

Facilitating dialogue for a more inclusive curriculum

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ABSTRACT

Despite the exponential increase in international students in UK higher education (HE) and the increasingly diverse nature of home students, literature highlights the persistence of application of the deficit model when supporting international students' learning development. Two major causes for this are assumptions made on the basis of linguistic and cultural difference, including previous academic experience, and the tendency for research in this area to focus on international students' perceptions of their learning experience in isolation from home students' diverse experiences. Drawing on the perspectives of a cohort of home and international postgraduate students and their teachers, this study aimed to explore whether participants value curricular adjustments designed to equip all students to engage with academic culture. In this way, it presents potential barriers and offers practical suggestions for 'internationalising the curriculum' to ensure its inclusiveness for all. The article initially focuses on methodological approaches taken to address existing inequalities. Combining a conceptual framework based on critical post-structural and feminist theories with a collaborative methodology, this case study explores the multiplicities of identities and positionings that previous literature in this area have generally left uncontested. The findings suggest that both home and international students feel that they lack necessary cultural and linguistic capital and value the deconstruction of taken-for-granted academic practices. Suggestions made by all research participants for enhancing the curriculum are presented.

INTERNATIONALISING THE HE CURRICULUM

Well my experience is maybe slightly unique but I found that as part of my undergraduate degree, which obviously I did quite a long time ago now... nobody ever really sat down during that course and said right this how you should be approaching your learning. (Home student)

We hadn't [fulfilled the criteria] and it was on the last day that I realised this because I went through the marking criteria. I forced them to do this. Earlier I was being shy because I thought maybe these guys are correct because they are from the same [education] system so I thought they might understand how it goes. I found it a bit difficult. (International student)

The above quotes encapsulate the need for approaches that seek to question persisting assumptions and to engage learners in dialogue to enhance the learning experience for all. This article focuses on aspects of a case study which sought to explore and recommend ways in which the Higher Education (HE) curriculum can be internationalised, in terms of enhancing the educational experience for its internationally diverse participants and equipping learners to contribute to global society. The research, carried out for my Masters dissertation, involved exploring post-graduate learners' and their teachers' perceptions of

specific aspects of a curriculum designed by the author and fellow teachers to support and draw value from the diverse student body. Here, specific focus is given to the methodological approaches adopted and the dialogue they stimulated, particularly around academic literacy.

To set this dialogue in context, international (non-UK domiciled) students, currently make up 13% of all students in UK HE and contribute over £1 billion in fees annually (UKCOSA, 2004, p.14). These figures are set to increase three-fold over the next 15 years (UKCOSA, 2004, p.6). Undeniably for many UK universities the motivation to increase their international student cohort comes from the considerable and unrestricted financial resources that they bring (Haigh, 2002, p.50). Despite such forecast increases for UK HEIs, the competition from other education-providing nations must not be underestimated. In a dynamic marketplace, where a significant proportion of recruitment is based on reputation spread by successfully graduating compatriots, UK universities must take seriously the international student's academic experience if they are able to maintain their second place market share (Taylor, 2005). Academic success is most international students' primary goal and universities are morally obliged to facilitate this (Else, 1990). Evidently many universities have policy regarding support for international learners, particularly second language speakers. However, to what degree has policy been realised in practice? And how does this policy relate to integrated policy for all learners? It can be argued that the commonly applied deficit model, for example Kim's (1988) integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation (cited in Martin, 1994), not only puts the onus on the international student to adjust to fit with dominant culture (Hellmundt and Fox, 2003, p.34), but also fails to recognise the needs and multiple positionings of the diverse body of domestic learners who, like international students, face challenges in negotiating unfamiliar academic practices, as indicated in the opening quotes.

Conceptual Framework

Growing interest in the benefits of internationalising the curriculum has led to the emergence of a new theoretical framework which links "critical pedagogy and intercultural communication theory to specific teaching strategies that encourage student voice and enhance students' critical understandings as global learners" (Hellmundt, 2003a, p.1). Taking this into account, this study situated itself within the theoretical frameworks of critical pedagogy (Freire and Shor, 1987; Ellsworth, 1992), intercultural communication theory (Byram, 1997; Hellmundt and Fox, 2003; Hofstede, 1991), academic literacies (Lillis, 2001; Street, 2005) and approaches to learning (Biggs, 2003; Kember, 2004). It also drew on post-structural and feminist theories that challenge power relations and deconstruct positionality within the hegemonic discourses of colonialism, neo-colonialism and globalisation (Luke and Gore, 1992). In this context, positionality relates to how participants locate themselves in this academic space relative to each other, according to previous experiences and social and educational expectations of them, imposed by wider discourses. It was hoped that this framework would allow exploration of the interconnections between differences and inequalities, including those relating to gender, ethnicity, class and age, and the multiplicities of identities and positionings in the classroom that make genuine internationalisation of the curriculum such a challenge.

Aims and Methodology

Previously conducted research in this area has almost exclusively focussed on the perspective of international students and/or teachers (Robertson et al. 2000; Grey, 2002). Furthermore, it has largely sought to investigate how international students can be 'enabled' to succeed academically. Little attention is given to how international students might contribute to the curriculum (Hellmundt, 2003a). I believe that the resultant epistemology has both contributed to the application of the deficit model to teaching international students, and silenced the home students' voice, ignoring their diverse needs. I aimed to facilitate, and report on, an indirect dialogue between international, home students and teachers in order to contribute their knowledge to internationalising the curriculum. As the focus of the study was the positionality of students and their teachers, it was important to consider data collection and analysis in terms of the researched and researcher's positionality and considerations for producing and situating knowledges. Rose argues that it is impossible to achieve the kind of transparent reflexivity, aspired to by many feminist researchers, that allows "full understanding of the researcher, the researched and the research context" (Rose, 1997, p.305). Instead, she aims "to produce nongeneralising knowledges that can learn from other knowledges" (Rose, 1997, p.318). This study drew on the critical educational research paradigm (Tight, 2004), already proven to have a considerable impact on curriculum development, as it suited this study's objectives: to recommend more egalitarian, practical and evaluated alternative approaches (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, pp.32-33). I also adopted elements of closely related feminist research methodology which challenge hegemonic discourse around knowledge construction, arguing that research should not exploit, but empower participants (Luke and Gore, 1992).

A case study approach was chosen through a desire to focus on the interaction of a specific group in a specific learning experience (Bell, 1999, pp.10-11). Aware of the criticisms made of case studies' inability to be generalisable and representative (Denscombe, 2003), I anticipated that this approach would allow access to intimate levels of human interaction that large-scale enquiry misses. I also drew on Glaser and Strauss's (1967, cited in Denscombe, 2003) grounded theory approach, appropriate "particularly where the researcher wishes to investigate the subjective meanings that people use when interacting with others in specific settings" (Denscombe, 2003, p.113).

Sample

The case study focused on 64 Information Systems and Computing post-graduate students. 47% of them were registered as overseas fee payers and the majority of these spoke English as a second language (L2). 18%, mainly home students, studied on a part-time basis. I explored these students' and their teachers' perceptions of the value of a newly developed module, *Professional Development and Research*, which I felt constituted internationalisation of the curriculum, according to published definitions, but essentially by:

- preparing students to confidently and successfully operate within international academic environments;

- encouraging and supporting students in learning from each other in a way that enhances their academic experience and prepares them for future employment / study.

Postgraduates were chosen in response to much national interest, as numbers of international students are rising most quickly at postgraduate level. I chose this particular cohort because of almost equal numbers of home and international students, the team working element and because I contributed to the new module's development and facilitation, thus positioning me as teacher/researcher. A further benefit was the opportunity to engage in collaborative research with academic colleagues (Beaty and Cousin, 2002, p.24).

Archival Records

A major difficulty with the archival data was that, because EU students do not pay overseas fees, they are not distinguishable from home students in the University's database. Also, nationality is not recorded and to access details of students' ethnicity (if given), individual's permission must be sought. Had I realised these data limitations beforehand I might have asked participants their nationalities from the outset. That said, I was keen that students would not be aware that the study sought to distinguish between home and international students, as this may cause them to position themselves according to their perceived role and bias their responses, hence my reliance on registration data. Further complexities arose as some participants were not British-born but were eligible to register as home students. Already the issues around multiple identities and possibilities for incorrect assumptions are apparent.

Documentary Evidence

I included analysis of students' reflective assignments to take advantage of *inadvertent primary sources* and sources of *unwitting* evidence (Bell, 1999, pp.109-110) and had hoped that they would provide rich data pertaining to students' learning experiences. I also wanted to evaluate this assessment method, partly by ascertaining whether, and why, students valued writing it. Another reason for using students' perspectives was to foster a collaborative research approach, taken from feminist methodologies (Burke, 2002, p.39) in an attempt to avoid potentially exploitative and disempowering aspects of research. As I would only interview a small sample of students and anticipated that I would not get a 100% return on questionnaires, this approach guaranteed 'hearing' all the students' voices, as all submitted an assignment.

The disadvantage of using assessed student writing was that, in order to comply with marking criteria, authors may have elaborated on experiences to demonstrate their understanding. Conversely, they may have felt that they could not express themselves honestly about difficult team relations for fear of being academically penalised. As Foucault asserts "(the) superimposition of the power relations and knowledge relations assumes in examination all its visible brilliance" (Foucault, 1977, pp.184-5 cited in Epstein, 1997, p.186). This was impossible to overcome completely but, to minimize risks of the data being unreliable, I endeavoured to apply internal criticism (Bell, 1999, p.113). One method used was to organise assignments according to student teams, read them team by

team and thereby to cross-reference written accounts. I then followed up contradictions during the interviews.

Analysis of Documentary Evidence

Given the sheer volume of data yielded by the student assignments, a systematic approach to data analysis was required, whilst taking care not to dissect participants' stories when they are most vulnerable in terms of losing their voice (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998). My rationale for using sub-questions, elaborated from the research questions, rather than a more rigid framework of categories, was inspired by feminist methodology which "shifts data analysis away from the traditional 'coding' which implies fitting a person into a pre-existing set of categories, whether those of the researcher or those of established theoretical frameworks" (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998, p.134). Although at times the process felt haphazard, I believe that only by engaging fully in it could I discover the best way of analysing this data and attempt to extend reflexivity to these unsystematic, initial familiarisation stages of data analysis (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998).

In order to make sense of all the data collected by the various methods I used Robson's (1993) tactics for drawing conclusions from qualitative data namely "Counting ... Patterning ... Clustering ... Factoring ... Relating variables ... Building of causal networks ... Relating findings to general theoretical frameworks" (Robson, 1993, p. 401). I deliberated over whether to count frequency of occurrence of themes, as such statistical analysis is often criticised by qualitative researchers (Robson, 1993). However, I did want to be able to make generalisations about trends or patterns in the data so decided to count frequency as part of my analysis, but not report quantitatively on documentary evidence. It is widely acknowledged and accepted that the beliefs, values and identity of the researcher inevitably impact on qualitative data collection and analysis. Thus, the researcher has two options:

to distance themselves from their normal everyday beliefs and to suspend judgement on social issues for the duration of their research...[or] come clean about the way their research agenda has been shaped by personal experiences and social backgrounds (Denscombe, 2003, pp. 268-269).

I adopted the latter approach.

Interviews - Design and Analysis

The interview phase of data collection was guided by grounded theory approaches. For example, my student interview schedule was based on key themes that were recurrent in the assignments and questionnaire responses. These were perceptions of the value of the learning experience, including future applicability, relative positionings of other students and issues around assessment. I interviewed four home and three international students, reflecting their equal importance in learning from and contributing to this learning experience. Interviewees were purposively sampled as this "allows the researcher to home in on people or events which there are good grounds for believing will be critical for the research" (Denscombe, 2003, p.16). My rationale for 'good grounds' were that in terms of

nationality, gender, age and mode of study the interviewees were representative of the cohort. I subsequently interviewed three teachers. The teachers' interview schedule was informed by insights from student interviews, so that I could follow-up discrepancies and cross-check facts, in order to increase internal and external validity (Adelman *et al.*, 1976), but also because, as my aim was to actively contribute to the development of the module design, this provided a good opportunity for collaborative review of students' feedback. This approach was based on the assertion that "(generating) a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.6, cited in Denscombe, 2003, p.111).

When conducting the interviews, I attempted to use interactive conversations (Burke, 2002, p.48), which involved me sharing relevant information about myself, for example, I talked about my experience of being an international student and L2 speaker in Mexico and Portugal. The purpose of this was to avoid perpetuation of the power imbalance where the interviewee leaves feeling vulnerable, having divulged personal details whilst the interviewer remains unexposed and unchallenged. It is difficult to say whether it was a successfully applied technique but participants were impressively constructively critical and certainly went away knowing more about me! An interesting ontological observation was that I became increasingly aware of my shifting position. I was interviewing students that I had previously taught, about their experience as postgraduate students, when I myself was conducting postgraduate student research. I chose not to disclose this as I didn't feel comfortable doing so. I suppose I thought it would negatively position me. This seems ironic now given the efforts I made to avoid the power imbalance between researcher and the researched but highlights that power relations are complex and slippery and that the researcher is located within and helps to produce those power relations.

During the interview, I showed each interviewee selected video-clip observations of participants working in groups, with the intention of prompting and enriching reflections on curricular activities. This seemed to have a positive impact and proved an even more effective prompt when the person I was interviewing was directly involved in footage. It was also particularly useful for identifying fellow students as many had forgotten teammates names!

Findings

Despite categorisations having emerged from raw data, I was aware of the influence of my ontological position as teacher-researcher on the selection and categorisation process and was keen not to contribute to negative constructions. In consideration of this dilemma, I identified that participants also used these categorisations, without my prompting. I, therefore, conclude that the categorisations that I am dealing with are so bound up in the hegemonic institutional and wider discourse that we cannot avoid them. Instead, I sought to explore, challenge and suggest ways to avoid them, whilst, given the problematic nature of classification, recognize that I too am perpetuating them.

I believed that this module's aims sought to address the "lack of awareness and engagement with cultural diversity and the politics of difference when considering skills and literacies

needed by students in a changing world” (Grey, 2002, p.153). The real test, however, was what the students thought and to what degree those pedagogic interventions generally thought to be valued by international students, because of their perceived linguistic disadvantage or different, deficient, educational and cultural backgrounds (Hellmundt and Fox, 2003, p.34) were valued by home students and teachers. Here focus is on issues around academic literacy, specifically academic writing, critical thinking and referencing.

ACADEMIC WRITING

Burke and Hermerschmidt observe that “teaching and learning of academic writing is institutionally separated from disciplinary teaching and constructed as ‘remedial’ and skills based” (2005, p.346). These often take the form of language-orientated improvement programmes for international students and ethnolinguistic minority students (Leung and Safford, 2005). I would argue that this module, sought to mainstream the learning and teaching of academic writing. It is useful, at this point, to draw on Lillis’ study which focuses on the writing of ‘non-traditional’ students, which include ethnic minority and working-class groups (DfES, 2003). According to the University’s registry records (2004/05) ethnic minority students made up 59% of the student population and this case study cohort was representative of that diversity. Of the four home students interviewed, three were from ethno-linguistic minority backgrounds and one of these spoke English as a second language (ESL). Despite arguments that, at a political level, widening participation and increased international student participation are in conflict (Scott, 1998), Lillis’ work clearly corroborates the counter argument; that at a pedagogic level, partly due to the significant incidence of ESL and bilingualism amongst both target groups, curricular adjustments will benefit both groups. Furthermore, Lillis claims “(essayist) literacy is the privileged literacy practice within Western societies, constituting considerable cultural/linguistic capital; ...conferring prestige on its users” (Lillis, 2001, p.53). This suggests that those who do not have this ‘cultural/linguistic’ capital are marginalised, even though they have gained access to the academic community. It is important to deconstruct the student writing process in order to identify who is marginalised, in what way, and how to challenge inequalities. Lillis conceives student writing as socially determined practice. She criticises prevailing views that construct the ability to produce essays as ‘common sense’ and argues that students who have not been socialised through exposure to socio-discursive practices previously cannot ‘know’ without being taught. My findings suggest that none of the students, including those having completed UK undergraduate degrees, felt that they had the necessary linguistic or cultural capital to confidently meet the demands of academic writing. They all valued the opportunity to develop the information collecting, selecting and presenting skills that they consider student writing to involve:

I’ve learnt how to basically change my writing, I’ve improved my grammar, I’ve improved my writing style, I’ve also learnt how to research ... for my previous, undergraduate dissertation, I did do research. OK, I got a good grade and put a lot in but I wasn’t able to do research. I didn’t do the literature review properly. (Home student)

Lillis advocates a *critical language awareness pedagogy approach*, through which students are aware of their improvement, as indicated in the previous quote, and which conceives writing as “creative self-expression” (Lillis, 2001, p.164). For this module students were required to write a self-evaluative assignment on their team working experience which the majority valued, and even ‘enjoyed’.

It was good because ... when I speak English it's OK, but when it comes to writing I find sometimes, even though I am born here, brought up here, I do sometimes find it difficult for my grammar. But I felt when I wrote this piece of work it was one of my best that I've written. And also because I had a chance of ... reflecting, critical reflection. That's going to help me with my dissertation because I have to critically reflect [on] my development. (Home student)

(Certainly) very nice...because maybe before I can write about myself as I like, but when I write about scientific things or literature things it's very difficult to collect all the information and write about something not related to your feelings, only about your subject... you should manage all these things together. (Home student, UG overseas, L2 speaker)

These quotes indicate that through self-expression students find the space and freedom to focus on stylistic and grammatical considerations and that they make sense of critical approaches through practical application. However, that is not to suggest that critical/evaluative/reflective approaches did not create challenges. Burke and Hermerschmidt (2005) seek to deconstruct academic practices, which are assumed to have one meaning but clearly do not. In this module visible representational tools (Lillis, 2001) and techniques were introduced as a strategy to guide in students' critical thinking. However, it was found that even attempts to communicate academic conventions more explicitly often fail to be meaningful due the inaccessibility of terminology used (Lillis, 2001). For example, aspects of the module that students were least confident with involved using techniques to aid critical and analytical thinking such as concept maps and Vee heuristic. Students wanted more opportunity to practise these. When asked about using these academic practices both teachers and learners were confused by assumed single meanings:

When I started, for me those words were also very vague because...I had a complete other idea of a concept map (Teacher).

Furthermore, it should not be assumed that visible representational resources will overcome language barrier entirely. An L2 speaking home student commented that the concept mapping was:

(useful), but it's very hard for me because, you know, the language is difficult and the relation between words is not easy for me, yes, that's why I think if we had examples, OK. (Home student, L2 speaker)

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking, also referred to as analytical skills and reasoning ability, is a socially constructed element of the Western knowledge tradition which, it is argued, has

become a dividing practice in the internationalised university. It functions as a marker of difference, rendering some cultural groups apparently deficient and at the same time establishing a market for the expertise presumably needed to remedy their deficiency (Nichols, 2003, p.136).

Encouragingly, teachers in the case study did not identify international students as being any less capable than home students regarding critical approaches. However, assumptions based on cultural conceptions of critical thinking did emerge. Critical thinking and, more specifically, the way we define this academic approach is used to ‘other’ students from different educational backgrounds as “such definitions position the cultural Other as an irrational subject, consistent with colonialist strategies of representation” (Nichols, 2003, p.141). Here potential difference in academic approaches was acknowledged by a teacher, but understood in a way that perpetuated this othering of students from particular cultural backgrounds:

I think there’s an argument that understandably they get a particularly Western view of what [research] is and you know I found that quite interesting...I was relatively purposeful that they got [an understanding of] how to go about doing research, that is how you go about doing research in the Western system, very rationally based stuff which...in the context of what I know about some of the Eastern cultures, would be, not diametrically opposed, but is not necessarily that congruent with the way that they might go about doing things. (Teacher)

The teacher’s suggested alternative approach would allow students to contribute to knowledge but the focus is still firmly, possibly for practical reasons, on enabling students to integrate into the Western academic conventions. This highlights the perennial conflict regarding what content to include and exclude and, therefore, which knowledge is privileged:

The difficulty that we face there is that...the module, over and above all else, has to prepare them to survive in this academic environment because they are here for the year, they’re paid and signed up to doing that... Now I think what would be interesting, and I’m not saying that we could do this because we have the content problem still...is them having some reflective stuff and looking at how that works within different cultures...actually to get students to feedback to us how what sorts of skills are relevant to them in their home environments and... both other students and us as lectures could learn. (Teacher)

Students did indicate valuing the inclusion of the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills, not just for this academic experience, but also because they recognize the global transferability:

critical writing was one aspect that I was lacking because I'd already taken a US-based exam and I scored very well in the other two sections but in the critical writing section I was lagging behind a lot. (International student)

In China, cultural critique has been acknowledged as a requirement for operating in the global economy and, therefore, incorporated into HE curricula (Nichols, 2003). An Indian student revealed choosing to study in the UK partly because of exposure to reflective practices not encouraged in the 'more practical' courses at home. Whilst this student did not indicate an understanding that one educational approach was superior to another, they did explain that co-nationals "see US and UK as developed countries". The notion of hierarchy based on accepted academic practice and related privileged knowledge is well illustrated by this international student's reflections on their all international student group's disagreement over choosing a certain topic to present on:

Now I think it was original from my background that I never think law is very important in China! Therefore, I assumed that privacy policy was not important and it would be hard for our group to explore this kind of topic in detail... Since European countries had advanced and systematic juristic system, law, legislation, and policy, [they] had more stronger concept in their mind, although we all knew what the concrete thing is and how to express it in English language. (International student)

Though this student seems happy with the decision, and acknowledges the new cultural perspectives gained, the recognition that colleagues had a "stronger concept in their mind" suggests his negative positioning. Interestingly, he feels that he is able to renegotiate his unequal position by identifying his equal ability to express himself in English.

Although the teachers in the study did not have any evidence that home students positioned international students negatively, and avoided working with them because of their previous educational experience and academic abilities, such possibilities were alluded to:

I think that it could be, I don't know, that the home students really look down on... foreign degrees, so basically saying, ...degrees from other Universities [are] not as good as I have, so it might be better to [work with] whoever...I don't know, it's a perception (Teacher).

One factor that caused students to position international team mates negatively was their own so-called 'non-traditional' background. For example, some had non-traditional entry qualifications, such as GNVQs, rather than the 'gold-standard' A-levels (Williams, 1997). It seemed as though, because they felt negatively positioned by wider discourses such as widening participation, they needed to assert their right to participate by highlighting their superior knowledge:

I had to explain something to them and I found it difficult to explain, although I understood it...it's almost teaching them...although I've done a

lot of teaching before, I've just helped so many people before. (Home student)

Post-structuralist literature that helps to make sense of these subjective and shifting identities suggests that “(there) are no social positions exempt from becoming oppressive to others...any group – any position – can move into an oppressor role” (Minh-ha, 1988, cited in Ellsworth, 1992, p.114).

Widespread assumptions about international students' inability to 'think critically', largely result from a failure to deconstruct what we mean by critical thinking (Burke and Hermerschmidt, 2005) and oversimplified understandings of culturally-specific approaches to learning (Littlewood, 2000; Kember, 2004). Both contribute to discouraging international students' engagement and reproducing colonialist stereotypes (Nichols, 2003, p.147). Concerns amongst academic traditionalists are that curricular adjustments aimed at challenging existing inequality, will compromise academic standards (Haigh, 2002). Examples of such attitudinal inflexibility raise fundamental questions regarding the internationalisation of universities and their curricula, such as: “How might the university, so clearly rooted in its values and structures in European history, open itself to ideas and values derived from other knowledge sources?” (Yang, 2002, p.83).

Several suggestions for beginning to challenge such 'taken for granted' assumptions include “tutors and students reflexively considering 'critical thinking' practices not only as writers, but also as readers” (Burke and Hermerschmidt, 2005, p.352). When asked what they would do differently in the future one student commented:

Before starting any work [I] will think critically... I will be more vigilant in writing documents and would consider myself more a reader rather than a writer. (International student)

Burke and Hermerschmidt also advise that

(self-reflexive) pedagogies necessitate the interrogation of *our own* writing practices to become critically aware ourselves of the processes involved in the construction of a piece of writing. This, in turn, informs the teaching of writing in ways that provide access to writing processes that otherwise might remain hidden and unexplored (2005, p.358).

Interestingly, when asked whether they had learnt anything from this teaching experience one teacher's response indicated benefit derived from such increased self-awareness:

Oh very much! I think that sometimes in your academic writing, although you never get it perfect, it is always in development, when you reach a certain stage you give it for granted... Being exposed in a group that were struggling with that ability, [that] were for the first time exposed to academic writing, for me ... it grounded my way of structuring my own argument because it becomes automatic, it's like learning to drive ... but then when you teach someone else

to drive you have to go back and make all your automatic actions conscious again. (Teacher)

In terms of students' suggestions, as indicated by the following representative quote, they want more clarity around what is required of them, examples and opportunity to practise. The quote also indicates a willingness to take a proactive approach to their learning:

It was good but what I felt was some of the marking criteria was very difficult to interpret, like from my background I haven't heard the terms reflective and critical... so it was a bit difficult ... I want to improve my critical writing skills ... I wanted to know what I lack. So I think we have to have some examples, like, of what reflective thinking [is]. You could give us some literature.
(International student)

The following teacher's response to such student feedback indicates a positive level of awareness and that student feedback is valued:

One of the things that I've learnt from the feedback ... is that certainly, initially, they would benefit from more structured guidance around how to do things and I think that's what a lot of them were looking for. Now, I think you could probably do that initially and then start to withdraw it as they start to build up their experience base whereas I probably expected a little bit too much from them in that. (Teacher)

This quote also encapsulates the dilemma for teachers who aim to encourage independence in learning.

REFERENCING AND PLAGIARISM

Referencing is another academic practice that is 'taken for granted' and conceptualized as a mechanical procedure (Burke and Hermerschmidt 2005; Lillis, 2001). Through this module, students were engaged in an interactive session on referencing and avoiding plagiarism, part of a pilot programme developed in response to increasing cases of plagiarism. This involved students discussing where they would draw the line in terms of plagiarism, synthesizing text, applying referencing and constructing bibliographies from 'real' sources. International students are positioned negatively with regard to plagiarism partly because of the significant number of international students amongst those facing disciplinarys. It is widely conceived that lack of proficiency in English language is a primary reason for L2 speakers committing plagiarism, because, when writing in a second language, it is less easy to distinguish between your own words and someone else's (Swain, 2004). However, it is also increasingly acknowledged that cultural differences in academic practices are equally significant and that plagiarism is neither a universal concept, nor are its rules for application universal (ibid). It is, therefore, necessary to ensure that all students understand the ideology underpinning plagiarism and how to avoid committing it. According to evaluation form feedback, all participants felt that they had benefited from the aforementioned session. An emerging issue related to discrepancy in the enforcement of

plagiarism regulations across universities. When asked whether he valued the session one home student replied:

Yes, I did, when I did my undergraduate the rules ... were virtually non-existent. I think they basically said ... don't do it, it's naughty. I never heard of anybody even getting their wrist slapped for quite blatant plagiarism. So, I think, if that's not the case [here], and obviously it's not, then I think it was vital to communicate that, in quite strong terms, to the students. And I think that was done quite well, and you know the session had a reference prop in and so, as I say, not having really worked with papers before its something that was useful, useful for me. (Home student)

When asked what the main differences between university study at home and in the UK one international student volunteered:

(It's) a lot different...I think there's a lot of transparency, because the thing about plagiarism is non-existent in [my country], we used to rip stuff off the internet and just make assignments up... back in [my country] you can ask your friends to do it for you. (International student)

Such admissions highlight not only difference in academic practice, but also the different levels at which 'cheating' can be understood. Certainly, it is also not enough to educate about plagiarism, learners need to see that the rules are upheld and penalties enforced, which one student disputed:

I think plagiarism has been talked a lot about. It is good that you mention it but it doesn't work in practice as I've heard...because people have plagiarised, they have been caught for it, but they haven't been ditched out of the course ... I don't like that. Maybe I'm too harsh, maybe I'm just fair, but when it comes to that I have nothing left over for people who plagiarise. (International student)

In terms of the teachers' perception of the approach taken, they reported benefits of increased awareness of the issues and an opportunity to collaborate with students

doing the plagiarism exercise ... I think it very firmly indicated to us that the grey area that we thought would be a grey area was ... and that they struggled with that (Teacher).

A tangible outcome was seen in the decrease from twelve to one in the number of plagiarism cases amongst these students. However, in response to the previous student's accusation, a teacher agreed that they might find more cases if they got tougher on detection.

Despite a strong focus on encouraging learners to explore and contrast different schools of thought, not all the students conceived the "orchestration of voices" metaphor (Lillis and Ramsey, 1997, cited in Burke and Hermerschmidt, 2005, p.353) to make sense of argument

building and construction of knowledges. One expressed that they were “still not sure of the concept of literature review” and, when writing about their own team work experience, puzzled “why should I need those papers to know [how teams work]?” (International student). Much literature intended as guidance for teachers fails to address such complexities (Pecorari, 1998; Ryan, 1997).

Burke and Hermerschmidt (2005) observe the difficulty students have in gaining sufficient understanding of the knowledge needed to critically and confidently engage in their disciplinary communities. These teachers shared similar views. However, one student valued

getting to grips with papers and ... developing ... the awareness of what's out there in terms of IT management discussion. (Home student)

CONCLUSION

This case study, with its diverse mediums of evidence and inherent benefits of allowing close examination of the particular, combined with a collaborative methodology, has revealed several important considerations. Key to these is that challenges for internationalisation of the curriculum may be less about policy change and more about understanding interconnections between differences and inequalities and multiplicities of identities and positionings held by participants and how they relate to learners' engagement in academic practice. The curricular adjustments evaluated aimed to increase inclusivity for all and to support engagement rather than assuming prior educational experience.

Unlike much literature which applies 'deficiency' and 'adjustment' models to international students, this study found that both international and home students equally valued opportunities to develop skills and confidence in 'taken for granted' academic practices. Conversely, it also uncovered the persistence of uncontested assumptions and inequality in the classroom around privileged knowledge and accepted academic conventions. This dialogue with learners and their teachers offered suggestions for increasing the inclusivity of HE curricula and further researching this area. These include recognising that student writing is a socially determined practice and, therefore, mainstreaming the development of academic writing skills by encouraging creative expression and establishing a supportive environment in which to acquire necessary, but often taken for granted, linguistic and cultural capital. Students and their teachers also identified a need to acknowledge the not only cultural but also academic specificity of critical thinking, to deconstruct what this practice involves, question assumptions and increase opportunities to develop and practise analytical techniques. Questionnaire responses and richer investigations via interviews, as well as qualitative data such as reduced disciplinary cases, confirmed the value of providing interactive exploration of what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. In terms of the value of this teacher as researcher experience, it offered an opportunity for learners and teachers to critically examine their own and each other's academic practices and gave an insight into the potential richness of more varied and systematic, but not necessarily onerous, evaluation of learning experiences where all voices are heard and valued.

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