

PedRIO Research/ Teaching Fellowship Award Scheme: Progress Report

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Title of project: Internationalisation of Learning and Teaching

Type of project: Research and Development

Keywords: Internationalisation of the Curriculum; Internationalisation at Home; Home Students

Aims of project: To expand the existing understanding of internationalisation of learning and teaching in HE for home-based students across several disciplines/faculties, and provide evidence of impact for interventions to enhance the same at PU.

Background/context to project: International awareness and competence is an employability trait expected/desired of graduates in most fields (Jones and Killick 2013). Previous studies of internationalisation of the curriculum have focused heavily on international students, home students abroad and transnational partnerships. There is an identified need to address home students, as many as 80% of whom have limited direct contact with internationalisation (Jones 2013; Jones and Killick 2013; HEPI 2015). Current research on this issue is sparse, and the extant literature does not address student views, effects of teaching changes on these or the situation across a range of disciplines.

Methods used: Student surveys x2; staff interviews, Delphi survey; systematic literature review; content analysis; staff workshop

Results:

Literature Review: Very little literature refers to home students at all. Where literature is found on home students, it typically concerns study abroad experiences. There has been a recent focus on non-mobile home students from a few researchers (Jones and Killick 2007; Beelen 2015), but much of this explores home students' experiences *with* international students on campus. The limits of this approach in contexts where international students are not present has recently been acknowledged, and a proposed solution has been multicultural volunteering in local communities.

There is also an identified bias in the literature towards Business subjects, where higher concentrations of international students exist, as there are clearer international elements to the subject matter. Our review found that 47% of publications on internationalisation of the curriculum in the past 5 years have drawn on exclusively Business subjects as evidence sources. The literature which provided empirical studies was limited, focusing on single subjects, single institutions and/or using online student surveys which may not capture dissident student views.

Content Analysis of UK University Strategies:

- We reviewed the University Strategies for 117 UK HEIs, and the specific Internationalisation Strategies for those which were available (about half).
- ALL refer to developing internationalisation as a key selling point and goal.
- Nearly all relate this only to welcoming international students, expanding recruitment overseas, making transnational partnerships, and developing international research.
- This aligns with the current league table rankings, which only account for percentage of international students and volume of international research.
- Very few make any mention of home students. Those that do refer to the benefits to them of having more international students, or of study abroad.
- Only three addressed non-mobile home students directly.

Student Surveys (Key Findings of Year 1)

- Home students are largely positive about internationalisation in the curriculum in all subjects.
- Their understandings of Global Citizenship are erratic and not similar to the presumed meaning in the literature - student definitions lack personal agency or responsibility.
- Student understandings of Cross-Cultural Competency are very consistent, clearly articulated, and nearly always involved personal agency and responsibility.
- There was a divide between Science and Business/Social Science disciplines as anticipated. The latter were strongly pro-internationalisation of the curriculum and the former much less so (but still not overall negative). However, Biology was more similar to the Business/Social Sciences than to the other Science subjects, while English Literature was more similar to the Science subjects.
- Science students felt *multiculturalism* was irrelevant, but that a global perspective was useful for employment. They felt that their subjects were objective, empirical, and culturally universal, therefore international without needing special focus.
- English Literature students felt multiculturalism was relevant, but also had the strongest *qualitative* resistance to internationalisation. They cited that the subject was 'English' literature, therefore not international (even though the module, in this case, was about Homer's *Odyssey*!)
- Education and Social Work students noted the value of multiculturalism in the *home* environment they expect to work in.
- Business and Social Work students were much more positive about all aspects of internationalisation, and had almost no negative outliers - all other subjects had many.
- Business students exclusively felt strongly that international students in one's classes and/or study abroad were necessary for international learning. This implies that internationalisation cannot be learned by home students without these elements.
- The previous two points, together with the Business bias in the literature, suggest that current trends in internationalisation of the curriculum for home students wrongly assume an environment rich in international students and study abroad

opportunities. Further, it presumes a *recognised* international element to the subjects themselves.

- The impact of specific teaching methods on student views was unclear. Nevertheless, some tentative patterns were present.
 - Several pedagogies showed as moderately influential on positive student views over the whole dataset. Specifically, those which drew attention to international or multicultural aspects of the subject directly - those which were *explicit and contextualised*.
 - However, looked at by subject, this relationship almost entirely disappeared. Thus, subjects which taught these ways also had students with more positive views, but we cannot say whether one has influenced the other. Stage-two will help resolve this.

Provisional Recommendations

1. Focus staff guidance and interventions on promoting Cross-Cultural Competence by name, as students appear to grasp the meaning and personal responsibility of this term in each subject.
2. Focus staff guidance away from promoting the term Global Citizenship, at least in year 1, as this term is poorly understood, and students do not associate it with something within their control or responsibility.
3. Be wary of recommendations from Business-centric research, which do not address the views and situations of the majority of students. Many studies in subjects other than Business continue to rely on the Business-centric core for interpretation.
4. Focus staff guidance on identifying and explicitly introducing the international and multicultural aspects of each subject in a highly contextualised way. At PU, the immersive module seems to be a perfect opportunity to do so. Done at this stage, this awareness may positively colour students' perceptions other internationalisation of the curriculum initiatives that follow, such as multicultural campus events which they may otherwise view as irrelevant to their course.

Note: This project runs until the start of 2017, thus several data sources are still being collected/analysed

Associated publications (*in production*):

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| 2016 | Troy Heffernan, David Morrison, Debby Cotton, Pollyanna Magne, Simon Payne, "Internalising Internationalisation: views on internationalisation of the curriculum among home-based students" <i>in Studies in Higher Education</i> |
| 2016 | Troy Heffernan, David Morrison, Debby Cotton, Pollyanna Magne, Simon Payne, "Citizenship or Competence: the impact of terms on student views of internationalisation" <i>in British Journal of Educational Research</i> |

Dissemination: VCT&L Conference; staff workshop; website updates; 7 Steps/PCGAP updates

Are you happy for us to include your project on our website? Yes