Internationalisation of Higher Education: A UK Perspective

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Outline

1. Introducing Newcastle University
2. UK Higher Education (HE) sector
3. Intercultural communication and HE
4. Examples from Newcastle University
   1. Teaching
   2. Research
5. UK-Japan HE differences and similarities
6. Questions and comments from you
Newcastle upon Tyne...
Newcastle University...

• Ranked in the top 1% of universities in the world (QS World University Rankings 2014)

• Member of the Russell Group, comprising 24 leading research institutions in the UK

• Student population in 2014-2015 stood at 22,673 (UK campus)
  • 5250 overseas students from over 120 countries

• A further 1191 students are based at campuses in Malaysia and Singapore

• Several hundred programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level spanning Medicine, Science, Agriculture, Engineering, Social Science, Arts, Humanities, Languages and Education
Internationalisation in higher education: A growing phenomenon...

• More than four million people studying in higher education (HE) institutions located outside their country of origin worldwide, and numbers are growing (OECD, 2015)

• Many thousands of internationally-mobile staff

• Patterns changing – growth of regional hubs challenging ‘Western’ hegemonies

• ‘Internationalisation’ as institutional response to this burgeoning phenomenon – traditionally amounting largely to recruitment
HE internationalisation in the UK (1)

The UK remains the main European destination for international students, and the second most important globally after the US.

Possible reasons:
- Brand and image of British higher education
- History of universities in UK
- Perception of London as a global city
- Importance of English as an international language
HE internationalisation in the UK (2)

19% of total HE student body are non-UK

Students on UK research PG degrees (e.g. PhD)
- 51% Non-UK
- 49% UK

Students on UK taught PG degrees (e.g. MA, MSc)
- 71% Non-UK
- 29% UK

It is estimated that international students bring in around £8bn pounds per year

UKCISA, 2015
HE internationalisation in the UK (3)

There are now more international students studying UK degrees from outside of the UK than inside the UK (571,000 estimated; International Unit 2013)

- Distance learning/online courses (51.2%)
- Partnerships with foreign institutes (42%)
- Campuses outside of the UK (6.8%)
- Majority from Malaysia, Singapore and Pakistan
Internationalisation in higher education: Current thinking...

• Pervasive but contested concept in contemporary HE, often economically driven (Turner and Robson, 2008; Tian and Lowe, 2009; Brandenburg and De Wit, 2011)

• Presence of international students often seen as a key to internationalisation...but the actions taken to accommodate and integrate those students are often inadequate or inappropriate (Reid and Spencer Oatey, 2013)

• A marketization discourse steers thinking away from a radical reassessment of HE purposes, priorities and processes that student diversity and multicultural interaction require (De Vita and Case, 2003; Caruana and Spurling, 2007)
An intercultural phenomenon...

• ‘...the various manifestations of internationalisation currently operationalised are not in themselves panaceas for institutions seeking to engage positively with the globalizing education ‘market’...

• ...greater numbers of international students or a higher global institutional ranking do not necessarily reflect a higher degree of beneficial intercultural interaction or education.’ (Young, Handford and Schartner, 2016 forthcoming)

• Towards ‘Internationalisation 2.0’?

• One of the most current interesting arenas for the study of intercultural communication, interaction, dialogue...?
Intercultural communication research in relation to internationalization in HE...

Three broad interrelated areas of thematic interest:

1. Themes related to conceptual issues in intercultural communication
2. Lingua-cultural issues
3. Themes directly related to learning, teaching and the student and staff experience
1. Broadly intercultural conceptual themes ...

1. How institutions promote themselves as exhibiting and fostering intercultural communication, inclusivity, openness. How this relates to reality.

2. The nature(s) of national educational and institutional cultures and subcultures. How these are perceived, by ‘locals’ and sojourners.

3. The relevance of institutional vs. national educational ‘cultures’ and sub-cultures in understanding the ‘home’ and ‘international’ student and staff experience of specific institutions, or parts of institutions.
2. Lingua-cultural themes...

Highlighting the inexplicable but complex link between language, communication and culture...

1. Is ‘internationalisation’ really ‘Englishization’? The increasing role of the English language in the internationalization of higher education worldwide:
   • as entry requirement for students (home and international)
   • as medium of teaching and learning
   • as publication medium for research
   • as a hiring/promotion criterion for staff
   • as a contributor to institutional rankings (Pillar and Cho, 2013)

2. How is the increasing influence of the language perceived (by individuals, institutions, nations and supra-national organisations like ASEAN and the EU (e.g. Snodin & Young, 2015)?
3. Learning, teaching and the student experience...

1. The nature of intercultural competence(s) and their relationship to interactional competences

2. The extent to which intercultural competences are seen as desirable graduate attributes by employers, students, institutions....

3. Pedagogical implications of internationalisation – e.g. intercultural group working, staff and student induction, expectations related to criticality, assessment and feedback, different ‘cultures of learning and of teaching’...

4. How to facilitate ‘international’ staff student adjustment and adaptation. How to do the same for ‘locals’ in the internationalising university...

(e.g. Pitts and Brooks, 2016, forthcoming; Holiday, 2016, forthcoming; Spencer-Oatey and Dauber, 2016, forthcoming; Jin and Cortazzi, 2016, forthcoming)
Examples from Newcastle University

1. Teaching: Internationalising University Experience module
2. Research: Intercultural Communication and Engineering Education – A Collaboration between Newcastle and Tokyo Universities
Teaching:
Internationalising University Experience Module (1)

Compulsory module for students on BA Education (new degree)

• 24 lectures (2h)
• 12 seminars (1h)

Module aims:
1. Promote the importance of an international dimension to education (primary, secondary and tertiary)
2. Offer intellectually exciting and challenging internationalised and intercultural experiences
3. Explore the theoretical and practical dimensions of the concepts of intercultural communication, internationalisation and global citizenship
Teaching: Internationalising University Experience Module (2)

SYLLABUS OUTLINE

• **Block 1: Intercultural communication (sessions 1-4)**
  ➢ ‘Culture’, nation and language; English as an international language

• **Block 2: Global citizenship (sessions 5-8)**
  ➢ Citizenship in the 21st century; Education for global citizenship

• **Block 3: Internationalisation in higher education (sessions 9-12)**
  ➢ Internationalising curricula; diversity in higher education

ASSESSMENT

• **Assignment 1 (Sem1): Intercultural Episodes – Group Presentation**
  ➢ Select, ‘unpack’ and present one intercultural encounter

• **Assignment 2 (Sem 2): Micro-Ethnography and Essay**
  ➢ Collect and analyse a small amount of ethnographic data

• **Assignment 3 (Sem 1 & 2): Reflective portfolio**
  ➢ Weekly journal entries on Blackboard
Research: Intercultural Communication and Engineering Education – A Collaboration between Newcastle and Tokyo Universities

Research questions:

1. How do engineering staff and students frame ‘global engineer’ and ‘intercultural communication’?

2. How important to engineering students and staff is intercultural communication? How do students perceive their own skills?

Methods:

1. Self-report survey with engineering students
2. Focus groups with engineering students and staff
UK-Japan HE differences

• Status in the international student market
  • UK: established on international market, but facing new competitors
  • Japan: emerging on international market

• Reliance on international students
  • UK: current heavy reliance on international students
  • Japan: potential future reliance on international students?

• International industrial relevance
  • Japan: perceived internationally as leaders in (e.g.) engineering and technology
  • UK: no longer perceived as leaders in any particular industry/discipline?

• Local language and culture
  • Many prospective students study English from young age
  • Knowledge of Japan and Japanese tends to be more niche

• Motivations for internationalisation?
UK-Japan HE similarities

• Island nations competing against continental neighbours
• Internationalisation high on the agenda at government and university level
• Few students chose to study overseas
• Relevance of social sciences and humanities diminishing
• Integration of international students into university and local community an ongoing challenge
Concluding remarks

• HE institutions need to operate on a global level
  • In order to prosper
  • And, potentially, in order to survive

• Obstacles and challenges to internationalisation remain

• ‘Internationalised university’ needs to be more than just having international students and staff on campus
  • Integration needed for full benefits to be felt, on individual and university level

• UK and Japan HE have both similar and different challenges, but can learn from one another’s current contexts
ありがとうございます！

Thank you for your attention!

Your questions or comments are welcome
References


