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Pedagogies Across Borders

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Title of project: Pedagogies Across Borders

Type of project: Investigative Case Study

Aims of project: to explore some of the issues around the preparation, design, transfer and delivery of programmes from one educational environment to another.

Background to project (or context)

During the past decade, the scale of transnational education has increased greatly, with the UK, Australia and the USA playing a leading role in delivering transnational programmes (Humfrey, 2009). Plymouth University has a growing number of transnational partnership programmes including Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. Various studies explain that it is crucial to develop an understanding of the respective cultural and learning profiles in transnational partnerships in order to consider appropriate teaching strategies (Heffernan & Poole, 2004., Heffernan, 2010., Jusdanis, 1995). Other studies critiqued the provision and level of quality assurance that is applied to transnational programmes (Billing, 2004., van Damme, 2001). However the pedagogy of transnational education remains largely under-researched.

This research explores the experiences of transnational teaching and learning in the context of Hong Kong with the intent to understand the nature of the transnational classroom and the implications for the providers of transnational education.

Methods used

The three cases formed of UK-based staff, local staff, and students, aimed to present "thick description of participants' lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for [their] situation" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 254).

Semi-structured interview format. A total of twenty interviews were conducted (UK-based tutors = 5, local staff & programme leaders=8 and students=7).

The transcripts were fully transcribed, and analysed by using NVivo software. Content analysis was employed to analyse the interview data. Each case then explored similarities and differences in perspectives among participants, and cross-referenced for emerging themes.

Results

Findings confirmed the complexity of transnational education. While some of the interviewees perpetuated stereotypes, others challenged them. Contexts, cultures, roles and modes of delivery all provoked comment and presented a range of differing perspectives.

Key themes to emerge from the data included:

Some teaching and learning approaches can present a challenge in new contexts. Such activities might include active engagement in the classroom (Entwhistle, 2000) or writing a

dissertation. Students recommended that, although challenging, these teaching and learning approaches should persist as they offered real skills that would give them a competitive edge in the market place.

Curriculum design should be a collaborative process. Power dynamics between the international education provider and the local institution need to be recognised and reconciled at an early stage. In order for the curriculum to be meaningful a level of creativity and independence is required in the local institution (Dunn and Wallace, 2006; Leaske, 2004).

Controls and quality assurance need to be effectively managed and aligned with the awarding institution in partnership with local tutors. This may require additional staff training on issues such as marking.

Publications from this research identify a range of strategies to enhance transnational teaching and learning experiences. These include: re-thinking team dynamics; enhancing the volume and quality of communication; adopting shared vision and perspectives on the partnership; revisiting transnational pedagogies; and support for teaching staff and students. Findings from this research have been included in an online teaching resource and are also used in a module on 'internationalisation' in the Postgraduate Certificate of Academic Practice (PGCAP).

Associated publications

Heffernan, T., **Magne, P.** Poverjuc, O., (2012) *Pedagogies across borders: considerations and implications of the design, transfer and delivery of transnational programmes*. International Conference of Educational Development: Bangkok

Magne, P. (2012) 7 steps to internationalising teaching and learning. Plymouth University. Available at www.educationaldevelopment.net (accessed 15 Oct 2012).

Heffernan, T., **Magne, P.** Poverjuc, O., (currently under review) Pedagogies across borders: perspectives from teaching staff and students engaged with transnational programmes in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Academic Development*

Website (if directly connected to the project)

Collings, J., **Magne, P.** (2011) *Internationalisation: on-line educational resource.* Available at https://xerte.plymouth.ac.uk/play.php?template_id=597 (Accessed on 15 Oct 2012)

Keywords: transnational education; learning styles; transnational curriculum; transnational pedagogies

Summary of project budget expenditure:

Initial award: £13,217.64

Spend on Research Assistant: £7,137.12

Data collection (travel and accommodation): £1920.45

Payments to participants (gift certificates): £115.57

Spend on transcription: £897.60

Spend on ICED conference: £1766.35

Poster printing: £42.50

Total spend: £11879.59

Amount left: £1338.05

Please forward the final report to pedrio@plymouth.ac.uk by the **31st October 2012**