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A new approach to an old problem: an enhanced Induction framework for Postgraduate International Students

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Background:

- Northumbria University is ranked 12th in the UK for recruiting international students (UKCISA, 2009).

- 2007/8 (UKCISA, 2009) there were 95,090 (17,730 EU and 77,360 none EU students) full time students on postgraduate taught programmes.

- The top two non-EU countries students come from, are China (45,355 all levels) and India (25,905 all levels).

- Business and Administrative studies had the largest number of international students at 90,765 (all levels) out of 341,790 international students.

Background:

• The recruitment of Newcastle Business School postgraduate students is geographically diverse and mirrors UK recruitment.

• Such a diverse cohort presents particular challenges to both the students and NBS.

- • International students arriving in the UK find the learning environment challenging and often experience a loss of confidence (Carroll and Ryan, 2005) due to the different teaching approaches.

- • Issues apart from the obvious language problem include more student focused learning and the ability to demonstrate greater critical thinking. The students suffer what Warwick (2007;5) describes as a "form of cultural shock".

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Background:

• Carroll and Ryan (2005) would argue against the Deficit Model, where universities categories problems based on difference between international students and the host country. *They believe institutions need to change to reflect the geographical diversity of the student population.*

• With this in mind NBS introduced in 2009/10 an enhanced pre-teaching Learning and Teaching Induction week.

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Demographics and Student Profiling Pedagogical Research

- Work focused upon 300 postgraduate UK and international students.

- Data was collected in induction sessions and targeted follow up sessions.

- Data was used to understand the portfolio student profile re learning.

- To support pedagogical research in best study practice within diverse student groups.

A

The purpose of the PG Induction to Learning Week was to:

- Identify and overcome the barriers to postgraduate learning

- Enable all students to engage more effectively and earlier with their taught modules

- Introduce the students to NBS postgraduate learning and teaching culture.

Demographics – Example Session Data

2.) Are you male or female?

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Male	41.92%	96
Female	58.08%	133
Totals	100%	229

3.) What is your home country?

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
UK	6.90%	16
Western Europe	3.45%	8
Eastern Europe	1.29%	3
Mainland China	43.53%	101
Hong Kong	0.86%	2
Singapore	0%	0
Malaysia	3.88%	9
Taiwan & Vietnam	5.60%	13
India	10.34%	24
Other	24.14%	56
Totals	100%	232

Demographics – Example Questions

What is your home country?

1. UK
2. Western Europe
3. Eastern Europe
4. Mainland China
5. Hong Kong
6. Singapore
7. Malaysia
8. Taiwan & Vietnam
9. India
10. Other

Chart values: UK 7%, Western Europe 3%, Eastern Europe 1%, Mainland China 44%, Hong Kong 1%, Singapore 0%, Malaysia 4%, Taiwan & Vietnam 6%, India 10%, Other 24%
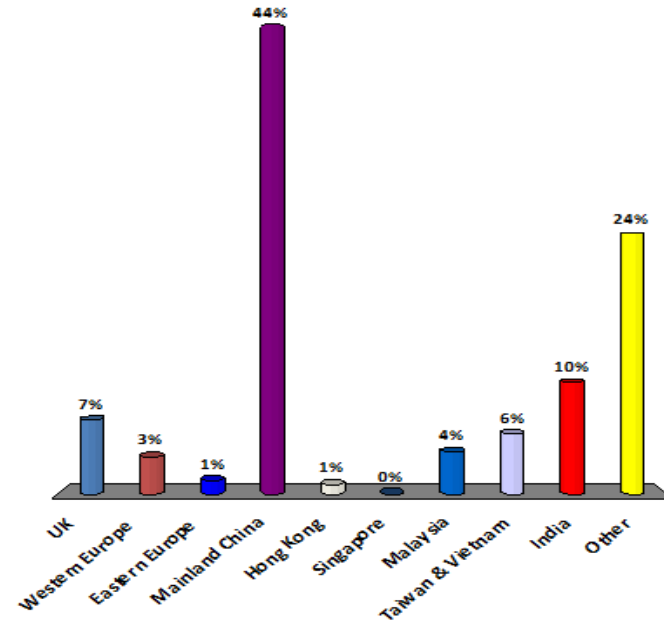
Demographic Comparison Example

## 9.) How often were your studies supported through e-learning and online

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never	Total
Under 21	2		2	4
21 – 23	38	19	33	90
24 – 26	42	25	28	95
27 – 29	6	4	8	18
30+	11	1	11	23
Male	37	24	34	95
Female	58	23	48	129
UK	9	1	6	16
Western Europe	3		5	8
Eastern Europe		1	2	3
Mainland China	57	22	20	99
Hong Kong	1	1		2
Singapore				
Malaysia	3	3	3	9
Taiwan & Vietnam	3	3	5	11
India	1	2	21	24
Other	18	15	23	56

Demographics – Example Questions

How many hours of classes did attend per week at your previous institution?

1. 1-5 hours
2. 6-10
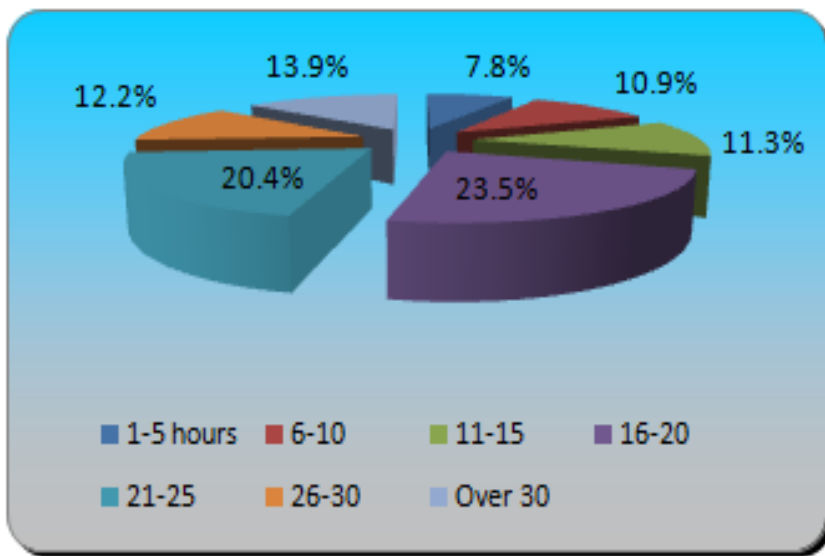3. 11-15
4. 16-20
5. 21-25
6. 26-30
7. Over 30

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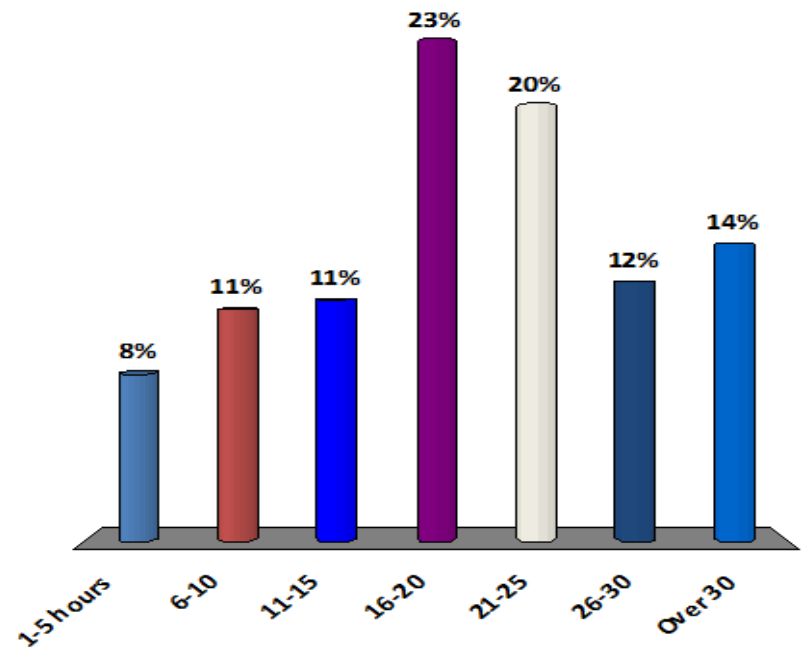
Demographics – Example Session Data

5.) How many hours of classes did attend per week at your previous institution?

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
1-5 hours	7.83%	18
6-10	10.87%	25
11-15	11.30%	26
16-20	23.48%	54
21-25	20.43%	47
26-30	12.17%	28
Over 30	13.91%	32
Totals	100%	230

PG Induction to Learning Week

A week of activities were delivered which included the following:-

- Students to work in mixed cultural groups, whilst developing their skills of information searching, critical evaluation and presentation skills (areas that many international students have limited or no experience).

- Introduce and discuss the role of the lecture, seminar, independent learning etc.

- Practical exercises to introduce marking criteria.

Induction week activities: detail

Activities

- Support programme identity.

- Element of 'fun' learning.

- Collective engagement.

- Non-threatening

Student expectations

- Explore the student profile and prior learning experience.

- Explore staff and student expectations of:
  - Lecture
  - Seminar
  - Identify NBS purposes of each
  - Provide advice for students on preparing for

Induction and Breaking Down Barriers

- Focused upon tackling barriers and diversity within the postgraduate portfolio of 300 students during induction week.

- TurningPoint PRS was used to run an interactive team quiz as an icebreaker.

- Designed to encourage students to interact with each other and with academic staff.

- Students were organised into programme based teams.

- Students had to consult within their teams and share their answers via a roving microphone.

Welcome to ..
# The Postgraduate Induction
PROGRAMME TEAM QUIZ

Yours Hosts ..

John Dickinson and Nigel Coates

Newcastle Business School

Please select your Programme Team

0%

0%

0%

0%

0%

0%

0%

0%

1. MA International Business Administration

2. MSc Global Logistics & SCM

3. MSc Accountancy & Finance

4. MSc Global Financial Management

5. MSc Marketing

6. MSc Business Management & Business with

7. MSc International HRM

8. MBA (Masters in Bus Admin)

0%
0
of
300

Answer Now

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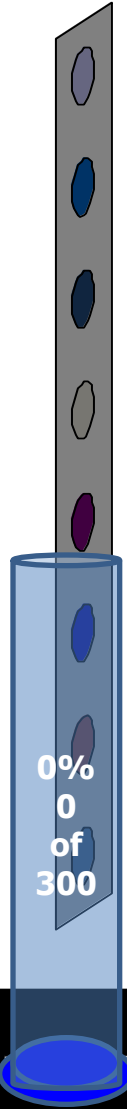
Programme learning activity

Work in your allocated groups and report on an article related to your masters programme.

1. Explain how you found the article. E.g. search terms used, the database used

2. Accurately identify the article using the Harvard system of referencing.

3. Critically evaluate the article.

Present your report using a Power point presentation (maximum 3 slides and 5 minutes)

Information seeking skills

Introduction to NORA library skills

1. Staff working with academics to identify relevant article

2. Staff working with students to identify information sources and how to use

3. Staff part of student briefing

   – Available in schedule slots in library for additional support

Exercise contextualised and addressing student need at the right time

Main Findings

Staff

- Early development and introduction to students of key skills

- Practise in above

- Early development of programme identity

- Able to give early formative feedback

Students

- Active not passive role in the week

- Understanding of programme context

- Early mixing of students through treasure hunt, presentations

Summary

Before PG Induction to Learning Week

1. Programme based 2 hour induction session prior to the start of teaching.

2. Year Long PG Induction Module.

PG Induction to Learning Week

1. Addressing new international students 'cultural shock'.

2. Providing key induction messages.

3. Introduction to key skills.

4. Portfolio and programme activities.

4. Linked to Year Long PG Induction Module.

Discussion of Implications

Positive

- Good staff & student feedback
- General feel good 'buzz' with students
- Early introduction to key skills:
    - NBS L&T culture
    - Programme identity
    - Group working

On-going

- Degree of cultural mix
- Implications of programme group size
- Student retention during week
- Late arrivals

Any questions?

List of key references/resources:

Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. (eds) (2005) Teaching International Students – Improving Learning For All, Abington, Routledge
UKCISA (2009) Student statistics. Available online at:
www.ukcisa.org.uk/about/ statistics (accessed 12 December 2009).

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Watkins, D and Biggs, J. (eds) (2001) Teaching the Chinese Learner: psychological and pedagogical perspectives. Hong Kong, Comparative Education Research Centre.