LINK 16

Internationalisation

"It's a small world?"

As academics, we can never be accused of keeping things simple. We seem to delight in polysyllabic words or opaque acronyms whenever the opportunity arises. In this issue of LINK we consider 'internationalisation'. The use of a single word might, in this case, suggest a simple concept, but it hides a highly complex area already benefiting from our fullest attention – as the range of contributions reflects.

At one end of a spectrum of concerns are questions about the nature of curricula which can prepare all students for life in the world of the 21st Century, to ensure familiarity with global and multicultural issues, and to encourage inter-cultural skills. We want to ensure that our international students can engage successfully with curricula which are relevant to their needs and at the same time must ensure that our home students capitalise on opportunities to be international in their outlook. We need to be aware of the international career aspirations of all our students and the skills they require to contribute to the large multi-national employers in our sector or for international mobility as they pursue their careers.

At the other end of the spectrum are questions of comparability, standards and levels raised by developments in Europe and through our engagement with higher education generally, and in our subject areas particularly, across the world. The world is a smaller place but we don't yet have shared views in some of the key areas. We may even use the same words but not with the same meanings and so must recognise and understand differences, build consensus when possible, and be prepared for change.

Mid-spectrum are exciting developments in student and staff exchanges, student internships overseas, collaborative programmes, and offering UK programmes overseas. But we must not forget that these developments are often to ensure competitiveness in recruiting students, success financially as institutions, and distinctiveness in the market place. We have to achieve these whilst working together to enhance provision for our students in our subject areas internationally.

Internationalisation is a long word, perhaps rightly for such a complex area. We shall consider its significance further in our annual conference this year ...."It's a Small World? International Opportunities and Challenges for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education". ■

Clive Robertson, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Network

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European Higher Education Area (EHEA) – An Overview

Katie Akerman and **Nick Harris**, QAA

Key organisations

- The European Commission

- European University Association

- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

- The National Unions of Students in Europe

 .... the so-called 'E4'

Key policy – the Bologna Process

The Bologna Process (see also the article on page 20) is an inter-governmental process involving 45 European countries with the aim of increasing co-operation and creating common reference points and comparable structures in the field of higher education, including:

- systems for easily comparable degrees – a qualifications framework – and student achievements – diploma supplement

- co-operation in HE quality assurance

- a common system of credits

- support for mobility of students and teachers

Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA

This was 'adopted' by ministers under their Bergen Communique (2005) http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050520_Bergen_Communique.pdf . It sets out the three agreed Bologna cycles – Bachelor's (the honours degree in UK terms), Master's and Doctoral. It includes generic cycle descriptors that should be used as 'reference points', or as legal requirements in some countries. The cycle descriptors are compatible with the England, Wales and Northern Ireland Framework for Higher Education Qualification descriptors. The European framework also includes guidelines on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/BASIC/Framework_Qualifications.HTM

For further details of the 'Dublin' descriptors, see: www.unibuc.ro/uploads_ro/35714/Dublin_Descriptors_2004Doctor.pdf

Diploma Supplement (DS)

The DS should be issued to students on graduation from their HEI. It should set out their qualification in a standard format and describe the content of the qualification (see: www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europeunit/qualifications/diploma_supplement.cfm).

European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (QA)

These were also adopted in Bergen and cover QA within HEIs, external QA for HEIs and QA of the agencies that organise the external QA (see: www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050221_ENQA_report.pdf).

European Credit and Transfer System (ECTS)

This is used widely throughout Europe. The system was originally developed to aid recognition of student's study away from their 'home institution', and was based upon 'time served'. It is seeking to move towards recognition of learning outcomes, and encompass 'credit accumulation'. Although several UK HEIs use ECTS, the recent Burgess consultation on credit for HE in England returned a 'no' vote to the proposal that ECTS be introduced as a national system (see: www.hea.ie/index.cfm/page/sub/id/902).

Other current projects include:

The Trans-national European Evaluation Projects (TEEP)

The first TEEP project developed a method, including criteria and their application, for the QA of bachelors programmes, and the second, which has just ended, for the evaluation of joint masters programmes. These will be a useful resource when considering establishing trans-national partnerships (see: TEEP under www.enqa.eu/projects.lasso).

The Tuning Project

The Tuning Project aims to identify where education systems converge across Europe. By tuning education systems in this way, and locating simple, common reference points amongst them, the aim is to make recognition of qualifications easier. (see: www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europeunit/qualifications/tuning_project.cfm).

What next?

The fifth ministerial meeting will be held in London, in 2007, to discuss further steps towards the establishment of an EHEA by 2010. The ministers will also take stock of the implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the development of national frameworks for qualifications, the award and recognition of joint degrees, including at the doctorate level, and the creation of opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, including procedures for the recognition of prior learning.

For further details on any of the above, please contact: k.akerman@qaa.ac.uk ■

Teaching the International Learner - Interventions in Learning and Teaching

Kevin Nield, Sheffield Hallam University

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to present findings of research which explored Chinese students' perceptions of the role of the teacher, the use of group work and their preferences. The initial work was carried out in Hong Kong, but it was believed that the preferences identified might also apply to mainland Chinese students studying on-site at Sheffield Hallam University. A short programme of action research was introduced into one module. The purpose of this was to utilise these preferences to enhance the teaching and learning experience of Chinese students studying on a postgraduate programme. The article concludes by examining the impact of the programme of action research.

The Hong Kong Research

1. *The Role of the Teacher*

To test their perception of the role of the teacher, the students were asked, via a questionnaire, to think of the best teacher that they had ever had. They were asked to describe them and to say whether they had perceived that individual as a friend. The qualities that these students identified in their best ever teacher might be categorised under themes of pedagogic practice, student-teacher relationship and 'heart'.

With regard to pedagogic practice, students expect teachers to: have professional knowledge; use innovative teaching methods; always provide useful and effective notes and materials; and put effort into teaching materials. Almost half of the students specifically stated that they expected the teacher to be a friend. The relationship with a good teacher was expected to be good and the teacher would be helpful and patient. However, there would be a distance in this relationship as students would expect to have respect for their teacher. In the student-teacher relationship, the theme which stood out was 'heart'. Several students stated that the teacher must: understand them as people; be aware of their problems; be available; be sincere; and care about them.

2. *Perceptions of Group Work*

To test the perception of group work, the students were asked to give their opinions of this type of work. The question was given a special focus as the perception of group work in the relevant literature was contradictory. For example, some sources said that group work would be contrary to face, while others said that as a collectivist society group work would be appreciated.

The majority of the students were in favour of group work. The reasons given for this preference were pragmatic rather than cultural and included sharing the workload, learning from each other and other skills that were gained.

The Action Research

Having discovered that Chinese students in Hong Kong had a different view of the role of the teacher and might actually have a preference for group work, the next question to be answered was could these findings be replicated and used with mainland Chinese students attending on-site courses, to improve learning?

Chinese students attending on-site courses were given a pre-course questionnaire in which they were asked to give their view of group work and the role of the teacher. Additionally they were asked to say which parts of the course they were looking forward to and which parts filled them with trepidation.

The findings with regard to both group work and the role of the teacher were remarkably similar to those of the Hong Kong cohort. The aspects of the course that the students most feared are summarised in Table 1 below. It was thought that it might be possible that by using group work, and understanding perceptions of a 'good teacher', some of these fears might be allayed.

Table 1: Chinese Students' Academic Fears	
Language	All aspects but particularly academic writing in a second language
Time management	Fear of missing deadlines and overload of work
Academic skills	Essay writing, report writing, presentations
Dissertation	Fear of research

The Interventions

Based on the responses from the Hong Kong and mainland Chinese student groups, a number of changes were made to the delivery of one module – Hospitality Organisational Excellence. This module had previously been taught in a conventional manner, with lectures and seminars. The teaching pattern was changed to lectures (which might still meet the didactic preference) and a series of small group meetings. To allow the group meetings to be as accessible as possible the lecturer in charge was available from 9 am to 1 pm on Wednesday mornings for six weeks – a time when all of the learners were free and which coincided with the first written assignment. The coursework was changed to a combination of group and individual work. Attendance at the group tutorials was not compulsory and importantly the students set the agenda. The students were allowed to ask for help and advice on any topic.

It was hoped that these groups would benefit the students and facilitate learning from each other. The objectives were that the level of close co-operation would increase confidence, as well as improving study skills such as essay writing and communication. Essentially, the learning sets were an attempt to meet the needs of the students and to go some way towards providing a lecturer who demonstrated heart.

In addition to using group work as a learning strategy, part of the first assessment was converted to group work. The underpinning logic was that the students might learn from each other and have the opportunity to improve their English language through these meetings and also writing academically.

In summary, the interventions were aimed at improving the student experience through the use of group work underpinned by knowledge of the importance of 'heart' and the student-teacher relationship.

Evaluation of the Action Research

When the students handed in their first piece of work they were given a questionnaire in which they were asked to evaluate the first assignment, in terms of the group work and the group tutorials. Within the evaluations, the students were asked to assess contact with their teacher and the extent to which both their confidence and their study skills had improved as a consequence of the intervention.

For each of the questions the students were asked how far they agreed with the statement on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 was strongly agree, 2 was agree and so on with 5 being strongly disagree. The findings that are presented relate specifically to all learners on the programme and learners from mainland China.

The results are shown in Tables 2 and 3 below. The scores are averages for all students studying on the postgraduate programme and for mainland Chinese students only.

Table 2: Evaluation of Group Work		
Nationality	All	Chinese
I felt apprehensive about working in groups	2.3	1.9
Working in groups improved my essay writing	2.2	2.1
After completing the group work I feel more confident about my course	1.9	1.9
I learned study skills from other members of the group	1.8	1.7
Working in groups improved my communication skills	1.9	1.7

As demonstrated in Table 2, the Chinese students were more apprehensive about working in groups than the rest of their cohort. Given that they may have been only rarely exposed to this method of working it is not surprising. However, although the figures are not statistically significant, the Chinese students were as confident about the course as their fellow students. Importantly, with regard to the objectives of the intervention, the Chinese students believed that they had learned study skills from the other students and had improved their communication skills.

Table 3: Evaluation of Group Tutorials		
Nationality	All	Chinese
The group tutorials gave me the contact with the tutor that I desired	1.9	2.0
The group tutorials made me feel more confident about postgraduate study	1.9	1.7
I learned study skills from other members of the group	2.0	1.8

With regard to contact with the tutor (Table 3), the Chinese students confirmed that the tutorials gave them the contact with their tutors which they desired, but they were slightly less certain than the other students. Where the Chinese students were certain, in comparison to other students, was in the confidence that the tutorials gave them regarding their future study and also that they learned from other students. In this respect the intervention again met its objectives.

Conclusions

In a year when admissions from China to UK universities has dropped by 22.5 percent and many universities may be finding a hole in their finances (Tysome, 2005), it is important that Higher Education providers pay attention to the quality of the learning experience that they are offering to international students. An important way of doing this is getting to know the students, being aware of their preferences, and making appropriate alterations to teaching, learning and assessment strategies. This is not to suggest that assessments should be changed to methods that international students find easier, but that we are aware of their weaknesses and recognise these.

A frequent cause of concern for students from outside the UK is that contact and 'engagement' with teachers is both minimal and difficult. Moreover, in order to become the autonomous learners they seek to become, such students naturally will seek the engagement of their teachers in order to develop an understanding of what is required of them. From the evaluation, it is clear that the interventions have been successful, up to a point. They have gone some way in improving the confidence of Chinese students and have helped them

improve their study skills. More work needs to be carried out into: the support that Chinese students require from their tutors; and the contact that students have with their tutors. It is interesting to note that, before attending Sheffield Hallam University, the modal class contact in China, for students in this cohort, had been 26 hours per week, compared with a timetabled week of 8 – 10 hours at Sheffield.

These findings further suggest that academics and students may, understandably and necessarily, have expectations or make assumptions about learning and learners, which do not match the reality. They also demonstrate that when academics are prepared to take time to question stereotypes about groups of learners, and make what are only minor adaptations to their teaching, that they are able to improve the quality of the students' experience.

References

See http://www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/publications.html ■

Enhancing the Student Learning Experience through Internationalisation: The Role of the Higher Education Academy

Jane Berry, Higher Education Academy, York

A founding purpose of the Higher Education Academy is to support higher education staff, their institutions, sector stakeholders and partner organisations, in meeting the challenge of upholding the UK's reputation for quality of teaching, learning and student support, and further enhancing the learning experience for all students. Underpinning all its work, therefore, is a commitment to having an international perspective in recognition of: the increased competition from overseas providers faced by the sector; growing international perspectives on curricula and standards issues being driven by the Bologna and other policy agendas; and not least the needs of students themselves as future parents, employees, business and political leaders in a world of global 'connectivity' and mobility.

Enhancing the learning experience of students, by definition, means improving the experience of both UK domiciled students and those from overseas. The student body is increasingly diverse today and the Academy's work with, and on behalf of, institutions and their staff, has to reflect this diversity, as universities and colleges put in place strategies and practices that recognise the dual challenges of creating a more 'internationalised' student and of meeting the needs of international students themselves (Salehi-Sangari and Foster, 1999).

The Academy's work in this area is 'work in progress' – an emerging programme of activities is being designed to address themes identified by the sector as being of increasing importance. Our current focus is on the internationalisation of the curriculum and support for international students. These are *big* issues. Further, and fundamental to our approach, it is necessary to recognise that there is at present no clear consensus around the term 'internationalisation', or around how best it might, or should be, operationalised in an institutional or departmental context. This is exemplified in the diversity of approaches being adopted by HEIs, which in turn reflect the wide range of drivers for change – divisible, in Knight and de Wit's (1995) view, into 'academic', 'political', 'economic' and 'social and cultural' drivers – in the name of 'internationalisation'. Any or all of these potentially impact on the student learning experience, however conceptualised.

In a curriculum context specifically, these approaches variously embrace both the formal curriculum (for example, through enhanced learning opportunities and settings, breadth and scope of course content, placements etc) and the informal, in which the student constituency itself is recognised as a part of the learning experience, and the institution seeks to promote the integration of an international and inter-cultural dimension into all its functions as part of a 'holistic' approach to internationalisation.

These issues – and their inherent tensions – were discussed at a consultative exercise undertaken by the Academy in December 2005, which invited the participation of colleagues from across the sector with a specialist knowledge and/or direct experience of the practical issues associated with internationalisation in HEIs. The aim was to help identify sector needs for support in this area. It confirmed how contested an area this is and highlighted a wide range of aspirations, both for more internationalised curricula and for the enhancement of support for international students. Taking an *outcomes approach* to reflection on what such curricula might look like, it pointed, for example, to: the importance of cross-cultural learning and the teaching of skills for global citizenship; the recognition of necessarily differing approaches by different disciplines; the need to challenge normative assumptions about western culture; and the over-arching importance of pedagogy to the process of internationalisation.

This agenda is clearly to be differentiated from that of the implementation of support systems to enable international students to progress through higher education successfully. In this context there was a widely held view that the sector should not only see the care and support of international students as part of a wider, widening participation agenda, but should also avoid deficit models of diversity. On a practical level, institutions were seen to face significant challenges here in managing all students' expectations – to include those of international students – preparing them for transition to HE, inducting them into local academic values and conventions, and then providing support structures and study skills provision on an on-going basis. All such provision should be viewed, in an ideal world, from an integrated perspective. As one contributor said, "International students are the solution not the problem!"

Whether addressing issues of teaching and learning, or wider student support, the engagement and development of staff was seen to be fundamental to any internationalisation strategy, and featured prominently as an area of support which the Academy might address. This might be through: collaborative work with educational developers; research, development and dissemination of resources; disciplinary initiatives; or the promotion of the benefits of internationalisation for the student learning experience more widely across the sector, through dissemination of good practice. It was pointed out that such work might usefully help institutions and practitioners address the need to problematise the process of internationalisation as, for example, in helping staff to assess course content, or to embrace a more international perspective in all aspects of their teaching.

Finally a number of guiding principles were identified and widely endorsed in relation to the process of internationalisation in general. A number of these might not only be seen to have relevance for the enhancement of the student learning experience but also to offer opportunities for the Academy to work with the sector in progressing this agenda. These included:

- Being open to the learning to be gained both from overseas institutions and from operating overseas as a UK provider

- Being committed to addressing the needs of both international students and staff working in UK HEIs

- Encouraging more UK students and staff to participate in overseas opportunities

- Movement towards the wider recognition of international work and academic partnerships through the RAE

At a disciplinary level, the Academy's Subject Centres continue to work closely with their communities, with the internationalisation of the curriculum being addressed through collaborations with professional bodies and overseas subject associations. This includes programmes of activity reflecting the varying extent to which internationalisation is naturally addressed through core curriculum content. Activities typically include: contributions to international journals and conferences; international research collaborations; and the exchanging and dissemination of international practice, amongst many others.

A programme of centrally coordinated activity is also being taken forward by the Academy over the coming months in direct response to the scoping exercise undertaken in December. This will include: a literature review; the funding of a number of disciplinary projects to be commissioned through the Subject Centre network; the sponsoring of sector events to showcase good practice in supporting international students and to further dialogue around the internationalisation agenda, including the implications of the Bologna process; and the development of web-based resources, including case studies of institutional practice.

Finally, whilst a number of conceptual frameworks have been developed to describe approaches to internationalisation, in practice and for specific institutions, the process typically involves a unique and complex mix of activities and initiatives with varying levels of stakeholder involvement. One way for HEIs to map this complexity is to use a quality review instrument such as that developed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris – 'Developing an Institutional Self-Portrait using the Internationalisation Quality Review Process Guidelines' (Knight, 2002). This instrument is being adapted and used as a research and quality review tool in a few UK institutions, and the Academy is currently funding the University of Surrey to trial its use as a research and development tool. The research team are due to report back this summer.

For further information about any of the above activity please email to: enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk or telephone: 01904 717500

References

See http://www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/publications.html ▪

Developing an International Programme of Study

Maureen Brookes, Oxford Brookes University

Introduction

In 1999, a decision was undertaken in the Department of Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Management at Oxford Brookes University to introduce an undergraduate International Hospitality Management degree into the then current portfolio of programmes. There were a wide variety of factors that underpinned this decision including: the ever-increasing internationalisation of the industry and graduate destinations; the growing diversity of the student body; and the University's new international strategy. This article recounts the process undertaken to develop an international curriculum. It begins by briefly defining and identifying principles of best practice in curriculum design and the dimensions of an international curriculum. It then discusses the process undertaken within the Department to develop an international programme through the application of these principles.

Curriculum Design

According to Jackson, Shaw and Armstrong (2002), the process of curriculum design is central to promoting student learning and entails:

- what is to be learnt and why

- how it is to be learnt

- when it is to be learnt

The author argues, that curriculum can best be understood in terms of content, order and process, and note the importance of assessment within curriculum design. Biggs (2003) emphasises the importance of constructively aligning all these components so that the meanings that students construct through learning activities are aligned with these activities and the assessment of them. In constructive alignment, assessment tasks must therefore measure what the learning intentions are (Jackson et al, 2002). Jackson et al (2002) further advise that curriculum itself is shaped by the cultures or norms of different professional bodies, institutions and subjects, as well as by external environmental forces.

International Curricula

Within Hospitality Higher Education (HE), as in many other subject areas, there were and still are, a number of external forces driving the need for an international curriculum. On the one hand, internationalising curricula became relevant in order to develop students' ability to work in global business environments (Hellmundt, 2006). However, Black (2004) argues that internationalisation in HE is more than just about creating a more internationalised student. Drawing on the International Association of Universities' (2000) definition of internationalisation, Black (2004) reports that an international curriculum must also meet the needs of international students. Her comprehensive review of the literature identifies four key elements of internationalisation in university programmes: faculty, students, curriculum content and international alliances.

Raimond and Halliburton (1995) advise that if a student is to be capable of operating in more than one country, an international programme of study requires international case studies and examples to be used in teaching. They also suggest that programmes should contain the provision for language study. Wijensinghe and Davies (2001) make a case for the inclusion of intercultural skills training, particularly in hospitality curricula whilst Seymour and Constanti (2002) report on the effectiveness of studying in culturally diverse environments to develop the intercultural competencies necessary for managers in a global economy.

Hellmundt (2006) notes that different cultural perspectives of the student body can also be used as a resource. He warns that the international curriculum must establish a context of inclusion to be effective. Black (2004) advises that curriculum content cannot be assessed without taking into account the teaching staff's personal contribution, character of the student body, culture of the institution, and its relationships with other institutions for research and exchange purposes. As such, these four key elements cannot realistically be treated in isolation.

This brief literature review suggests that international curriculum design entails three 'best practice' principles as follows:

1. It draws upon the cultures and norms of different stakeholders.

2. It considers curriculum content, order and process in a constructively aligned manner.

3. It gives due consideration to the internationalisation of programme content, alliances, faculty and students.

The following section reports on how these were taken into account during the process of designing the international curriculum within the Department of Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism at Oxford Brookes. A team driven approach was adopted where different members of subject disciplines acted in cohort and served as points of reference in the overall development of the programme.

Cultures and norms of different stakeholders

In developing the programme, five different stakeholder perspectives were taken into account. At the time of development, the QAA introduced subject benchmark statements and the benchmarks for Unit 25 were duly consulted. However, while these guidelines were incorporated into curriculum design, there was very little emphasis placed on international elements within them.

As one of the key aims of Hospitality Management programmes is to produce graduates capable of managing in the industry, it was also essential to consider the expectations of industrialists when developing the programme. Two key issues were identified in relation to industry needs and International Hospitality Management graduates: the internationalisation of programme content and the development of interpersonal skills required to adapt to living and working in different cultures (see for instance Jayawardena, 2001).

A third perspective to be considered was that of the University, and two further issues had to be considered. From a strategic perspective, the programme design had to be consistent with the University's international strategy that sought to attract and retain students from overseas, and prepare them for living and working in different cultures. It was also important that the design matched the technical requirements of the University's modular system, teaching, learning and assessment timescales, and credit structure.

At the departmental level, consideration was also given to academic staff. In particular, staff knowledge of international companies and practice, and their ability to facilitate discussion in multi-cultural groups. It was recognised that comparative analysis is a skill that needs to be taught, otherwise comparisons with other cultures can be parochial and there may be a danger of assumptions of superiority of western models and practices. It was also deemed essential that fishbowl approaches, whereby a few international examples of cultural differences are included in module content, were avoided as this practice can lead to stereotyping.

Last, but certainly not least, student norms or perspectives also had to be thought through. Including a student representative on the working party, as well as detailed interviews conducted by the International Student Tutor, facilitated this perspective. In addition to the point raised for academic staff, determining how to develop international management competencies and cultural sensitivity was recognised as a key challenge. It was also questioned whether particular assessment practices favoured particular cultural groups.

Constructive Alignment

Drawing upon these different perspectives, the next stage was to constructively align the curriculum content, order, process and assessment. The development of a graduate profile was the starting point and it was clear that this profile needed to contain reference to international competencies. Four competencies were identified as follows:

- **Personal**: The student is able to demonstrate their cultural sensitivity through an understanding of their own culture and its perspectives, and other cultures and their perspectives

- **Professional**: The student is able to recognise the value of cultural diversity and identify intercultural issues relevant to their professional practice

- **Academic**: The student is able to apply theoretical concepts in an international context

- **Cultural Adjustment**: The student is able to demonstrate an ability to adapt to living and working in a different culture

These competencies were incorporated into a broader graduate profile that also reflected QAA benchmark statements and were divided according to knowledge and understanding, cognitive and transferable skills.

The next step in the development process was to embed these profiles into the core compulsory modules. This process involved mapping the profile to particular learning outcomes across the different disciplinary subject areas covered within the programme. Disciplinary teams were formed to facilitate this process. Teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks were then developed to accurately deliver and assess achievement of these learning outcomes in a constructively aligned manner.

Giving due consideration to internationalisation

The programme developed reflects the essential elements of an international curriculum as identified by Black (2004). Across the programme, modules were developed in line with the graduate profile that include international case studies or address the global nature of the industry in some other way. For instance, within compulsory marketing modules, diversity of customer markets is a key element. A compulsory module on intercultural management is also included. This module requires students to use theoretical propositions to evaluate the influence of culture on the management of hospitality workforces. Foreign language modules are also included as acceptable electives.

In order to help develop their ability to live and adapt to different cultures, students on the programme are required to undertake a compulsory period abroad, either on a work internship or a semester of study at one of ten exchange partner institutions. A number of students do both. When they return,

these students' experiences are a further resource to be used within modules. Staff visits to international work placements, exchanges with partner institutions, and involvement in international research and consultancy, all help the staff development process and are used proactively to inform teaching across the department.

Concluding thoughts

The International Hospitality Management degree at Oxford Brookes University continues to attract increasing student numbers. Academic members of the department seek adaptations and improvements in order to continue to meet the demands of the changing environment and increasingly diverse student bodies. This process is informed through regular feedback from students, graduates and industrialists. In addition, current

research being undertaken within the department, on best practice in developing and assessing intercultural management skills in higher education, will also enable us to enhance this programme further.

References

See http://www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/ publications.html ∎

A Consideration of the Problems Faced by International Students in English Language Acquisition

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Abstract

In my ten years of dealing with international students in the role of Study Support Lecturer, one of their major preoccupations is their level of English language. Although all students enter their course with a minimum level of IELTS 6, many feel disadvantaged by particularly poor spoken English and suffer feelings of anxiety, shame and inferiority. Low self-confidence means that many feel ill-equipped to engage in class discussion and in social interaction with the host community. A common reaction to stress caused by communication problems is to retreat into communication with co-national students, further inhibiting progress in language. Whilst linguistic progress is made by nearly all students, support systems nevertheless must be put in place to alleviate the shock experienced by international students at the start of the academic sojourn. If British universities are to continue to recruit international students with the minimum qualification of IELTS 6, I would strongly suggest that academic and language support should be provided.

Introduction

The move to a new environment is cited as one of the most traumatic events in a person's life and, in most sojourners, some degree of culture shock will be experienced (Kim 1988). Oberg (1960) defines culture shock as anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. A commonly cited feature of culture shock is

language shock caused by immersion into an environment where the dominant language spoken is not the sojourner's native language, inducing feelings of helplessness, confusion, sadness, disorientation and anxiety. Adjustment to a new environment is dependent on the development of understanding between the host and the sojourner. Therefore language ability is critical as a medium of communication.

In my experience, as a Study Support Lecturer for overseas Tourism Masters students over the last ten years and as a Tourism Masters Programme Leader for the last two years, anxiety is experienced by the majority of international students in relation to linguistic competence. Nervousness over language ability is generally experienced before departure and only intensifies upon arrival, when confronted by the foreign language as spoken, and the need to make themselves understood. This paper considers the feelings of students about being in a foreign language environment and discusses the strategies students use (or avoid) to improve language ability. Finally, the implications for British Higher Education of a growing number of international students are discussed.

Students' initial level of English

British Universities' (Macrae 1997) preferred entry qualification tends to be the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and entry requirement for study at degree level, at most universities in the UK, is IELTS 6 (or less commonly

TOFEL 550/213). However, the level of spoken and written ability varies significantly and, in any case, there is no guarantee that holding this minimum level of English for study at HE level in the UK is reliable as a predictor of language ability.

All students recognise the need for a good level of English to: meet the demands of the course; cope in an English-speaking environment; and to operate in an increasingly globalised business environment whose international language of communication is English. The centrality of English to professional, academic and socio-cultural efficacy means that the majority of students express a high level of anxiety over their language skills, particularly during the first few weeks.

Feelings of anxiety and inadequacy

From induction day, and on meeting staff and other students, there is often enormous anxiety among students over their academic and general linguistic competence. As Sharples (1995) and Blue (1995) highlighted, the academic culture is more important to students than the host culture: and it is the importance of language as related to the academic task that panics students in the initial few weeks.

As Cammish (1997) noted, international students need to be competent in understanding not only the content of lectures, but also in following the more rapid and informal register of speech used in discussion and grasping instructions in practical

and face-to-face situations. Many students confess panic over their inability to follow lectures and oral instructions, and suffer embarrassment over their communicative difficulties. They feel reluctant to draw attention to themselves, and to identify themselves as foreigners whose English is poor. Words used over and over again by students to refer to their English language skills include *nervous, scared, frightened, worried, afraid, embarrassed*, and *ashamed*.

A common problem reported by students, as the first term progresses, is their self-reported inability to follow the content of lectures, with some students saying they can only understand 30 percent of the lecture. It is possible that if lecturers are made aware of the difficulties in comprehension faced by students, and of the consequent dips in self-esteem, they may become more sensitive to the need to make themselves understood and to monitor their own use of language, with a heightened awareness of the extent to which they are communicating successfully. On the other hand, lecturers may beg the question, often asked by the better-speaking students, what are students doing on the course if they cannot follow the spoken word.

Such is the level of distress experienced by many students that they contemplate leaving the course, after spending nights without sleep and appearing at my office in a state of agitation. Most students are counselled and change their mind, but out of 150 students altogether in 2004/5, five left the course with three returning to study with the next cohort.

An example is a Chinese student, *Yang*, who came to my office in tears over her inability to understand everyday conversation as well as academic language: like most students her aim was not just to pass the course, but also to learn something about life in the UK, something which her linguistic inadequacy barred her from pursuing. Despite achieving IELTS 6 she declared that her language was not good enough to succeed. She said that she wanted to go away and prepare herself more by taking another preparatory English course so she could return with more confidence. Her anxiety was reflected physically in pale, spotty skin with dark circles under her eyes and a frowning harassed look on her face. The only time she smiled was when she was offered the reprieve of a new start, i.e. deferral until the next academic year. As Storti (1990) noted, stress impacts negatively on the ability to study and, like the afore-mentioned student, many find that their level of anxiety makes them unable to concentrate.

Feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness are commonplace among students. There is a common tendency to use self-deprecating language to refer to linguistic ability. A particular case is an Iranian student, Kiana, whose comments on her own level of English frequently contained self-denigrating language including: "I am rubbish"; "I am really bad"; "people think I'm stupid." According to Hofstede (1991), self-doubt and loss of face, with consequences for self-esteem, are common feelings among sojourners as they struggle to make themselves understood in the first few weeks.

In a sense, the visitor in a foreign culture reverts to the mental state of an infant in which they have to learn to do simple things again, as reflected in Kiana's likening of herself to a 'little girl':

"Embarrassed! Like getting red! Really! Like little girl! Even I didn't know how to buy ticket for bus or anything you know. And even I asked somebody, I couldn't understand what they said so immediately I said 'ok, ok.' But two minutes later I asked somebody else. But you know you be embarrassed when you can't speak English.

Constrained by the linguistic rules of the foreign language and its rules of use, language learners are placed in a position of subordination and powerlessness (Kramsch 1993), with older learners in particular placed in an uncomfortable position of inferiority in relation to language. Most have been academically successful at home, often professionally well established, and now suddenly they face intense academic pressure, adjustments and painful social vulnerability. This has resonance for the majority of the students I work with, who have left behind high status jobs in their own country (including teachers, lecturers, directors, head chefs, purchasers, translators, marketing managers, tourism chiefs, P.A.s, travel agent managers).

Anxiety over participation in class

Nearly all students identify a link between linguistic competence and the level of participation in class. Therefore much anxiety is expressed about the prevalence of class discussion, an academic difference between the UK and many other countries, noted in a survey by The British Council (1999). At first, lectures and seminars can send students into learning shock! Many students sit silently in class for many months, rarely volunteering an answer unless picked on. As Hofstede (1991) noted, a lecturer from a western country expects students to participate in class, to volunteer an opinion and to engage in debate. For many students, however, this is a demand that is overwhelming. Unused to this convention, it can take many months before students make the adjustment and start speaking in class. This is often a very painful process, with discomfort manifested in: blushing; shy, nervous smiles; quiet, sometimes inaudible contributions; and avoidance of eye contact.

When probed, some students said that they wanted to be picked on by lecturers, as their lack of contribution was something they wanted to change. Therefore, whilst a relativist stance in lecturers is to be welcomed, including an awareness of western academic conventions, and the difficulties international students will face in open discussion, students should nevertheless be sensitively encouraged to adapt to the norms of British academic culture. This also helps counter the resentment of those students in the cohort who are irritated by the passivity of other students, most commonly of Asian origin.

A common reaction to stress: the retreat into ethnic communication patterns

It is universally acknowledged that the route to progress in language learning is through speaking it. Through determined efforts to mix across national groups and to practise English, students can succeed in becoming functionally fit and well-adapted, both socially and academically. But according to Kim (1988), students have to be willing to experience feelings of helplessness and distress in order to make linguistic progress; these are inevitable emotions in the acquisition of communicative competence.

Unfortunately, given the fear of exposure as a badly speaking foreigner, and the discomfort associated with mixing with co-nationals, international students often retreat into ethnic communication patterns, with co-nationals sought out not just for the comfort they bring, but for the ability to converse easily, without the pressure of speaking English for an extended period. The following words were most commonly used to describe speaking in the native language: *easy, familiar, cosy, home, relaxing*. Such was the extent of sticking to co-national groups that one student from China described to me how, during a cold spell, he had stayed at home for a few days, not only mixing with his Chinese flat mates, but also watching Chinese films and when he emerged from the house, he was surprised to find himself in England again, in an English-speaking environment.

Over the course of the academic year, the patterns of interaction established within the first few months are often maintained. Students need to make individual efforts to overcome linguistic problems early on: the majority of students impede their own linguistic development by interacting mainly with co-nationals and speaking their native language, instead of speaking in English.

Conclusion

Communication is at the heart of adaptation. Students with good linguistic skills describe themselves as having an easier time adjusting to academic life, as well as gaining acceptance in the host community. The anxiety surrounding language ability is high in the initial few months of the academic sojourn. This imposes a huge stress on students in terms of an increased workload, owing to the amount of extra time needed for reading and writing in English, and general unhappiness over their inability to communicate with confidence and ease. It is to be expected then that students do not refer to themselves as being completely settled until a degree of linguistic competence is achieved, which enables a minimum accommodation with academic tasks.

A central question then is: should HE English language requirements be reviewed? At present, the minimum entry qualification for most British universities is IELTS 6. However, we must question whether or not this represents an adequate language level for international students who have to study not only in a foreign language, but also often in a foreign academic culture.

The suggestion that the minimum IELTS level should be increased conflicts with the desire of most HE institutions in the UK to continue to attract, and indeed to improve their recruitment of, full-fee paying international students. Of course, this feeds into a debate over the increasing targeting of international students as a source of income generation. The likelihood that universities will raise their minimum IELTS requirement is low, given the ensuing reduction in applicants with, for example, IELTS 6.5/7, and the conflict this represents with international student recruitment policy. Almost all universities need to generate revenue independent of the HE Funding Councils and many have sought to do so by expanding their international student intake.

If international student recruitment is to be ethically driven, if we continue to recruit students whose language level we know *may* impede their adjustment and have a negative effect on psychological health, the institution has the moral duty to put in place systems of support to facilitate the acquisition of language skills. The most obvious form of support is the provision of language and study support. There is evidence that international students are starting to take English language support into account when choosing a course, as many realise that good pre-sessional or in-sessional language support can make the difference between success and failure.

Furthermore, the shorter the period of study, the better a student's English needs to be before study starts. Indeed, on a Masters course, there is little time for in-sessional language improvement. In this case, it should be considered that the most useful study support is not generic, but discipline-specific, as classes are more likely to be well-attended and to be of practical use in assignment preparation.

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Note: All names are anonymised

References

See http://www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/publications.html ■

Delivering UK Higher Education Overseas – a Case Study of Hospitality Management

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Introduction: the Swiss context

The International Hotel Management Institute (IMI), founded in 1991, is a privately owned, largely residential, hotel school in Luzern, Central Switzerland. One of many such schools that are to be found in that country. IMI works closely with the Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) which recognises its sub-degree programmes and validates its BA (Honours) degrees. This short article is about some aspects of designing and delivering an essentially UK programme in an overseas country to students drawn from a global market.

Traditionally, the majority of the private English speaking/instructing hotel schools in Switzerland have recruited mainly from Europe, but as a result of tourism growth in Asia the market shifted in this direction significantly over the fifteen years up to 2003. However, with intensified global competition in hospitality and tourism education, particularly from Australia and New Zealand, and a strong Swiss Franc, the Asian market has been a lot tougher in the last two years. One response to this by some schools, including IMI, has been to once again broaden the recruitment base. In 2001, 80 percent of all IMI's students came from Asian and south-east Asian countries, notably China, India, Malaysia, Indonesia and South Korea, although 22 nationalities in total were represented in the School in that year. In 2005, some 37 nationalities were represented with only 55 percent coming from Asia and south-east Asia.

Broadening the student recruitment base is not just an issue of economic survival. The traditional attraction of Swiss hotel schools to the markets described above was the image that Switzerland (in some views somewhat bizarrely) projects as the historic home of hotel management – an image which remains very real. More recently, as many Swiss hotel schools have come to work with overseas partners, this image has been augmented and the attraction of studying in the 'home of hospitality management', but for a UK or US endorsed qualification, seems now to be the 'unique selling point' (USP) of private Swiss hotel schools. A corollary of this is, of course, that students coming to Switzerland to study hotel management expect a truly international academic experience.

The IMI model

In the five years since 2001, IMI has sought to fuse its business, marketing and academic objectives into a workable 'international' model that satisfies students' educational expectations. In this, it has been strongly supported by its UK partner, MMU. At the IMI, each calendar year has two semesters, January to June and July to December, and each semester is equivalent to a UK academic year. Courses are thus intensive and students appreciate this, giving IMI and other Swiss schools a market and price advantage vis-à-vis other countries' models.

The school operates a four year equivalent degree which, together with a compulsory internship, means that a student can graduate with a BA (Honours) degree in two-and-a-half years. In practice most students do multiple internships and around 75 percent take three years or more to complete to Bachelor's level.

IMI is a small school and markets itself as such in terms of the level of support it can give to its students because of its size. As a matter of policy, IMI caps student numbers per semester at 200 (over all courses) and typically recruits around 175. This allows the School to maintain favourable ratios, for example a SSR of 1:16, and a student/library book stock ratio of 1:32.

As one would expect, Faculty are the key to IMI's success. Faculty have no requirement to undertake research (although there is an appraisal requirement to maintain high standards of teaching scholarship) and front-line faculty have no administrative responsibilities beyond their own teaching. This means that the school is highly 'customer focused'. In addition, all full-time faculty, except in certain specialist areas, must be qualified to Masters level, and have some formal qualification in learning and teaching, or be a registered practitioner of the UK

HEA or similar organisation. Faculty salaries are competitive, the lowest being equivalent to the penultimate point on the UK (pre-1992 universities) Lecturer B scale and taxed at no more than 20%. Swiss immigration laws restrict the scope of recruitment for international faculty but in addition to Britons, IMI has in the last two years had faculty from France, Germany, Finland, Egypt, Ireland, and of course, Switzerland.

Curriculum and the student market

As indicated earlier, the claim to be an 'international' school delivering an international curriculum (the word figures in all IMI's programme titles) has to be justified to the student body whilst at the same time embracing students' desires for a UK qualification delivered with some patina of 'Swissness'. In curriculum design, the challenge IMI constantly faces is ensuring that the basic principles of a university subject curriculum are covered while offering genuinely 'international perspectives' on hospitality and tourism. There is also a need to avoid the undoubted tendency present elsewhere in the English speaking world to employ 'international' course titles where no real international content exists. Further, this has to be delivered in a context in which internships in a quadri-lingual country are an integral feature of all courses and are, for students, a further major attraction for studying in Switzerland.

IMI have adopted a progressive approach whereby clearly delineated international perspectives evolve over the undergraduate programme (exit points are available at the end of each year for the awards of certificate, diploma, higher diploma and BA). In the first level programme, which focuses on principles of contributing subjects, this is mainly represented by different culinary traditions in the food production class, a discrete class on tourism and hospitality geography, and consideration of international culture within the unit on personal development planning. At other levels, different national, international and cultural conventions and examples are addressed and utilised in: accounting and finance; human resource; marketing; and food and beverage management units, amongst others. All of this is underpinned by carefully designed coursework that allows the application of principles to the analysis of a variety of individual and collaborative assignments of an international character, while seeking to maximise the diversity of cultural experience represented by the student body.

A critical role is played in curriculum design by the UK partner and in assessment by the School's external examiners. Programme design, validation and delivery follow the internal procedures of MMU which in turn is, of course, heavily influenced by UK QAA requirements. In terms of assessment, IMI works closely with its external examiners who, in addition to their normal roles, have a key influence in reviewing across all programmes the nature and content of coursework, thereby encouraging the confidence of students and other stakeholders in the comparability of standards relative to courses elsewhere. The School also retains the services of an independent UK academic adviser who delivers regular staff seminars on developments in the sector.

Diversity and difference

The diversity of origins, values and beliefs of both IMI faculty and students presents numerous educational challenges. Many non-UK faculty see the UK 'learning and teaching' model as both inefficient and dogmatic. This serves as a useful reminder that whatever the merits of current UK practice, there are alternative traditions which others feel strongly about. Many IMI students with more 'traditional' educational experiences (the majority) find the idea of a substantial degree of enabled and independent student learning facilitated by faculty (as opposed to the idea of lecturer as a demi-god disseminating wisdom from on high) difficult at first. The approaches taken need to be properly explained and supported. This said, faculty and student commitment is secured, aided by a strong and consistent approach to learning presented with a high degree of transparency.

However, perhaps most important in securing such commitment is the diverse background of the student body itself. The international approach to content curriculum noted earlier serves as a vehicle for ensuring that the student body is not treated at any level as homogeneous, an important factor where all but a handful are 'overseas' students. The development of this sense of diversity – of the benefits of learning from different cultures – is encouraged in a variety of other ways, not least in group work assessment where as far is as is sensible, assignments are designed to incorporate an element that requires reflection on the diversity of backgrounds of group members as part of the exercise.

It is, of course, easy to overestimate the importance of difference and IMI personnel are often asked if students are getting a truly 'international' experience, an almost impossible question to answer in a world

with a high degree of cultural convergence. Perhaps the question is mistaken! IMI certainly feels it has a good story to tell in what it does, but we are not sufficiently self-satisfied or complacent to believe that we are doing anything other than prospecting in a mine that will never be completely dug-out.

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Investigating Asian Students' Career Motivation

Dr Liz Doherty, **Anna Klenert** and **Simonetta Manfredi**, Sheffield Hallam University and Oxford Brookes University

The Centre for Diversity Policy Research, at Oxford Brookes University, is currently undertaking a research project to investigate Asian students' career motivation. The project has been funded through the Vice-Chancellor's Innovation and Development fund. There seems to be a need for more research to be undertaken into international students' employability and, in particular, around their career motivation and aspirations, in order to help them to find suitable employment. Similarly, there seems to be a need for UK-based employers seeking to expand their operations in Asian countries, whose fast growing economies offer new markets to British businesses, to identify suitable pools of Asian graduates to be employed in their country of origin in these UK-based businesses.

This fact was brought to our attention when the Compass Group PLC, a world's leading food service company, which operates in 98 countries and employs 460,000 people, approached the Centre for Diversity Research to undertake a project to help them to identify suitable pools of potential graduates who could be employed in their expanding operations in Asia. The company had experienced difficulties in recruiting Asian graduates in Europe. Anecdotal evidence gathered by senior HR company representatives suggested that most of these graduates intended to find employment in the West, the reason being that it would offer them greater earning potentials which would compensate for the high costs of their Western education. As a result of this, the Company was concerned that their plan of sourcing Asian graduates in Europe was likely to fail and felt that they needed to explore the possibilities of recruiting graduates directly from Asian universities. The project, designed and carried out by the Centre for Compass, included:

- An investigation of the Higher Education structure in China, Thailand and Singapore, and of the possibility of setting up internships with some HE institutions in those countries

- Collection of qualitative data, through focus groups with Asian students taking degrees at Oxford Brookes University in Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism as well as in General Business Studies

The findings from the focus groups showed that although a number of students were interested in getting some work experience in the UK after graduation, the great majority of them were planning to work mainly in their country of origin. They also indicated that working for a company that offered a clear career path, and opportunities for self-development and training, were important aims for students. Most students expressed an interest in working for a company with a recognised global brand and good salary prospects, and benefits were also mentioned. The latter seemed to be particularly important to Chinese students. A full account of this research was presented at the CHME conference in May 2006.

Building on these findings, our current project is seeking to investigate career motivations and aspirations from a wider sample of Asian students across the University by collecting data through an anonymous questionnaire. This sample includes Asian students taking Oxford Brookes University Business courses that have been franchised to partnership institutions in China, Hong Kong and Malaysia. This will provide an opportunity to compare the responses of the Asian students studying in the UK with those of the students doing Oxford Brookes University degrees in their countries of origin, and to see whether there are any differences between the two groups. This study will be completed by the end of 2006 and its findings will be then made available on the Research Centre's web-site: www.business.brookes.ac.uk/research/cdpr ◼

Delivering Masters Programmes in the International Arena: The University of Brighton in Normandy

Chris Dutton, University of Brighton

The School of Service Management (SSM) at the University of Brighton has a well-established track record over the last 13 years for the provision of management education for the tourism industry. Since achieving United Nations World Tourism Organisation accreditation for its postgraduate tourism programmes, the School has attracted interest from potential partner institutions from around the world. After detailed evaluation, the École de Management de Normandie (EMN) was fully approved as a partner of the University for the shared delivery of a MA Tourism Management. This article will explore some of the key issues surrounding such an arrangement.

EMN was founded in 2003 and is a private college, funded principally by the Chambers of Commerce of Caen and Le Havre. It was previously the Normandy Business School and works in partnership with the Polytechnicum de Normandie, a publicly funded higher education institution. EMN has 44 full-time and 320 part-time academic staff. There are currently around 1,200 students and 700 adult education trainees. The French Ministry of Education accredits programmes delivered by private HEIs in France.

EMN prove an ideal partner for a number of reasons:

1. A commitment to a research culture.

2. Based in Le Havre they are half a day's travel away from the University of Brighton, Eastbourne.

3. Excellent physical resources, library, IT equipment etc.

4. A strong and complimentary teaching programme. Their current masters provision includes the following:

   - 3ème cycle en Management du Développement Territorial

   - 3ème cycle en Logistique Globale et Transports Internationaux

   - Master of Commerce in Value Chain and Logistics Management

   - Master of Science in Value Chain Management & Logistics: awarded by Macquarie University, Australia

   - Mastère Specialise Entrepreneurs

   - EMN also offers continuing professional development programmes and is a partner in the Executive MBA of the Polytechnicum de Normandie.

A commitment from the Mayor of Deauville has overseen the creation of a custom designed learning centre for the new programme, based at the International Conference Centre in Deauville.

The Masters programme is delivered 70 percent by SSM staff and 30 percent by EMN staff. The students are registered as University of Brighton students, for a University of Brighton award, and have the same benefits and rights as any other student registered with the University. They have access to all the online resources of the University as well as EMN's own library resource.

Staff from SSM travel to Normandy and deliver three–day intensive workshops. The programme runs for a full calendar year, with a course leader in the UK and a course leader in France. The programme is taught in English and students receive tutorial support, by distance, from the UK.

The course itself is seen as being one of significant economic and political importance and at its launch attracted the French Minister of Tourism, Léon Bertrand, pictured below with the first cohort of students.

As this goes to print, the students are a third of their way through the taught element, which the feedback shows, they have found to be enjoyable and challenging. Tutors have also reported that the intensive teaching mode has been hugely beneficial. Of course, with any new programme, there have been some challenges. Not least of these is the logistics of travelling across the English Channel, or under it, in the depths of winter. The communication lines also need to be very clear. Success, however, is attributed to the commitment of both partner institutions and the students.

The partnership with EMN will develop with more courses brought on stream over the next few years. The strength of the partnership has also attracted significant funding from the European Union through its Interreg 3a programme. The two schools are currently collaborating on the joint development of a MA in Tourism and Leisure Management delivered through a virtual learning environment.

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Reflections on my ERASMUS Teaching Exchange Experience in Finland

Debra Enzenbacher, Bath Spa University

Summary

Last year, in March and April 2005, I delivered a geography module with a tourism focus at the University of Helsinki under the ERASMUS teaching exchange programme. This international experience was positive and allowed me to develop on a professional as well as personal level. I am writing about it for three main reasons. Firstly, I want to encourage colleagues to consider participating in a teaching exchange due to the many benefits that may be gained by so doing. Secondly, the experience allows me to compare UK and Finnish academic practice and note the differences. Thirdly, I find it helpful to reflect on choices made with respect to curriculum delivery now that some time has elapsed since the exchange took place. This article will describe the terms of my teaching exchange in Finland, consider the international dimension of the work, providing an example of teaching and assessment practice there, and offer suggestions to colleagues considering teaching exchange work in a different country.

The terms of my teaching exchange

The Department of Geography forms part of the Faculty of Science at the University of Helsinki and is the oldest and largest such department in Finland (see Figure 1). The geography module I delivered there was called *The challenge of Antarctic tourism policymaking*. This one credit intensive module entailed 10 hours of class contact time and was delivered over one week in late March and early April 2005. I met with students five times for two-hour sessions. The first four lectures covered the following themes: 1) The physical and political geography of Antarctica; 2) An introduction to Antarctic tourism; 3) The regulation of Antarctic tourism and the role of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO); and 4) Managing Antarctic visitors and future prospects for Antarctic tourism. The final session provided an essay briefing that included recommended readings, marking criteria and detailed guidance regarding expectations for the assignment.

Figure 1 Inside the Physicum of the University of Helsinki, home of the Department of Geography

The international dimension of the work

Living and delivering teaching material in another European country was an exciting, interesting and challenging experience, not least because Finland employs a different marking system than the UK. The students engaged with the material well and showed a great deal of enthusiasm for the subject matter which was highly satisfying. The strong research culture of the Geography Department at the University of Helsinki was inspiring and there were many opportunities to discuss ideas and exchange information in the staff coffee room.

The material delivered had a strong international dimension as well, since it centred on Antarctica which no-one owns. The continent is governed by the nations that have signed its Treaty and agreed to work under the terms of the Antarctic Treaty System. The module highlighted the tourism policymaking process for the region and the work of IAATO, a tour operator organisation which relies heavily on international co-operation from its members. Being an American, working in a British University, on exchange in Finland, added a further cultural dimension to the experience.

The module was delivered in English. Ten students signed up for the module, but only seven opted to submit the coursework for credit. The class comprised eight students from Finland and one each from France and Sweden. There were four males and six females in the class. At first, students appeared reluctant to contribute during taught sessions, but soon adapted to my teaching approach by asking questions and making excellent comments including humorous observations.

Since this teaching exchange involved assessment, it was necessary to gain insight into how coursework is set and marked in Finland. The staff helped to answer my many questions. Marks in their system range from 0 to 3 with pluses and minuses given, so careful attention was paid to ensure marks were accurate. In that system, a zero is a fail, 1– is a pass, 1+ is fairly good, marks of 2–, 2 and 2+ represent good work and 3– and 3 signal excellence.

The strict coursework deadline was met by all the students who took the module for credit. Their essays were sent to me in one packet by post and returned the following week to the Geography Department's ERASMUS co-ordinator with written feedback, using a form I developed for the purpose, in addition to comments placed directly on the coursework. It was agreed that students would not be penalised unduly for errors in spelling and grammar since the assessment was conducted in English. For some of the students on the module, English was their third language. Overall, I was impressed at the ease of communication with students and staff during my exchange, although some office staff spoke little English and I found myself resorting to gestures with them in order to arrange office tasks such as photocopying.

During the coursework briefing session I fielded many questions on the standard of English expected. This seemed to preoccupy some of the students so I allayed their concerns by stressing that it was most important their ideas could be understood and that they provided evidence using the Harvard style of referencing to support their arguments. Further discussion with students taking the module revealed that they receive limited written feedback on essay coursework. The concept of a standardised feedback form containing a checklist of the marking criteria was new to them. The form I devised indicated the extent to which they complied with various criteria set for the assignment so they could see at a glance what went well and where they went wrong. I provided them with a copy of the marking criteria and encouraged them to use the checklist to mark their own work before submitting it in order to avoid obvious errors or glaring omissions.

Among the small things I did to promote cultural exchange was to bring with me some food items from the UK that they would not likely have experienced. For example, I brought in fun size bags of chocolates and other snacks for them and they really appreciated the gesture. One student had food allergies, but said her younger siblings would enjoy the treats which was nice to know.

If I had the exchange to do over again, I would try to spend more time with the students outside of class in an informal group setting because I learned so much during my conversations with them. Time was limited, but the university provided generous communal meeting areas for students which I could have made better use of during my visit. If given more class contact time with students, it would have been helpful to run an interactive seminar session in which further ideas could be shared. Also, I would have asked more questions about the technical support provided by the department. I used PowerPoint on the laptop provided in the classroom, but did not understand the messages displayed because they appeared in Finnish. Overall, the technical support provided was outstanding and the teaching accommodation was modern, comfortable and well furnished.

The Kumpula Campus, at which the Geography Department of the University of Helsinki is located, is easily accessible by tram (see Figure 2) from the city centre, where I stayed in the University Guest House. The four kilometre journey took approximately 15–20 minutes and allowed me to observe daily activities in the capital city in comfort. Public transport in Finland is impressive – it is clean, safe, reliable and efficient.

At the weekend I wanted to explore the local area so I purchased the Helsinki Card from the tourism office in the city centre which grants unlimited travel on public transport, including the ferry trip to the famous Suomenlinna sea fortress on a nearby island (see Figure 3). I also saw notable landmarks while on the city coach tour including the Sibelius monument (see Figure 4), located in the public park of the same name. A trip to Finland is incomplete without a visit to the sauna so I booked in for that experience as well, and emerged relaxed and refreshed.

Figure 2 Waiting for the tram near the Kumpula Campus

Figure 3 The Finnish coast in winter

Figure 4 The Sibelius monument in Helsinki

Suggestions to colleagues considering international teaching exchange work

On reflection, the entire teaching exchange experience was so positive that I would recommend it highly to others. The following points may prove useful to those considering undertaking international teaching exchange work. While there may be many more issues to think about in advance, this list is designed to provide a helpful start.

- Consider the teaching methods you plan to use and establish that they are appropriate to the institution at which you plan to teach

- Establish the number of students you will be teaching

- Discuss assessment modes and procedures prior to your visit

- Think about how you will provide feedback to students on any assessed work

- Prepare your teaching materials in advance so you can make the most of being in the host country

- Ask questions about the technical support provided by the university and communicate clearly your equipment needs for the duration of your exchange

- Organise central accommodation so you can get acquainted with the area quickly

- Read through guide books and other material to provide a flavour of the locality and a sense of the sites you would like to explore in your free time

- Arrange time to meet with students as a group in an informal setting if possible to promote further cultural exchange

- Bring some small items from your resident country to show or share with students

- Follow up your visit with a thank you note to the department concerned which can then be placed on their bulletin board for the students to see

Clearly my experience on the ERASMUS teaching exchange programme at the University of Helsinki was positive and yielded many personal and professional benefits. The international dimension of the work created new challenges, increased my understanding, stimulated thought, and provided lasting memories to treasure. We can get complacent with our approach to teaching if we are not careful and complacency has no place in higher education. Remaining open to new ideas and possibilities in other teaching settings can help fuel our passion for what we do. In conclusion, the opportunity to take part in this programme and share teaching practice in another country was a privilege and one that I would happily repeat in future. ■

Guilty of the Same Mistakes? The Absence of Intercultural Skills in International Management Programmes

Judie Gannon, Oxford Brookes University

A significant segment of the international management literature focuses upon what it takes to become a successful manager (Adler, 2001; Guirdham, 1999). Operating in international environments is seen to demand the ability to cope in diverse and complex situations, and in particular with people who have different values, beliefs and backgrounds. The whole area of culture, as the study of a society or group's attitudes, behaviours and customs, should arguably form part of any undergraduate or postgraduate programme professing international credentials (Hale & Tijmstra, 1990; Leask, 1999).

However, a theoretical understanding of culture, specifically national cultures, is probably insufficient for the development of a successful international management career (Adler, 2001; Schneider & Barsoux, 2003). As much of the international management literature attests, many of the managers sent abroad by their companies struggle to live up to the expectations of their skills and knowledge (Adler, 2001; Forster & Johnsen, 1996).

Even where the figures for failed expatriates are contested (Harzing, 1995; 2001), there is evidence from international managers themselves of the difficulties they face when working with, and in, diverse cultures (Le Sueur, 1999; Shay & Tracy, 1997). The main reasons for such problems are based on the use of technical skills as the prime basis for international assignment selection, and a dearth of intercultural adjustment preparation and training (Harzing, 2001; Scullion & Brewster, 1999). Building on this account of the relative absence of intercultural skills education and training in the business world, a project to explore the existing provision of intercultural skills education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in UK and selected international hospitality and tourism programmes was devised.

Intercultural skills can be defined as the ability to interact "with other groups (minority and majority), where tasks requiring interaction are completed effectively with neither of the party suffering from any invisible stress-related symptoms." (Mamman 1995:

530; Brislin et al., 1986). The internationalisation of the business and management curricula has been widely debated (Dahl, 2003; De Vita and Case, 2003; Haigh, 2002) and the hospitality and tourism industry, and its management education, has been no stranger to these deliberations (Ledwith and Seymour, 2001; Maxwell et al., 2001). Despite such insights, there is no coherent overview of intercultural skills provision across hospitality and tourism management education.

The study began by using the course directory from the HLST Higher Education Academy website (www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/course_directory/default.asp) to identify the extent of hospitality and tourism undergraduate and postgraduate programmes professing international dimensions. The term international was used in the course description search facility to identify appropriate programmes of study in the hospitality and tourism subject areas. Table 1 identifies the provision of such hospitality and tourism courses, and the magnitude of international courses in those subject areas.

	Undergraduate Hospitality & Tourism		Postgraduate Hospitality & Tourism	
	Hospitality (%)	Tourism (%)	Hospitality (%)	Tourism (%)
International	23 (23.3)	17 (12.2)	9 (33.3)	13 (19.7)
Not International	76 (76.7)	122 (87.8)	18 (66.6)	53 (80.3)
Total	99	139	27	66

Table 1: International Hospitality and Tourism Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes (all modes of study)

It is clear from this table that courses professing some international dimensions make up a significant minority of hospitality and tourism undergraduate and postgraduate programmes on offer in the UK. The postgraduate courses, in particular, were more likely to profess an international focus, which is probably a reflection of the need to attract international students (and their fees). Using the web pages from the various educational institutions in this initial search, each international hospitality and tourism course was examined to ascertain the ways in which international issues are addressed in their curriculum. The majority of courses use international placements, the teaching of the international context of hospitality and/or tourism, and foreign language components to fulfil their international course title credentials. Very few courses explicitly identified the teaching of intercultural skills, though the teaching of more general management and personal skills was evident.

However, it was not possible, from the secondary Internet sources, to distinguish whether intercultural skills were developed as part of their remit.

The expatriation and international management literature clearly indicates that while an awareness of the international business context, along with international experience (through a work placement) and fluency in languages are likely to increase the effectiveness of those operating in international environments, they may be insufficient without some level of intercultural skills education (Adler, 2001; Schneider & Barsoux, 2003). These initial secondary data findings, from international hospitality and tourism programmes in the UK, suggest that educationalists may be guilty of the same complacency as senior managers, in failing to address the need to develop intercultural skills amongst their students on international hospitality and tourism management programmes. The current project will now use questionnaires to establish how intercultural skills are addressed in the population of international hospitality and tourism programmes in the UK. It also aims to identify 'good practice' in intercultural skills teaching and assessment, by including examples from international hospitality and tourism management courses elsewhere in the world.

If you are interested in this project, then please contact Judie Gannon (jmgannon@brookes.ac.uk)

References

See http://www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/publications.html ∎

Aligning a European Higher Education Structure in Sport Science – AEHESIS – The Sports Science Response to the Changing European Higher Education Landscape

Ben Gittus, SkillsActive

Recent years have seen a range of developments in European Higher Education (HE). Perhaps the most significant of these has been the signing by all European Education Ministers of the Bologna Declaration in 1999. The Bologna Declaration promotes the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, in order to promote European citizens employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system. Other European HE initiatives include the Dublin descriptors, which are European agreed descriptors at bachelors and masters level, the Lisbon Objectives, which provide an overall policy framework for education and training in Europe, and the newly proposed European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The two key aspects which drive all these developments in HE, from ministerial level, are: the commitment to the convergence of programmes in the same subject area; and a wish to see the linking of programmes more closely to the needs of the job market. There is undoubtedly an agenda to increase both the mobility of workers, and their productivity and competitiveness across the European Union (EU). The stated aim of the EU, with regard to education, is to create…

> "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion." (European Council, 2000)

Each country in Europe, and each subject area, has been tasked to meet the challenges presented by

this new European higher education agenda. The AEHESIS project is the response to these challenges from the European sports science sector.

AEHESIS is a European ERASMUS Thematic Network Project related to the potential and fundamental changes in the structure of the HE sector based on the Bologna declaration. The aim of ERASMUS Thematic Networks is to enhance quality, and to define and develop a European dimension within a given academic discipline or study area. The goal of the AEHESIS project is to develop knowledge and tools, useful to facilitate a process of convergence across Europe, between the HE and vocational training programmes in sports science.

The ongoing European HE agenda strengthens the need for working together, capitalising on previous and shared experiences, and developments made in the sports science sector within the ENSSEE Network. It is also necessary for the sport science sector to take into consideration all the implications of this agenda. Leading members of the European sports science community have stated it is not enough that sport science universities embrace the general objectives of the European agenda: they also need to be ready to *reform their own strategies* (Petry, Froberg and Madella, 2005). This fact makes the AEHESIS project extremely important because it will improve the employability of graduates across Europe by developing tools, including model curricula based on market needs, which are crucial for the competitiveness and the positive development of the sector.

The project focuses on two major aspects in the sport science sector. The first concerns the integration of programmes and time frames of the educational structures. The second intends to ensure that the identified structures relate to the needs of the labour market.

Given the complexity of what is known as "sport and physical activity", the project focuses on four main areas in the sports science sector: Sport Management, Physical Education, Health and Fitness, and Sport Coaching. These are the key areas in the environment of sport and physical activity, both because of their prevalence in the educational and research sector, and because of the impact they have on the labour market.

The objectives of the AEHESIS project are to:

1. Develop a methodology for analysing and comparing programmes

2. Bring about a high level of Europe-wide convergence and transparency in four main areas of sport science

3. Engage with the labour market to ensure vocational relevance by developing professional profiles and desired outcomes

4. Identify and promote examples of good practice, and encourage innovation

5. Develop model curriculum structures for each area

6. Co-ordinate the guiding role of the higher education structures and networks and the action of possible independent associations to secure quality control and European accreditation in the four main areas

7. Reinforce the link between education and society, bringing together the public-sector, scientific and professional players.

The AEHESIS project has significant European wide representation, with 69 partners from 29 countries. The key UK partners who have been working closely with the project on sector expert groups are *SkillsActive*, *Sports Coach UK*, *University of Worcester* and *Leeds Metropolitan University*.

The research element

A major part of the AEHESIS project is to collect and compare data from institutions with sport related programmes from around Europe. This is essential to recognise the progress of the sport science area with regard to the Bologna process, to develop tools to assist the sector and to provide information to Ministers and other interested parties.

The research consists of two online questionnaires:

1. AEHESIS Institutional Questionnaire - this was developed to map and evaluate all HE Organisations in Sport Science in Europe. Its main objective is not only to receive the most important information about the programmes offered but also to offer a common European database of all Sport Science Organisations and their programmes to all interested stakeholders.

2. AEHESIS Curriculum Questionnaire - this was developed to describe the main aspects of all different programmes delivered by HE Institutions in Europe and help the development of the model curriculum. The questionnaire includes a range of questions about programmes, ranging from content and work experience, to inclusion of a European dimension.

The aim of the online survey is to understand the processes going on in all the countries involved, and especially to carry out effective comparisons of learning outcomes, maps of competences and

teaching methods. The AEHESIS online survey can be accessed at the AEHESIS website (http://www.aehesis.de/HTML/CurQu05.htm).

To date there are: 96 health and fitness programmes, 93 coaching programmes, 93 physical education programmes, and 84 management programmes in the database. The UK is behind other European partners in the number of responses. Given the number of institutions and programmes in the UK this is something which should be rectified. Anyone involved in the teaching of a HE programme in sport, particularly in the four subjects listed above, is encouraged to access the online survey and complete the institutional and curriculum questionnaire.

The curriculum model

One of the key outcomes of the project is a 'curriculum model' for each of the four areas. The model has to be agreed by all partners across Europe and has to link to the labour market. The *Six-Step-Model* is the methodology which has been chosen to develop the curriculum model. The parts of the model can be summarised as follows:

1. **Professional Area**: the significant areas of work or sectors which are included in the project. Within the AEHESIS project these are Physical Education, Sport Management, Health and Fitness and Sport Coaching.

2. **Standard Occupation**: The occupations or jobs in the professional area defined by a similar set of tasks and duties. For example, a personal trainer within the Health and Fitness area.

3. **Activities**: The set of tasks and duties corresponding to a specific occupation.

4. **Competences**: The skills, knowledge and behaviours required for competent performance in a work setting.

5. **Learning Outcomes**: The set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual acquires and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process.

6. **Curriculum Model**: A specific process used to build a curriculum that could be identified and used as a reference, it will cover: the identification of key contents; their distribution in programmes, units and modules, their loading in a credit system, the identification of possible training routes and learning pathways.

Conclusion

The AEHESIS project is currently in its third year. The results of the project will be presented at a

conference in Prague on the 1st and 2nd September, 2006. The fourth and final year related to dissemination is planned to begin in October. The main tasks of the project in the months up to September are:

- to encourage academics from across Europe to complete the online survey, and

- for the sector groups to complete the curriculum models for the four areas of sports management, sport coaching, physical education and health and fitness.

The four areas are at difference stages of development of the curriculum model. Health and Fitness will have a draft model for consultation for May 2006 and if you would like to be part of the Health and Fitness consultation group contact Ben Gittus at ben.gittus@skillsactive.com to register an interest. Full details of the project to date, including the latest information on each of the four areas, are available in the Report of the Second Year which is on the AEHESIS website (www.aehesis.com).

The European higher education landscape is changing in light of the Bologna process and other developments, to ensure its future as an important and expanding curriculum area, sports science must take account of these changes and their implications. The AEHESIS project aims to coordinate a response from the sport sector to this new agenda. UK universities are encouraged to participate in the project through completing the online survey on the website and providing consultation on the curriculum models.

References

See http://www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/publications.html ◼

Australia's International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE)

Perry Hobson, Southern Cross University, Australia

Over the last two decades, Australia has rapidly developed its capacity and reputation in higher education. Today, 17% of all students enrolled in Australian universities are international students - currently the highest percentage in the world!

In the fields of tourism, hotel and event management, academic capacity and provision has grown rapidly, particularly over the last 15 years. Of the 38 universities in Australia, roughly 28 are actively involved in some form of education or research. Of the top fifty tourism researchers recently listed in the journal *Tourism Management*, 25% have been or are currently based in Australia. Furthermore, the national tourism and hospitality educators body – the Council for Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education Inc (CAUTHE) – established an annual research conference which is now well-regarded internationally (www.chme.co.uk/conference/).

The International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE) is an initiative of the Australian federal government, and is one of five such centres recently created by the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST).

Established in 2004, THE-ICE was set up to not only recognise existing excellence in tourism and hospitality education, but to further develop this excellence. In addition, the centre is charged to help Australian institutions expand their range of international linkages, and to actively promote the study of tourism and hospitality at its member institutions.

While some countries have become well-known for a particular strength in one sector of education, such as Switzerland and its hotel schools, Australia has developed a reputation across multiple sectors comprising not only its federally funded universities, but also its state-funded vocational colleges (known as TAFEs) and its private hotel schools. THE-ICE is a membership organisation that is open to institutions from all three of these sectors.

THE-ICE's initial focus has been to benchmark best practice within Australia and internationally. To that end, THE-ICE set up a Panel of Experts drawn from around the world to help inform its development and direction. THE-ICE is also guided by its Advisory Council, drawn from its institutional membership, as well as leaders in the industry.

In line with this, THE-ICE developed its Standards of Excellence, against which the tourism, hotel and event programs of invited institutions are assessed. Those which successfully meet the criteria are able to become members.

Members can participate in the International Scholarship Program, which offers scholarships to international students for Diploma, Bachelor and Masters degrees. Institutions can also participate in the Visiting Scholar programme, which provides funding for international scholars to visit Australia.

THE-ICE is also in the process of developing its Knowledge and Skills Centre. It will be advising the Commission on Higher Education in Thailand on the development of International Masters degrees, and also advising on education and training as part of the Fiji Strategic Tourism Development Plan.

Given the internationalisation of HE, THE-ICE and its members are actively seeking ways to develop new education partnerships which lead to more exchange and study abroad options, as well as joint and dual degrees. The creation of the centre also provides its member institutions with an ability to collaborate and jointly take advantage of opportunities which they would not otherwise have been able to.

For more information on and details of our member institutions, visit www.the-ice.org or contact the Director, Associate Professor Perry Hobson perry.hobson@the-ice.org. For information on THE-ICE 2007 Scholarships, visit www.the-ice.org/scholarships ◼

An Australian Government Initiative

International Centre of Excellence in **Tourism and Hospitality Education**

Assessed to meet THE-ICE Standards of Excellence

The Bologna Process

Sue Hopkinson, UK Socrates-Erasmus Council

The Bologna Process is a European inter-governmental process to harmonise higher education across signatory countries with the overarching aim of creating a "European Higher Education Area" by 2010.

What started as an initiative of a small group of four countries (France, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom) has grown and now numbers 45, with members stretching from Austria to Azerbaijan.

Sorbonne

The education ministers of the four countries who met in Paris in 1998 recognised the new challenges facing European higher education and the central role higher education institutions could play in supporting economic and social cohesion.

The Sorbonne Declaration outlines the broad strokes of higher education reform, which were to be refined and clarified in subsequent communiqués and are now commonly referred to as Bologna Action Lines.

Bologna

When ministers met in Bologna in 1999, the "Europe of Knowledge" was seen as an essential factor for social and human growth. This is strongly echoed in the Lisbon Agenda of March 2000, when the EU Heads of State and Governments agreed to make the EU "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy by 2010".

At Bologna, concrete objectives were established. The following are the main aims of the Bologna Process:

- Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees in order to promote European citizens' employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system. The Diploma Supplement is one instrument designed to facilitate this.

- Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate.

- Establishment of a system of credits – such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) – as a proper means of promoting widespread student mobility. This is seen as a mechanism not only to support the mobility of students but also to provide continued opportunities for lifelong learning.

- Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles, and providing students with access to study and training opportunities. Mobility opportunities should also be available for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, with full recognition of periods spent in a European context.

- Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.

- Promotion of the necessary European dimension in higher education, with regard to curricular development, inter-institutional cooperation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

The Bologna Declaration makes clear that the above '*Action Lines*' should be pursued with respect to the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and university autonomy.

Prague 2001

Significantly, ministers stressed that the involvement of higher education institutions and students, as competent, active and constructive partners, was necessary to the establishment and shaping of a European Higher Education Area.

Berlin 2003

Berlin 2003 was seen as an opportunity for ministers to reflect on past progress but also to give the process further momentum. As such, ministers committed themselves to intermediate priorities, namely, to strengthen their efforts to promote effective quality assurance systems, to step up effective use of the system based on two cycles, and to improve the recognition system of degrees and periods of study.

Significantly, the doctoral level was included as the third cycle in the Bologna Process to reflect the importance of research as an integral part of higher education across Europe.

Bergen 2005

Ministers welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the Bologna Action Lines, reconfirmed their commitment to the reform processes, and emphasised: mobility; the recognition of degrees and study periods; the social dimension; research; and cooperation with third countries, as core components of a European Higher Education Area.

Looking ahead: London 2007

From 1 July 2005, the UK has taken over responsibility for the Secretariat to the Bologna Follow Up Group and its Board. The Secretariat's aim is to provide information and news about developments in the Bologna Process, and about how the work programme will be taken forward over the next two years until the next Ministerial Summit, in London, May 2007.

The UK Team of Bologna Promoters

Since 2004, the European Commission has funded national teams of Bologna Promoters in all Socrates-Erasmus countries. A national team of 14 UK Bologna Promoters – senior academics and university administrators - assist UK higher education institutions with the implications of the Bologna Process, the implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement, as well as the promotion and development of student and staff mobility.

The Bologna Promoters undertake a range of activities including: visits to institutions, meeting key sector bodies, presentations at national conferences and symposia.

A visit from a Bologna Promoter can be requested through the UK Socrates-Erasmus Council – call 01227 762712 or email info@erasmus.ac.uk. A full list of UK Bologna Promoters can be found on the Council's website: www.erasmus.ac.uk/Bologna.html ■

ERASMUS

Sue Hopkinson, UK Socrates-Erasmus Council

The UK Socrates-Erasmus Council administers and promotes the Socrates-Erasmus mobility programme for students and teachers in the UK. Other roles include the administration of the team of UK Bologna Promoters, acting as the National Structure for the Erasmus Mundus programme in the UK, and the UK National Tempus Information Office.

What is Erasmus?

Many of you may already be familiar with the Socrates-Erasmus programme from hosting incoming students from all over Europe in your institution. Every year, the UK sends around 7,000 students on the programme, in every subject area, from agriculture to tourism. 31 countries participate (including the candidate countries of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey), involving over 2,000 higher education institutions in those countries. Students can spend between 3 and 12 months studying in the partner institution, and can also combine their study period with a work placement.

In 2004/05, 80 students went abroad with the programme in the fields of Tourism, Catering/Hotel Management, Sport Science and Leisure to countries as diverse as Portugal, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Spain and Sweden.

Erasmus students are entitled to a monthly grant (in 2005/06 this was equivalent to around €350 a month), and can continue to take advantage of their student loan. They pay no tuition fees to their host institution, and full-year Erasmus students also benefit from a tuition fee waiver in the UK for that year.

Erasmus is not just for language students, although getting a grasp of a new language is often an integral part of the Erasmus experience. Many countries now teach courses in English, and there may be some financial assistance to help with learning the language in the country, before the study programme begins.

Teaching staff mobility is another element of the Erasmus programme. Teachers are entitled to a grant to contribute towards their travel and subsistence costs, and can make a teaching visit to a participating country for a period of one week to six months. 35 HE staff went abroad with Erasmus in 2004/05 in the fields of Tourism, Catering/Hotel Management, Sport Science and Leisure, out of a total of a little over 1300 for the UK as a whole.

So why go on an Erasmus placement?

Most students report that it was 'the best year of their lives'. As well as the benefits of experiencing another country's education system, and the academic subject being viewed from a different angle, the social dimension of the period abroad will be one to remember. Employers value the skills that Erasmus students gain, such as flexibility, maturity, experience of another culture, language skills and, as less than 5% of UK students currently take up the offer of Erasmus, it will stand out on a CV.

As far as teaching mobility goes, an Erasmus period abroad can contribute to one's professional and personal development. New contacts are made which often lead to further collaboration and research. The European dimension of courses can be developed through another academic perspective.

A drama tutor, involved in Erasmus for the past 15 years, said, "…I have supervised learning experiences for my students at universities abroad, welcomed foreign students to our courses, and taught my subject in a wide range of European universities and colleges. This has been exhilarating, challenging, satisfying and enabling. Erasmus works!"

For further information on the programme, please view the UK Erasmus website:

www.erasmus.ac.uk ■

Dissertations: Asian International Students' Perspectives

Dr. Rong Huang, University of Plymouth

Over the past decade international student enrolment at British Higher Education (HE) institutions has grown significantly. The majority of the international students that study for a British qualification originate from Asia, specifically from China. Britain has become the most popular destination for Chinese students, ahead of America, the previous most favourite, and Germany, where higher education is virtually free. The figures are startling! In 2003, the number of Mainland Chinese students in British universities jumped from 17,700 to 32,000, and six years ago it was just 2,500 (August, 2004).

As a significant component of the curriculum, student research, as an assessment tool, has been studied and evaluated by reflective HE practitioners in the UK (I'Anson and Smith, 2004). The focus on postgraduate dissertations is evident. Whilst there are many texts on both research methods, and guides to the design and development of dissertations, much less attention has been given to the actual writing and structure of the dissertations. Meanwhile, many studies suggest that international students might have preferred a different learning approach to the one used in their host country (Barron and Arcodia, 2002). However, there is a lack of voice from international students about their own experiences on writing dissertations.

For international students, Casanave and Hubbard (1992) found that such students often had difficulty in meeting the demands of the kind of writing required of them at Masters degree level. This was especially the case for students who came from a context where the conventions and expectations of academic writing were quite different to the situation they then found themselves in (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997).

Therefore, the international students' perspective of undertaking a dissertation is explored here by drawing on qualitative research with postgraduate Hospitality Management students in the UK. Their motivations for topic choices and also their positive and negative experience in the research process are discussed.

The researcher interviewed 40 international students from three different countries (China, India and Malaysia) about their experience. In-depth interviews were carried out in April and May 2005. A content analysis was adopted to understand their experiences.

The motivations for topic choices

From the interviews, it was very clear that there were three main motivations for the students in their choice of research topic. These were:

1. a link to career development

2. personal interest in the subject area

3. perceived ease of access to secondary and primary data.

The positive experience from writing a dissertation

Although writing a dissertation in their non-native language was very hard, many students reported gaining benefits from doing it. 15 students who provided positive experience statements agreed that writing a long piece of work in English was very beneficial to them.

Several students also reported that during the writing of their dissertation, support from their classmates was a very positive benefit for them. These findings seem to support Olsen's (1998) opinion that peer support is one of the most important factors influencing students' positive experience in writing dissertations.

The negative experiences of writing a dissertation

Although the interviewees all reported they had a great sense of achievement after finishing writing their dissertation, they also all told me of their negative experiences. The three most common negative experiences are summarised as follows:

1. Critical approach/analytical writing

   Many interviewees were confused and depressed about their critical analytical skills because of a lack of knowledge or practice in this area.

2. The relationship with supervisors

   All the interviewees reported that there were many cultural barriers to them having an effective relationship with their supervisors. Because of cultural differences, they had mismatched expectations of, or misunderstandings with, their supervisors.

3. Access and data collection

   The interviewees identified difficulties in data collection due to cultural differences and unco-operative respondents. Some interviewees rebuked themselves because they had a low level of understanding about data collection methods and also, because they lacked sufficient time management skills, they could not gather sufficient data for their research.

Although only a small-scale project, this research highlights international students' perspectives of the writing of dissertations, as a counterbalance to the dominance of the academics' perspective and the focus on students within their own country. The findings from this research have implications for both the research training given to students and also to lecturers in terms of pedagogy. As writing a dissertation is a new experience for international students, it is suggested that they be given a tutorial on how to prepare a dissertation and how to interact with supervisors.

As the students highlighted cultural influences on their learning experience, such as referencing and social practices, and relationships between teachers and students, the students and the lecturers could discuss these in order to avoid any misunderstandings between them. The ground rules about their respective roles and expectations should

be set out at the beginning of the students' study. This would help encourage the students to express their personal views about their research material, using both oral and written methods.

During the early stages of topic selection, the challenges of accessing and collecting data should be emphasised. This would help highlight the important implications of their choice of research topic and also avoid disappointment during the later stages of data collection. The research results suggest that a short training session on critical thinking skills would be beneficial to international students, as most of them have no clear idea of what critical thinking is, and how to be critical with the literature they read and also their own work. It would be very helpful if lecturers developed a model for critically analysing a subject, or gave examples to the students of how to do a critical analysis.

References

See http://www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/ publications.html ∎

International Student Support: Promoting Cultural and Academic Adjustment Through Designing Embedded Courses

Tony Luxon and **Moira Peelo**, Lancaster University

Curriculum design is one teaching tool that has the potential to forefront course content in ways that facilitate cultural and academic integration and adjustment. We work from the position that it is not productive to separate out the emotional, social and cognitive elements of academic work and adjustment, because they all come together in the lives of each student. So, we favour embedded courses that include academic and cultural awareness as *part* of students' degree schemes, rather than through *bolt-on* study skills and language classes.

Further, our experience has been that international students need to make a *general* cultural adjustment in their academic work: for students studying management, business or social science degrees especially, the assumptions embedded in courses make their cultural adjustment harder to negotiate. For example, international students from another culture may be unable to understand references made to television programmes and advertising campaigns or to national institutions (such as the NHS).

In addition, international students need to make *specific* cultural adjustments to the discourse of their chosen subject area, with all its tacit assumptions about what is relevant knowledge, or what constitutes learning and good performance in any given task or situation.

To make familiarisation a part of the curriculum means engaging people's own experience in the learning process, rather than only asking students to accommodate our cultural assumptions and practices. Awareness of the Euro-centric/North American nature of the curriculum and its material allows us to attempt to use cross-cultural opportunities in teaching.

An alternative way of describing this is as awareness of student variety and the interaction of specific students with specific courses and, rather than viewing international students as a problem, viewing internationalisation as an opportunity for *all* students.

Curriculum design: principles into practice

The following examples are drawn from a course, which we have been teaching together to newly- arrived Chinese students entering the second year of a Culture & Communication degree. It was developed on the basis of feedback from the first cohort of students on this programme. Since developing the course, this model has also been adapted for 1st Year international undergraduates in the Management School.

Using exercises that encourage comparison of their experience in both the present context and in that of their previous one is an important tool for allowing students to use their prior experience as a foundation for making sense of new material in a new environment. Globalisation is one example of a course topic that easily allows students to start with their own experiences and observations: asking, for example, about sources of information which informed international students' university applications and the process through which they did this, is one personal and concrete route into globalisation theory. Alongside this, exercises that draw on observations since arrival emphasise the sort of questioning approach we wish to encourage.

Some questions that have been used as an introduction to globalisation include:

Since you arrived:

- What are the main differences you have found between life in China and life in Britain in general?

- What are the main differences between study in China and study in this British university?

- How many different nationalities have you met since your arrival?

- So far, have you had more contact with British people or with people outside Britain?

Bridges need to be made, of course, between personal knowledge and wider theoretical frameworks, and these links are made via relevant structured readings.

This approach to teaching about globalisation relates to two of our four learning outcomes:

1. an improved knowledge of contemporary British society; and

2. the ability to analyse societies and culture, by learning to position one's own cultural inheritance and experience within the framework of study at Lancaster.

Many other topics lend themselves to similar treatment, such as: gender, crime, education systems, advertising, leisure, retail trade or television and the media. These comparisons, if used effectively in terms of contribution to classroom discussion, and the type of assignments that students can produce through this process, also enable a broadening and enriching of the curriculum and, there is evidence to suggest from the example we are discussing here, of the research areas of a department in which this is taking place.

Embedded within exercises and activities on the course are strategies to manage academic practices effectively while, at the same time, developing familiarity with British society. Course content and study activities then become seamless, rather than stopping course content to do a separate portion of 'study skills'. This relates to the other two of our four learning outcomes:

1. an understanding of the academic skills required to study effectively at Lancaster and development of students' English for academic purposes; and

2. The development of the transferable skills necessary for independent learning in this context: especially criticality in reading, essay writing & structuring one's own learning activities (essays, research, seminars & oral presentations).

Of course, this approach is relevant not only to students from outside the UK, but relates to home students too. UK students, particularly in first year courses, are also having to come to terms with academic practices, some of which are mentioned above, with which they may not be completely familiar.

We are not claiming that this model of curriculum design is the answer for everyone in all circumstances, nor do we think it is without problems. However, we are arguing that curriculum design can sit alongside all the other initiatives and support services available, and, as part of a wider provision, provide an effective tool to promote social and cultural integration.

This approach acknowledges that these students do indeed face challenges by coming to study in a new environment. However, it also recognises that by facilitating the process of coming to terms with change, international students' potential as learners, as contributors to the curriculum, and to the research profile of the university, can be more effectively realised.

Biographical Details

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Learning for Sustainable Futures

On 23rd and 24th April 2006, the HLST Network held a joint event with Geography Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES) and Sociology Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP) Subject Centres, focussing on sustainability and corporate social responsibility issues (CSR) within our respective subject areas. The event was facilitated by Colin Beard, a national teaching fellow and consultant from Sheffield Hallam University, and aimed to consider these emerging agendas in education and explore the opportunities for enhancing student employability and citizenship provided by the increasing interest in CSR and business ethics.

Workshops included a 'coffee and papers' session to allow time to read and reflect on papers that have influenced thinking on the topic and various other interactive activities included experience of a problem based learning session and working with ethical audits. The delegates were a mixture of students and staff, and this joint working generated very positive feedback:

"I thoroughly enjoyed the conference and gained a great deal from it. The most important and useful skill for me personally being the development of student engagement techniques. I loved the interactive workshops e.g. PBL - Greening the Olympics, and it will definitely be a technique I will use in my teaching."

"I would also like to compliment Colin on his facilitation of the event, there are a number of techniques I will be recommending to colleagues and (I) look forward to other interesting conferences which mix together colleagues from different subject domains and also include our learners. Well done - it was a conference worth attending even all the way from Cornwall."

A further intended outcome of the event is to develop materials and resources for the active/experiential learning, and teaching of sustainable development. This is an ongoing project and more information and materials will be available in the near future. ∎

Case Study: Tourism Education in China

Dr. Rong Huang and **Professor Wenjun Wang**, University of Plymouth and Tianjin University of Commerce, China

Introduction

In China, tourism in the modern sense began in 1978 after China started its policy of economic reforms, known as the 'open-door' policy'. Since then China's tourism industry has developed rapidly. In 2005, the total revenue from the tourism industry was 768.6 billion RMB, equivalent to US$ 95.5 billion (CNTA, 2006). Due to this rapid growth, there is an increasing demand for professionals with a background of a high level of education in tourism. By 2003, there were 494 higher educational institutes in China that provided tourism management programmes (CNTA, 2004).

This article discusses the development of tourism education in China. Students' internship, and international cooperation and collaboration are also discussed as these two issues were hot topics at a recent annual tourism conference in China.

The Development of Tourism Education in China

According to Zhang and Fang (2005), the development of tourism education in China can be divided into three phases:

The first phase was from 1949 to 1978, when tourism service in China was considered only as a part of foreign affairs. During this period, tourism education was mainly about on-the-job training to front-line employees, such as front office staff, coach drivers, and interpreters. This education was all about basic skills for a particular job and was provided by individual enterprises or organisations.

The second phase was from 1978 to the mid-1990s. During this period, China's tourism industry was transforming from reception work of foreign affairs to an industry generating economic returns. In 1978, the first tourism secondary school was founded in Nanjing, and by 1995, the number of schools and colleges that offered full-time tourism education reached 622. Of these, 138 were higher education institutions and 484 were secondary vocational schools (CNTA, 1996). Part-time education and on-the-job training also took a big step forward. They were planned and organised by the state, local tourism administrations and tourism enterprises, and implemented by tourism schools and colleges.

The third phase was from the mid-1990s to the present day. During this period, China's transformation from a planned to a market economy increased in speed, and the Chinese tourism industry is now ranked as one of the biggest in the world. Education in tourism schools and colleges has entered a stage of quality development as the institutions have not only emphasised educational reform and teaching facilities, but also carried out research into tourism as a discipline, international cooperation, and exchanges to integrate with international practice.

However, the short history and rapid growth of China's tourism education sector, together with shortages of qualified teachers, and poor quality teaching methods and materials, have created obvious quality issues (Zhang and Wu, 2004; Zhang & Fang, 2005). Based on a comprehensive review of current tourism education in China, in terms of the various educational programmes and the attitude of tourism employers towards human resource development, Lam and Xiao (2000) suggested that a large gap exists between the supply and the demand of quality personnel. A key dilemma of tourism education in China is poor curriculum design. Graduates from tourism education institutes and vocational training schools cannot fulfil industry needs and demands, in terms of quality and quantity. At a recent tourism annual conference in China, student internships and international cooperation were suggested as useful solutions to current problems with tourism education in China. Therefore, the following section will look at both areas in more detail.

Student internship

Internship for tourism students has been a hot topic among Chinese tourism academia and also the Chinese tourism industry. In most of the Tourism HE Institutions' courses, the number and length of student internships available is far from adequate. Some schools only arrange one or two months of internship during four-year undergraduate programmes, whilst others have no such arrangement for student internships. These practices have led to a situation where tourism enterprises are unwilling to hire college graduates as they can barely fit into the posts after graduation. Also, these students tend to have unrealistic expectations about work in the industry.

However, tourism institutions have complained that some tourism enterprises are very reluctant to provide opportunities for their students to gain practical experience via work placements. Also, when the enterprises did accept their students for work placements, the students were often treated as cheap labour for the enterprises to exploit, instead of allowing the students to gain relevant work experience.

There is now agreement that student internships should be an important element in Tourism Education among tourism academia, tourism enterprises and relevant government departments. Therefore the government, at national, provincial and municipal levels, needs to take an active role in facilitating collaboration between tourism academia and the industry, by emphasising that student internships will benefit students, faculty and the industry, and eventually lead to a win-win-win situation for all parties involved.

International cooperation and exchanges

There are now more and more exchanges and collaborations between tourism education institutions in China and similar ones abroad. These exchanges and collaborations are in different forms, such as student and teacher exchanges, visiting scholars and guest lecturers.

Recently, Florida International University (FIU) signed an agreement with the Tianjin University of Commerce to run a Hospitality Management School in China which would mirror the top-ranked Miami programme. The agreement is thought to be the first one on this scale between the Chinese government and a foreign university. According to the agreement, over the next two years, a group of Business Professors from China will undertake the Masters programme in Hospitality Management at FIU, and will then be hired by the FIU

faculty to teach at Tianjin University of Commerce, starting in Autumn 2006. Influenced by this example, many other tourism schools in China are also keen to look for appropriate international partners.

Conclusion

Tourism Education in China has now developed: from basic skills training for specific jobs in the tourism industry, to a gradually completed three-level educational system. In order to cope with the rapid development of the China tourism industry, tourism education reform is imperative! Developing graduates with a broader disciplinary base,

a hierarchically balanced knowledge and relevant practical experience, is important to both the students and the tourism industry.

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See http://www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/publications.html ■

International Dimensions of the Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) and Hospitality Management Education Providers

Stephen Ball, CHME

An international orientation has long been considered a natural and inherent aspect of Higher Education (HE) and universities (Wende, 1996). Central to this orientation has commonly been the international student programme (Blight, Davis and Olsen (2000). This article argues that the internationalisation of Hospitality HE should, and increasingly does, go beyond such programmes. It also shows, with reference to the Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME), that internationalisation of Hospitality HE features stakeholders other than HE institutions. To this end an overview of international dimensions of CHME, the subject association and voice of Hospitality Management in the UK, is provided. The article begins, though, with consideration of the meaning of internationalisation of HE and how this is manifested in practice. This will be achieved by analysing international elements of Hospitality Management Education provision within one institution – Sheffield Hallam University.

Internationalisation of Universities

Knight (1997), suggests that "internationalisation of higher education is the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into teaching, research and service of the institution". While this process may vary from institution to institution, six strategies for internationalisation have been identified by Back, Davis and Olsen (1996). These are:

1. International student programmes;

2. International student support services;

3. Offshore delivery of education and international delivery of distance education;

4. Internationalisation of teaching, through internationalisation of the content and form of the curriculum and through international experiences such as exchanges;

5. International technical assistance and training, including short courses and customised training; and

6. Internationalisation in research.

Back et al. (1996) also stress the importance of having an organisational strategy for internationalisation. Many institutions have this and the practices of individual faculties, academic subject groups, research centres, and other institutional work arrangements, reflect this also.

Hospitality Management Education is international and has become increasingly so over the last twenty years or so. Courses are delivered by academics in universities and colleges throughout the world to an international student body. Many of these students, when graduating, wish to work in the global hospitality industry. This internationalisation in Hospitality Management Education is strongly evident in the work and people of individual institutions involved in hospitality management education. An example of this, and the extent of the application of the strategies of Back et al (1996), can be seen in my own institution, Sheffield Hallam University.

International Elements in Hospitality Education Provision at Sheffield Hallam University

At the university, an international academic staff team, supported occasionally by international exchange staff, visiting lecturers from overseas, and by speakers from international hospitality companies, teach hospitality management to international students. All students, including international students, are able to draw upon the student services support for help with a whole host of matters including: accommodation, careers information, study help and written English. There are both postgraduate and undergraduate international hospitality management modules and courses at the university. These attract students from across the world. Some of them are students on international exchange projects run by both European and non-European countries, while others are enrolled on distance learning courses, which the university has offered for nearly fifteen years. Currently, a number of both undergraduate and postgraduate students study by the distance learning mode in their own countries, with some attending short supporting study schools delivered by academics in their home country

e.g. Hong Kong. Many students take the opportunity to engage in supervised work experience in hotels, restaurants, bars and their operating companies outside of the UK. Some of these return to their overseas placement organisation on graduation, while many graduates progress into careers which make a significant contribution to the international Hospitality Industry.

The Hospitality Management Courses at the University are supported by the Centre for International Hospitality Management Research (CIHMR). Staff of the Centre routinely undertake research, publication and consultancy on issues of international importance and much of this work is done in collaboration with, or for international businesses or organisations, including other HE institutions. Staff also publish in international hospitality research and academic journals, write with authors from other countries, and attend international conferences. Sheffield Hallam University has an international reputation for hospitality management. This, along with the experiences of the Centre, has resulted in a worldwide network of contacts and affiliations with other educational establishments, companies and government agencies.

The above example indicates that a number of stakeholders and actors (the HE institution, academic and non-academic staff, students and businesses) in the internationalisation of Hospitality Management Education can be distinguished. But there are others! Academic subject associations have a role. CHME is the UK subject association for hospitality and represents those UK universities and colleges offering programmes of study and qualifications in hospitality management. CHME works with, and for, universities and colleges, to promote high academic standards and vocational relevance in hospitality management. Some of its international dimensions are now presented.

International Perspectives of CHME

The increasing internationalisation taking place in individual institutions providing hospitality management education in the UK, many of whom are members of CHME, is being mirrored in many facets of the work of the Council. For example, CHME holds an annual international research, teaching and learning conference with international keynote speakers and an international audience. An international scientific committee reviews submitted papers and, in 2003, contributions were received from as far a field as: Australia, Brazil, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and Taiwan (Nield, 2003). The involvement of people from other countries has always enriched and broadened CHME conferences. Another example of the increasingly international

nature of CHME is the growing number of individual international members from other countries, including Australia, India and Switzerland.

A key dimension of CHME's work in the last few years has been the forging of links with other hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism professional associations. These have been both domestic and international, and have been pursued for the benefit of hospitality HE generally, individual HE institutions, academic staff, students and the hospitality industry across the world. Brief reports of two recent joint international subject association meetings involving CHME are given below.

In May 2005, a Meeting of the Joint Association Chairs of CHME, Council of Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE), and the Nordic Tourism Research Association was held at the CHME Research and Teaching and Learning Conference in Bournemouth. The following matters were agreed:

1. For each group to add as a standing item to the agenda of their respective future Executive Committee meetings: Reports from other associations i.e. for CHME meetings this would be Reports from CAUTHE and the Nordic Group.

2. To attach links on their respective web sites to each others' web sites.

3. To facilitate, where possible and appropriate, the publication of each others' conference papers.

4. To pursue, with its Executive Committees, mutual financial support (e.g. discounts). for members to attend each others conferences.

5. To promote and publicise each others' journals, publications, activities etc. at respective events and on web sites.

6. To encourage dialogue between appropriate academics regarding mutual refereeing of conference paper submissions.

The meeting stimulated the organisation of a further meeting, the 'Kindred Association' session, at the 2006 CAUTHE Conference held in Melbourne, Australia. This session gave "... to tourism, travel and hospitality professional associations from across the world the opportunity to present ideas on how these organisations might work more closely together in co-operative and collaborative education and research" (Davis, 2006).

Besides CHME and CAUTHE, the organisations represented by their Chairs or nominees were: Asia Pacific Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (Apac CHRIE); Asia-Pacific Education and Institutes in Tourism (APETIT); Association

for Tourism in Higher Education (ATHE) Pacific; International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (AIEST); International Society of Travel and Tourism Education; and Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

The association representatives agreed that continued contact and dialogue would be beneficial and that they would:

- Put links to the Kindred Association websites on their home page

- Publicise Kindred Association conferences via their websites

- Make formal time available at their conferences for a 'Kindred Association' meeting

- Continue to communicate via email addresses

In conclusion then, this article has argued that the internationalisation of Hospitality Management Education should be viewed as being more than about international student programmes, and also that there are stakeholders and actors, other than HE institutions, involved in the internationalisation process. It is my personal view that CHME must continue to develop its international dimension and that it is essential that CHME and its members should build on, and extend, the relationships they have with international Kindred Associations. These relationships can contribute to the international and intercultural dimensions of teaching and research in hospitality and other subjects. They can also form part of an international subject based network which would collect data related to Hospitality Management Education (such as that collected for the UK in Jameson, Walmsley and Ball, 2005) across the world, and facilitate a widespread response to issues of international significance in Hospitality Management Education. Furthermore relationships between CHME, and other associations, are important for the development, awareness and recognition of hospitality education worldwide.

The author would welcome the opportunity to discuss any issues arising from this article. Anyone who wishes to know more about the CIHMR, CHME or CHME membership should contact: s.ball@shu.ac.uk

Stephen Ball, *Centre for International Hospitality Management Research, Sheffield Hallam University, and Chair of CHME*

References

See http://www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/publications.html ∎

International Student Support - Peeling the Onion

Kevin Nield, Sheffield Hallam University

Introduction

On 21 October 2005, the Times Higher Education Supplement reported that the number of Chinese students entering Higher Education in the UK had fallen by 22.5%. Among the many reasons given for this was the quality of the educational experience.

This report was particularly timely as in September 2005, I had been commissioned to undertake a survey of support for international students and to make recommendations regarding future levels of support, and was due to report back in early November 2005.

What follows is a description of the research, its main findings and recommendations. The research method used was interviews, with key staff and organisations within the university. Due to the large number of programme and course leaders, these staff were given an e-mail questionnaire.

The Survey

The findings of the survey of international student support undertaken in the Faculty of Organisation and Management, Sheffield Hallam University, indicated that there were a minimum of *six levels of support* within the University. These levels of support were:

1.   **University Level**

    This support is provided by the University's International Office. Support is wide-ranging and essential; it starts with attracting and recruiting students. This could be described as the 'glossy' end of student support. It includes marketing tools such as CD-ROMs, DVDs (in Mandarin) and brochures, among its outputs.

    Support then continues by providing care for students after arrival. This includes: meet and greet programmes, study skills, language, employment, accommodation and medical support.

2.   **Faculty Level**

    This is tailor-made support based upon a Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) funded project. This support is by way of a virtual learning environment (Blackboard) and

enables students to find answers to many of the generic problems that they may have. The drawback is that much of it replicates support offered at university level.

Additionally, and importantly, 'at risk' students are identified through attendance checks each semester and scrutiny of performance data. Additional support includes organisation of social events and skills sessions.

3.   **Course/Programme Level**

    Support at this level is best described as 'patchy' as it is offered by individuals and depends largely on their view of the role.

    From the analysis of the responses of course and programme leaders, course level support could be summarised as:

    A. Excellent. This depends on the course/programme leader and teams and/or other initiatives. Some tutors saw international student support as a fundamental part of their role. One course team in particular took this very seriously and the course leader reported that:

    "Formal support on the course is offered via weekly course leader surgeries, regular informal Course Meetings and 'office hours' access to our administrator who can deal with some issues and forward others to appropriate staff. However, the key mechanism for support is via regular week by week contact with a compact team of experienced, committed academic staff. Most teach on at least two modules and the same team support dissertations and consultancy projects. All are available in and out of class and via email. Close working relationships are developed and enhanced by a number of social and non-assessed events during the year, e.g. last year, a study visit to Brussels and a summer Chatsworth `day out´."

    Additionally, other initiatives to enhance the student experience were encouraged. Often, however, these stemmed from individual ideas that were implemented in small areas of provision and did not apply to all international students. These ideas addressed issues such as employability, pastoral care and socialising.

They included: placements on postgraduate programmes (something previously thought of as impossible), drop-in coffee mornings (replacing or being additional to the more formal course committees), and evening social events for specific groups of international students.

B. Non-existent. This was usually because there was no perceived need as certain courses do not attract international students. This is best summed up by one respondent who said, "We have very few, if any international students due to the nature of the course. Therefore, we do not have specific support built in for them."

C. Delegated. Where support was delegated it was usually to the University or Faculty support mechanisms. Again this is elegantly summarised by one respondent who said, "I refer students to central services. The support offered there seems to be very good. I don't do anything over and above that."

4.   **Underpinning Level**

    This is pedagogic and is mainly concerned with improving the learning experience of international learners. This consists of research projects funded through the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee. Examples of the work undertaken include research into the learning preferences of Chinese and Indian learners, and another project that examined completion rates on postgraduate courses by different categories of learner.

5.   **Student Union**

    This was an easy category to forget as it is often outside of the purview of academics. However, much good work particularly with regard to socialisation is carried out through the societies, clubs and events that are organised and funded by the Student Union. Ignoring this might lead to unnecessary duplication of events.

6.   **Administrative Support**

    Again, this is another level of support that is easy to forget, and was perceived in this way by administrative staff. These members of staff are 'front-line' to all students and this function is often ignored. Work is in progress in this area

but administrative staff identified that they need 'cultural awareness' training. Additionally, given the front-line nature of their role, important information such as sources of support for international students should be available to administrative staff that may be in daily contact with international students.

Summary and General Comments

In general, the support that exists within the Faculty: is excellent; should be excellent; but may not be perceived as excellent. The reasons for poor perceptions may be:

1. Limited knowledge of what exists: no member of staff was fully aware of the different and potentially overlapping levels of support.

2. The number of people involved and their roles are confused and confusing: the lines between marketing to international students, developing new products and support, are particularly blurred. Central departments with similar titles have different but overlapping functions.

3. Support may be missing in areas that have become 'key', e.g. finding employment and work experience.

4. Many of the ideas and initiatives, though good, did not apply to all international students.

Recommendations

1. The levels of support should not be any less than exist at present. What should change is the level of knowledge of the support available. The University should, and will, continue to provide support and information on study skills, languages, employment, accommodation, medical issues, employment, meet and greet

programmes and information brochures. To complement this, the faculty should be responsible for providing information to students through a dedicated virtual learning environment. This would be for all students and provide a Blackboard site with information on social events, specific skills sessions, faculty induction sessions, briefing for administrative staff on cultural issues, general co-ordination of activities and liaison with central departments.

At the level of the course, informal drop-in sessions should be timetabled as regular slots (to be monitored for attendance) and, importantly, should be available for *all* international students, particularly in the 'at risk' early weeks. Additionally, course specific activities such as academic writing and plagiarism, workshops on deconstructing learning outcomes and assessment criteria, should be organised and timetabled.

The underpinning level of support should continue with research activities being targeted at specific aspects of the international student's learning experience. Part of this function should be an evaluation of support activities and systems.

The Student Union should be involved with the faculty so that activities may be co-ordinated and social events properly organised. Administrative staff should, and must, be acknowledged as part of the student effort. They should be aware of the support that is available for international students and also be culturally aware.

2. International support co-ordinators should be appointed at division level. Their role should be one of information and filling the "knowledge" gap regarding levels of support. The role would include helping, advising and supporting course teams and liaising with central departments.

3. Although this did not derive from survey, there is a need for students to be given dedicated help with regard to employment and work placement. As a consequence of this, it is recommended that international students are provided with specific help and guidance with regard to employment and careers, including help with finding work placements.

4. As part of the 'knowledge' role of the international support co-ordinators, programme and course leaders, and administrative staff, should attend courses at which all levels of support are explained. This should make it possible for the same levels of support to be fully explained to all international students as part of the induction process.

5. Pedagogic research in this field should be encouraged and fostered. TQEF and other monies should be dedicated to pedagogic projects in this area.

For further details on the above, please contact Kevin Nield k.nield@shu.ac.uk

Postscript

The report was accepted in its entirety. International support co-ordinators have been appointed and work is in progress to take forward the other recommendations. ■

International Students' Experience of Higher Education in Sport, Leisure and Tourism Management

Bob Snape, University of Bolton

Introduction

International students, whom in the context of this paper are taken to mean those who come from other countries to study in the United Kingdom, have for several years been a feature of British Higher Education (HE), making a significant contribution to its funding through their fees. As HE becomes increasingly consumerist, the recruitment of international students will gain even greater significance. However, despite past warnings against complacent assumptions of a continuing trend of international recruitment (British Council, 2000), recent comment has implied that these remain unheeded and that universities will need to radically change their policies and outlook if they are to retain their market position (Crimes and Sellars, 2004; Gilligan, 2005).

It is not the intention of this article to address this portentous issue, but chance comments recently made to the author by some international students highlighted the fact that many had experienced a markedly different style of learning and teaching in their home country, prior to coming to Great Britain. This led to a realisation that such differentiation could be important to the recruitment and retention of international students and, in turn, suggested that quality improvement in provision requires a better understanding of the **total** experience of international students during their course of their study. Although universities take great care to provide additional support for international students, there is nevertheless a relative dearth of collated documentation. This was acknowledged in a recent QAA (2005) report, which noted that reporting arrangements for institutional audit do not offer a single location to deal with the ways in which institutions meet the needs of their international students. Subsequently, it is salutary for practitioners to develop a greater awareness of the experiences of these students, and consider ways in which curriculum design and delivery might better accommodate their expectations and abilities.

This article is based upon a micro research exercise undertaken in the Department of Sport, Leisure and Tourism Management at the University of Bolton. In line with the University's strategy, the department has a strong active commitment to widening participation, and the student intake exhibits a notably varied demographic, national and academic profile. It has recruited international students to its Sport Development and Tourism Management programmes for several years and the recent introduction of an undergraduate degree in international tourism management resulted in a marked increase in the number of international students.

The research undertaken sought to elicit an initial exploration of international students' experiences and impressions of HE, particularly in terms of learning and teaching. It also aimed to tentatively address aspects of the students' social life and their integration with home-based students beyond the classroom. A questionnaire survey and some semi-structured interviews were conducted in the academic year 2005-2006 with eight international students – two from Slovakia, one from the Czech Republic, one from Poland, one from Macedonia, one from Cameroon, one from Mauritius and one from India. Clearly this was a very small and non-representative sample, but it nevertheless enabled the research to provide, in a very preliminary manner, a qualitative insight into the students' experiences. The profile of the sample reflected the growing number of European students undertaking HE in Great Britain. While it was not possible, within the time frame of the research, to undertake a cross-tabulated analysis of the data, the aim of the research was rather to gain some initial impressions that might, at a later stage, inform a more comprehensive and complex programme of research into international students' experiences.

Themes arising from survey

The students were asked to comment on the content of their course and also on the extent to which the course they had completed immediately prior to coming to the University was considered to have been an appropriate preparation for their degree studies. With only one exception, students expressed satisfaction with the content of the course and felt they had been adequately informed about it. Their previous education had, in the main, been in more general and theory-orientated courses in business and economics, rather than in the vocational awards through which the majority of students undertaking leisure and tourism management courses enter the university. However, there was a consensus that their previous experience had provided a firm grounding for HLST based HE. Respondents' experiences of HE in the United Kingdom were, to a large extent, evaluated with reference to their previous educational experience.

The two major areas of difference to emerge related to the *high degree of practical orientation of their current course and the high level of support provided by tutors*. Most felt that the emphasis on *vocationalism* contrasted sharply with the predominantly *theoretical* orientation of HE in their home country. This was generally felt to be more useful, in terms of initial career development, than the content of a degree in their home country would have been. However, a few respondents felt that a more theoretical content would, in fact, be more advantageous as it would be transferable across different sectors and countries. Most respondents enjoyed case studies and practical tasks, especially when these provided opportunities for group work and discussion. Teaching styles also received much favourable comment, again when compared with those to which the students had been accustomed previously. Responses indicated that lecturers in Britain tended to adopt a more supportive and open stance, as for example, in encouraging class-based discussion. Tutors were perceived to be *student-focused* and to demonstrate a *supportive demeanour* to individuals:

> "In my country lecturers just present the lecture; they do not help students with assignments, and don't care if they fail. In England the biggest difference is that the tutors take care of their students which I think is the best strength in the university system."

Several other comments related to the perceived *helpfulness* of tutors, for example:

> "I like the fact that tutors teach how to write essays and reports from the first level so [hopefully] they might be really helpful when writing the final year dissertation."

In a similar vein, *personal tutorials* were highly valued, with some respondents claiming that these were not a feature of education in their own country. The fact that first year students undertook a *compulsory study and learning skills module* also attracted comment with some students, particularly those from Eastern Europe, expressing surprise that these skills were taught at university.

However, the modular nature of courses and their vocational remit attracted some negative comment, with some respondents finding the course *too* narrow, by which they meant too vocational in content and not sufficiently demanding of them. The repetitive explanation of basics in lectures was seen as 'boring' and both the amount and level of work were reported by one respondent to be below that experienced in her home country. This perception of narrowness was in part influenced by the fact that university students in Eastern Europe would study more subjects – reportedly six or seven as opposed to the three modules per semester model at Bolton – and would also have far higher contact hours - on average twenty hours per week. Several respondents said that they would prefer even more theory than that which is already taught. This may be a reflection of the high level of theoretical content to which they had been accustomed in their home country, which would almost certainly have been well in excess of that taught on the vocational further education courses undertaken by the majority of home students. Conversely, the assessment methods, which included a mixture of class and work-based coursework, and examinations, were felt to be much

more conducive to learning than the almost exclusive reliance on final examinations which was reported to be the dominant mode in their own countries.

In particular, the *mixed* nature of the student body presented marked differences to past experience and also challenges to learning. Widening participation has, for many universities, involved the intake of students who find university methods of teaching – for example lectures and seminars – both alien and challenging. The transition to higher education has proved difficult for a small number of these students, and respondents felt uncomfortable with the impact such students could have on their learning and teaching environment, for example their proclivity to talk in class and their relatively shorter attention spans. At least one respondent expressed surprise that tutors were willing to adapt their delivery style to accommodate students such as these, again reflecting pedagogical difference between Britain and some other countries.

Social aspects

All respondents stated that they felt they had integrated socially with other students. Group work and the generally welcoming approach of staff had contributed to this. Most had joined the University's International Society and had made friends through this who were also international students. Some had made friends with British students but this was through sharing a hall of residence and not through their course.

Conclusion

While it would be inappropriate to make generalisations from the research results, the responses nevertheless suggest a few pointers to further research. One of these relates to the apparent potential attraction of vocational degrees in this country to international students and the possible marketing advantage this offers. A related issue is the difference in teaching style and tutorial support, and the extent to which this tended to be compared favourably with those in the students' home countries. The integration of international students within student cohorts of differing pre-university education also merits consideration, and a final topic worthy of further investigation is the extent to which vocational degrees may be perceived as *too vocational* by international students - a question that might be thought to have a more general relevance.

Acknowledgements

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References

See http://www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/publications.html ■

Attractions of Further Education: A Singaporean Experience

John Teo, EASB Institute of Management, Singapore

Life-long learning is now accepted as required in a world of dynamic information flows, science and technology advances and continual change. Modern managers spend much of their lives in learning or teaching. Education and training show up on every management needs-assessment carried out.

The Educational ministry in Singapore is spearheading an initiative to establish a national life-long learning system. This is intended to help international students, as well as the existing pool of workers, invest wisely in future career and education which will maximise their contribution to employers, and advance their careers.

The Private Educational Organisations (PEOs) stand to gain from this initiative. Most have forged alliances with leading overseas universities and governing bodies, to present courses and programmes designed to tackle the challenges of today's vibrant and ever-changing economy.

A wide spectrum of courses are offered - from academic qualifications-based courses, to specialist courses, and English language courses, designed to equip students with skills relevant to the needs of the job market. It is estimated that there are well over 10,000 foreign international students pursuing full-time studies in Singapore.

Working adults in Singapore can decide between various educational options. Some may opt for a graduate degree like an MBA qualification. Others look for a first degree. Some are in the market for a new set of skills, whilst others consider taking up academic studies overseas to improve both their skills and their career prospects. The wide array of choices can overwhelm the prospective student. This is where professional marketers can help in educational counselling. This would mean being a friend, mentor and advisor, to those who seek counsel and obviously is easier said than done. The challenge is to study the prospect's background, including administering tests like: ability, aptitude,

learning style, aspirations, visions; and then advising them on practical, sensible and achievable steps that should be taken to realise their dreams.

Some of the biggest impacts on educational choices have come from Business Information Management (BIM) and job mobility. Skills that are marketable anywhere in the world have become well-regarded. Currently, there are many Business IT jobs and this expertise is required globally. The ability to work anywhere in the world fuels the hunger to earn higher salaries. Most people still see paper qualifications as the key to better-paid careers, promotions and financial security. The pervasive adoption of information technology, in both work and private life, demands that individuals be able to exploit the technology to the fullest.

Business professionals who want to tap into the pulse of the e-revolution can look at specialist qualifications that will enable them to craft new career pathways into their chosen field. Part-time programmes are available from several private institutions. They provide business-specialist programmes that are intended to support business executives with the necessary skills and know-how to steer businesses.

Specialist programmes in Business such as: Global Human Resources; International Marketing and Business Management; International Hospitality Management; etc, cater to different needs within the industry. For example, an International Marketing/Business developer will be able to produce design concepts and final production artwork that will satisfy business needs. International Hospitality Development professionals will develop and implement Integrated Resorts and commerce solutions using various tools and technologies, such as 'Commerce Server'. Similarly a Web Application Developer will have technical knowledge of Internet, intranet and extranet technologies to create professional and interactive web pages. Courses of this nature are extremely popular as they are held on a flexible modular basis and can be completed in a relatively short time, as contact hours total less than 200.

Internationally Recognised Qualifications

Formal educational programmes are also widely available from several PEOs in Singapore. Often these programmes involve a modular exam/coursework-based curriculum that is developed by a foreign university for distance-delivery in Singapore. Thus, diploma and degree programmes, from a gamut of universities from Australia, UK, and the US, are available locally through partner institutes.

East Asia School of Business (EASB) Institute of Management is one such organisation. It provides a comprehensive range of degree courses and specialist English programmes. EASB currently offers one doctoral, nine masters, thirteen bachelor, and eight diploma and advanced programmes. More than 3,000 students are enrolled in these courses.

Formal qualifications are the best option for those who want to improve themselves academically. Degrees from good and reputable universities, particularly from the UK, are sought after by both upgraders and employers. People with 'better' and 'higher' qualifications are better rewarded, in money terms and career advancement. Human resource professionals have yet to devise a better system to reward employees. Until they do, formal paper qualifications will continue to be used as benchmarks to reward people.

Students should not undertake such degree programmes without thoughtful deliberation. They need to take stock of their ability to successfully complete their chosen course of study, the reputation of the proposed university/institution, and their goals and visions. Additionally factors such as finances and the pre-entry requirements of the institution in question are also important.

The attraction of such programmes is two-fold. Firstly, the curriculum accords the learners training in their field of study. Secondly, certificates for these joint awards are issued under the name of the university or examining body, ensuring their marketability, as the professional, operational and administrative support for these awards are from an established and recognised international source. Often the degrees awarded are identical to those awarded for on-campus study and make no mention of the student taking the programme through distance study.

Securing a place in the local universities is not easy, given the high number of applicants and the entry criteria. However, studying in the local universities requires a smaller financial outlay and the opportunity to work part-time. Students in PEOs typically cannot work due to visa restrictions but some do risk doing cash-in-hand work.

Those looking for a postgraduate qualification would usually choose to do a part-time course, as most universities design these programmes with working adults in mind. Thus, the choice of pursuing a distance learning programme, or even one administered through the Internet becomes a viable option. Being able to finance the programme by working full-time is an added advantage.

Experience gained by studying overseas is a marketable commodity. Long-term career prospects can be enhanced and the experience develops self-confidence, independence, and cross-cultural skills – attributes all in high demand with employers.

During a recession economy, it is a good time for workers to upgrade themselves to be better qualified and trained for the upturn in the economy. In choosing a programme, prospective students should consider the investments of time, finance, and more importantly what opportunities the programme will offer upon completion.

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Challenges, Opportunities and Headaches

Hugh Wilkins, Griffith University, Australia

Griffith University is situated in Queensland, Australia and commenced tourism and hospitality management education in the late 1980s. An excellent reputation for research and the quality of the tourism and hotel

management programmes has since developed. This reputation, together with the marketing efforts of the university, has seen considerable growth in the numbers of non-Australian students, predominately from countries in the Asia-Pacific region, studying in tourism and hotel management. These students, variously defined as international or fee-paying overseas students, now comprise almost sixty percent of the undergraduate student cohort in the broad tourism and hospitality arena, with the

percentage being somewhat higher in the hotel management programme. This situation, whilst welcomed by the university, presents opportunities and challenges in ensuring the validity of the educational experience and the maintenance of educational quality.

A number of issues that are contingent with a majority of students in a degree programme coming from other countries need to be considered. This article continues with a discussion of two of the many issues, and is intended to generate discussion rather than present solutions.

Curriculum Issues

Griffith University is an Australian University and the degrees were originally developed in an Australian context to satisfy the needs of domestic students and the domestic hotel industry. When the Hotel Management degree underwent a major review a few years ago, a survey of hotels of reasonable size and quality standard within Australia was undertaken. The survey identified the industry expectations of graduates across a number of general and specialist management roles (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). Although the hotel industry is an international industry, with most management practices being transferable across boundaries, there are, obviously, a number of regional peculiarities and characteristics that are not transferable. For example, elements of the curriculum relating to regional distinctiveness such as legal aspects, and food and beverage aspects.

The legal aspects of hospitality management are largely country-specific, as are elements of other functional areas such as human resources and accounting. Given that the majority of students are not Australian, this raises issues about the validity of the curriculum. Should we expect students from outside Australia to understand, let alone successfully complete, a course in (Australian) Hospitality Law? This may be a particularly pertinent question for students from predominately Muslim countries, where the cultural understanding relating to the management of premises designed for the consumption of alcohol may be lacking. Equally the food preparation and service courses may present challenges for students. Whilst we may argue we develop skills in Western food styles, this may imply some cultural arrogance as to what is appropriate for an international industry.

Given these issues, does this mean, to ensure a sound pedagogical approach, we should change the curriculum to suit the majority of the student body? Or alternatively, should we generalise the curriculum so it is applicable in all countries, and if so how can this be done without making it so bland as to be untenable? Whilst the law courses may be particularly country specific, similar constraints apply across other functional aspects of hotel management, including elements of the degree related to food (food preparation, food service, gastronomy, wine appreciation etc). However, to constrain the degree to those aspects that are relevant for students from all countries would significantly reduce the range of subjects that could be taught, and limit the value of the degree for domestic industry!

Student Learning Experience

A diverse student body presents challenges across a number of dimensions, including learning approaches and integration. As may be expected, although the student body studying tourism and hospitality comes from a number of countries, over 40 in practice, there are concentrations of students from particular countries. Over recent years these have included South Korea, Taiwan and China. The question arises do we integrate these students? And if so how?

The tendency exists for Australian students to choose to work with other Australian students, Korean students to work with other Korean students and so on. Is this a problem? If the student cohort were entirely Australian, we would allow students to self-select the people with whom they chose to work. However, with an international student component there is a perception we should try to 'mix them up' with other students. Is this for their own benefit, or is it an academic belief that multi-cultural groups are 'better' and assist students to adapt and understand the learning context? If we made comparison with a UK context, with a class of purely UK students, do you try to 'mix up' students from Scotland, England and Wales, or from Lancashire and Devon to ensure a pedagogically sound approach? If not, why should we then adopt the forced integration of international students with students from other cultural backgrounds?

There are also other impacts associated with a diverse student group. Domestic students have a generic understanding of a number of facets of culture and behaviour that may be unfamiliar to the international students. This necessitates that some aspects of teaching are more fundamental than would otherwise be the case. The need to cover basic materials devalues the course for domestic students who have to be 'taught

how to suck eggs' and opens us to criticism from other, self-perceived, more academic disciplines as being a 'chardonnay' course. There is also the impact of a large cohort of students from non-English speaking backgrounds on material delivery and class discussions. Whilst international students have to pass the requisite entry standard there is little doubt their ability to perform academically is often constrained by language barriers.

Whilst the above may focus on some of the challenges associated with a diverse student group, the richness such diversity brings to education transcends the problems. This richness is unparalleled in many of those self-proclaimed more academic disciplines that often seem to be unattractive in the international marketplace.

However, there is need for debate on the educational implications of large populations of 'international' students. Some universities have expressed international recruitment targets of up to 25 percent of the overall student body! Given the attractiveness of some disciplines is limited for 'international' students, whilst others disciplines actively discourage them, it is likely the majority of these students will be focused in the business arena. The debate must focus on the ethical and pedagogical issues that arise from this changing mix of students. If the potential benefits of a diverse international student body are to be fully reaped, there is a need to evaluate the educational needs and contributions of such a diverse body rather than endeavouring to integrate them into a nationally focused programme.

References

See http://www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/publications.html ∎

HLST Network Annual Conference

It's a Small World? International Opportunities and Challenges for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education

20th September 2006, St Hugh's College,
University of Oxford

Our conference this year addresses the international perspectives which increasingly impact on the delivery of our programmes of study. We shall examine curriculum content which meets the needs and expectations of all students, including those from the EU / UK as well as those from other countries, the role of international student exchange programmes, international work experience opportunities, and learning experiences and opportunities for multi-cultural student groups. We shall explore opportunities to learn from each other, through international staff exchanges and collaboration, examine issues arising from delivering UK programmes overseas and hear from those involved in developing programmes through international partnerships. We shall consider how we work with industry to support the international mobility and employment ambitions of our graduates.

The world is getting smaller, but an increasingly international context for higher education brings issues which are highly complex and require well-informed responses. This year's conference will identify key issues and propose directions we can take.

Details of the programme and booking arrangements are available at –
www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk

The HLST Network joined other subject centres in a national student award competition inviting students to submit an essay: 'How does your experience of your course compare with any expectations you may have had?'

The winning HLST essay, written by Danielle Freer from Leicester College, is included here as the Network Focus and was submitted to the Higher Education Academy to be judged along with the winning essays from other subject centres.

How does your experience of your course compare with any expectations you may have had?

As a potential mature student I was so apprehensive about returning to college after being out of education for 10 years that I put off applying for my course for at least two years. Finally I decided if I was going to do it, it was now or never. Taking the first steps were the hardest, just making that phone call enquiring about the course was nerve-wracking. The meeting with the course tutor felt like an interview - would I get on the course or not? I prepared myself with a CV and a certificate from a previous job. The course had everything I wanted to learn plus much more. I felt excited once the interview was over. The tutor had explained everything about the course and what it would entail; she had shown me work by previous students on the course and had given me a tour of the college. Every student I saw there seemed very young, which I hadn't anticipated, and I asked myself if I could go to college with these people every day. The answer had to be yes, as my career would involve working alongside people of all ages. I couldn't hold myself back by not applying for the course. I decided that this was a minor hurdle; being around these students would educate me on young people's attitudes today, after all, I would be working with these people in the near future. I received a call a few days later letting me know that I had been accepted onto the course - to my surprise I was now officially a student!

Nine months before the course began I needed to prepare myself academically, which was the difficult part. Not having written a report, essay or done any form of presentation before made it a huge stepping-stone. I didn't want to feel or look stupid in front of the other students. It was going to be a challenge and not one I was looking forward to, but if I wanted my qualification, it had to be done. I was going to be learning a new set of skills which would carry me forward throughout my career. I therefore prepared myself by taking writing and spelling classes to exercise my brain. Fortunately my previous employer was already offering classes in these skills. I researched more about the college and read up a little on the modules that would be taught and I found this very beneficial.

Another problem was MONEY. How would I survive being a student, working part-time, struggling to pay for my rent, bills and food? Talking to a welfare advisor was very helpful and to my surprise I found I was entitled to a grant, so all those years of hesitation about how I would survive on lack of funds could have been resolved with one simple phone call to the college welfare department. At this point most of my anxieties had been quelled and I could now concentrate on the academic side.

My HND group only consisted of seven students and by Christmas two had dropped out. This left four girls who had all just finished other courses or had just left school; I felt that they would breeze through their work and I would be left behind. My main concern was that the tutors were going to be like schoolteachers, very, "Yes sir!, No sir!" However, I found things to be the complete opposite - the tutors treat you like an adult and don't patronise you if you ask a 'silly question'. As one tutor said: "There is never a wrong question to ask." Most tutors at Leicester College were and are very supportive and are available to talk through and offer guidance on any worries or problems (college or home) that may arise during the course of student life. Again, this was something I hadn't expected, and I can honestly say that the help I received has had a positive impact on my studies and the same could be said for the other students in my group.

I have found that the main aim of the tutors is to guide, learn and help us to achieve our personal best in our studies. I needed to move house in my first term and I was very worried about how I would finish all my assignments on time at the same time as moving house. After talking with a tutor and explaining my worries I was offered an extension on my assignment. This relieved some of the stress and I moved house without worry and completed my work for the deadline.

I am currently in my final year with a few months left to go. I have come a long way and have learnt so much, both personally and academically. I can now write reports without any problems and presentations don't seem as daunting. I have realised what my strengths are and have a clearer view on what type of career I would like to pursue. All the new skills I have learnt I will continue to use in my chosen career. The friends I have made at college are ones that I will stay in touch with as we have really bonded. I have realised that people learn at different stages in life and in different ways; as a small group we all were able to be supportive of each other and be open about our fears and anxieties. We were all in the same boat from the very beginning of the course and this experience was a new challenge for us all.

When I have completed this course I will feel I have achieved my goal to gain some focus in my life and overcome the challenges and obstacles on the way. I believe that if I can do this then anyone can, a cliché, but it's true. This course has given me 100% more than I ever expected. To anyone hesitating about taking further study I would say, make the decision to do it now. It doesn't matter what age you are or at what stage of life you are.. There is always room to learn and build on your self-esteem and to become more knowledgeable in whatever you do.

Danielle Freer, HND Hospitality Management, Leicester College ■

The Higher Education Academy | **Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Network**

LINK 17

The theme for the next edition of LINK, to be published in September 2006, will be blended learning. Articles are welcome on the following topics, or others related to the theme:

- The costs or the benefits

- Encouraging active learning

- Using the Internet in teaching

- Using ICT to give prompt feedback to students

- Integrating online learning within courses

- Writing and using digital learning objects

- Flexible/off campus delivery

- Computer aided assessment

- Using computer based simulations, virtual learning environments, blogging, podcasts, video conferences, wiki boards or computer mediated conferencing

If you would like to contribute an article to LINK 17, please contact sfrench@brookes.ac.uk

Useful websites

The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS)
http://www.atlas-euro.org/

Bologna Bergen
http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/

Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/

British Council
http://www.britishcouncil.org/

DfES
www.dfes.gov.uk/eupresidency2005/index.shtml
www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/

École de management de Normandie
www.ecole-management-normandie.fr/

École Supérieure de Commerce du Havre
www.esc-lehavre.fr/GB_index.asp

European Association for Sport Management (EASM)
www.easm.net

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
www.enqa.eu

The European Commission
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/index_en.html

European University Association
www.eua.be

Green Globe
www.greenglobe.org

Higher Education Academy – Internationalisation
www.heacademy.ac.uk/International.htm

The Higher Education Policy Institute
http://www.hepi.ac.uk/

International CHRIE
www.chrie.org

Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies Subject Centre
www.llas.ac.uk
including, Academic Implications of the Bologna Process
www.llas.ac.uk/events/llaseventarchiveitem.aspx?resourceid=2484

The National Unions of Students in Europe
www.esib.org

The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education
www.obhe.ac.uk

QAA
www.qaa.ac.uk/international/default.asp

Sport Information Resource Centre
www.sirc.ca

UK HE Europe Unit
www.europeunit.ac.uk/home
www.europeunit.ac.uk/bologna_process/index.cfm

UK Socrates Erasmus Council
www.erasmus.ac.uk/whatis.html

University of Brighton – Local Leisure Network Newsletter
www.brighton.ac.uk/ssm/llln2.html

World Leisure
www.worldleisure.org

Any views or opinions represented in articles published in LINK are those of the authors rather than those of their institutions or of the HLST Network.

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