**Planning and Supporting Student Learning in a Seminar Setting at Higher Education in UAL**

**Background:**

In the setting of Higher Education at UAL, seminars provide a platform for interactive and collaborative learning experiences and help build on the direct learning format of a formal Lecture. However, a challenge arises in effectively planning for and supporting student learning within this context, particularly in developing active participation, signposting self-learning, and cultivating a sense of belonging among students (Tinto, 2017). Seminars should be more student led and give an open forum for them to learn and interact compared to the lecture setting.

**Evaluation:**

Current strategies for addressing these challenges involve setting ground rules at the beginning of each seminar to establish expectations for student behaviour and participation. Additionally, incorporating interactive activities, group discussions, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities helps to promote student engagement and participation (Brookfield & Preskill, 2016). However, challenges persist in ensuring that all students feel included and valued within the seminar setting.

**Moving Forward:**

Drawing from various sources, including literature, observations of peers, and personal experience, several strategies can enhance the planning and support of student learning in seminar settings:

1. Clear Communication: Providing clear instructions and objectives for each seminar session, along with advance reading materials, helps students prepare and actively participate in discussions. Also considering communication and signposting for continued learning after the session in the form of clear self-study tasks.
2. Active Learning Techniques: Incorporating active learning techniques, such as problem-solving exercises, case studies, and role-playing activities, promotes student engagement and critical thinking skills (Chick, Haynie, & Gurung, 2012). It can also help to bring to life academic theory and put things in a real world setting that can help students identify with. Even aspire to learn more in their own time.
3. Feedback Mechanisms: Implementing regular feedback mechanisms, such as anonymous surveys or peer evaluations, allows students to provide input on their learning experiences and offers opportunities for continuous improvement. This can link well with point 4 and the use of tools such as Padlet & Slido to allow another method of anonymity participation for students to feel comfortable interacting how they choose.
4. Technology Integration: Utilising online platforms and tools, such as discussion forums or collaborative documents like Padlet or Miro, facilitates communication and knowledge sharing among students, both during and outside of seminar sessions. It can help continued learning and even join up seminar sessions over several weeks in a seamless manor.

**Reflection:**

Through experimentation with some of these strategies, successes and limitations have been observed. Active learning techniques and technology integration have proven effective in enhancing student engagement and participation. However, challenges remain in ensuring fair participation and developing a sense of belonging among all students, particularly those from diverse backgrounds. For example, it cannot be assumed all students have access or knowledge of online platforms. Language barriers can divide a class or the speed in which engagement and participation will happen.

Moving forward, a continued focus on refining and adapting these practices based on student feedback and reflection will be essential. This reflection underlines the importance of planning and creating inclusive learning environments in a seminar setting where all students feel valued and supported in their academic journey.

**References:**

Brookfield, S. D., & Preskill, S. (2016). *The discussion book: 50 great ways to get people talking*. John Wiley & Sons.

Chick, N. L., Haynie, A., & Gurung, R. A. (2012). *Exploring more signature pedagogies: Approaches to teaching disciplinary habits of mind*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Tinto, V. (2017). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. University of Chicago Press.