North East Regional Learning and Teaching Conference 2014

Broadening Horizons – The Global Graduate

Hosted by:
Durham University
27th March 2014
Keynote Speaker: John Craig, Higher Education Academy

Dr John Craig is Assistant Director and Head of Social Sciences at the Higher Education Academy. He previously served as an Assistant Dean at Teesside University and has taught at the University of Huddersfield, the University of Leeds and the Open University. He led the FDTL5 Case-based learning project and is chair of the Political Studies Association Teaching and Learning specialist Group.


The 3 Rivers Consortium is operated by members of staff from the five campus-based regional universities. In 2013–14 these staff are:

Durham          Bob Matthew        Robert.matthew@durham.ac.uk
Newcastle       Richard Young      richard.young@newcastle.ac.uk
               Rosalind Beaumont       Rosalind.beaumont@newcastle.ac.uk
Northumbria     Scott Burgess      scott.burgess@northumbria.ac.uk
Sunderland      Anna Round         mark.proctor@sunderland.ac.uk
               Mark Proctor
Teesside        Juliette Oko       j.oko@tees.ac.uk
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<td>B1 Making Qualitative Research methods training fun - Boliver</td>
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<td><strong>A4</strong> The International Student Experience - Majorbanks</td>
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<td><strong>B4</strong> Raising Staff-Student Awareness of the challenges of international students – Watson</td>
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<td><strong>C4</strong> Preparing geography undergraduates to teach in the 21st century – White</td>
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<td><strong>D4</strong> Identifying barriers facing international students - Bassam</td>
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<td><strong>B5</strong> Are we communicating cross-culturally? - Schartner</td>
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<td><strong>C5</strong> Student partner approaches for evidence based evaluation – Keenan et. al.</td>
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<td><strong>D5</strong> Flipping Assessments! Hampson, Tinney, Stewart &amp; Howe.</td>
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All sessions are held in Collingwood College, University of Durham, see the map below, location 6.
Abstracts

Session 1: 10:00 – 1030.

A1 Which support do international students need primarily: language training or learning style awareness? - Rosemary Mitchell-Schuitevoerder

Which support do international students need primarily: language training or learning style awareness?

In this paper I will argue that the performance of international students might improve more rapidly if they were offered awareness training in learning styles, with language support playing a secondary role. The in-sessional support programme, offered by the Durham Language Centre now offers an extensive range of classes in English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and although many students attend, their performance in class does not always show significant progression during the year. The findings in this study are based on many years of teaching experience on pre-sessional summer courses in English for Academic Purposes, as well as four years of teaching the module translation and technology to predominantly international students. The teaching of the module is based on a project-based learner-centred syllabus. Findings during consecutive years have shown some progress in academic essays during the year among international as well as home-students. In contrast, non-assessed project work improved greatly among home students, and very little among international East-Asian students. Focus group discussions, surveys, interviews and email exchange have provided data, which indicate that international students arrive without any experience of a learner-centred methodology. In conclusion, this project sheds new light on the need for strong learning support in addition to language support. Without an awareness of learning styles, language support has less impact on international students and their performance does not reflect the EAP input.

B1 Making Qualitative Research Methods Training Fun for students from diverse national origins – Vikki Boliver

Although most students recognise that quantitative research skills are very valuable in the graduate labour market, many students approach quantitative methods modules with feelings of ambivalence if not downright dread. As such, engaging students in learning about quantitative research methods is notoriously difficult, and the challenge is greater still if the class is composed of students from a diverse range of disciplinary backgrounds and national origins. In this presentation I reflect on a strategy I have been using which aims to make quantitative methods training effective and fun for a multi-disciplinary and multi-national class of social science postgraduate students at Durham University. In order to illustrate complex statistical techniques in an intellectually accessible and appealing way, I have developed a series of interactive practical exercises using a carefully selected range of sweets, including Smarties to illustrate central limit theorem in probability sampling; Rowntree’s Randoms to illustrate cluster analysis; assorted chocolate bars to illustrate qualitative comparative analysis; and chocolate buttons to illustrate micro-simulation. In this presentation I discuss the pedagogical intent behind these practical exercises and I reflect on how my students have responded to them.

C1 Curriculum and Graduateness in the 21st Century – Samuel Louis

The overwhelming majority of Bachelor’s degrees in the UK are single honours. A small number of students undertake combined awards where they study two or three subjects over the duration of their degree. This creates the potential for
students to master very different paradigms of thinking - and also the need to synthesise and integrate, to be truly interdisciplinary. They have to master more threshold concepts (Meyer and Land, 2003). Anecdotal evidence from staff would suggest that combined students offer wider insights in seminar work and assessments than SH students, and degree attainment are higher. Arguably Combined students gain more criticality (Barnett, 2007), intellectual development and self authorship (Baxter Magolda, 1993: 2009) and thus develop further the key graduate attribute of critical evaluation of their own work (Nicol, 2010). A second element which may develop graduateness is the need to make more decisions, be more autonomous and self-regulated. In short, they need to take responsibility and develop integrated graduate attributes (Barrie, 2007). A third element is that they might be just more engaged - and this facilitates transformative learning (Bryson, 2011). Some of them undertake study abroad too with concomitant benefits. Therefore the value added by Combined degrees better equips graduates in contributing to society in tackling complex 21st century problems. Of course, there are counter-arguments, that Combined degrees dilute depth of understanding, and attract students who cannot make up their mind! I present evidence from a small qualitative study of students at Newcastle University.

**D1 Implementing Intercultural Education: Challenges for Higher Education – Lynette Harland**

**Background:** The education system has a responsibility to prepare learners to participate in the globalised world, but this presents a significant challenge, particularly in mono-cultural classrooms. This presentation will consider some of the key challenges, as well as some of the solutions, from the perspective of an academic teaching in a mono-cultural classroom and also an EdD student who has recently completed the module International and Intercultural Education.

**Point 1:** What is intercultural education and how does this differ from multi-cultural education. This discussion will incorporate critique of assimilation, acknowledging diversity, stereotyping and racism, as well as the move towards intercultural approaches and the positives of this approach.

**Point 2.** The challenges of implementing intercultural education. This discussion will consider language and cultural barriers, skills and training of teachers and the demographics of the workforce, particularly in the North East. The increasing emphasis on attracting international students and the challenges associated with this. The nature of the education system i.e. rigid academic calendars, assessment processes.

**Point 3 Solutions - Discussion here will include intercultural competence, the need for intercultural education to move from the margins to the centre of our institutions and also some examples of introducing intercultural approaches in mono-cultural classrooms.**

**E1 Supporting Internationally Mobile Researchers – Lowry McComb & Linda Hui Yang.**

Supporting international mobile researchers to make the cultural transition to work in a new research environment is becoming increasingly important. We report the work being done by two projects to address these issues.

**REFIRS** is funded by the Higher Education Academy and is looking at incoming internationally-mobile research students’ perceptions of the research environment they are entering and how the reality meets these expectations.

**ImpactE** is funded by the European Commission and is a consortium of 6 European Universities in partnership with Vitae and Epigeum. The project is wide ranging, with a focus on developing tools to assist international mobile researchers to make the cultural and social transitions to work successfully in a new research environment.
This session will cover:

- Internationally-mobile researchers’ expectations
- Internationally-mobile researchers’ needs to support their transition to a new environment
- Methods to support the above

**Session 2: 10:30 – 11:00**

**A2 Interrelationships between motivation, resilience and self efficacy and their contribution to Chinese International Foundation Students’ Academic Adjustment – Jinhua Mathias.**

This research studied the relationships between motivation, personal resilience and self-efficacy variables, and the combined effect they can have on Chinese international students’ adjustment. Based on quantitative study, the results revealed that Chinese students’ motivation is complex, often partly instrumental and partly emotional. It was also found that intrinsic motivation, personal resilience and self-efficacy are closely associated with academic adjustment. The interrelationships between motivation, personal resilience and self-efficacy suggest that motivation and self-efficacy are different constructs in personal traits and contribute independently to academic adjustment. On the other hand, personal resilience and self-efficacy were significantly correlated. This study indicated that these personal characteristics could be useful indicators of Chinese students’ likely academic adjustment, particularly when recruiting such students and when providing support for them.

**B2 Outward Mobility on Vocational Programmes – suing the placement year to globalize the student experience – Becky Thomson**

Vocational undergraduate degrees commonly include a placement year where students have the opportunity to undertake work experience which is relevant to their programme. Traditionally this has been with a UK company or organisation, but this has become a less attractive option for students as placements have been difficult to secure during the economic downturn. An alternative is to encourage students to consider a combination of both international study and work experience to enhance their global perspective.

In order to globalise UK students, HEI’s need to be presenting viable and attractive international options to their students over the duration of their studies. Rather than simply focusing on UK work placements and internships, we need to consider offering students the opportunity to use part of their placement year to study abroad and gain experience of higher education in another country. Once they are established within an international partner institution, students can then look at securing work experience in their host country for the remainder of their placement year.

By using a placement year to encourage outward mobility, institutions do not necessarily have to ‘map’ courses together with an international partner, and students are able to enhance their UK studies by completing relevant
courses internationally that may not be available to them otherwise. This is in addition to any international work experience that can be secured.

C2 Investigating the Perceptions held by University Students of professional scientists and engineers – Helen Hooper

There is an international deficit of scientists and engineers. For example, a 2012 report indicates that training at current rates will result in a 1,000,000 shortfall to meet workforce demands across the next decade just in the US. Such reports call for increased training but also highlight an imperative to develop better retention strategies to help close this formidable gap, especially for women, who remain underrepresented within many fields of science and engineering. We focussed on identifying on retention issues at level 4 and post graduate employment. In order to enhance induction/ transition support for first year students and develop better career/ FE support we investigated what students understood about the activities that professional scientists/ engineers engage with routinely. Students at 3 regional HEIs on a range of STEM programmes were challenged to articulate their understanding of what professional scientists/ engineers routinely do, along with providing information about pre entry motivations for choice of subject/ university course, post graduate study/ career aspirations and parental/ carer occupation. Students were also asked to complete a ‘Draw a Scientist/ Engineer’ task and the visual images drawn were analysed for gender and level of stereotype. The data reveals a range of misconceptions, including gender biased stereotypes. Aspects of the data will be discussed, along with implications for practice.

D2 Developing a Global Lens: the development of global citizenship for HE students volunteering in a Bulgarian institution for babies and young children – Lindey Cookson, Louise Carr & Sarah Khan

This presentation explores the development of ‘global graduates’ using qualitative findings from a volunteering project in a Bulgarian Social Care Home. The 20 students involved were from a Joint Hons undergraduate programme studying Early Years, Childhood and Disabilities.

Volunteering in Higher Education has come under political scrutiny recently, with strong cross-party support for schemes to promote undergraduate volunteering in particular (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2010). The Cerick Report (QCA, 1998) suggested that education has a role in preparing the next generation to be ‘stewards of society’, and with the current emphasis on employability universities are under increasing pressure to produce graduates who are well prepared for the world of work, with an understanding of themselves as citizens of a wider world than the UK. International volunteering can facilitate a stronger sense of ‘global citizenship’ and ‘solidarity’; …lead to greater awareness and understanding of development issues, poverty and diversity (VSO, 2007).

“We had to try to understand that the working practice in the orphanage was a result of much wider issues like the changing political situation in Bulgaria, discriminatory attitudes and policies towards the Roma population and the transitional economic situation” (student)

Findings suggest volunteers developed employability attributes beyond their initial expectations. Individually and collectively they developed a sense and lens of ‘global citizenship’ (OXFAM, 2006, Jones, 2010). The international experience of volunteering was emotional in nature, and significant in developing students confidence, and their understanding of the challenges (and delights) of placing themselves in a wholly unfamiliar context of care.
E2 Internationalisation outside the classroom – Theresa McKinven & Hannah King

Over the past 15 years a significant body of research has been built up considering the experiences of students going overseas to study, most often from the perspective of the overseas student. These include studies focusing on students’ learning experience (e.g. Campbell & Li 2008), interaction between host country and overseas students (e.g. Barron 2006), conditions which can lead to integration of students from different cultures, the potential benefits of interaction (e.g. Gill 2007, 2010) and the difficulties students face in developing relationships with students from other cultures (e.g. Brown 2009) with most institutional practice assuming that integration and adaptation is the responsibility of international students, and global citizenship often reflecting the unspoken or even unacknowledged assumption of ‘westernisation’. The experience of living and studying abroad is particularly challenging, involving as it does the whole person: ‘life abroad represents an extensive natural learning situation which stimulates many more aspects of learners’ personalities than are usually catered for in educational institutions’ (Murphy-Lejeune 2003).

However, there is little research which includes the perspectives of host country students, students’ experience outside the classroom, for example in the communities they may form in student residences (suggested as an ideal opportunity to investigate international learning experience (Van Laar et al. 2005, Kudo & Simkin 2003) due to their nature as ready-made communities with recognisable cultural differences in the membership (Todd & Nesdale 1997), and little research carried out focusing on students’ active participation in shaping the intercultural learning experiences and opportunities for integration. Given the potentially profound impacts of residence overseas, there are also few opportunities provided by institutions to facilitate student evaluation and reflection on their experiences. This presentation will focus on opportunities for intercultural learning outside the classroom and within a wider community.

Session 3: 13:45 – 14:15

A3 What are our International Students Telling us? Further Explorations of a formative feedback intervention, to support academic literacy - Caroline Burns & Martin Foo.

This study reports on a further iteration of an action research cycle, discussed in Burns and Foo (2012, 2013). It explores how formative feedback on academic literacy was used and acted upon. It also considers if a Formative Feedback Intervention providing timely feedback to students on their ‘exploratory essay’ (Wingate, Andon & Cogo, 2011) increased their confidence in future assignments, as well as whether the assignment of a grade was beneficial. Students were asked to give written reflections using Gibbs’ reflective model (1988) and later via a semi-structured questionnaire. In-depth interviews were also carried out to provide rich data. Findings suggest students are taking appropriate actions to close the gap (Sadler, 1989) in particular sharing with their peers, and that the one to one dialogue with staff is important to them (Arkoudis & Tran, 2010). Feedback is reported to be an emotional experience; the grade assigned is highly valued and appears to be used for self-motivation. In addition, students raised the issue of the cultural adjustment they are making to bridge the gap between the teaching and learning of their home and new environment (Charlesworth, 2011).
B3 Co-operative Learning and the International Student – Barbara Whittle

As part of my own CPD, I wanted to investigate the reluctance of some international students, particularly from China and South East Asia, to participate verbally in English in class discussions. Through research, I learned that this was an issue not only in the UK, but also other countries with international students, such as Australia, Canada and the United States. Having come to EAP from the world of ESOL, where students generally were keen to communicate verbally, this was initially surprising to me. My research led me to investigate whether a more co-operative learning style would encourage greater verbal communication in the class. I therefore tracked a group of 12 international students for 4 weeks during one of my pre-sessional Summer School classes, to investigate whether a more co-operative learning approach would encourage more English in class. The results were encouraging, despite the limitations of the study such as time constraints and small group numbers. Since completing this piece of action research, I have found that my own practice has improved and I have gained more confidence as a practitioner. Whilst acknowledging that this method is not a “cure all”, as some students indicated a dislike of this type of group work, I have found this to be a very useful piece of research and has inspired me to do more. In the light of this, I would like to share my findings with colleagues outside my university and encourage any questions or suggestions for future research.

C3 Graduate Voice – “My Personal Employability Skills Portfolio” – Maria Dawson, Danielle Forster, Martyn MOxen & Irena Zenovic.

A pilot study presented at the 5th International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation in Madrid (ICERI2012) entitled ‘Student voice: Personalize my learning’ (Dawson, 2012) explored students’ understandings of the notion of ‘employability’ and encouraged them to build the relationship between Higher Education (HE) and graduate employability in a way that makes sense to them. The findings revealed that transition from undergraduate status to graduate 'work-ready' status requires high-intensity support by academic and student-centred staff teams.

Since then, the pilot study evolved. Adaptations of the teaching and learning approaches initially employed to assist students build their Personal Employability Skills Portfolios (PESP) were refined to suit, even more, the individual’s needs and career aspirations. Personal reflections upon my ‘employability journey and valuable lessons taught were passed on to my students. Specifically, looking to the past for inspiration, aspects from my background knowledge on Business Analysis techniques such as the GROW Model, STAR technique and MOST, emerged and played vital role in developing the students’ decision making process. Applying creatively personal work experience such as the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) also contributed in shaping a realistic view of the students’ skills profiles. Enhancing academic standing via research also meant that students on this study were offered a better experience and added value learning.

The findings of the study, which is currently focused on a broad category of undergraduate students who finish their degree, evidences their journey from the ‘unaware’ phase to ‘informed’ progression in to graduate employment. Even though, the study still acts as a baseline to the initial pilot study and therefore not intended as a definitive, it offers significant insight to what it really means to be a critical, reflective and empowered higher
education graduate from a student’s point of view. It emphasizes the need for HEIs to adapt a development education approach to teaching and learning and exploit education for sustainable development. It also reveals that research-active and research-informed teaching is imperative in enhancing the learning experience of our students and delivers impact.

D3 Supporting integration of study aboard students – Elizabeth Sherman & Suzanne Sarah Bryan

Students who study abroad for a semester or a year face a major transition in overcoming the culture shock of living in an unfamiliar country. They also face of adapting to different higher education system. Ironically the key attraction of undertaking this may be adapting to a new culture and integrating with a more new set of international friends. However this can prove more difficult than expected with a resultant sense of alienation and isolation. Some students then adopt a ‘tourist’ approach and spend all their time with study abroad students from their home institution or country.

We present work from three projects originated by students who all had had a study abroad experience, and felt that structured support could help:

1. Preparing before going abroad, by providing support and advice to outgoing 2nd year students, peer to peer, from those that experienced something very similar.
2. A buddy scheme for incoming study abroad students, to provide informal support and friendship, from home students who had experienced going abroad themselves.
3. Developing a module on inter-cultural competences to incoming study abroad students to enable them to understand the issues involved and develop better strategies to apply in at the time and in the future.

Two of the projects were led and implemented by students, and the third led by a staff member. We shall review how these initiatives unfolded and lesson learned, what the students partners gained, and create an opportunity to discuss the value of such schemes and good practice.

E3 Heard about the HEAR? Evaluation of initial employer impact of the Higher Education Achievement Record, - Helen Hooper, Jenna Tutor, Helen Manns, Roger Penlington & Fiona Caple.

The Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) arose as a recommendation from the final Burgess report ‘Beyond the Honours Degree Classification’ and was first implemented in 2012-2013, with wide spread roll out continuing across the UK HEI sector. The HEAR includes a range of University validated activities - with an underpinning focus on employability, therefore the main risk to the Department/ HEI if the HEAR is not effectively implemented is an impact on the employability of their students. There is currently little information available from employers regarding whether they are aware of the HEAR, what they think of HEARs, if they have seen them, or what they would like to see on a HEAR etc. In order to evaluate the initial employer impact of the HEAR we developed a focussed online survey which was administered to over 150 STEM employers and post graduate course admissions tutors. The survey was targeted at individuals who participate in the graduate recruitment procedures for the company/organisation. Initial data will be discussed in terms of an evidence base on which to inform future development of the HEAR, to encourage students to engage with relevant HEAR activities and to encourage staff to provide support /opportunities for students to engage with relevant HEAR activity.
A4 The International Student Experience: Implications for Policy and Practice – Bruce Majoribanks

This study explored the interplay of capital and habitus during the acculturation process of international students whilst studying in HE institutions in one geographical area. It examined how they employed capital and habitus in their new multicultural context to determine whether they were passive recipients or active participants in the field of UK Higher Education. It sought to question the culturally diverse learners’ experiences with respect to their studying and living conditions in the UK; how personal and situational variables affected their early adjustment processes; how they adjusted to the classroom and university experience, and to life in the local community. The research was carried out across three Higher Education institutions which were located in one geographical area. The findings indicate that the international students did actively use their capital and habitus to realise their goals in spite of barriers imposed by social and cultural reproduction. The findings suggest further investigation of current international education policy and practice as currently international students are not contributing towards the internationalisation of universities, rather it is the international students who are becoming internationally competent and diversity is being contained. Dialogue to promote intercultural understanding between international students and home-based students is not widely occurring. This suggests that opportunities to develop intercultural competencies are not being fully accommodated or recognised with current Higher Education policy priorities regarding internationalisation at home. In spite of marginalisation within the universities and the communities, the international students are developing comparative and international perspectives and intercultural competencies through their experiences.

B4 Raising Staff – Student Awareness of the challenges of academic development as an international student – Tania Watson & Caroline Gibby.

Workshop (25 minutes) Please give objectives for the session and approximate timing of activities if submitting a workshop proposal.

Objectives

- To raise awareness of any barriers to expression when recording observational data in both native and English language
- To promote reflexive practice, toward self and others contributions
- To stimulate debate around the relevance of familiarisation with the challenges international students face when mastering writing in English and the demands of academic writing prose.

Schedule

- 5 minute introduction
- 15 minute exercise [5 minute observation, 10 minutes dual recording in English and native language]

5 minute plenary

C4 Preparing geography undergraduates to teach in the 21st century – Catherine White

The presentation outlines initiatives undertaken by the author at Northumbria University to enhance the graduate capabilities of students and their disciplinary knowledge in two spheres, Geography and Education. The author has
taken over the leadership of the ‘Geography in Education’ module for second and third year undergraduates students. This aims to provide students with a solid grounding in the nature and purpose of geographical education enabling them to decide about entering teaching. Students design and present a lesson for pupils on a topic in either the Early Years Foundation Stage or the National Curriculum for the UK. Students become better learners as a result of taking this module and will have acquired ‘pedagogical intelligence’ about the process of learning.

Another initiative is that of extending the geography undergraduate dissertation to encompass research carried out in schools. This develops ‘pedagogical intelligence’ about how learning happens as well as facilitating the students’ understanding of the ‘signature pedagogy’ of the subject (Schulman 2005).

D4 Identifying Barriers facing international students – Ian Bassam

Much research has been conducted into the student-institution relationship. The attention seems to focus on the macro-view of those students rather than the micro-view of that student. Less emphasis is placed on individual student actions, reactions or interactions.

This research has developed from looking at student communities and groupings of mono-culture and multi-culture, ultimately to see if this has an ‘end product’ to benefit the student. However, it might not be the medium and/or vehicle which is the issue. It could be that there is some sort of barrier is preventing engagement.

The existence of such a barrier needs to be identified. Then the question would be ‘Why is it that some students can cross that barrier?’ Have they identified a barrier and worked out how to negotiate it, are they oblivious to the barrier or do they crash through regardless?

Could there be issues to consider like cultural diversity issues specific the location.

Here the focus is on how some students do develop their social network, and some do not make the social connection.

Having taken the decision to study in a foreign environment, the international has prepared for the encounter, whereas the host students are literally faced with an alien experience and, maybe, do not know to handle the situation!

E4 Student Voice: Is Honesty the bet policy? A student-led review of e-learning – Elaine Tan, Eleanor Loughlin & Malcolm Murray

The level of technology enhanced learning varies across institutions and within departments. The degree to which learners engage with technology is often reported anecdotally by teaching staff or ‘measured’ through institutional surveys. Neither is really effective in establishing a true picture of institutional practice, either in determining how students perceive the efficacy of such technologies or how they impact upon learners’ study habits and practices.
With VLE reporting tools such as Blackboard Analytics now available, universities can finally quantify which tools students use. However the information generated by these reporting tools fails to provide any insight into students’ perceptions of efficacy, stories of use and expectations of outcome. Such tools also fail to capture the personal practices that students have developed to support their own independent or informal learning.

The Student-led Review of E-learning at Durham University differed in that it adopted a student-led and student-centred approach. The aim was to place control of the process in the hands of the students and give primacy to their voices. This presentation, delivered jointly by staff and student members of the team, will provide an overview of the process, the challenges and successes, and the key findings.

Session 5: 14:45 – 15:15

A5 Complex Ion of Complexion/ Using a corpus of student-generated texts to support international student learning at Foundation Level – Megan Bruce & Simon Rees

Durham University Foundation Centre has a diverse cohort consisting mainly of international or mature local students. This talk explores one initiative that we have established to induct our students into the Community of Practice of their progressing department: a corpus known as the FOCUS project. The aim of this project is to build a corpus of student-generated texts from different academic disciplines at different levels of study, then use this searchable data to help Foundation students learn how language is really used in their subject area.

International students have two-fold vocabulary needs: they need to learn new words in their subject area and also learn new subject-specific meanings for words they already know (e.g. heat, weak). Our corpus, supported by a range of self-access facilities which we have designed, allows students to explore words in context and disambiguate different meanings. As an online tool, it can be used by students before they arrive to prepare them for their studies, as well as in class and outside of class throughout their degree to support their learning. Student feedback from previous cohorts shows that the tool has been a success and it is already being shared with other universities and across different departments within Durham. The various stages of the FOCUS project have been funded by two grants from the HEA as well as Durham University Enhancing the Student Learning Experience Awards.

B5 Are we communicating cross-culturally? - Alina Schartner

This paper reports on a study investigating the learning and teaching experiences of international postgraduate students undertaking one-year taught MA programmes in Cross-cultural Communication (CCC) at a university in the North East of England. The programme under study traditionally attracts high international student numbers, mirroring latest statistics which indicate that non-UK students constitute the majority on taught postgraduate degrees at British universities – for 2011/12 this number stood at 69% nationally (UKCISA, 2013). However, whether the presence of large numbers of international students on the MA CCC necessarily means that the programme is ‘international’ remains under-explored. Thus this study asked the question ‘Are we really communication cross-culturally?’

At a time when host universities are increasingly committed to ‘internationalisation at home’ (Newcastle University, 2012), this study explored the academic adjustment experiences of international students and the role
of university staff and existing support structures in this process. A specific interest was in how far ‘internationalisation at home’ has been achieved on the MA CCC.

This paper integrates data from two sources: a series of semi-structured individual interviews conducted with a multinational group of international postgraduate students over the course of one academic year (N = 20), and a follow-up focus group with a group of Chinese international postgraduate students (N = 8).

The data strongly suggests that the international MA CCC students are largely unprepared for ‘new’ learning and teaching practices encountered at their host university, despite an introduction to ‘UK academic culture’ on English language courses. The main adjustment challenges identified by the students include independent learning, the interactive classroom, and critical writing. From the findings, the study proposes new ideas for ongoing academic support and intercultural training for staff.


Since the illustrations of Leonardo da Vinci, artistic portrayals of anatomy have been used in education. Artistic learning methods can be introduced at minimal cost to provide variety and engagement[1]. Drawing can fulfil components of experiential learning[2,3]. Critical looking and reflection can enhance learning of medical students[4], for whom visualisation is a major learning preference[5]. Despite numerous potential benefits, evidence supporting use of drawing in anatomy learning is limited[6-9].

We hypothesise that incorporating drawing into anatomy sessions using our ORDER (observe-reflect-draw-edit-repeat) process can maintain engagement and improve knowledge retention. We aim to explore if learning is significantly enhanced by ORDER in comparison with current methods.

ORDER involves students observing an anatomical image. The image is removed; students discuss, reflect and draw. Repetition with further detail added in each cycle allows students to build up drawings to develop and reinforce understanding. A mixed-method approach has generated data for ORDER evaluation in a pilot study (n=7) and cross-over randomised controlled trial (n=250), with pre-testing and immediate and delayed post-testing. Perceptions were obtained in feedback questionnaires. Student partners from medical and artistic disciplines have conducted research in collaboration with a professional artist.

ORDER can enhance learning and is perceived as valuable and engaging. Student partner approaches have yielded successful outputs. Partners have developed knowledge, research abilities and transferable skills.

ORDER will be investigated in further topics and learning environments. The ultimate outcome will be introduction of ORDER into curricula. Alternative artistic methods will be investigated to optimise variety and engagement for all students.

References
D5 Flipping Assessment! Using Group work to encourage student creativity and confidence – Libby Hampson, Debra Tinney, Kevin Stewart & Adam Howe.

Skills based modules don't always get the best press, and assessed group presentations, prevalent in this type of module, often elicit the most criticism. Yet against increased pressure on universities to enhance their student employability and prepare graduates for the 21st Century, there is still a need to encourage team skills and to make sure the experience is relevant and appealing to full/part-time students from a wide range of backgrounds. None more so than in Teesside University’s Business School’s Personal and Team Effectiveness (PTE), a 1st year core skills module.

Wanting to explore ways to engage students in group work, Senior Lecturer, Libby Hampson, and Learning Technologist, Debra Tinney, developed an assessment to build student creativity and confidence through supporting risk taking.

The resulting presentations highlighted how giving students choice and control transformed them into their own critical friends, and how turning their presentations into ‘products’ engendered a sense of pride and ownership which they were able to articulate with confidence. An added bonus, was that it allowed a much fuller role to be taken by international students and others lacking confidence in public speaking – thus creating a more balanced forum for involvement and engendering a greater sense of team involvement and cohort identity.

Student feedback on the process has been predominantly positive and taking the platform to show a selection of presentations alongside Libby and Debra, will be two PTE students to honestly discuss the reality of injecting diversity, challenge and fun into building team skills and assessment.

E5 International Student Success – Do the raw materials meet the specification? – David Bell.

Purpose: To confirm the entry standards of specialist MSc programmes within Engineering and provide a diagnostic test that will determine if a prospective student has the underpinning knowledge to facilitate success on the programme.
Design/ Methodology/Approach:- The entry standards for the specialist programmes within Engineering were benchmarked against the competitor set used in the Corporate Strategy to identify any significant differences or practices. The entry test was developed by discussion with the programme leaders at Northumbria. Its suitability was tested on Northumbria final year undergraduate (UG) students and compared with their degree award. The results from UG and post graduate (PG) students provided data that was analysed to confirm the programme leader’s expectations. The test was then given to new MSc students and analysis carried out to compare how well they progressed on the programme.

Findings:- There are no major differences in the academic entry criterion specified within the benchmark group, however English requirements do differ. The Northumbria undergraduate students that passed the test graduated at upper second class level or higher. Both graduating UG and in coming PG students had similar levels of knowledge. There is moderate correlation which is statistically significant, between the entry test and the postgraduate results.

Originality/value:- This model will help enrol more appropriate students and improve the retention, progression, completion and performance of International students as stated in the Corporate Strategy. This model could be adopted by any School or Institution offering specialist PGT programmes.

Question Time

This final session will provide an opportunity to ask questions, on L&T issues, of a panel comprising students from across the region. Questions can be submitted by delegates to conference session chairs or the registration desk in the foyer throughout the day using postcards.

Panel members: Student Representatives from all 5 Universities.

Chair: Paul Taylor (Teesside University)

We hope you have enjoyed the 3 Rivers Conference 2014. If you have any comments to make we will be pleased to hear them, either through the brief electronic feedback form we will send you, or direct to Robert.matthew@Durham.ac.uk