a single A4 page needs to be written by combining a variety of ideas. I thought Idea Notes would be a good way to focus on the process of nurturing each idea first, rather than immediately seeking the results. Through recording one's own ideas in written form instead of memorizing pieces of information, these ideas can be used productively later when writing presentations and reports, as well as theses.

What I am proposing to students at this time is to handwrite their ideas on B6 size information cards (also called "Kyoto University style"), which are available at the Co-op. It is not my intention to deny digital tools, but I would like them to experience the joy of writing by hand.

Q: What are some of the innovations you have made when conducting online and hybrid classes?

Idea 1: Handout materials in advance

I make handouts with the information I want the students to have and give it to them in advance. For each lecture, I upload two to four A4 pages of materials on manaba, which include bullet points, diagrams, relevant treaty texts and cases to be discussed.

During a class, students can only concentrate on either listening or reading. I do not think students will understand if they listen to the teacher and look at the slides at the same time. So, by giving them handouts, they can look over the material beforehand. Handouts also make it easier for

students to see the outline of the class, and follow the class progress and important points. I also use slides in class, but I use them as a supplement to show diagrams, pictures, and key words.

Idea 2: Work together with the TA

I ask my TA to help me receive questions. Since the lecture has more than 150 students, it cannot be very interactive. So, I ask the TAs to send questions from the students to me via chat. The TA summarizes the questions according to the outline in the handout and pastes them into a shared document that is simultaneously displayed on the screen in front of me. I look at it and give the lecture, answering questions as appropriate.

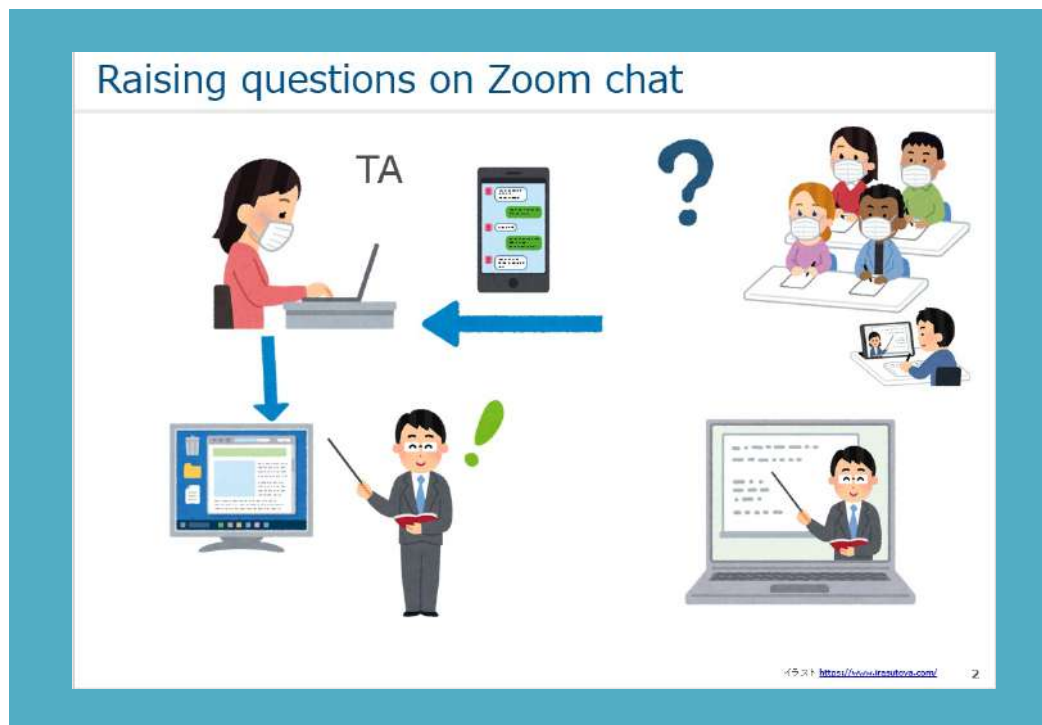
Idea 3: Have consideration for the students' course environment

Since some students are taking the class via recording, for example, I make sure that the deadlines for preparation assignments are fair. Also, online classes can be tiring, so I take a short break in the middle of the lecture to play music or introduce a movie related to the class.

Q: What steps do you take to improve the content of your classes?

A: The first step I take is using respon at the end of each class as a way to receive comments and questions. I check these points after the lecture, make minor changes to the teaching style, answer some questions in the next class.

The second step is when receiving the final report, I see how well the students were able to write the report. This step also gives me hints on techniques



to be used as preparation and review assignments. The idea for Idea Notes which I mentioned earlier was born from such reflections.

The third step is when I receive the class evaluation surveys that the students fill out at the end of the course. I check which items scored worse than others and read the students' comments, which inform me about the design of the course for the next year.

Q. What is important to you in your teaching?

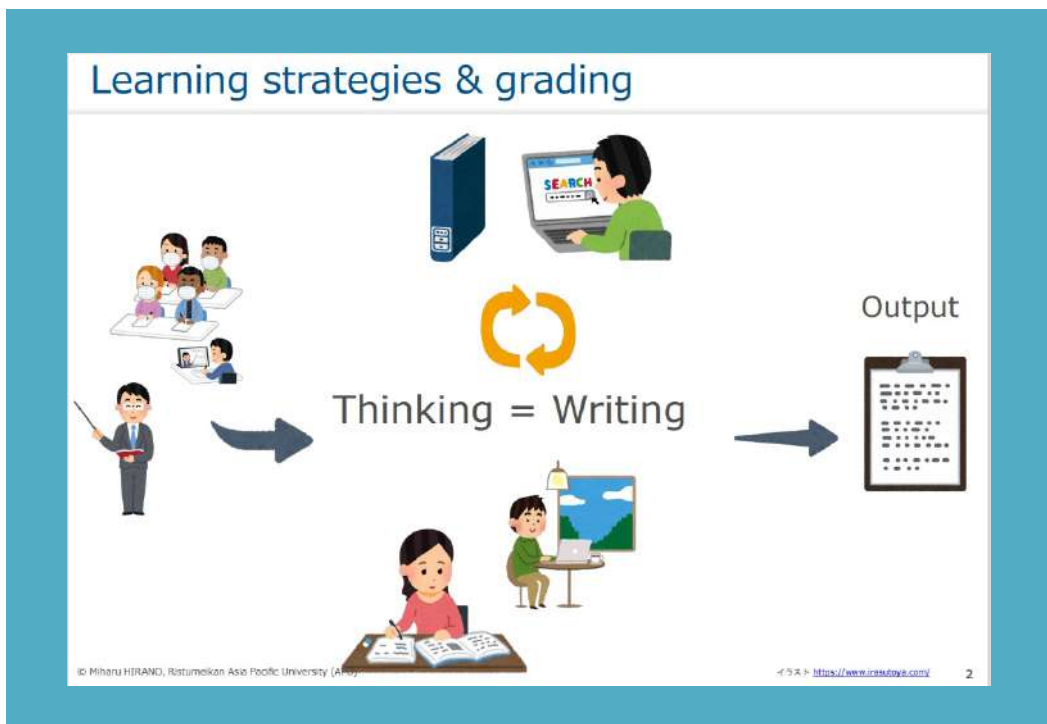
A: In the current pandemic, we must prioritize. In other words, I believe that **students need to be healthy and not be overwhelmed by stress so that they can study**. Therefore, for example, I am

flexible with allowing students to turn in review assignments late, provided that they explain the reason in advance. Interestingly, I have the impression that the number of students who meet the deadline has conversely increased.

As for the content of what I teach, I try to **teach based on what the students should know rather than what I as the teacher am interested in**.

Q. What do you expect from the students who take your classes?

A: **What I expect from students is for them not be passive but active**. I want them to listen to the lectures more voraciously and write the term papers and Idea Notes for themselves, and not just passively write because the teacher tells them to. I



am teaching what I want the students to know, so I expect them to actively participate in the class, thinking about what will be important for them as much as possible.

The Idea Note method that I am experimenting with is a tool for students to take what they learn in class and turn it into their own thinking. Although students have a lot of freedom in what they write, if they do not provide reasons for their thoughts, they will not be able to reach others. Simply saying, "I think this way," does not make the world a better place. I hope that this tool will be useful for students to acquire the ability to explain "why."

Interviewer Impressions

Through this interview, I learned about the hard work of the Professor who prepares and plans a lot before and after each class so that the students will be able to think for themselves and organize what they have learned, rather than having a one-way flow of information from teacher to student. It was very interesting to learn about the Professor's unique and innovative teaching style and vision for the class. I was able to realize the importance of taking the class individually as the input, and organizing knowledge in one's own way and thinking about how to connect it to daily life as the output. In the future, I would like to review the contents of classes so that I can make the knowledge my own by thinking and organizing it in my own words like the Idea Notes, rather than ending with note-taking. I believe that through this process, I will be able to improve the quality of my learning.



What is [Q]?

At APU there are many professors who put together wonderful classes, and if we could get to know how these classes are planned, it would contribute to the improvement of other professors' classes. For that purpose, we have begun doing interviews in order to learn about class planning. These articles have been entitled [Q], comprising a variety of meanings such as: increasing the [Q]uality of classes, answering [Q]uestions to increase quality, and forming a [Q]ueue, or line, of class improvements. We would be very happy if these articles could contribute to the [Q]uest of APU professors' class quality improvement.

