



## Global Education at Australian Universities

著者	Higashino Mitsunari, Ota Masahiko
journal or publication title	Bulletin of Kyushu Institute of Technology (Institute of Liberal Arts)
number	1
page range	1-14
year	2017-03-31
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10228/00006058">http://hdl.handle.net/10228/00006058</a>

# Global education at Australian universities

(Received December 7, 2016)

Kyushu Institute of Technology Mitsunari HIGASHINO

Kyushu Institute of Technology Masahiko OTA

## Abstract

In this paper, we examine several practices of global education at Australian universities and, thereby, identify their characteristics and challenges in order to derive implications for higher education in Japan. We visited four universities in Australia, i.e. the University of Wollongong, the University of Melbourne, Monash University, and La Trobe University, and conducted interviews with academic as well as administrative staff in charge of global education or studies abroad. The universities we visited understood that the institutional transformation of educational systems was a necessary prerequisite for globalization of university education. In the implementation of institutional transformations, initiatives undertaken by a university-wide organization, the involvement of faculty members through workshops and group discussions, and careful implementation considering potential tensions between “research” and “education” were confirmed. With regard to the actual contents of global education, the cases we examined strongly emphasized the practical application of learned knowledge or skills, to be acquired through interactions with real society, to global issues. It was clearly recognized that a major role of universities is to help students acquire such competencies for the practical application of knowledge, with an emphasis on the processes through which students recognize that they can – and should – apply learned knowledge to global problems for solutions. We confirmed that the practices of Australian global education, which refer to “inner multicultural situations” and strive to foster global citizenship contributing to solutions of global problems, have many implications for Japanese universities.

## 1. Australian society and education

Australia is a country built on immigration from Britain and has high degrees of ethnic and racial diversity. Although more than 80% of the country’s population have European origins, those with Asian origins and Aboriginal peoples constitute approximately 10% and 2% of the nation’s population, respectively (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015). “European origins” of course are not monolithic, comprising various different cultural backgrounds including British, Italian, Greek, and others. Approximately 20% of the country’s population is considered to be comprised of

immigrants, with large numbers of people from China, India, and Vietnam.

As a nation with diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, “multiculturalism” is an essential characteristic for Australia, as it has never been free from multicultural influences. This is in contrast to Japan, which has long been dominated by a myth of a “homogeneous society”, although Japan has several ethnic minorities. Without reflecting on or reconsidering this historical myth, there is currently a call for multiculturalism or intercultural understanding, mostly to cope with recent trends of globalization.

However, even in Australia, multicultural preconditions have not necessarily led to harmonization or good relationships among cultures and races. Racial discrimination has deep roots in Australian history and society. Although white Australian policy is no longer officially in place, it is said that attitudes of white superiority in regard to others, such as Asians, blacks, or Middle-Eastern immigrants, persist. In 2005, the Cronulla Race Riots in Sydney’s suburbs, which saw violence between non-immigrant whites against Middle Eastern – and particularly Lebanese – immigrants, exposed the persistence of racial discrimination, or possibly the combination of neo-nationalism promoted by globalization with existing attitudes of racial discrimination.

Australia has struggled to create national unity. In this context, language and education have been important tools towards this goal. Although English is the official language of Australia, according to census data, the percentage of families that use English exclusively is just 78.5%. Among immigrant families, it is common to speak the mother language at home. It is estimated that 2.1% and 1.6% of the total population can speak only Chinese or Italian, respectively. To resolve the dilemma of harmonization and unify the diversity of languages, Australia has, on the one hand, declared that English is the official common language; on the other hand, it has adopted a language policy for the maintenance of immigrant and indigenous languages (Matsuda, 2009).

As well as language policies, the nation’s multicultural characteristics have affected Australia’s educational policies. In particular, there is a growing concern about the widening and perpetuating educational gaps that exist among cultures and races. Against this backdrop, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians was adopted in 2008. Securing preschool education for all children starting at age four and improving secondary-education completion rates are included in its goals (Sato, 2011; Shimomura, 2012).

In this regard, Australia has often employed the concept of citizenship as a basic philosophy of national integration. *Australian Citizenship for a New Century*, a report by the Australian Citizenship Council in 2000, expresses that citizenship, which can promote national integration, should seek shared values in Australia. Apart from public-school education, the concept of citizenship is also applied to so-called immigration tests (Sato, 2011).

Another characteristic of Australian education is that it has been an export industry, particularly higher education. The number of foreign students in Australia is approximately 600,000, and the global share of foreign students in higher education has reached 7% (Shimomura, 2012). This has resulted from Australia's positioning education as an important industry in the context of the increasing significance of service industries, and the country has actively recruited foreign students. Recently, the New Colombo Plan, with initiatives to dispatch Australian students to other parts of the Asia-Pacific Region, was launched (Australian Government, 2015). This plan is designed to encourage students to participate in internship or mentorship programs in companies or other organizations in other countries in the region. The globalization of higher education is being promoted so that Australia can make strong economic growth and establish markets in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Thus, there are two directions towards globalization in Australian education and particularly in the nation's higher education. One aims to develop citizens that can contribute to the global society, with the nation's background of multiculturalism. The other aims to recruit and dispatch globally competitive human resources from/to other countries, with higher education as a service industry.

Japan is confronting a similar situation. Amid rapid globalization, many universities are facing challenges related to fostering citizens who can think and act based on global perspectives, and, through trial and error processes, they are considering what kinds of roles universities can play. In this situation, it is of great importance to learn from the advanced examples of other countries. In the present study, we examine several practices related to global education in Australian universities and, thereby, identify their characteristics and challenges in order to derive knowledge about their implications for higher education in Japan.

## 2. Analytical frameworks and methods

Japanese universities are vociferously calling for global education and the development of globally competitive human resources. One of the representative organizations addressing this request is the Council on Promotion of Human Resource for Globalization Development established by the Japanese government. Its 2012 report states that “global human resources” should have the following characteristics: (1) linguistic and communication skills, (2) self-direction and positiveness, a spirit for challenge, cooperativeness and flexibility, and a sense of responsibility and mission, and (3) understanding of other cultures and a sense of identity as a Japanese. These three factors are often found, with some modification in expression, in the documents of other councils or meetings in Japan to explain global human resources.

However, Yoshida (2014) indicates that the concept of global human resources that prevails in Japan crucially lacks critical thinking. She advises that this skill is needed for Japanese universities to foster persons who can think critically about – and possibly with stances of resistance – various issues or problems brought about by globalization, not just to develop human resources required by Japan or Japanese companies wishing to adapt to globalization.

Global education in the present study also stands on these perspectives. We focus on how we can help student establish identities as citizens in the context of global social transformations, with critical senses of resistance to globalization. In this sense, we considered that we would be able to learn a lot from global education in Australian universities, where multicultural circumstances and trends of globalization converge.

Against this backdrop, we visited four universities in Australia, i.e. the University of Wollongong, the University of Melbourne, Monash University, and La Trobe University, during February and March of 2015, and conducted interviews with academic as well as administrative staff in charge of global education or study-abroad programs (interviewees are listed in Appendix 1). All four universities are highly prestigious regarding education and research, and they have actively been accepting foreign students. These interviews, not only with academic staff but also with administrative staff, represent valuable “voices” regarding the actualities in the Australian higher-education sector.

In the following chapters, we examine the institution and practice of global

education, as well as the supporting systems for study-abroad programs.

### **3. Institutional arrangements and the practice of global education**

#### **3.1. Institutional arrangements for global education**

All of the universities where we conducted interviews understood that globalization or interculturalization of university education comprised much more than simply dispatching or inviting students to and from foreign countries. They understood that the institutional transformation of educational systems was a necessary prerequisite for the true globalization of university education. In this section, we review curriculum transformations at the University of Wollongong and La Trobe University.

##### *The University of Wollongong*

The University of Wollongong has been implementing the Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP) since 2013. A university-wide organization called Learning, Teaching & Curriculum (LTC) was in charge of implementing this project. Its objectives were to review and transform curricula for all courses taught at the university to meet the requirements of higher-education standards in Australia, to develop existing best practices or course designs, and to develop technological infrastructure for the effective delivery and assessment of education. CTP has four themes, i.e. “research/equity based”, “real world focused”, “technology enriched”, and “intellectually challenging”. To accomplish these, five transformational practices, i.e. FYE (First Year Entrance)@UOW, My Portfolio@UOW, Hybrid Learning@UOW, Connections@UOW, and Capstones@UOW, were prepared as facilitation tools. These were expected to be fully implemented throughout the university by 2018, preceded by dissemination and consultation to staff, students, graduates, and career staff advisors from 2013 to 2014 with a trial implementation beginning in 2015.

This curricular transformation was not designed specifically for the sake of educational globalization. However, for example, the theme of “intellectually challenging” includes the following: “carefully designed learning activities and open, flexible curriculum structures will empower students to be adventurous in their learning by exploring unfamiliar and challenging subject matter and pressing global questions”, where directions to foster citizenship through global education were explicitly presented.

In the Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences, Engineering Across Cultures (EAC) has been implemented. EAC, an educational program funded by the Australian government (Office for Learning & Teaching), was intended to teach students how cultural aspects affect the work of engineers and engineering design, and thereby develop intercultural competencies for engineers (details are explained in sub-chapter 3.2). The Engineering Education group in the faculty was in charge of implementation.

What should be emphasized here is that EAC had been integrated into the official curriculum as a mandatory course for undergraduate first-year students (“Design and Innovation”) in the Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences. A senior lecturer who had played a crucial role in this project told us that EAC was a new kind of initiative, and thus, it had to be institutionalized as an official subject so that it would not fade away after a few activities were accomplished. The LTC recognized that EAC was a good practice for curricular transformation in the Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences and was willing to disseminate the experience of this intercultural subject throughout the university.

#### *La Trobe University*

At La Trobe University, the Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IOC) project was implemented by a university-wide organization, La Trobe Learning and Teaching (LTLT), having been initiated by the Pro Vice-Chancellor of Teaching and Learning. The definition of the internationalization of the curriculum was the integration of international or intercultural aspects into the curriculum and university education. The project was intended to transform curricula through the process cycle of review, imagine, revise and plan, act, and evaluate. The project also emphasized the processes through which faculty members proactively increase self-awareness and collectively transform their faculty. For this purpose, in general, teams comprised of approximately five members were developed for each course, and they conducted reviews of existing curricula. Information related to this project, such as questionnaires, was open to the public on their website (<http://www.ioc.global>).

The above-cited website provided concrete cases. For example, in the field of nursing, concrete curriculum transformations were undertaken based on faculty members’ clear recognition, which had been fostered through group discussions, that nurses in Australia must cope practically with various patients who have diverse

cultural backgrounds.

### *Summary*

Efforts in these two universities had the following similarities. In the first place, directions and activities were explicitly written in each university's strategic plans, a university-wide organization was established, and activities were implemented through university-wide initiatives. Secondly, in the implementation processes, academic staff members of each faculty were involved through workshops and group discussions, and activities were promoted as educational initiatives. Thirdly, activities were implemented carefully, with a consideration of the potential tensions that could arise between "research" and "education", both of which are primary duties of academic staff.

The executive dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences at the University of Wollongong told us that, although acknowledging the fact that there were several faculty members who did not want to spend much time on education at the expense of time for research, both education and research can and should go together. He said that in Australian higher-education institutions, research and education were both imperative duties for academic staff, and that large portions of their salaries were paid as rewards for educational activities; therefore, academic staff should be effective educationalists in parallel with being good researchers.

From the perspective of cooperation between the university-wide administration and faculties, the presence of the aforementioned senior lecturer who played a crucial role in EAC provides a number of implications. He was a member of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences, and at the same time, he adequately cooperated with the university administration or the university-wide organization (LTC), and informed and coordinated with other members in the Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences in regard to university-led reform initiatives. The executive dean told us that, thanks to his work and his presence on the Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences, cooperation with the university administration had been more smoothly implemented than in other faculties. It is clear that the presence of such a key person can work favorably for the implementation of university-wide initiatives.

Australia does not have to take into account the development of English-language skills when it comes to globalization or internationalization of university



curricula; in this sense, the Australian efforts may not be directly applicable to Japan. However, the facts that they considered fundamental curriculum transformations, not merely the dispatching of students, to be necessary to address globalization or internationalization, and that they carefully managed potential tensions between the university-wide organization and faculties or between research and education, were meaningful implications for Japanese university education.

### **3.2. The practice of global education**

Here we review global education programs in two universities, i.e. the Engineering Across Cultures (EAC) program at the University of Wollongong and the Bachelor of Global Studies at Monash University. As previously noted, EAC had been developed as a mandatory subject for first-year students of “Design and Innovation” in the Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences; we will refer to this subject in particular.

#### *Engineering across Cultures (EAC) at the University of Wollongong*

The subject of “Design and Innovation” was comprised of several units with specific themes, for which students would think about engineering, designing, or creating and giving presentations in line with the themes. For example, the first unit was about “How people live and the impact of engineering”, for which students were expected to learn about interactions between building designs and cultures with various examples of building materials and lifestyles all over the world.

The second unit was related to energy-efficient school buildings and the aim for students was to attempt to design school buildings that could realize efficient energy use at reduced costs and that were suitable for children in all developmental stages. Students were expected to discuss achieving harmony between engineering technology and humanity with various actual samples of school buildings. The third unit, “Exploring workplace cultures”, dealt with practical issues of managing client requests such as effective prevention of operational or workmen’s accidents.

With these materials, students were directed to engage in learning about interactions between cultures and technology, practical design and production, or developing presentations. Student notes, with which students would develop their learning processes, had been prepared for each unit. In these notes, purposes or time allocations for each unit were presented, and blank pages were included for recording

the results of tasks. Tutor notes had also been prepared for each unit, which included time allocation, instructional points, and an evaluation of the unit. Tutors were expected to manage lectures using these notes as detailed guidelines.

The director of the Engineering Education group (head of the EAC program) commented that EAC was also important for learning about the cultures of Aboriginal peoples, which could be said to be Australia's inner diversity. In fact, teaching materials contained Aboriginal cultures in Australia, and a couple of Aboriginal people had been highly involved in the Engineering Education group. The director told us that engineers would have opportunities to accept project orders from Aboriginal people and work in their regions at their request, and hence, developing intercultural competencies through EAC would also be helpful for working effectively in such situations.

Thus, it was confirmed that Wollongong's EAC program (the subject of "Design and Innovation") was not simply useful for making lectures more globalized or interculturalized. Rather, EAC was an educational transformation initiative designed to develop teaching achievements and methods to become more deliberate. In addition, EAC was distinctive in emphasizing the relationship with Aboriginal peoples in Australia and for collaborating with these people in planning and implementation.

#### *Bachelor of Global Studies at Monash University*

At Monash University, the Bachelor of Global Studies course had been implemented in the Faculty of Arts, with double degree arrangements with the Bachelor of Commerce or Bachelor of Science. This course emphasized how to confront various issues or problems that accompanied globalization and how to transform society. This point was in contrast to faculties of letters or arts in general in Japan, where conceptual disciplines such as philosophy, history, literature, and so on, are mainly taught. The goal of the Bachelor of Global Studies course was to foster students who could explore how to practically apply learned knowledge to global transformations. In this course, study abroad was mandatory (discussed in detail in Chapter 4). In addition, collaboration with companies and interactive learning methods such as group work were emphasized; this emphasis on collaboration with companies was a feature that is not common in faculties of letters in Japanese universities.

It was confirmed that theoretical exploration or academic disciplines were not neglected. During the three years of the course, which had applied a major and

minor system, students were to complete general academic coursework such as anthropology, history, philosophy, or politics for major subjects and could take subjects such as “Australia in the World”, “Bioethics”, or “Holocaust and Genocide Studies” for minor subjects. Special subjects such as “Global Cultural Literacies”, “International Relations”, or “International Studies” had been prepared for the course.

As previously noted, although this course was offered in the Faculty of Arts, its main subjects were related to war, peace, or area studies, and a focus was placed on how to apply learned knowledge to practical issues for the solution of global problems or to bring about social transformations. This course reflected Australia’s educational orientation of a focus on fostering citizenship and multiculturalism. It could also be regarded as a practice for global education, not for students merely to adapt to global transformations but to be able to think and act in ways that would bring about solutions of global problems or issues.

### *Summary*

It turned out that both programs strongly emphasized the practical application of learned knowledge or skills, to be acquired through interactions with real society, to global issues. Both universities clearly recognized that a major role of universities is to help students acquire such competencies. They also emphasized the processes through which students recognize that they can, and they should, apply learned knowledge to global solutions. Such philosophical constructs would be useful for global education in Japan.

## **4. Studies abroad and student-supportive systems**

In this chapter, we review studies abroad and supportive systems for students. In the universities we visited, university-wide organizations such as Study Abroad Centers were in charge of studies abroad. “Studies abroad” were understood as semester-based and individual-based learning activities differentiated from “study tours”, which were basically one- or two-week visits to foreign countries with a group of students. North America and Europe were more popular destinations for studies abroad than was Asia.

Regarding student support, at the University of Wollongong, there was a systematic information provision and advice system at the Study Abroad Center, with

professional personnel for study abroad or exchange programs. We found a number of brochures for universities in various countries there. A person in charge told us that, basically, students select the university they wish to attend for study abroad from a list of universities that have an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the University of Wollongong, based on their own interests or purposes.

In the universities we visited, group-based, short-term study tours, which are often implemented at Japanese universities, were basically under the responsibilities of each faculty, and it appeared that Study Abroad Centers did not necessarily have all the related information. From our interviews, it was implied that short-term study tours were less popular than semester-based studies abroad. Related to this point, an interviewee at the International Office at La Trobe University commented that engineering students generally have less interest in studying abroad than other faculties' students, and hence, if more opportunities for short-term study tours, which are easier to join, were offered, more students could be encouraged to study abroad.

As referred to earlier, in the Bachelor of Global Studies course at Monash University, study abroad was mandatory. Of the total 144 credits required for graduation, 12 credits should be earned through study abroad with a credit transfer system. Students generally select universities with MOUs or that oversee campuses of Monash University. In general, students take courses offered at the universities with which they are affiliated. However, it is also possible to earn credits through extracurricular activities such as internships in cases where there are no courses that match students' interests. In addition, students do not have to stay continuously at that university and in that country during the semester; students can return to Australia after completing 12 credits. This system offers flexibility to Australian students who are generally busy and may hesitate to study abroad for a long time. To what extent students have been able to convincingly explain what they learned and how they can utilize what they learned through their study abroad is regarded as an important educational outcome.

As mentioned in the introduction, universities in Australia are making efforts to increase the number students who study abroad, supported by the New Colombo Plan. However, some interviewees from the University of Wollongong and La Trobe University commented that, in Australia, even students whose parents are native English speakers are not very proactive about going to non-English-speaking countries to gain experience. In addition, they also mentioned that, in a world where

the common language is English, students who are native English speakers have little motivation to learn a second language, and hence, it is difficult to encourage students to go abroad to study at universities that do not offer courses in English.

Learning English is not necessarily an indispensable element of global education. Nevertheless, for non-native English speakers such as Japanese students, to be in an environment where English is spoken is a great motivation for studying abroad. In this sense, push factors to let students go abroad may be stronger in Japan than in Australia.

## **5. Implications for Japanese universities**

Lastly, we present implications derived from the interview surveys for higher education in Japan. The first point is that Australian universities were consciously taking “inner multicultural situations” into consideration. For example, at the University of Wollongong, in program implementation, collaboration with Aboriginal peoples was regarded as an important aspect. At Monash University, solutions for cultural conflict, including gender violence, were emphasized as a reason to foster citizenship in global education. Australia is a country where English is the common language and where various immigrants live alongside each other, and therefore, multiculturalism should be an a priori assumption. However, even in Australia, “inner multicultural situations” might not have been adequately and appropriately taken into consideration. It could be said that global or intercultural education in Australia is built upon the self-reflection of such an existing context.

Japan also has various kinds of cultural conflicts within the country, e.g. foreign residents in Japan, disabled people, inequalities over gender or sexuality, economic disparities or poverty issues, etc. Exclusionism or social fragmentation might even have been accelerated due to rapid globalization. Globalization is not merely the increase of international mobility or a concept simply confined to industrial or financial aspects. An essence of globalization represents phenomena in which transformations of capital or labor are directly connected to transformations of our daily lives or localities. Australian global or intercultural education provides a perspective that makes us aware of the importance of “inner multicultural situations” and “inner cultural conflicts”.

Recently, universities in Japan have been preparing subjects that teach students

languages or global situations to adjust to the trends of globalization. However, how they define globalization and what kinds of individuals they are trying to foster are still unclear. In addition, subjects that aim to contribute to solutions of various kinds of cultural conflicts by combining human/social sciences and natural sciences have not been sufficient.

The aforementioned characteristics of Australian global education, which refer to “inner multicultural situations” and attempt to foster global citizenship contributing to solutions of global problems have a number of implications for such Japanese situations. In particular, it is significantly suggestive for Japanese universities that Monash University’s Bachelor of Global Studies course stressed the development of global citizenship or multiculturalism, applicability to society, and collaboration with society or companies in their curriculum transformation. The University of Wollongong’s EAC program is also equally suggestive in a sense that it strongly integrated engineering education into liberal arts education with detailed teaching materials, with the importance of the cultural aspects of engineering work or the working environment being properly taught.

## References

- Australian Government (2015). *New Colombo Plan*. Retrieved 31 March 2015 from:  
<http://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/pages/new-colombo-plan.aspx>
- Central Intelligence Agency (2015). *World Fact Book*. Retrieved 31 March 2015 from:  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/as.html>
- Matsuda, Y. (2009). *Language education policy in a multicultural Australia*. Kobe: Hitsuji Shobo. (in Japanese)
- Sato, H. (2011). *Educational reform in Australia: challenges for an education-oriented nation in the 21st century*. Tokyo: Gakubunsha. (in Japanese)
- Shimomura, T. (2012). Educational revolution: educational reform amid globalization. In: Institute of Australian Studies at Waseda University (ed.), *Australia in the world: globalization of society and culture* (pp. 171-189). Yokohama: Oceania Press. (in Japanese)
- Watanabe, M.E. (2014). The international baccalaureate program in the global age: its impact on socialization and public education. *Japanese Journal of Educational Research*, 81, 176-185. (in Japanese with an English abstract)
- Yoshida, A. (2014). “Global human resource development” and university education in Japan: from the perspective of “localism” in discussion among actors. *Japanese Journal of Educational Research*, 81, 164-175. (in Japanese with an English abstract)

## Appendix 1: List of Interviewees

---

The University of Wollongong (visit on 27 February 2015)

- Director, Engineering and Mathematics Research Group, Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences
  - Senior Lecturer, Engineering Education, Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences
  - Executive Dean, Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences
  - Associate Dean-Education, Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences
  - OLT National Teaching Fellow/ Director, Learning, Teaching & Curriculum
  - Director, International Engagement & Coordination
  - Manager for Student Mobility, Office of Global Student Mobility, International Engagement & Coordination
- 

The University of Melbourne (visit on 2 March 2015)

- Senior Lecturer, Center for the Study of Higher Education
  - Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Higher Education
- 

Monash University (visit on 3 March 2015)

- Associate Dean (Education), Faculty of Arts
  - Group Manager, Marketing, Recruitment and International Development
- 

La Trobe University (visit on 3 March 2015)

- Pro Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning
  - Senior Coordinator, La Trobe Abroad
-