

# *Internationalisation of HE: Perspectives from the classroom*

“It would be great if Australian students actually realised what an advantage it is to have these international students ... there is a whole world they could learn from ... but they are so busy and caught up in their own little worlds.”

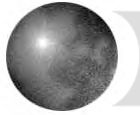
(lecturer, case study uni)

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## *2. The context for internationalisation*

- Globalisation: interconnectedness.
- ‘Glo-na-cal’ agency – complex networks of interactions (*Marginson & Rhoades, 2002*):
  - **Global** contexts: competitive GKE/S (*OECD, 2008*).
  - **National** policy making.
  - **Local** (uni) policies and practices: situated case studies (*Marginson, 2007; Stensaker et al, 2009*).



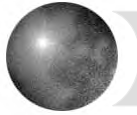
### 3. *The case study university*

- **University policy:** economic AND social/cultural rationales ('graduate attributes': 'international perspectives' & 'intercultural awareness').
- Internationalisation in 'onshore' **classrooms**.
- **Communications skills unit:** compulsory, first year – oral & written communication, teamwork, research skills, referencing, *intercultural awareness*.
- **Perspectives of staff & students**  
(Science, Engineering & Architecture).



### 4. *Methodology*

- **Qualitative** (focus group interviews) and **quantitative** (student survey – Likert).
  - **Staff (Coordinators & Sessionals)**
  - **Students** 264 (38 nationalities): 15 classes.
    - a) 'student visa' (40)
    - b) 'resident' (34)
    - c) 'multi-culture' (32)
    - d) 'local' (158)
- \*\* *Significant differences between student categories on approx half of the survey items*



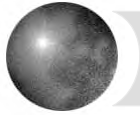
## 5. *Internationalising the curriculum* (*staff perspectives*)

- “International students bring that sort of ability to communicate with people from other countries. And then you **ask students for examples** from their own countries so you **mix it in** with the Australian context.” (C)
- “Intercultural awareness is developed in the communications skills unit where it is **explicitly part of the curriculum** but in other classes I can’t see that happening.” (S)



## 6. *Internationalising the curriculum*

Statement in <b>student survey</b>	% Agree
I am exposed to many international examples in my course	79
I have learned some intercultural awareness in class	80
My course has a predominantly Australian focus	35**
Intercultural learning should be an explicit part of the curriculum	70**
I am familiar with the university’s ‘graduate attributes’	45**



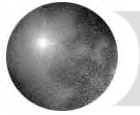
## 7. *Integration of international students (staff perspectives)*

- “Australian students don’t talk to them until we put them into a group, otherwise there is **segregation**” (C); “**them and us**” (S).
- “I had a Chinese student in a group with 3 local students for his **oral presentation** & he wrote after that it was his **first opportunity ever to talk with Australian students**. He actually really loved it” (C).
- “I never create groups in my classes, I always **let them sort themselves out**” (S).



## 8. *Integration of international students*

Statement in <b>student survey</b>	% Agree
I have experienced working with students from different countries this semester	97
In class discussions international students are invited to contribute	93
I prefer working in groups with people from my own country	45
Lecturers should create groups for group work and not let students choose	49**
Everyone is treated equally in class	94**



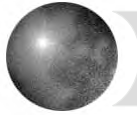
## 9. *Language & communication* *(staff perspectives)*

- “Australian students worry, perhaps rightly that an international student in their group will **bring their mark down due to language problems**” (C).
- “A lot of staying back after class **explaining what you were actually saying in class**, a lot of redrafting assignments”(C).
- “Other departments expect that our unit will **correct all writing deficiencies** ...but they think we are a waste of time because we haven't fixed them all” (C).



## 10. *Language & communication*

Statement in <b>student survey</b>	% Agree
My lecturers frequently misunderstand what NESB students say	42
I often have difficulty understanding NESB speakers	54**
My ability in academic English is an issue for me in my course	33**
The communications skills unit was very useful	79**



## *11. Language & communication: most contentious issues (student surveys)*

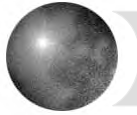
Australian students:

- “International students open Australia’s horizons. However, **they should have to be able to speak understandable English!**”
- “A concern I have is working with students with poor English skills. How can a student study a course in a language **they cannot communicate well** in?”
- “I don’t like it when I can’t understand NESB students/staff. **It affects my learning.**”



## *12. Internationalisation policy to practice within the university*

- Institutional policies parallel global & national discourses, except ‘integration’ (‘inclusivity’ values pluralism? *Arnesen et al, 2007*).
- Bigger gap (*cf-Stensaker et al, 2009*) is between institutional policies & classroom practices.
- Uneven policy awareness of amongst staff (PD & sessionals? *Currie & Vidovich, 2009*).
- International students seek interculturality more than nationals (*AEI, 2008; OECD, 2008*)
- Limited evidence of embedded intercultural awareness. (‘othering’? *Arber, 2009*)



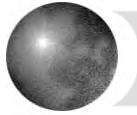
### *13. Internationalisation for all*

- Interculturality programs for all first year students (*Ramsey et al, 2006*) and staff (PD).
- Interculturality embedded in all curricula, pedagogy & assessment:
  - Curriculum hybridisation not homogenisation (*OECD, 2008; Schapper & Mayson, 2004*).
  - more attention to pedagogy (*Smart et al, 2000*) & ‘cross- cultural ignorance’ (*Singh, 2009*).
- Student financial support (govt) to reduce paid work & attend campus (*Marginson, 2008*).
- ‘International mindedness’ (*IBO, 2009*) in schooling: intercultural & language learning.



### *14. Transformative internationalisation*

- Continuum from **symbolic to transformative** internationalisation (*Bartell, 2003*).
- **Two-way** transformations require supports (*Gill, 2007*).
- **Cosmopolitanism** (*Rizvi, 2008*): “a way of learning about social identities and cultural trajectories ... that underscore their interconnectivity with the rest of the world”; dynamics of cultural hybridity (not fixed, homogenised abstractions of cultures).



## *15. To conclude*

**Transformative internationalisation** will only develop when:

- social & cultural priorities sit alongside economic priorities (**policy breadth**).
- interculturality is embedded in classroom practices (**policy depth**).
- Critical engagement occurs with complex global-national-local interactions (**'bigger picture' political/power relations**).
- More **research** (empirical & theoretical) to transcend the boundaries of our thinking.

*References* →