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International study visits and the promotion of intercultural capabilities: an exploratory study

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International study visits and the promotion of
intercultural capabilities: an exploratory study

by

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A thesis submitted to Plymouth University in partial fulfilment for
the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

August 2014

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capabilities: an exploratory study**

Abstract

Internationalisation is high on the agenda of Higher Education in the UK, with the promotion of the students' intercultural capabilities seen as key for their future careers and lives as global citizens. Within this agenda international study visits are considered beneficial for student teachers, giving those with limited exposure to cultural diversity an opportunity to learn first-hand about education in other countries.

Taking a postmodern approach and using Facet Methodology, the research investigated the extent to which the pattern of study visits in a School of Education in a University in the South West of England was conducive to promoting the intercultural capabilities of the participants. Drawing on perspectives from Bourdieu and postcolonial theory, analysis of the University policies on Internationalisation and Teaching and Learning revealed a variety of positions towards international study visits and interviews with Associate Deans of a Faculty explored how far these were being manifested for the different professional disciplines of Education, Health and Social Care. The perspectives, views and attitudes of the student and tutor participants on a range of study visits were then captured through focus groups, interviews and writing frames.

The study found that neither the students nor the tutors showed an awareness of the nature and importance of intercultural capabilities and therefore the approaches to study visits were patchy in developing them. It suggests that though such visits can be beneficial in promoting such capabilities in the participants, they will only do so consistently if there is in place a transformational pedagogy, informed by postcolonial theory, and implemented by knowledgeable tutors. This approach would include a planned programme of pre-trip, in-trip and post-trip activities encouraging reflection upon experiences, whether positive or disturbing, based upon an explicit contract with students to engage in intercultural learning as a central aspect of the visit.

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Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Education has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at Plymouth University has not formed part of any other degree, either at Plymouth University or at another establishment.

A programme of advanced study, which included four taught modules and this thesis, was undertaken. Relevant educational research seminars and conferences were attended at which work was often presented and several papers were prepared for publication.

Publications:

Campbell-Barr, V. and Huggins, V. (2011) " Enhancing student learning from international study trips: an exploration of the possibilities and difficulties of using digital technologies to share experiences", R. Erzsebet, (ed.) *Tarsadalomtudományi Tanulmányok IV*. City: Debreceni Egyetem Kiado Debrecen University Press: Hungary pp. 29-35

Carter-Dillon, R. & Huggins, V. (2010) 'Childhood and Well-being in the Developing World' in Leeson, C. & Parker-Rees, R. (eds) (2010) *Early Childhood Studies: an introduction to the study of children's worlds and children's lives*, (3rd ed.) Exeter: Learning Matters

Huggins, V. (2013) 'Widening our awareness of international approaches to Early Childhood Education and Care: an imperative for 21st century Early Years practitioners?', Chapter 2 in Georgeson, J. & Payler, J. (eds) *International Perspectives on Early Childhood Education and Care*. Maidenhead: OUP

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Wickett, K. & Huggins, V. (2011) Using the local community as part of the Early Years learning environment' in Pratt, N. & Waite, S. (eds) (2011) *Learning Outside the Classroom: birth to eleven*. London: Sage

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Huggins, V. A. (2010) 'The professional identities of a group of early years student teachers: an exploratory study'. *3rd International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation, Madrid, Spain*. 15-17th November 2010. Virtual presentation. Proceedings published: ICERI2010 Proceedings, ISBN: 978-84-614-2439-9 / ISSN: 2340-1095. Available online at <http://library.iated.org/publications/iceri2010>.

Global Partnerships as sites for Mutual Learning: Workshop 1st September 2011, University of Exeter and End of Project conference, 21st June & 22nd June 2012, Millennium Point, Birmingham.

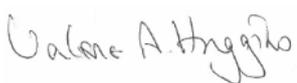
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1. The Genesis of the Study

1.1 Introduction

My study arose from two powerful personal and professional experiences. The first was that I came into Initial Teacher Education after a VSO¹ secondment to a Teacher Education College in Ethiopia. I had lived virtually all my life in Devon, with very little experience of travel abroad and limited contact with a range of cultures, and I found my year in Ethiopia both eye-opening and transformative. As a professional, I learned about the different education system and about working in teacher education but, of much more importance, I came to appreciate how I had previously taken it for granted that my Western concepts and approaches to education were universally appropriate. I had not questioned that British educators, including myself, might plan and deliver a programme of training, based entirely upon their own experience, practice and educational philosophy, to highly qualified and experienced teacher educators in another country and culture. I discovered how problematic it was to be positioned as an 'expert' by Ethiopian teachers, despite initially having no experience of living in an Ethiopian community, let alone any knowledge of the Ethiopian education system.

At a personal level, living in Addis Ababa, I had my first conscious extended encounter with major cultural difference, recognising properly for the first time how narrow and rigid were my ideas about the 'other'. Over the year I began to shift my own views and perspectives, recognising for the first time what my whiteness might represent in a

¹ Voluntary Services Overseas, an international non-governmental organisation that provides experienced professionals to work in a variety of Majority World contexts for a one or two year placement.

Majority World² context such as Ethiopia, and on my return the reverse culture shock that I experienced made me fundamentally rethink many of my attitudes towards aid, poverty and the role of education in promoting social justice. I therefore entered Higher Education as a lecturer at a time when my ideas about myself, about the profession of teaching and about my role as an educator were in a state of flux.

The second experience was that as a Higher Education tutor I participated in study visits abroad. The University was giving support for the idea of developing students' perspectives on education outside the UK, something of particular relevance and importance in my area of teacher education, Early Childhood Studies. Its students need to be able to respond positively and sympathetically to children and families whose ways of life, beliefs and attitudes may differ significantly from their own (Carter Dillon and Huggins 2010) and to work in increasingly diverse settings and communities in a world of growing social mobility (Goodwin 2010). I confidently expected that students would gain considerably from participating in such visits, as I had in Ethiopia, and that this would include a wider understanding of colonialism, poverty and aid. This expectation was only partially fulfilled. Although some students did appear to become more confident, and many termed the visit 'life-changing', the gains seemed patchy and I found the visits to be disconcerting and uncomfortable at times. A series of critical incidents encountered during these study visits forced me to begin reflecting more deeply upon the nature and the purpose of such experiences (Bruster and Peterson 2012), as well as upon my role as a tutor.

² I have decided to use the terms 'Majority World' and 'Global South', rather than 'Developing World' or 'Third World', following the examples of key researchers in this area such as Andreotti, Penn and Martin.

A shaping influence upon the study was the difficult professional transition I was making in moving from teaching in Early Years settings to lecturing in Higher Education. I came with a clear identity as an 'expert' teacher and Early Years consultant, responsible for transmitting this body of knowledge to the student teachers. Experiencing Higher Education, and particularly embarking later upon EdD study, shook up my understandings about teaching and learning processes as I encountered a range of socio-cultural ideas and perspectives for the first time and recognised how limited had been the theoretical underpinnings of my good practice. Reading the ideas of Lave and Wenger, Bourdieu and Foucault, for example, initially caused considerable disequilibrium but led to a fundamental rethink of my approaches to teaching. Having deconstructed many of my own taken-for-granted notions and views, critically reflected upon their origins and recognised many of their limitations, I could see how these had been constraining my professional identity. I increasingly accepted that I needed to consider how my practice as a teacher educator might contribute towards the development of the professional identities of the student teachers that I worked with, and how vital it was that this should involve the use of theoretical perspectives and a challenging, questioning approach to taken-for-granted practices and policies, something which I explored in my second EdD assignment (Appendix:6.2). I was coming to see my role not simply as transmitting expertise but as a co-constructor of expertise and meaning, supporting students in the complex process of shaping and interweaving their professional and personal identities. In doing so, I began to make better sense of my experiences in Ethiopia, and to see how I might have taken an appreciably different approach to my work there.

My developing perspective on education and on international issues informed the doctoral assignment evaluating the module 'Childhood and Well-being in the Developing World' (see Appendix:6.3). During its first delivery, I had encountered many of the same concerns with students' responses as I had during my study visits, in particular that intense exposure to knowledge about Majority World countries did not necessarily bring about significant change in their attitudes and understandings. However, in reading for the assignment, I encountered the work of Andreotti and de Souza (2008b) and I became intrigued by the concept of what they termed 'intercultural capabilities.' They articulated my vague concerns about the effectiveness of the 'soft' global citizenship approach I had been using, advocating instead a 'hard' approach, based upon critical literacy and the need for learners to confront and unlearn existing attitudes and beliefs. Increasingly I came to see how such an approach might be embodied in programmes of study, especially those that might have a direct impact upon students' responses to cultural diversity. I had no prior knowledge of this field or of accompanying theoretical perspectives such as postcolonialism, but gained a growing sense of their importance as I began to develop a vocabulary with which to articulate my concerns and a theoretical position that was helping me to make sense of my own professional and personal journey.

1.2 Identifying an area of study

I was increasingly drawn to investigate the contribution of international study visits in developing student teachers' responses to cultural diversity. At this time, there was a growing interest in such trips and exchanges, with the world becoming more

interconnected (Buczynski *et al.* 2010). Higher Education was no exception, with institutions responding to demands for modern graduates to be able to act effectively in a global culture and economy (DfID 2011; University of Plymouth 2009a) and to develop broader international perspectives on their areas of professional concern. At the same time, however, there were questions about the design, purpose and outcomes of study visits, especially when those involved students from the Minority World visiting the Global South (Martin & Griffiths 2011). As a tutor of such trips, I found the concerns troubling and decided that they warranted further investigation. It seemed to me vital that new entrants to the teaching profession were able to respond sensitively and appropriately to cultural diversity, and the possibility that existing patterns of international study visits were a missed opportunity, or were even having a negative impact, was disturbing.

My first impulse was to devise a simple evaluative study of the effect of particular study trips on participants' attitudes towards cultural diversity. This might have involved:

- identification from the literature of a limited range of specific characteristics and indicative attitudes/behaviour
- pre-testing of participants for these
- some observation of in-trip organisation and activities
- post-testing
- evaluation of impact.

However, my reading on research methodology rapidly exposed limitations. To create a sample of comparable trips would have been very difficult unless I was able to research substantially outside my own institution – unrealistic. The study would offer

only very limited evidence as to how and why such learning had – or had not – happened, and minimal evidence in answering a key question – were the participant tutors and students looking to develop such qualities and characteristics? If ‘yes’, the findings would be trivial; if ‘no’, the findings would be largely irrelevant. This mental exercise clarified that prior issues and questions had to be addressed. One related directly to the first assignment in my doctoral study (Appendix 6.1), in which I had developed my knowledge of the processes of educational policy, in particular as articulated by Ball and Bowe (1992). It was unclear to me how far international study visits were embedded in a policy framework; how the purposes and conduct of them were articulated and implemented by the various agents concerned; how these agents positioned themselves; and how much agency they had. Secondly, I recognised that participants would engage in visits with their own possibly highly individual motivations and goals, and that these would significantly influence the learning gained.

An extreme constructivist position on this would be that that, since participants are actively making their own sense of the world, each would perceive the experiences of the study trip differently. There would be little point in the trip leaders attempting to predetermine the resulting learning outcomes and little validity in generalisations made by the researcher. However, my study of socio-cultural theories of learning, such as Lave and Wenger’s communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; Rogoff 2003) and Bourdieu’s concepts of fields, habitus and capital (Bourdieu 1990), suggested that knowledge does not reside solely in the individual but is socially constructed as we make sense of our interactions with people, places and things. Moreover, key aspects of the notion of a community of practice are that knowledge is

fluid, intersubjective and dialogical (Lave and Wenger 1991) and that learning is a trajectory of participation (Dreier 1999; Penn 2008). This view does not deny that there is a real world independent of human thought, what Searle (1995) calls 'brute facts', but, as he argues, there are 'social facts' overlaying these, forming a cultural framework of shared meanings. It was essential therefore, for my research to explore aspects of such a framework, particularly how participants had constructed and were constructing their understandings of the Majority World, and to gain a picture of how other views, attitudes and perceptions were articulated and sustained in the actions and social situations of the study visits.

Lave (2008) argues that the only way to understand the dynamics of such a community of practice is to deconstruct what all the participants do and how they do it. This suggested to me that I could only hope to gain a reasonably accurate picture by being a member of that community of practice, rather than being an outside observer/expert attempting to define the nature and value of the process. Furthermore, through studying the process I was looking to adopt a more central role in which I could have a direct influence on future developments (Dreier 1999). This was especially compelling as I saw the purpose of the EdD as going beyond the generation of new knowledge to having a direct, research-informed impact upon educational practice.

My concern for social justice, whether in the UK or in the Majority World, and my conviction as to its importance in education (Giroux 2011; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2007; MacNaughton 2005) was involving me in working for change, in my own practice, in my dealings with colleagues, in my work with students and in my research.

So my project could not simply be about hearing and identifying the varied perspectives of participants in the community of practice. In order for me to promote change, I had to consider critically what might have been shaping such perspectives and perceived 'truths' in order to challenge the taken-for-granted and to encourage new ways of thinking (Penn 2008; Jowallah 2011). As advocated by MacNaughton (2005) and Dahlberg and Moss (2005), I looked to use a Foucauldian lens to identify and analyse the regimes of truth that underpinned the discourses of the participants, in order to consider why some might be more dominant than others, and to explore the relationship between knowledge, truth and power in these discourses. Finding appropriate ways of revealing the stories of the students, who, my experience suggested, might previously have been marginalised, was thus a crucial part of the research.

In studying the social world, I find unsatisfactory a positivistic epistemology which considers that there is one view of the truth, based on scientifically established evidence gained through experimentation, objective observation and deduction (Butler-Kisber 2010; Hughes, 2010; Cohen *et al.* 2011). Instead I have come to adopt a postmodern stance, where knowledge is considered as partial, context-dependent (Taylor 2010) and shaped by who is speaking. Such a stance does not privilege one speaker over another (Penn 2008) and I hoped that using this as a theoretical lens would help me to pay better attention to the voices of the students and the tutors and to appreciate more fully their points of view.

Given my new understandings, based on a social constructivist epistemology (Burr 2003), about the nature of learning and knowledge being created in the social, political, historical context, I had to take into account the motives, attitudes, perceptions, ideas and feelings of the people involved in the study trips and the context in which these were situated. Therefore, it was vital for me to acknowledge that any ideas and concepts about the Majority World are contingent, historically-specific cultural constructions (Lichtman 2010). As a result, I used positioning theory in order to investigate the way that all the participants, including myself, were positioned and positioned themselves with regard to the knowledge, knowing and meaning-making generated (Burr 2003; Davies and Harré 1990; Harré *et al* 2009). Such participants are producers of the discourses surrounding the Majority World, but are also manipulated by them, and I hoped that a consideration of their ways of speaking about the Majority World would reveal much of what they considered right and appropriate to do professionally in responding to cultural diversity. The over-riding paradigm used was therefore critical theory, which:

seeks to uncover the interests at work in particular situations and to interrogate the legitimacy of those interests, identify the extent to which they are legitimate in their service of equality and democracy. (Cohen et al. 2011:31)

My concern for social justice added a clear moral and ethical dimension to this educational research. I would argue that teacher educators have an obligation to promote and develop in student teachers positive attitudes and behaviours, including towards diversity, and so a crucial aspect of their role is encouraging students to critique taken-for-granted practices, engaging in reflection and discussion to identify alternative approaches. Thus this research project was not aimed at investigating the

previous and current contribution of such trips to the development of student teachers' responses to cultural diversity, but as the basis for questioning and challenging existing patterns in order to shape new approaches to international study visits.

The study is set out in the subsequent six chapters. In Chapter 2, I provide the context for the study, considering the changes that globalisation and internationalisation have made to Higher Education generally, and specifically at Plymouth University. This includes policy analysis and discussion. This is followed in Chapter 3 by a critical review of current literature and research relating to international study visits in Higher Education. I consider the increasing necessity for students to be able to respond to cultural diversity, and some ways in which teacher education might prepare future teachers for this. A key aspect of this section is a detailed discussion of a range of perspectives on intercultural capabilities.

I set out the methodological process of the study in Chapter 4, explaining how I gathered the perspectives of tutors and students involved in international study visits. I consider the process of analysis of the variety of data generated. I also grapple with the ethical challenges and potential professional repercussions that I faced in conducting research within my own workplace. The subsequent findings about student access to international study visits are detailed in Chapter 5, along with the participants' motivations. In Chapter 6 I consider the data gathered about the organisation and pedagogy of the trips. This is followed by a discussion in Chapter 7 of how these findings are useful for developing the theoretical understanding of the place

of international study trips in promoting intercultural capabilities and the practical difficulties in making them available to a wider range of students. I also look back on the lessons I have learnt as a researcher and as a teacher educator by undertaking this study into intercultural capabilities and by my participation in the wider EdD programme.

2. The Context of International Study Visits

International study visits and placements are increasingly common in Higher Education institutions as a response to globalisation and to cultural diversity, and are widely seen as contributing to Internationalisation policies and strategies. The chapter discusses these developments in the context of Plymouth University and its former Faculty of Health, Education and Society.

2.1 Globalisation

Any consideration of the purpose and value of international study visits has to be in the context of rapid 21st century changes resulting in increased globalisation. This deeply political and highly complex phenomenon is defined as “an accelerating set of processes involving flows that encompass ever-greater numbers of the world’s spaces and that lead to increasing integration and interconnectivity among those spaces” (Ritzer 2007:1). Such interconnectivity makes demands upon us all, not least in institutions of Higher Education (Leask and Bridge 2013), if we are to respond appropriately.

Globalisation can be seen as a positive force (Maringe *et al.* 2013). It increases access to knowledge, providing solutions to world-wide problems; communication and trade are quicker and more efficient; and the potential minimisation of the nation state may well lead to a more peaceful world. At the same time there are negative aspects (Cantle 2012a). Its progress is currently dominated by Minority World culture and

societal forms at the expense of others and it encourages the migration of talented individuals away from poor and less-developed countries, a process favouring wealthier nations (Guo et al 2012). Aman (2013) suggests that the rhetoric of globalisation is based upon the post-Enlightenment discourse that progress will lead to economic benefits for all, but Mehta (2010) argues that in the short-term it is often at the expense of the many displaced communities around the world. However, such a fundamental shift cannot be reversed, only managed better; globalisation offers new challenges as well as requiring a range of ethical choices.

2.2 The impact of cultural diversity

One consequence of globalisation is a huge increase in our exposure to, and so awareness of, cultural diversity (Bagnoli 2007; Perry and Southwell 2011).

Technological transformation has increased global flows of people, information and images, investments, policies and knowledge at a hitherto unknown rate and scale (Guo *et al* 2009) and migration is increasing, becoming more commonplace and involving people of all races, classes and ages. As Cantle (2012a) notes, there were 214 million international migrants in 2010 and this is predicted to rise to over 400m by 2050, leading to what he terms 'super-diversity' in Western economies. Many such migrants are looking for more lucrative employment, although often as temporary visitors seeking financial benefit before returning if possible to their home country. At the same time, there is also considerable migration of people displaced by war and natural disaster and looking for a haven. Communities in the UK, including those in the South West, that until only 20 years ago seemed relatively homogenous, are becoming more ethnically diverse, as international migration and changing patterns of employment

encourage or force people to move (Diamond 2010). In consequence, all the inhabitants have increasingly to respond to unfamiliar attitudes, beliefs and patterns of behaviour, and it is vital that young people growing up amid such diversity are prepared for it and appreciate the benefits of it.

Similar flexibility and responsiveness is demanded in the world of work. Technological advances are leading to a growing interconnectedness of business, with many multinational companies; information communication technology has promoted a third wave of economic revolution with countries in every corner of the world now connected in a global village (Ng 2012). More and more people will be working in a multinational context, and so will need to be prepared to respond effectively to the cultural differences they will inevitably encounter.

In my own field of teacher education teachers world-wide are operating in classrooms that are more and more diverse, and so children are entering them with unusual life-histories, experiences and learning needs (Goodwin 2010). Some cities, such as London and Amsterdam, are super-diverse with over 300 language groups (Cantle, 2012a). The extent of the demographic transformation in America, for example, is unprecedented. Ukpokodu (2011) suggests, based on the 2010 census, that currently in Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 54% of the children are defined as White, 22% Hispanic and 17% Black, but predicts that by 2020 66% of US students will be from non-white groups because of substantial immigration and higher birth rates amongst many non-white groups. Such demographic change challenges teachers. Furthermore, in both the UK and the USA the teaching staff may be becoming more diverse; many practitioners

may not have been recruited locally, or they themselves may have migrated to find employment. This makes extra demands in terms both of leading educational settings and of working effectively in a diverse and multicultural team (Devine 2012).

These pressures are experienced in many countries but there is an argument that they may demand an even more effective response from UK teachers and teacher educators. Historically and geographically much of the UK population has been culturally isolated and isolationist, with limited experience and understanding of people from other countries. Yet it has become an attractive destination for migrants and refugees from across the world, and membership of the European Union has further opened its boundaries. Most student teachers can now expect to encounter children and families from a wider range of cultures, even in parts of the UK away from the major urban centres, so their training needs to address this. It is frequently claimed that as part of this training study visits to, or placements in, other countries will enable them to become sensitive and responsive to aspects of cultural difference (Pence and Macgillivray 2008). The validity of such a claim needs to be considered as part of the process of deciding what might be appropriate responses by a Higher Education institution to the realities of globalisation.

2.3 The response of Higher Education and the concept of internationalisation

Prominent in the debates about globalisation is the concept of 'internationalisation' as a necessary response to its influences. This was evidenced in Europe with the 1988 MagnaCharta Universitatum (IU 2014), which started a process of harmonisation of

higher education across the EU member states, with subsequent agreements, known as the Bologna Process; 47 states are now involved. It has created a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) to enable students and graduates to move freely between countries.

As long ago as 1998, Ellingboe suggested that such internationalisation involves a “range of stakeholders working to change the internal dynamics of an institution to respond and adapt to an increasingly diverse, globally-focussed, ever-changing external environment” (1998:199). This is a major concern for Higher Education institutions, since they are themselves major contributors to globalisation through the role they play in the rapid creation and distribution of ideas (Leask and Bridge 2013), with nation states having less control of what is taught (Cantle, 2012a). Intellectual globalisation leads to an increasing range of perspectives and identities in Higher Education on the part of both tutors and students (Trahar 2007; Buczynski *et al.* 2010) and Trahar (2011) asserts it is a moral duty of Higher Education to internationalise its approaches if it is to meet the needs of all its students. However, a major difficulty lies in coming to an agreement within the institution about what are ‘globalisation’ and ‘internationalisation’ and what might constitute appropriate aims and missions for Higher Education in such an internationalisation process. This issue has been widely acknowledged in the literature (Knight, 1999; Buczynski *et al.* 2010; Gopal, 2011; Guo & Chase, 2011; Ng, 2012). Some of the difficulty results from the tendency of institutions to express policy in plausible generalisation; examples are definitions of internationalisation such as “the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution” (Knight

1991:16) or “integration and infusion of an international dimension as a central part of a University programme” (Zolfaghari *et al.* 2009:16). Such unspecific statements rightly emphasise the need for the permeation of existing practice but offer little guidance as to the nature and direction of such developments. A further difficulty is that approaches to internationalisation often lack theoretical underpinning: “As with most educational transformations, internationalisation has been largely atheoretical and largely driven through practice” (Maringe *et al.* 2013:10).

In considering the contribution of international study visits, some conceptual clarification is required. Arguably, globalisation, as described above, is a multifaceted, largely external process impacting upon Higher Education, whereas internationalisation is a largely internal response to that impact:

Globalization is the context of economic and academic trends that are part of the reality of the 21st century. Internationalization includes the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions – and even individuals – to cope with the global academic environment.....Globalization may be unalterable but internationalization involves many choices. (Altbach and Knight 2007, in Trahar 2011:90-91).

The distinction is very pertinent. Firstly, it emphasises that responses to globalisation will not be somehow ‘inevitable’ or ‘determined by the situation’, but will be chosen by the institution and so will clearly reflect aspects of its own values, interests and theoretical perspectives. Secondly, it reminds us of the powerful agency of groups and individuals to shape internationalisation responses, at all levels from policy to practice.

Internationalisation strategies may therefore be underpinned by significantly different impulses. These are often reactive, driven by the perceived pressures of globalisation. Typical of this is Gorski's (2008) suggestion that education's primary purpose is now seen to be preparing people for employment in the global market. Universities around the world are increasingly seeking to create a greater global value for themselves, based on three emergent models, driven by different values: commercial, mainly in the Northern Hemisphere universities; cultural integration, in the Asian sector; and curriculum, in the Majority World contexts (Maringe *et al*, 2013). However, Maringe *et al*. suggest that these models reinforce disparities between the Global North and the Global South. One analysis would suggest that the 'Northern' model represents a continuation of the colonial pattern of looking to exploit international opportunities for financial gain - Gu *et al*. (2009) give the example of UK Higher Education institutions broadening and deepening international links because of the economic rationale to attract lucrative students from overseas at a time of declining home-based recruitment. The Asian model may be underpinned by a variety of impulses towards gaining full acceptance as major players throughout the Minority World, whilst the Majority World countries may be motivated to draw upon Minority World expertise to enhance their curriculum provision and research expertise. Such analysis is generalised and simplistic, but illustrates a common internationalisation motive that is 'selfish', focussed very largely upon the gains to the institution itself.

The universities' selfish motives are quite understandable. Maringe *et al*. (2013) suggest that internationalisation brings four key benefits to Higher Education institutions. They gain economic capital in terms of their global competitiveness; they

accrue symbolic capital in terms of enhanced visibility and reputation; they increase social and intellectual capital from the diversification of their academic staff and student body; and in developing global citizenship skills in their graduates, they are promoting a global employment market for them. In the current climate, when in England there are threats to funding, to academic jobs and to the value of graduate qualification, such perceived benefits must be appealing.

However, Maringe *et al.* (2013) also emphasise four unintended consequences of this agenda. It drains talented people away from the Majority World. It encourages the export of Western ideologies, cultures and languages, which are assumed to be superior to indigenous ones. Its focus on profit and on commodification leads to a weakening of the moral purpose of education. The resulting increase in student numbers in Minority World universities frequently erodes the very quality of the education provided there that attracted students in the first place.

Such a 'selfish' approach is not an inevitable consequence of globalisation; there can be very different impulses driving internationalisation strategies. Various supranational bodies such as UNESCO, OECD and the EU have long used the discourse of interculturality in promoting liberty, justice and peace, as well as enhancing our ability to be successful in a constantly changing world of work. The premise is that:

education provides all learners with cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable them to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural, religious groups and nations (UNESCO 2006:37).

Many academics, for instance Ng (2012), argue that Higher Education has a responsibility to foster intercultural understanding, respect and tolerance, based on

the belief that the cultural heritage of people is universal and that as global citizens we should share in the process of the advancement of knowledge. Meiras (2004) agrees, suggesting that the ability to understand and respect other cultures and the development of cultural sensitivity are central aspects of international education.

Arguably, the major thrust of Higher Education around the world should be the conscious promotion of a university as a global institution, producing graduates with a global outlook, able to be flexible, to consider different perspectives and to deal with the inevitable uncertainties of a rapidly changing world (Blum & Bourn 2013).

In contrast to the previously identified 'selfish' and inward-facing model, this represents an 'altruistic' and outward-facing model, debatably post-colonial in that it disclaims an exploitive stance characteristic of colonialism in favour of a stance as a 'global citizen', concerned to achieve mutual benefits to humanity. It emphasises what such graduates will be able to give as a result of their education, rather than upon what they will have gained. As a result, the European Union is currently implementing policies (European Commission 2008), aimed at bringing diverse cultures in contact with each other, and is including interculturality in the education curricula at all levels in its member states (Aman 2013).

What this stresses is that an appropriate and effective response to globalisation cannot be the narrow accumulation of knowledge and skills to make one better able to exploit and benefit from widening opportunities but should involve the development of personal abilities that enable one to respond appropriately to cultural diversity:

The ability to adapt quickly and effectively to unfamiliar cultural environments is becoming one of the key skills demanded by an internationalised economy and rapidly changing domestic context (Campbell 2000:31).

It is now widely accepted that some kind of multicultural or intercultural competence is necessary for citizens of a world that is becoming increasingly globalised and that the deliberate development of such competence must be seen as part of the mission for Higher Education, since it will provide students with “the skills and knowledge to function in multicultural settings as well as breaking down misconceptions about non-western cultures” (McMullen and Penn 2011:423).

Of course, one must not imply that the ‘selfish’ and the ‘altruistic’ approaches to internationalisation are mutually exclusive. Indeed, the two categories are frequently bundled together in the debate; Guo and Chase (2011), for example, mix together reactive arguments for internationalisation – marketing, recruitment, income generation, demonstrating international standards – and proactive ones – enhancing international understandings and the skills of both staff and students to develop international alliances and forge international collaboration in research and knowledge production. However, although the rhetoric of students as global citizens is very strong in Higher Education, it is often based on seeing them as passive consumers of policy, rather than as critical, reflective agents of change to such policies (Leask and Bridge 2013).

Over the past decade institutions have increasingly updated their internationalisation policies and guidelines. Koutsantoni’s survey (2006, cited in Warwick and Moogan, 2013) found that over half of UK institutions had such policies, and Leask and Bridge (2013) suggest that the number has subsequently increased, although coverage is still patchy. However, in the UK this development has largely been driven by management

demands for student recruitment, rather than by curriculum development imperatives or by the wish to provide an enhanced teaching and learning experience, whereas in Australia, for example, the emphasis is much more on ensuring the students leave university with an enhanced global perspective (Warwick and Moogan 2013). It is also a concern that many academic staff remain uncertain about what internationalisation involves, even though they are the constructors of the curriculum, and that as yet there has been little research into the internationalisation of the curriculum in Higher Education for staff to use in enhancing teaching and learning (Leask and Bridge 2013). One UK institution proactive in tackling such issues is Leeds Metropolitan University, which has compiled guidelines for its students and staff clearly based on research in this field. Students need to be “capable of recognising, of making informed responses towards and of living and working comfortably with the diversity they encounter now and in the future” (Killick 2008:6). They also need to have awareness of self in relation to the ‘other’; the ability to communicate effectively across cultures; the confidence to challenge their own values and those of others responsibly and ethically; a knowledge of international and multicultural perspectives upon their own discipline area that derive from other cultures, philosophies, religions or nations; and the ability to apply all this to their personal lives and their professional practice. Clearly this approach places at the centre of the educational process the development in its students of appropriate personal abilities in preparing them to respond to globalisation, and recognises that this demands a different educational approach:

The global context presents a fundamentally different sort of challenge to education than in the Enlightenment framework. Whereas previously education was more focussed on the needs and development of the individual....education for life in a global world broadens the outline of community beyond family, the region or the

nation. Today the communities of personal affiliation are multiple, dislocated, provisional and ever changing. (Burbules 2000:21-22)

2.4 Plymouth University and the internationalisation agenda

In preparation for my investigation of international study visits I looked at the attitudes of my own institution towards globalisation and the nature of its internationalisation response, and found that these illustrated many of the aspects discussed in Section

2.3. In 2009 it published an Internationalisation Policy with clear goals, such as:

Ensuring internationalisation is firmly embedded into the core activities of the university and creating an enabling structure to maintain and develop opportunities as they arise. (University of Plymouth 2009a)

It consciously promotes the University as a global institution, producing students with a global outlook, able to look at different perspectives and to deal with change and uncertainty in the way advocated by Blum and Bourn (2013). The Internationalisation Policy (University of Plymouth 2009a) and the related strategic and policy documents, such as the Teaching and Learning Strategy (University of Plymouth 2009b) and the Commercialisation Strategy (Plymouth University 2011), all use the rhetoric of internationalisation. However, a closer examination shows two major areas of limitation: the first in terms of the underlying motivation and the second in terms of implementation.

2.4.1 Limitations in underlying motivations of Plymouth University internationalisation policies

Three examples will serve to illustrate the way in which underlying motivations may be more 'selfish' than the policy statements suggest. Firstly, a key argument for internationalisation is that the ethnic diversity in the South West region lags behind that of the UK as a whole (2-3% in the 2001 census, as opposed to 8% for the UK); this has for too long been reflected in the make-up of the student body. It therefore argues for the need to attract international students "in order to sustain a diverse and multi-cultural student body" (University of Plymouth 2009a:7) and defines this as helpful in preparing both students and staff to work in a global setting and in adding an international dimension to the programmes offered, positioning itself as fostering cultural diversity and tolerance. But there is no indication of how, and the initiatives are narrowly justified in terms of local gains:

The region in general will benefit from an increasing emphasis on multiculturalism, which will enhance both the culture and the economy of the peninsula (University of Plymouth 2009a).

There is no recognition that these wider dimensions might help to develop within the local 'monoculture' greater awareness of cultural diversity and a greater tolerance of difference. Even more vividly, in the later policy on Equality the apparently 'altruistic' approach can be seen to be aimed substantially at 'selfish' benefits to the institution.

An organisation known for embracing equality and diversity will establish a positive profile within both the local and national community as being socially conscious, responsible and progressive. Such a reputation will attract ethical investors and partners as well as talented staff and students (University of Plymouth 2011).

Secondly, there are indications that underlying its drive for recruiting overseas students is the lucrative fee income they bring at a time when there are growing fears about declining UK student numbers (Gu *et al.* 2009). Thus, portraying itself as a

culturally diverse community may be as much to attract even more international students as to enhance the educational experience of the wider student body. A subsequent focus in this document and in the Internationalisation Strategy (University of Plymouth 2009a) is on exploiting the markets for students from China, India, Europe, South East Asia and the Middle East, with a strong emphasis on courses such as business, health, computing and engineering that are commercially attractive. In a similar fashion, policy statements talk of fostering and supporting international research, with an emphasis upon collaboration. However, a major underlying focus is upon gaining further fee-income and upon the contribution of such research to the University's standing and its ratings (and so resourcing) in the Research Excellence Framework (HEFCE 2014), rather than upon enabling and supporting academic development abroad, particularly in the Majority World.

Thirdly, the policy statements seem largely to reflect a particular 'regime of truth', embodied in Gorski (2008)'s suggestion that education's primary purpose is seen to be in preparing people for employment in the global market. The statements emphasise that Plymouth University is reacting to such globalisation and its changing demands through:

... the development of distinctive programmes and curricula with an international dimension to provide Plymouth students with an international outlook and the skills required for working in the global economy. (University of Plymouth 2009a).

Over and over again, policy and strategy documents invoke the advantage to students in employment terms. There is no mention of benefits to their employers, and no analysis of the nature of the advantage gained, of the particular skills underlying this,

or of how the University's programmes of study will promote them. This seems in line with the tendency in many universities to assume that preparation involves adding to the curriculum further bodies of knowledge about international perspectives, rather than critically evaluating the specific skills and attitudes needed for different professions operating in a global market (Blum and Bourn 2013).

There are ethical issues over this largely 'selfish' approach to internationalisation, particularly in relation to the Majority World. From a postcolonial perspective international students are being exploited for their 'differences' and what these can potentially offer to the Plymouth students as the host community. Seemingly, the University adopts a taken-for-granted position that this approach is ethical, with no questioning of its right to do so, or even that there may be an ethical issue. Such a habitus is shaped by the external environment around Higher Education, driven by the current neoliberal regime of truth, that of commercialisation, marketisation and income generation. The University's Commercialisation Strategy (Plymouth University 2011) confirms this with its emphases on promoting the University as an international brand, on diversifying its income stream, on gaining competitive advantage and on developing new market opportunities, all aimed at securing a world-leading reputation. But there is no questioning, for example, of the ways that the University is taking advantage of the increasing market of knowledge transfer to other countries in the world, little recognition of the need to make such transfer culturally relevant, and no awareness that by doing this there is a danger of perpetuating colonial approaches of exporting Western funds of knowledge supported by the global power of the English language, all for commercial gain and to enhance the reputation of the University. A

suspicion is that although the overt intentions of the policies are to promote the image of the University as a public educator they are actually driven by a covert technological pragmatist thrust, seeing education as largely promoting economic development and aiming to prepare students for the world of work, rather than preparing them to work in the world.

2.4.2 Limitations in the implementation of Plymouth University internationalisation policies

The second limitation of the policy documents is that they do not indicate clearly how the policies are to be implemented, and so how they may shape student learning. For example, there is minimal mention of international study visits in the University strategy documents. There is an offer of enhanced opportunities to study and work overseas and a generalised intention to offer

a globally relevant and culturally rich experience by growing our international student body and encouraging all students to undertake curricula and extra-curricular activities with an international perspective. (University of Plymouth 2009a).

The application of Ball and Bowe's (1992) policy analysis model prompts several major reservations about these claims. The first is simple: 'encouraging' is not the same as 'ensuring' or even 'enabling'. Policy statements have to be translated into more active and concrete evidence of direction and support if particular initiatives are to be given a high priority. Secondly, policy statements are by their nature strategic, and will only be translated effectively into practice if there is a robust process of dissemination, programme and curriculum development and monitoring. Thirdly, the vaguer and more generalised the policy statements, the more room there is for interpretational

slippage and the more difficult it is to hold to account those responsible if policy is not implemented. Fourthly, the vaguer and more unspecific the policy aims, the more likely it will be that they cease to be considered priorities under pressure (Ball & Bowe 1992).

The issue of priorities suggests a further factor. The strategy of any Higher Education institution must balance its outward-facing, 'altruistic' goals, such as providing a high quality of education for its students, enhancing their lives and benefiting the community and society in general, against its inward-looking, 'selfish' goals, such as enhancing its reputation, attracting funding, defending itself against criticism and recruiting students. 'Altruistic' goals are less likely to be pursued energetically and effectively if 'selfish' goals carry more weight in the devising and implementation of policy. Given this, much will depend upon the structures in individual Faculties for implementing policies and upon the agency of the personnel carrying them out. Thus the views of such personnel, the design and operation of programmes of study and the learning outcomes which are given priority within them will be crucial. Appreciating this drew my attention to how internationalisation was being implemented within my own Faculty and School and, in particular, to the contribution of international study visits and placements.

2.5 Internationalisation in the Faculty context

Faculty approaches to Internationalisation are shaped by Key Theme 5 in the University's Teaching and Learning Strategy:

Key Theme 5 – To develop an internationalised approach to learning and teaching

Modern graduates must be able to act effectively in a global culture, economy and environment. We aim to equip our graduates for this experience by promoting cross-cultural and multicultural understanding and by providing a relevant educational experience in an environment that is supportive and inclusive for all students.

- We will continue to develop the international agenda, embedding it in the core of the curriculum
- We will encourage international collaboration through, for example, joint academic developments with global partners and by growing our international alumni network
- We will increase opportunities for safe, high quality international work-based and volunteering learning opportunities
- We will develop student skills to compete in the global business environment, promoting global citizenship and developing multicultural awareness (University of Plymouth 2009b:9).

They operate within the University structure (see Appendix 5.1) in which the role of the Faculty Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning, a member of the University Internationalisation Advisory Group, is key. However, at the time of the study, this Advisory Group had not met for over a year, due to personnel changes in the membership and to the disruptive effects of several major University reorganisations. This led to a hiatus in the promotion and monitoring of the strategy, including international study visits and the permeation of curricula with a global dimension. Responsibility for this was left to the Teaching and Learning Committee of each Faculty. However, in the run-up to my study, the Faculty was subject to a major merger in August 2011 in which the then Faculty of Education became part of the Faculty of Health, Education and Society as a School of Education. A few months later, it was

announced that there would be a demerger in August 2013, resulting in the establishment of a Faculty of Arts and Humanities, in which there would be a newly created Plymouth Institute of Education. These major structural changes generated a great deal of complex work for the relevant Teaching and Learning Committee, which therefore found it hard to give time to internationalisation in a systematic way. Hence, much was in turn left to the constituent Schools of the Faculty and, within them, to teaching teams, without specific guidance and support. This led to the School of Education following its own agenda on internationalisation, with little direct connection to the wider Faculty and University systems.

Despite this lack of direct University and Faculty support, the School of Education built further upon its range of international activity, with a strong focus upon international study visits and placements (Appendix 5.2). This came about substantially because in 2007 an academic had been nominated as International Coordinator, charged with promoting an international dimension in the work of the School, but without a formal position in the overall Teaching and Learning structure. As a result, and because of the ineffectiveness in this area of the Teaching and Learning Committee, the School's international activity remained almost entirely separate and self-contained.

A consequence was that, even in the School of Education itself, many tutors were largely unaware of the wider policies and the philosophies underpinning internationalisation and what was going on. I, as an academic with a significant and growing interest in the field of development education, have no recollection of the implementation of these University strategies being discussed at School and

Programme level, let alone of any debate about the distinctions between globalisation and internationalisation and the potential impact of these on our work. This perhaps relates to Leask and Bridge's (2013) concerns that many academic staff are uncertain about what internationalisation involves, although they are the constructors of the relevant curricula. When I became involved with the international study visits to The Gambia, I had little sense of how they fitted with the University's Internationalisation agenda. I did, however, have an interest in how they might contribute to the students' response to cultural diversity.

2.6 Cultural diversity and training for the caring professions

Given the impact of globalisation and the resulting increase in contact with cultural diversity, it would seem that all Higher Education students could benefit from an education which prepared them to respond appropriately to a rapidly changing world. Arguably, it would be a particular imperative for those training for caring professions such as teaching, nursing and social care since their work would inevitably involve them in face-to-face contact with people from diverse cultures. This would be as true, though perhaps not as obvious, when working in rural Devon and Cornwall as in multi-ethnic London. As a teacher educator working with a student body less culturally diverse than in many other Higher Education institutions, I had become increasingly conscious of the need to respond to this. For some of the students their minimal previous contact with, and so awareness of, cultural diversity would be a limiting factor in their professional responses. Widening experiences such as international study visits might be important. But would contact alone be sufficient? My previous experiences suggested that this was unlikely.

3. Literature Review

Chapter 2 reveals that whilst international study visits were a taken-for-granted aspect of the University's Internationalisation agenda and strategy, there was little guidance on how such visits might be conducted to promote student learning, or on the nature and goals for such learning. In this Chapter I therefore consider the role of international study visits in Higher Education provision, and the necessary attitudes and skills useful in responding to cultural diversity. This leads to a discussion of colonialism and postcolonialism and of ways to promote intercultural capabilities, which in turn reveals implications for teacher educators and for the conduct of international study visits in Higher Education.

3.1 The role of international study visits in Higher Education

Globalisation has had an increasing impact upon the study patterns of Higher Education students, in particular by encouraging them to undertake programmes of study abroad; Doerr (2012) estimates that in 2009 3.7 million were registered with educational institutions outside their country of citizenship. In addition, many institutions offer their students the chance to engage in international experiences during their degree. Cushner's (2011) research suggests that this is a successful marketing strategy as 81% of first year students in his UK study indicated that they wished to study abroad during their degree; nevertheless, it is interesting to note that only 5% actually did. Trilokekar and Rasmi (2011) give similar figures for Canada, but with even fewer students eventually participating. Clearly, the possibility of such an

experience is very different from international study visits being integral aspects of study programmes.

Study visits have been taking place internationally for at least the past 30 years (Martin *et al.* 2011) but in the UK the number has increased during the past decade, partly in response to initiatives from DfID (e.g. DfID 2011), but also because students are increasingly willing to travel to places outside Europe, maybe due to growing up in more diverse communities (Cushner 2011). Various North/South visits for teachers, student teachers and teacher educators are run by the British Council, the Development Education Centres and by Universities (Bloomfield *et al.* 2007; Hickling-Hudson 2011). Similar intercultural experiences exist in other countries such as Australia, Canada and USA (Phillion and Malewski 2011; Yang 2011).

Employability is an obvious and strong motivation for many participants. Buczynski *et al.* (2010) identify that when considering and justifying such visits there is often little emphasis upon personal transformation and more upon the 'selfish' benefits to be gained in terms of the acquisition of professional knowledge as well as the enhancement of the participant's own CV at a time of massification of Higher Education (Allen *et al.* 2012). Campbell-Barr and Huggins (2011) argue that this generation of students, often referred to in the Minority World as 'Generation Y' (Pope *et al.* 2014), want experiences that provide individual growth, and use their purchasing power to build their identity and status. International study visits provide opportunities for this.

Another use of visits for professional gain is their role in comparative education studies, in which student teachers find out about other educational systems in order to improve their own practice. To understand children in the increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse classrooms of their own country they need themselves to experience social and cultural differences (Gallego 2001), preferably through an opportunity to live and study abroad in a diverse and unfamiliar environment (Walters *et al.* 2009). But Walters *et al.* identify that this may be seen as largely enhancing existing UK school curricula and programmes, given the recent Government requirement that UK teachers should be trained to teach the global dimension of the curriculum and that schools should form global partnerships (DfID 2011; British Council 2012). It can therefore be argued, as Zemach-Bersin (2007) claims, that students are 'harvesting' the resources of international knowledge for their own benefit without necessarily considering the impact upon the host culture or coming to understand it better – indeed, that such a personal motivation may actually interfere with their appreciation of cultural difference.

Not all programmes of visits are so narrowly focused; many have broader and more 'altruistic' aims. Sometimes these arise from the particular context in which the visits were developed. For example, study abroad programmes by American Higher Education students originated from a post-WW2 desire to bring about peace through cultural exchange (Buczynski *et al.* 2010); during the Cold War this developed into a programme for the promotion of American values, and later became an attempt to compensate for failed foreign policies (Cook 2008). But the goals of many international study visits are more loosely defined in such terms as developing cultural awareness,

encouraging cultural exchange and fostering personal growth. In a survey of Canadian Higher Education institutions three main reasons given for promoting study abroad were:

to develop responsible and engaged global citizens; to strengthen students' international understanding, knowledge, and perspectives on global issues, and to develop students' international cultural awareness and skills. (Trilokekar and Rasmi 2011:495).

Often there is an expectation that study abroad will offer a transformative encounter with the 'other', resulting in a growth in the students' understanding, for instance of their own privilege and advantage by comparison with inhabitants of the Majority World. Such broad goals for international study trips are commonly found both in the literature about international study trips and in Higher Education course aims.

Gammonley and Rotabi (2007) illustrate this in their research about study abroad options for social work students, which appear to have a focus on international understanding and peace, emphasising human rights and social justice as the guiding principles of social work. Nevertheless, these very broad goals are not always translated into more specific, and so more assessable, learning objectives.

Much research, summarised by Brock *et al.* (2006), supports the idea that international study visits for student teachers and teachers are likely to have profound and positive effects, whether they take the form of small-scale trips, as with the teacher educators studied by Bloomfield *et al.* (2007), or of longer-term immersion overseas (Merryfield 2000). Once again the underlying premise is that teachers will be better prepared to work with children from diverse backgrounds if they have experienced diverse environments themselves and a language other than English (Phillion and Malewski 2011). Deardorff's (2006) study claims that teachers with international experience

become less ethnocentric and more able to rethink their view of the world, while Walters *et al.* (2009) suggest that it enhances cultural competence and global-mindedness. Pence and Macgillivray (2008), in their study of American students on a four-week placement in Rome, report that their confidence as teachers increased as well as their respect for the differences of others. Additionally, Brock and Wallace (2006) propose that international study visits can make people aware of what it is like to be perceived as the 'other', because to become culturally aware involves a revision of one's own identity in relation to experiences of different cultures, and Merryfield (2000:440) notes that "it is the interrelationships across identity and experience that lead to consciousness of other perspectives and ultimately a recognition of multiple realities". Individual students often talk of their visits as having been a life-changing experience (Campbell-Barr and Huggins 2011). Cushner (2011:610) confidently summarises a common view:

The message intercultural researchers have for educators is clear: teacher educators should do all we (sic) can to encourage and provide opportunities for young people to study, travel and live abroad at all levels of their education.

However, these benefits are not necessarily always gained from such visits, and not necessarily by every participant. In 2000, Merryfield warned that experiences alone do not make a person more multicultural. Indeed, more recent researchers express reservations about the simplistic notion that positive changes will necessarily result from mere exposure to cultural difference and diversity. Spending time abroad will not necessarily promote intercultural sensitivity; instead it may entrench negative stereotypes, encourage a heightened sense of nationality and promote greater ethnocentrism (Jackson 2010). The students need "ongoing critical reflection on their

experiences to make meaning of culture and its relationship to teaching” (Phillion and Malewski 2011:648).

In a review of three guidebooks on study abroad, Doerr (2012) critiques the discourse of immersion, arguing against the assumption that it is always positive. For instance, although living with a host family is promoted as being better than going abroad in the role of a tourist or a missionary, this is problematic. Often the host family is presumed to be ‘typical’, whereas they may have been selected and their provision and approach altered to cater for what are seen as the needs and expectations of the visitor. The visitor may consider their own family patterns to be the norm and so define those of the hosts as, at best, parochial and ‘quaint’ and, at worst as inferior, thus losing the opportunity to understand both sets of patterns as located in cultural differences to which each is an appropriate response. Doerr (2012) also reminds us that the student’s presence will make a difference to the way the family behaves, an understanding of which is an important learning.

It is possible that the length, intensity and degree of cultural immersion involved in the study visit may affect outcomes. Short study visits are typical of Higher Education provision, constrained by course timetables, by requirements to satisfy certain standards for placements, and by cost, whether to the institution or to the individual student. Medina-Lopez-Portillo’s (2004) study of US students suggests that the longer they are immersed in a culture, the more they learn and the more their intercultural sensitivities develop, whilst Cushner and Mahon (2002:152) argue that only “powerful, lengthy, direct, engaging, person-to-person interactions allow new educators to

develop skills that enable them to work effectively with individuals from other cultures.” A week’s visit spent in a luxury tourist hotel, with occasional guided and escorted daytime excursions to see sights of interest and an evening cabaret of local dance groups and traditional performers, is unlikely to deepen participants’ understanding of cultural diversity.

Length of visit may not be the major factor restricting learning from a trip. The participants have to be willing to engage in critical reflection and ready to respect a new culture; without this the visitors may discount or dismiss the new experiences, rather than being challenged and modified by them (Merryfield 2000). The presumption of trip leaders may be that, because they are student teachers, they will be interested in aspects of cultural diversity, as this is relevant to their professional practice, but, as Landis *et al.* (2004) note, many prospective teachers are not interested in living in and learning about a different culture and Walters *et al.* (2009) see such cultural apathy on the part of students as a key deterrent.

This draws attention to the potential effects of students’ differing motivations for participating – a wish to enhance their own employability need not be accompanied by any expectation of the need to change. It also draws attention to the fact that the ‘contract’ underpinning the joint work of students and tutors may be unclear. Tutors may have an expectation of change in student attitudes as a result of the visit, and may have their own internal definitions of what changes may be beneficial, but the extensive literature on personal change, much from the field of psychotherapy, asserts the need for this to be based upon a clear and explicit agreement about the intended

outcomes and the roles and responsibilities of all parties (Stewart & Joines 1987; Clarkson, 2013). Where there is no explicit contract, a presumed and implicit contract will operate, all the more powerful because it will be taken-for-granted by all parties.

Even when there is no direct resistance, the learning from experience may need to be mediated by knowledgeable others if it is to be positive.

Teachers who are prepared to help students become culturally competent are themselves culturally competent; they know enough about students' cultural and individual life circumstances to be able to communicate with them well. (Ladson-Billings 2009, cited in Ukpokodu 2011:97)

Further factors may be organisational and pedagogical. International study visits can provide a context in which students may critique their own assumptions and destabilise their view of the world in preparation for a revised and enlarged perspective, but this will only happen if the pedagogy of the international study visit promotes an exploration of the students' deeply held assumptions (Leibowitz *et al.* 2010; Perry and Southwell, 2011; Phillion and Malewski, 2011).

Martin and Griffiths (2011) criticise over-confident assumptions of the inevitable benefits of simple and unmediated exposure to cultural difference, suggesting that some study visits may reinforce rather than challenge the visitors' worldviews. Firstly, if the process is not facilitated by more knowledgeable others, participants' existing views may not only be left unchallenged but may act as a filter to their experiences and so limit their subsequent interpretations. Secondly, the visitors may well become very aware of the inequalities in the contexts they visit, but if they are not made aware of factors such as colonialism that have led to these inequalities they may fall back on

stereotypical and even racist explanations of what they see. Gorski (2008) goes even further and argues that international study visits, along with much intercultural education, actually accentuate rather than undermine existing social and political hierarchies. Whilst considerable personal transformation may occur during a study visit if students redefine their relationship to the rest of the world through critically evaluating their racial, ethnic, gendered, national and socio-economic self, the degree to which this will result is unpredictable (Buczynski *et al.* 2010). Since certain types of learning will not necessarily result from participation in such trips, careful analysis of how to bring about such learning more reliably and effectively is needed to place such trips upon a sounder footing and to justify the very considerable expenditure of time and money by organising tutors and by student participants.

3.2 Responding to cultural diversity – a new paradigm of interculturalism

Introducing students to unfamiliar cultures, and indeed helping them to understand the nature of ‘culture’, has sometimes been seen as a relatively straightforward process of giving them knowledge and experience of the ideas, customs and behaviours of people within a different society or community. Many UK school programmes of multicultural education in the 1970s and 1980s were posited upon this approach, which was criticised for reducing culture to “saris, samosas and steel drums” (Alibhai-Brown 2000). Unfortunately, awareness of other cultures was often based upon the reification and objectification of perceived difference, an approach which has two major limitations.

Firstly, it is frequently underpinned by a presumption of the superiority of the host culture, with the assumption that co-existence with diverse cultures will lead to their assimilation to the dominant culture (Moore-Gilbert 1997). Secondly, it neglects the difficulties experienced by many people in developing positive attitudes towards difference, since this goes against some deeply rooted human tendencies. From an early age we recognise differences between people and we develop a sense of being more comfortable with people who are similar to us (le Roux 2002). Moreover, our exposure to different people is often limited and when we do encounter them we tend to orient to the differences rather than appreciating and welcoming the commonalities with ourselves. It is a small and understandable step to finding such differences disconcerting, even scary, and to constructing and internalising attitudes of disapproval and superiority (Bennett 2009), which, unless challenged, we are likely to carry through relatively unchanged into adult life. Faced with cultural difference, these attitudes are likely to constitute our automatic fallback position. But in an increasingly globalised world we have to learn to overcome such responses in order to relate to and work with others effectively.

Thus, despite some success in promoting cultural pluralism, multiculturalism leaves many people fearful of change and prone to retreat into traditional identities and support networks (Cantle 2012a), ill-prepared to respond to exposure to internationalisation, globalisation and cultural diversity. The result has been a growing 21st century emphasis upon a new paradigm – that of interculturalism. This is rooted in a debate about the nature of culture. Taylor (2007) argues that much of the literature on intercultural competence refers to culture as being a set of beliefs, norms and

patterns of behaviour that act as a filter through which members of the group see things, and therefore intercultural communication is seen as being a potential problem when two such differing worldviews come into contact. But culture is increasingly being conceptualised not as fixed and essentialist but as dynamic and hybrid (Bhabha 1994), less a matter of transmission of tradition and more of a construction and reconstruction. In her discussions of definitions of culture, Trahar (2011:7) selects this from Maxwell (2001: 1) as an important aspect “Culture isthe sum of the stories we tell ourselves about who we are and who we want to be, individually and collectively”. This suggests that we have a set of underpinning stories that we modify in response to new situations and make up new ones, leading to new understandings of culture. It also indicates that it may be less important for us to learn about cultures than to learn to listen to such ‘stories’, to tune in and to empathise with what members of other cultures can share with us. The use of ‘inter’ rather than ‘multi’ in the debate serves to emphasise the flow of ideas and actions between and among cultural groups, potentially resulting in reciprocal learning.

The intercultural paradigm is not uncontested. Two debates are emerging, which Levey (2012) discusses in terms of ‘hard’ claims that interculturalism is fundamentally different to multiculturalism (Cantle 2013) and ‘soft’ claims, such as those of Meer and Mahmood (2011), that interculturalism is simply a change of emphasis within multicultural discourse. Meer and Mahmood acknowledge the claims of interculturalism that it has moved beyond multiculturalist approaches, in that it is:

First, as something greater than coexistence, in that interculturalism is allegedly more geared toward interaction and dialogue than multiculturalism. Second, that interculturalism is conceived as something less ‘groupist’ or more yielding of synthesis than

multiculturalism. Third, that interculturalism is something more committed to a stronger sense of the whole, in terms of such things as societal cohesion and national citizenship. Finally, that where multiculturalism may be illiberal and relativistic, interculturalism is more likely to lead to criticism of illiberal cultural practices (as part of the process of intercultural dialogue) (Meer and Mahmood 2011: 177).

However, they assert that the full multicultural paradigm (as opposed to the more limited multicultural strategies of the late 20th Century) incorporates these major features of interculturalism.

Cantle (2012b) disagrees that multiculturalism can be reframed in this way and draws upon the report from the Searchlight Educational Trust (2011) to argue that multiculturalism is a toxic brand. He suggests that multiculturalism focuses on individuals' rights to their own cultural practices and as such it centres on what is different (Barry, 2001), categorising people through nationality or origin and looking for beliefs and practices that set them apart from other groups, a process that leads to 'othering'. Interculturalism, on the other hand, emphasises what is shared between groups, looking for commonalities rather than focussing on what is different. Interculturalism therefore moves away from fixed, reified views of culture, and pursues what Phillips (2007) terms surprisingly as 'multiculturalism without culture', an approach that actively challenges cultural stereotypes. Thus Cantle (2013), Bouchard (2013) and others consider that interculturalism is building upon multiculturalism's emphasis upon equal treatment and non-discrimination, but with a focus on community cohesion and a positive embracing of diversity, and as such represents a different approach.

The relative effectiveness of two paradigms at the level of policy intervention is also under debate. Wieviorka (2012) concedes that previous multiculturalist policies have been largely perceived as a failure, since they have usually been limited to the narrow context of religion or race, as illustrated by Gilroy's (2012) discussion of multiculturalism and race politics. The concern could be that people have been made compliant to legal requirements without having the accompanying changes in attitudes, thus leading to resentment. However, Wieviorka argues that at least the concept of multiculturalism is clear legally and institutionally, whereas interculturalism is vague, and operates at a less political level, so we should consider using it as complementary to multiculturalism, not as a replacement for it.

There are wide areas of debate over multiculturalism/interculturalism in terms of broad social and political issues, and one substantial criticism of the latter is that developing understandings upon empathy and respect will not adequately address the structural inequalities and power imbalances that drive the debates about social cohesion in an increasingly super-diverse world. However, Cattle (2012b) argues that relational issues are now more important than structural ones as there are so many more cross-cultural relationships within and between communities. Interculturalism offers a challenging but "progressive attempt to create a fairer society and a modern conception of difference fitting for an increasingly globalised world" (Cattle 2012b: 41). He recommends (2012a) a whole new conceptual framework of interculturalism, with a recognition that difference is no longer determined within national borders and based on majority/minority binary oppositions but is global, shaped by cosmopolitan agendas (Cattle 2012a). Within this framework, identity is acknowledged as a dynamic,

hybrid concept incorporating all forms of difference, not just race, and relational issues have more significance than structural ones because of the many kinds of cross-cultural inter-relationships that are emerging both within and between local communities. Sondhi (2009) delineates lucidly the features of this new interculturality:

So what then is different about the new concept of interculturality? The basis of this approach lies in the creation of a new kind of living dialogue - creating the space and opportunity and the inclination for two different entities to know a little more about how to reassure and interest the other while also avoiding those things that might insult or alarm them, thus minimising the potential obstacles to the transaction. But it is more than just a tool of communication - it is a process of mutual learning and joint growth. This implies a process of acquiring, not only a set of basic facts and concepts about the other but also particular skills and competencies that will enable one to interact functionally with anyone different from oneself regardless of their origins (Sondhi 2009).

Here also the criticism can be levelled that this gives too much importance to the interpersonal and does not acknowledge sufficiently the structural and political barriers.

Nevertheless, in the context of my investigation such criticism has less direct relevance, since the substantial and contentious issues of the appropriateness of teachers and other educators engaging in forms of direct political action are beyond the scope of this thesis. In terms of the preparation of student teachers to respond to cultural diversity at the personal level – children, families, colleagues, the immediate local community – the paradigm of interculturalism has much to offer. Experience of the limitations of multicultural approaches has made it clear that gaining knowledge about other cultures as well as one's own and about the similarities and differences between them is necessary but by no means sufficient (Hill 2006). One also needs to develop the positive attitudes of empathy, curiosity and respect (Barrett 2013) vital for

working and living in a globalised world in which people need to be educated to respond positively and appropriately to unforeseen encounters with cultural diversity.

In our contacts with the 'other' we must recognise on both sides that our own experiences and values predispose us to certain interpretations:

The worlds people create for themselves are distinctive worlds, not the same worlds that others occupy. They fashion from every incident whatever meanings fit their own private biases. These biases, taken together, constitute what has been called the "assumptive world of the individual". The worlds people get inside their heads are the only worlds they know. And these symbolic worlds, not the real world, are what people talk about, argue about, laugh about, fight about. (Barnlund 1998:41).

Edgar and Sedgwick (2008) argue that our self-awareness as cultural beings emerges when we become conscious that our assumptive world is not the only world, is not a superior world, is not even 'the norm'. When we recognise that all other individuals and groups of individuals will have their own, equally valid, assumptive worlds, we will be more capable of sharing, negotiating, discussing, disputing over areas of difference, and so of better understanding them and better responding to them. Sondhi (2009) spells out important implications for schools and teachers and for the broader education of citizens in a culturally diverse world:

This implies a different way of reading situations, signs, symbols, and of communicating which we would describe as intercultural literacy. This indicates the acquisition of an intercultural competence, a certain frame of mind, which in a diverse society, becomes as important a competency as basic numeracy and literacy. No child should leave school without it and no public official with responsibility for deciding on local policy and resources should be without it either. (Sondhi 2009).

3.3 Colonialism and postcolonialism

Major aspects of the assumptive worlds of many in the UK and in other colonising nations will have been shaped by the history of colonialism that is deeply embedded in their collective consciousness. It is for this reason that many researchers in the field of response to cultural diversity see it as fundamental to adopt a postcolonial theoretical perspective in order to consider and critique how Eurocentric ideas may be shaping taken-for-granted beliefs and behaviours, which may in turn limit understandings of the contexts and situations encountered during international study visits, potentially marginalising local perspectives and so privileging Minority World knowledge and values (Martin 2010).

Over the last decade, Vanessa Andreotti has been a leading figure in this approach. She characterises the postcolonial perspective in terms of a debate that:

problematizes the representation of the Third World (*sic*) and the issues of power, voice and cultural subordination/supremacy

questions notions of development and visions of reality that are imposed as universal

recognises the violence of colonialism and its effects, but also acknowledges its productive outcomes

questions Eurocentrism, charity and 'benevolence'

also questions issues of identity, belonging and representation, and the romanticism (*sic*) of the South. (Andreotti 2006a:3)

Postcolonial theory argues that we substantially create who we are by defining who we are not. The inevitable recognition of difference resulting from European/Western exploration and colonisation thus led to Minority World ideas, values and customs

being projected as superior to those of the Majority World (Bennett 2009) and so to the notion of the Minority World having a 'civilising' mission, still seen in the underlying discourses of global education in the National Curriculum (DfES 2005) and in the Global Link programme (DfID 2011), as well as in much media coverage of events in the Majority World. It also led to the very common perception that countries and people in that World are essentially inadequate and incompetent, thus encouraging a response based largely upon intervention, aid and the attempt to impose Minority World patterns. Andreotti (2011) proposes that it is very difficult for any of us in the Minority World to avoid being influenced by such taken-for-granted beliefs and perceptions, not least because they frequently operate below the level of conscious reflection. Anyone looking to promote positive and respectful approaches to cultural difference must look to bring the taken-for-granted into greater awareness.

Thus, a postcolonial position has two major implications for the conduct of study trips to the Majority World. Firstly, the focus upon students gaining individual 'experience' of difference must be replaced with a more active emphasis upon developing their collective awareness of broader issues, including those of social justice. This will support them in engaging in reflection upon and analysis of their encounters with the 'other' in order to be prepared for action to reform social, political and economic structures (Langford 2010). Secondly, a respectful ethical engagement requires a prior change of thinking and attitudes towards the Majority World, in particular an unlearning of privilege (Andreotti and Warwick 2006). If existing assumptions and perceptions are left unchallenged, these will shape the responses of the students to the trip and how they interpret what they experience during it.

3.4 Intercultural capabilities

These wider demands in responding to cultural diversity and the growth of the paradigm of interculturalism (Cantle, 2012b) have resulted in a large body of literature, particularly during the past decade, exploring notions of what is variously termed 'intercultural competence' or 'intercultural capabilities'. There are complexities in discussing the area in a systematic way because of the wide range of terminologies and approaches from different perspectives and disciplines (Sinicrope *et al.* 2007). Trahar (2011) provides a personal perspective on the use of such terms in Higher Education, and opts for 'cultural capability', whereas I am persuaded by her comment that 'intercultural' feels more equitable and indicates what occurs between cultures, fitting with my understanding about the creation of knowledge.

The terms 'competence' and 'capability', are used interchangeably in much of the literature. Certainly there are overlaps in meaning, but I find it helpful to think of 'competence' in terms of established and proven abilities – one might expect a diplomat being posted abroad to have already demonstrated intercultural competence, for instance. 'Capability', on the other hand, has stronger associations of potential, of a progression towards competence. As an educator fostering and supporting such progress in students I find the term 'intercultural capability' more appropriate, and so use it in this study.

The need to be aware of these shades of meaning and to clarify them is emphasised in the review by Perry and Southwell (2011). They point out that most authors agree that intercultural capability comprises a set of cognitive, affective and behavioural skills and

characteristics that will support sensitive, effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts, but that each author reviewed emphasises slightly different aspects. Matveev and Nelson (2004) identify interpersonal skills, team effectiveness, cultural uncertainty and cultural empathy, while Arasatnam and Doerfel (2005) stress communication, something requiring empathy, intercultural experience/training, motivation, global attitude and the ability to listen well in conversation. Sercu's (2005) focus on language defines intercultural competence as the ability to act in a foreign language in a linguistically, sociolinguistically and pragmatically appropriate way, whilst Samovar and Porter (2009:379) describe a competent intercultural communicator as one who can "adjust to and interact effectively in a culture other than his own". Byram *et al.* (2001) suggest that one should be also be able to mediate between different perspectives and be conscious of their evaluations of difference, capabilities that require more than just knowledge of a language.

Despite these differences, a common and crucial element is intercultural sensitivity, a person's "active desire to motivate themselves to understand, appreciate and accept differences among cultures" (Chen and Starosta, 1998:231). Nevertheless such a desire will not necessarily result in competent interactions; it has to be accompanied by the ability to approach cultural 'others' without feeling insecure or threatened, feelings often arising from an ethnocentric stance (Hillier and Wozniak 2009). Again, the willingness to overcome established beliefs and attitudes arising from early socialisation and enculturation is a crucial capability, but it will have to develop further in practice in order to become a competence.

This sense of the process as one of ongoing learning and change is picked up by Bennett who suggests that interculturally sensitive individuals have an ethnorelative orientation whilst their less sensitive peers are ethnocentric; the latter adopt a stance where “the world-view of one’s own culture is central to all reality” (2009:30) whilst the former are “comfortable with many standards and customs and have the ability to adapt behaviour and judgements to a variety of interpersonal settings.” (2009:26). He puts forward a Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) in which individuals are thought to progress from ethnocentric stages of development (Denial, Defence and Minimization), into ethnorelative stages (Acceptance, Adaptation and Integration), leading to the acquisition of intercultural competence. He argues that as one gains more experience of cultural difference one becomes more competent in intercultural situations. However, there are two reservations to be entered. The first is that Bennett’s is not a developmental model in the sense of reflecting necessary aspects and sequences of human development based in biology but merely a possible progression of developing ideas and attitudes. Some people will not move through all these stages. The second is that, as Jackson (2010) identifies, individuals already demonstrating aspects of Acceptance, Adaptation and Integration may well be triggered into a regression to an ‘earlier’, ‘lower’ level of sensitivity by encountering unpleasant or threatening aspects of cultural difference.

Arguably, the same reservations can be entered about Deardoff’s (2006) earlier study, which also sees the development of intercultural competence as a process leading to knowledge and self-awareness, with empathy and an ethnorelative view the final stage, when one’s experience or understanding of cultural difference has become

wider and more complex. By contrast Gopal (2011) argues that the process involves the recognition of being in a particular cultural context, an appreciation of cultural differences and the development of strategies to adapt to these, and that all these interact in a dynamic fashion rather than taking place in a simple linear progression (the potential weakness of many strict stage theories). When the different elements act together a shift in one's own frame of reference may occur in which "adaptability and flexibility play a central role (internal)" resulting in "effective behaviour in intercultural situations (external)" (Deardorff 2009:238). In all the discussion there seems to be agreement that this is not a sudden 'event' but that it evolves over time, and that in order for it to happen there has to be willingness and a desire to achieve intercultural competence. This suggests that the motivations of participants and the 'contract' for their participation in an international study visit may have a noteworthy influence on the outcomes.

3.5 The promotion of intercultural capabilities

Given that a significant proportion of students may have little conscious awareness of having contact with cultural diversity, consideration needs to be given to how they may best be enabled to develop intercultural capabilities. Usher *et al* (1997) consider four traditions of learning in adult education that are potentially relevant. The first is an approach which centres upon the transmission of information, skills and values to a "classical, scientific self, a kind of self-contained mechanistic learning machine" (Tennant 2009:149); Usher *et al* (1997) term this the training and efficiency tradition and relate it to the liberal education tradition. In both the learner is inducted into the worthwhile content, the study approaches and the critical thought processes already

established within a subject discipline (Tennant, 2012). The learner's original view of the world, for instance their response to cultural diversity, is made subject to deliberate and ongoing modification through directed study until it conforms to a position considered appropriate by the tutors.

There are very considerable objections to this approach in relation to intercultural capabilities. One is that it underpinned the teaching of multiculturalism, with its emphasis upon gaining knowledge of other cultures. This approach has been discredited on many levels (Cantle, 2012a), such as in the 'steel bands and samosas' critique presented by Kaur-Stubbs (2008), and is considered potentially damaging to social cohesion (Bouchard, 2008). Mignolo (2005) argues that multiculturalism has maintained the existing system of capitalist economies, colonial differences and Eurocentricity rather than transforming them. Aman's (2013) research in a Swedish Higher Education institute showed that its students, who were being taught to adopt an intercultural perspective had come to consider that multiculturalism represented a static view of society in an essentialist model of learning, whereas interculturality was viewed as a positive, egalitarian approach, a strategy for bridging the gaps across cultures.

Another objection is that if the tutor 'experts' hold attitudes of colonial superiority, these will be perpetuated by adopting such an approach. Ideally, all such tutors within Higher Education will have an understanding of the debate around intercultural capabilities and of the body of research underpinning it. In practice, given the realities

of staffing and the likelihood that this topic will be only part of a wider course or module, there will be problems in guaranteeing such expertise.

A further concern is that the effectiveness of the approach and its often highly didactic pedagogy depends considerably upon a largely passive acceptance by its students of the views put forward by the 'expert' tutors. Three objections surface. One is that such an approach in a contested and controversial area of values and attitudes fits poorly with Higher Education's aim to foster critically reflective approaches. A second is that it does not adequately take account of the powerful and active contribution of the individual learner. A third is that, whilst some students may be convinced, others may resist the arguments, potentially resulting in the strengthening of their existing beliefs and attitudes. Thus in terms of developing intercultural capabilities, the approach is likely to be ineffective. Lanas and Kiilakoski's (2013) study of teachers in Northern Finland found that such fundamental change cannot simply be imposed or taught but will only occur given space and support for professional and personal reflection in a social context.

A second tradition discussed by Usher *et al* (1997) is that of the self-directed approach, which assumes that, given an experience, the individual will make rational sense of it. This tradition involves the notions of an authentic self, this time in terms of becoming, and of experience being a source of authentic knowledge, holding a "validity that some other forms of knowledge may not" (Zink and Dyson 2009:168). In this tradition, gaining intercultural understanding cannot be through being told about cultural difference; it must involve an element of first-hand experience.

Zink and Dyson's position can be invoked to justify an approach to international study visits in which direct experience is the central element, based on the belief that the consequent learning is very much an individual project for each participant. It is therefore not for trip leaders to act as 'experts', predetermining learning outcomes; rather, they should set out to provide powerful and sometimes unsettling experiences for the participants, presuming that these will necessarily result in substantial individual learning about cultural diversity and difference.

This approach can give rise to relevant learning, since the process of perceiving and responding to experiences results in the strengthening, reorganisation and extension of the learner's existing mental structures. When such experiences are first-hand, meaningful and novel, as many will be during international study visits, the impact will be formidable and this may well account for the many instances of transformative learning reported in the literature (Merryfield 2000; Brock and Wallace 2006; Deardorff 2006; Bloomfield et al. 2007; Deardorff 2009; Campbell-Barr and Huggins 2011). However, the learning may not be that considered positive by the trip organisers. Indeed, in some cases the outcomes may be considered negative, as discussed earlier (Gorski 2008; Martin et al. 2011).

Constructivist theories of learning offer an explanation. Whilst challenging and novel experiences usually result in substantial accommodation and so in the extension of mental structures, it is possible for the learner to assimilate them to their existing ideas through such mechanisms as preconceptions ("Standards of hygiene in Africa will be appalling"), selective noticing ("Everywhere we went there were happy, smiling

faces”), reinterpretation (“The men are really lazy; they just sit around on street corners”) or discounting (“Taking bribes isn’t serious; it’s a way of life here”). But the possibility of assimilation to existing ideas leads to a paradox. The more surprising, challenging and disconcerting the experiences, the more likely it is that such assimilating mechanisms will come into play. Indeed, if the new occurrences require too much accommodation of participants’ existing frames of reference, they may just reject them. Whilst the experience itself will have authenticity and validity, the learning from it will be unpredictable, since it will be dependent upon each individual’s willingness to learn from the experience, their perception of it and the sense that they make of it. If this process is intended to lead towards any agreed social goals or understandings it must be subjected to social sharing, discussion, validation and ultimate agreement.

Another key aim of Higher Education is to enable students to continue their own independent learning in the rapidly changing world. Historically, such a stance is often associated with a third approach, the learner-centred or humanistic approach, characterised by such pioneers as Montessori and Maslow. In this the teacher is seen as the facilitator of learning, offering suitable learning opportunities to meet the learners’ needs and open, caring, non-judgemental support.

There are limitations in this approach also. Though often involving students working and learning in groups, individuals are left with a large degree of control over the nature and direction of their learning, which again may not match agreed social goals or understandings. The approach presumes the humanist discourse of the individual as

a stable and coherent self taking rational decisions about what is to be learned, and how. But, as Zink and Dyson (2009:171) point out, “Rather than the individual as a rational and autonomous being who has experiences, the individual is a construct located in and produced in a variety of discourses”, indicating that the context and the relationships with others shape the self it is possible to be. Moreover, none of us is entirely rational or stable, which will affect our sense-making. Most importantly, learning is affected and constricted at every stage by the world views and the cognitive and emotional perspectives of the learner, and so individual reflection upon an experience may only enable a limited learning (Martin 2008). Leibowitz et al. (2010) discovered in their study with psychology and social work students in two South African Higher Education institutions that experience of learning together in a culturally diverse group, although welcomed, was not sufficient to transform the students’ views and attitudes towards those from a different cultural background. The students first had to be made explicitly aware of their own world-views, so required the assistance of an educator or of knowledgeable others.

Tennant (2009:149) critiques the training, the self-directed and the humanistic approaches, arguing that in all three “knowledge and skills are assumed to be neutral rather than socially and culturally constructed” and that it is not possible for individuals to act to overcome the social influences as the structures remain the same. He favours the fourth tradition identified by Usher *et al.* (1997), that of critical pedagogy and social action. In this, the self is seen as being socially constructed, and so inauthentic, subject to distortion by ideologies and by cultural and social structures. This approach sometimes sees the learner as wholly determined by these forces and so

unable to gain an individual critical perspective upon them. Tennant (2009:152) claims that this is “too pessimistic and leaves no scope for education to have a meaningful role”, as well as denying the individual any agency. From a post-modern perspective there is a need to decentre the self, seeing it not as a single coherent and rational subject, somehow ‘outside’ social structures and processes, but as embedded in a range of discourses and so possessing multiple subjectivities and identities. In adult education this offers the potential for opening up alternative discourses and for engaging in ideology critiques in which

...the aim is to analyze and uncover one’s ideological positioning, to understand how this positioning operates in the interests of oppression, and through dialogue and action, free oneself of ‘false consciousness’ (Tennant 2009:150).

As Usher (1992:210) had argued earlier:

We can only be the agents of our experience by engaging in a hermeneutic dialogue with the confused and often contradictory text of our experience of the world and ourselves.

A powerful tool in such a process is Mezirow’s (1978; 2000) concept of ‘transformative learning’, which he describes as “becoming critically aware of one’s own tacit assumptions and expectations and those of others, and assessing their relevance for making an interpretation” (Mezirow 2000:4). This picks up on the suggestion of Elias (1997:3) that “Transformative learning is the expansion of consciousness of basic worldview and specific capacities of the self”. Those are major shaping ideas in relation to intercultural capabilities; they involve “changes in our personal perspectives that transform our lives and how we see and understand ourselves, our context and the world around us.” (Erichsen 2011:114).

Perspective transformation has three aspects: psychological, involving changes in understanding of self; convictional, involving revision and changes in one's belief systems; and behavioural, involving changes in one's lifestyle (Taylor 2007; McEwan 2009; Trilokekar and Kukar 2011). Mezirow claims that making these changes frees us from simply acting upon the "purposes, values, feelings and meanings we have uncritically assimilated from others" (2000:8) and McEwan takes up Mezirow's point in suggesting that this can result in "frames of reference that are more permeable to additional amendments, reflective, inclusive, discriminating and overall more emotionally capable of change" (2009:3).

Transformative learning concurs that transmission of appropriate knowledge about cultural diversity is often useful but denies that it will bring about change on its own. Similarly, there is no simplistic dichotomy or opposition between transformative learning and the experiential model of momentous direct experiences. Indeed, transformative learning depends upon powerful experiences that, whether directly at first hand or indirectly from the huge variety of avenues opened up by Higher Education through study, reading, research and contacts with the ideas of other students, challenge and shake up the taken-for-granted. Eyler and Giles encapsulate this perception:

Transformational learning occurs as we struggle to solve a problem where our usual ways of doing or seeing things do not work, and we are called to question the validity of what we think we know or critically examine the very premises of our perception of the problem. (1999:133).

But essential is the recognition that there is a problem. Che *et al.* (2009) argue there needs to be a disorientation, a disequilibrium or a dissonance as a catalyst for change. In terms of international study visits, this is sometimes described in the literature as 'culture shock'. Adler (1975) identifies it as a form of anxiety and Pusch and Merrill (2008) talk about it in terms of feelings of panic, anxiety, alienation, frustration and helplessness. But transformation involves acceptance and endurance of the difficult emotions that may accompany an experience (Lanas and Kiilakoski 2013), an idea that links with the concepts of the pedagogy of discomfort (Boler and Zemblyas 2003) and Britzman's (2003) 'difficult knowledge'. This stresses that transformational learning from international study visits will depend upon there being in place procedures to ensure consideration of the 'problem', together with informed support.

In summary, it is highly unlikely that intercultural capabilities can be produced by a simple exposure to ethnic diversity or by experiencing a different culture on a short study trip, or by being provided with information about other cultures, as in a module delivered on campus (Phillion and Malewski 2011). Though each of these may make a valuable contribution, they will not be sufficient in themselves to bring about major changes in individual attitudes and behaviours. Falconer (2003) argues that much more research is needed on the design of learning experiences that are more authentic and that can have a deep impact on future teachers' views about the diverse children they will teach. However, the above analysis strongly supports the argument for a type of transformative learning to underpin the rationale and the organisation of international study visits.

3.6 Implications for teacher educators

Globalisation and internationalisation have introduced new factors into the debate about what constitutes high quality teaching. The concept of a globally informed and competent teacher has begun to feature, but essential is a definition that will reshape the planning, design and implementation of teacher education in the 21st century (Roberts 2007) and so enable new teachers to “capably meet the imperatives presented by a shifting global milieu” (Goodwin 2010:21). Unexpected shifts in the demographic patterns of a neighbourhood and a school, and a greater diversity in staff will require the recognition and management of a wide range of values, beliefs and approaches. At the most basic level this will be important for classroom management:

Students from different cultural backgrounds may view, interpret, evaluate and react differently to what the teacher says and does in the classroom. Teachers therefore have to constantly bear in mind that the more substantial the difference in cultural background between sender and receiver involved in the communicative process, the more substantial the differences in the meaning attached to the message and the social behaviour will be. (le Roux 2002:38).

Wang (2011) describes vividly how her lack of intercultural competence proved to be a major barrier for her when she started teaching in the UK on a teacher exchange programme organised by the British Council.

At a personal level Bleszynska (2008) suggests that major obstacles to intercultural development are ethnocentrism, xenophobia, racism and ethnic prejudice. She therefore advocates the development of “competencies to allow for the understanding of other cultures and the harmonious co-existence and cooperation among their representatives”; the provision of activities supporting the integration of immigrants into host societies in order to promote adaptation, acculturation and integration; and

the “shaping of attitudes of equality and respect for culturally diverse people” (Bleszynska 2008:543). This implies that teacher education should look to deal with students’ psychological barriers as part of intercultural competence development.

An even greater demand is that teacher educators have a responsibility to open up “sites of enquiry where assumptions and perceptions can be challenged and critiqued from a global and a social justice perspective” (Fiedler 2007:53). This position requires teachers to focus upon social justice, human rights, poverty and inequality and so to act to tackle problems both locally and globally. Fieldler’s forceful proactive approach, both complex and controversial, is reinforced by Hickling-Hudson who argues strongly, from her position as an educator from the Global South working in the Global North, that student teachers need to develop a critical global consciousness in order to be able to tackle larger current challenges, including

the failures of capitalism, the devastation of the environment, the intensification of injustice for the poor and for women, the escalation of ethnic, religious and political conflicts, skewed migration and refugee flows, and the threat of nuclear war (2011:453).

In addition, she suggests that student teachers need to study the global context in order to be able to analyse the intellectual and material violence of the traditional model of schooling inherited from European colonialism and perpetuated today. Such statements take the responsibilities of teacher educators into a much wider sphere, not just in terms of content but also in terms of the teaching/learning approach, moving away from one constrained by subjects, towards an inquiry-based, problem-solving model. The current pattern often encourages individual expertise and ownership of particular subject knowledge by teacher educators (Goodwin 2010),

transmitted to students in what Freire (1996) terms a 'banking approach', with little acknowledgement of their prior learning and experiences, and assessed through tests, audits and assignments. This model of teaching and learning is then replicated in the students' own practice in classrooms. Freire advocated that teaching should be concerned "to create possibilities for the construction and production of knowledge rather than to be engaged simply in the game of transferring knowledge" (Freire 1996, cited in Fumoto *et al.* 2004:48) if it is to prepare learners for our increasingly globalised and diverse society.

Such an extension and expansion of the responsibilities of teacher educators is controversial, and is certainly not reflected in the English Standards for teacher training (DfE 2011 updated 2013), but it is why de Souza and Andreotti (2007:14) perceive teacher education as being the site of various "socio-cultural crises in the form of continuously contested meaning, construction and negotiation". Teacher educators should look to use such crises to involve their students in reflection, analysis and a transformation of knowledge. De Souza and Andreotti draw upon the work of Spivak (1990) who advocates a pedagogical project that aims to establish an 'ethical relation to difference' through 'unlearning privilege', 'learning to learn from difference' and 'learning to work without guarantees'. Kapoor (2004:64) is another who suggests the importance of creating a disposition to:

retrace the itinerary of our prejudices and learning habits (from racism, sexism and classism to academic elitism and ethnocentrism), stop thinking of ourselves as better or fitter and unlearn dominant systems of knowledge and representation (2004:641).

However, Cushner's (2011) article on the intersection of intercultural research and the preparation of globally-competent teachers identifies major obstacles to pursuing these directions. Some are political. The agenda is in direct opposition to current UK Government priorities, which emphasise the goal of a universal achievement of standards, allowing no excuses in terms of social or economic circumstances, but placing total responsibility upon the quality of teaching, teachers and, by implication, teacher education. Moreover, current emphases include the promotion of 'practical' aspects of schooling (literacy/numeracy/science/technology) and assert the importance of promoting British values, as evidenced in the current Teacher Standards (DfE 2011, updated 2013). Backed up by the perceived threat of adverse ratings at Ofsted inspections, such emphases disempower those who might wish to assert a wider dimension in terms of interculturality. Marrying the two agendas is a difficult task, if not an impossible, which may explain Ukpokodu's (2011) despairing observation that, after decades of multicultural educational initiatives and research into teaching diverse learners, student teachers still emerge from initial teacher education courses without having developed the necessary cultural competence.

Resistance may come also from the teaching force itself, parts of which are likely to be conservative and slow to change (Cushner 2011). Brock and Wallace's (2006) study found that in the UK much of the teaching workforce was primarily monolingual, substantially made up of white British women, especially in the Early Years and Primary sector. In the US Ference and Bell (2004) found a very similar pattern. More recently, Ukpokodu (2011) considers that there is often a cultural mismatch between

the racial, ethnic, social and linguistic backgrounds of teachers and their students and

Howard (2006:127) argues that:

teachers must know about themselves before they can ever become transformative educators for diverse students, that an unexamined life on the part of a White teacher [any teacher] is a danger to every student and the more I have examined my own stuff related to race, culture, and differences, the less likely it is that I will consciously or unconsciously expose students to my own assumptions of rightness, my luxury of ignorance, or my blind perpetuation of the legacy of White privilege.

Until there is a racially representative workforce, teacher education programs will struggle to find ways to ensure all teachers can meet the diverse needs of their pupils from culturally different backgrounds (Edwards 2011). There may also be resistance from some student teachers. Many teacher education students in Mid-America resisted engaging in multicultural theory and practice because they were expecting when they graduated to teach in their home towns in predominantly White, rural areas (Phillion and Malewski 2011). Similar tendencies were found in the Blum and Bourn (2013) study mentioned earlier investigating UK students from Health and Engineering Higher Education courses. Many of the students showed no interest in international aspects of the curriculum until they were made specifically aware of the relevance to their future practice.

Moreover, “issues of race, class, cultural differences and inequality are sensitive, loaded with meaning and emotion, and connect to each person’s core beliefs and values” (Goodwin 2010:26). Students may well resist exploration of their fears, misconceptions and prejudices but this is essential if educators are to prepare them to respond positively and proactively to the increasingly international and global aspects

of their work, to provide a culturally sensitive learning environment, to understand how to interact effectively with families from diverse backgrounds, to uphold children's rights and to interrupt discriminatory school practices (Goodwin 2010; Phillion and Malewski 2011).

However, it would be both naïve and blinkered not to recognise that one of the biggest barriers to such a reconceptualisation may be the teacher educators themselves, the majority of whom, Goodwin (2010) claims, are white, middle class, mostly male and fiftyish, and perhaps lack the skill, knowledge and commitment to teach for equity and diversity, either locally or globally (Merryfield 2000; Cushner 2011). To do so, they need to be committed and knowledgeable about internationalisation and social justice and, given their limited experience of the 'other', this may be an issue. Many were trained at the time when multiculturalist policies were to be promoted, policies are acknowledged to have failed to adapt to the wider diversity agenda (Cattle, 2012a). Having to interact with people from different cultures can lead to uncertainty and anxiety. Cushner (2011) argues that teacher educators must themselves become more open and comfortable with difference, and model this for their students. Edwards (2011) claims that, as a whole, teacher educators lack a body of knowledge about what constitutes competent teachers of diverse students, which contributes to many teacher trainees leaving initial teacher education courses without the necessary intercultural skills, knowledge and dispositions, still promoting a multiculturalist approach. But it must also be recognised that the prior experience of teacher educators may be limited. Many enter the field after a good number of years as classroom teachers of a particular age group within a certain type of school, as I myself

did ,and this can narrow perspectives (Williams and Ritter 2010). They are often given little formal preparation or training for their new responsibilities, as there is an assumption that competent, efficient schoolteachers will be proficient teacher educators. However, Zeichner (2005) argues that teacher education may demand certain knowledge, values and skills that distinguish it from teaching in other contexts. For instance, moving from a mentoring role in school, providing solutions for colleagues, to a teacher educator role, challenging students to find answers for themselves, requires a shift in professional identity (Williams and Ritter 2010). These pressures are intensified if the teacher educator is simultaneously required to take into account the perhaps unfamiliar international and global dimensions of the work.

Wang (2008) notes that academics rarely receive preparation to teach international students or any formal intercultural competency training. If they do, such training may well focus on student learning styles rather than the competencies needed to negotiate other cultures (Gribble and Ziguras 2003). There needs to be professional development in this area for the teacher educators, rather than a reliance on it happening as part of their role as they undertake research and make international links. Gopal (2011) suggests that academics should complete one of the formal tests for intercultural competence, such as the IDI (Deardorff 2009), as the basis for appropriate training. Experiencing for themselves the approaches that they can use with their students is likely to be enlightening and professionally useful, but they may well still find difficult the resulting process of deconstructing and reconstructing their own fundamental perceptions, beliefs and values, and may need sensitive professional support. Nevertheless, if one accepts the argument of Dietz and Mateos Cortés (2012)

that intercultural education is justified not only to meet the needs of the minorities in European societies but also to support the majority communities in meeting the challenges of living in an increasingly diverse society, then arguably it should be a compulsory element in the continuing professional development of academics in Higher Education, including teacher educators.

3.7 How might teacher educators prepare students to respond to cultural diversity?

Andreotti (2006b; 2010; 2011) advocates taking a critical global citizenship education approach, and with de Souza puts forward a clear model and conceptual framework for engaging in such a transformative process (Andreotti and de Souza 2008a). They argue that the process must take students through four stages.

The first stage is learning to unlearn, so that they do not carry with them into the new experience old beliefs and ideas which may distort their learning. This involves them in looking critically at their taken-for-granted ways of doing things, which Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) term as 'habitus', and in making connections with the socio-historical processes that have shaped their contexts and cultures. The second stage is learning to listen, which is when, recognising the limitations and potentially distorting effects of their established perspectives, the students can begin to accept other perspectives and voices as being as legitimate, valid and authoritative as their own, and so can recognise how certain 'regimes of truth' have come to dominate our UK way of thinking. This leads to the third stage, in which students can learn to learn from the practice of others. This requires them not only to hear and take on board new perspectives, but to engage with new concepts to rearrange their cultural baggage and renegotiate their

existing understandings so as to adapt and change their practice. In the final stage, learning to reach out, students will gain the confidence to try out, explore and initiate new possible ways of being, of relating to others, becoming willing to engage in that potentially insecure and uncomfortable space where identities, power and ideas are renegotiated, and coming to see conflict as a productive component of learning. They will be willing to engage in 'risky' teaching (Blaise 2005), responsive to the diverse needs of the children and the families with whom they work, without imposing their own preconceptions and values.

Andreotti and de Souza (2008a) stress that progression through these stages will potentially enable the students' narratives, representations and framings to move from an egocentric stance, through an ethnocentric one (within their social group) and a humancentric one (within other social groups) to arrive at a worldcentric view from which they can engage in a persistent and ongoing critique of the hegemonic discourses and representations that they are engaged in. This analysis clearly relates to Bennett's (2009) model discussed earlier. Nevertheless, the de Souza and Andreotti model has some of the same limitations as Bennett's. It does not describe an inevitable developmental pattern, but rather analyses processes of learning and change which are necessary to achieve the goal of intercultural capability; it is evident that one cannot 'learn to listen' sensitively and accurately without overcoming some of one's own distorted beliefs and prejudices. It is debateable whether one can 'unlearn', rather than modifying/extending existing learning or replacing it with new learning. The process may also operate in the reverse direction, in that a particular experience may make one more prejudiced and less responsive to cultural diversity. Another

limitation, common to many developmental models of learning, is that an individual does not move from one stage to another in a simple linear progression, nor is one stage fully completed before another is begun. As such the model defines a tendency rather than a series of steps. Again, an individual may be at different 'stages' in different areas/aspects of their responses, for instance being able to reach out to cultural diversity within white European communities, whilst needing to unlearn some basic beliefs about, say, Sub-Saharan Africa. The process needs to be viewed not as a smooth and tidy progression but as an uneven and patchy struggle towards intercultural capability. However, the de Souza and Andreotti model does offer a clearer and more detailed description to guide the organisation and pedagogy of approaches in this field.

A further conceptual tool proposed by Andreotti and de Souza (2008a) is the suggestion that there are four lenses that frequently focus the students' concepts of the 'other'. Those with a 'missionary' lens see themselves as a saviour of the ignorant and the helpless, and those with a 'teacher' lens offer enlightenment and increased privilege for the holder of knowledge. Some students may have more of a 'tourist' lens, seeking entertainment and novelty, or an 'anthropologist' one, wanting both to observe and to preserve culture. All these lenses are underpinned by an assumption of cultural superiority and so interfere with any meaningful dialogue with people the students meet during the visit, blocking possibilities for the students to be open to change and to be challenged by the differences they encounter.

Andreotti and De Souza (2008b) are clear about the dangers of such a 'civilizing' mission, in which visitors, strongly motivated by a wish to make a difference, project their own beliefs as universal (Dobson, 2005) and superior to other approaches, instead of adopting a mutual learning approach which encompasses critical literacy, respect for difference and the challenging of ethnocentric judgements and 'civilising' agendas. As Cook (2008) suggests, this involves seeing Majority World 'others' as competent and knowledgeable about their own lives and social circumstances. As such, they are perceived not as objects of development, but as people from whom valuable lessons can be learned.

Other researchers offer teacher educators relevant approaches. Martin (2008) recommends a critical literacy approach, examining and analysing language and its role in constructing the lenses with which we make sense of the world. Hickling-Hudson advocates a post-colonial approach to enable us to "critique the supremacist ideologies of Eurocentrism entrenched in traditional Western education and seek alternatives" (2011:454). One of the strategies she uses is a critical analysis of the politics of educational aid, using reverse scenarios, challenging the master narratives of aid to the Majority World (Berg 2009). This develops understanding that such charity giving by affluent and sincere volunteers can "perpetuate stereotypes and ethnocentric assumptions about the needy, passive South and the dynamic, capable, generous North" (McEwan 2011:25). Once again, this offers a useful challenge to the stereotypical approach of 'helping poor people' that is common amongst participants in international study trips.

3.8 Implications for the conduct of international study visits

Identifying the importance of intercultural capabilities and the potential role of international study visits faces Higher Education institutions with a fundamental decision. Are the visits to be seen as an optional aspect of Higher Education study, largely aimed at 'selfish' benefit for those who choose to participate and not requiring significant personal change? If so, the concern for the development of intercultural capabilities will be of little relevance. Or are they intended to contribute to an internationalisation agenda, and so to the development of its students, as part of planned programmes of study – a claim often made in policy statements and marketing materials (see 2.3 above)? If so, the Literature indicates that they should be planned, organised and run in ways that are effective in promoting intercultural capabilities and in developing students' response to cultural diversity.

Several implications derive from the latter position. Firstly, there must be a clarification of intended learning outcomes from the visits, a taken-for-granted characteristic of Higher Education study programmes. Secondly, the visits must utilise a planned pedagogy, based upon current research and an underpinning model of adult learning, which shapes the organisation of the visit, from recruitment to debriefing. Thirdly, a key element throughout must be an expectation of ongoing critical reflection by all participants, students, tutors and, ideally, members of the host community, since critical engagement will benefit from hearing all their views and voices. Fourthly, the leaders/facilitators of such visits must be culturally aware, reflective practitioners, prepared to challenge students' perceptions and to promote ethical engagement with the 'other'.

An important element in such an approach may be Bhabha's (1994) concept of the Third Space between members of different cultures:

During an intercultural conversation individuals occupy their own cultural space; it is only by stepping out of this space, into the space *in between*, that learning from the dialogue can take place. (Martin and Griffiths 2011:19).

Brock and Wallace (2006) also talk about the usefulness of what they term displacement spaces where we can see things differently; these can be created by using activities, critical incidents, video, etc., as starting points for thoughtful reflection and discussion.

For such a process to be successful it must begin before arriving at the airport. For instance, if we use transformational theory as a basis students will need to examine their own cultural backgrounds prior to the trip in order to be prepared for how these may affect their experience of the unfamiliar world. Individual participants' positions may be detectable in their applications for a place on the course, so the displacement spaces need to be planned into the preparatory phases of the visit as a necessary prerequisite.

Indeed, Martin and Griffiths (2011) argue that there should be a substantial preparation phase for international study visits that includes discussion of hegemonic discourses in which questions of history, power and domination are raised and openly discussed (Fiedler 2007). This involves creating opportunities for discussions about what the students know about the Majority World, globalisation and colonialism and how they know it; for developing understanding that their knowledge is socially

constructed and situated; and for appreciating the contexts in which that knowledge forms. Arguably, students need to be made aware of the influences of imperialism on their worldview and to critically question it (Martin and Griffiths 2011). Nevertheless, however cogent the arguments for this agenda, it is being proposed as a requirement for a short trip that may be just one very small element in a major academic and professional course. The ideas and issues to be tackled could provide content for a major module, and can hardly be covered in the few out-of-hours, voluntary sessions that, realistically, are all that can be squeezed into participants' busy academic and personal schedules prior to the visit. Nevertheless, they are valid and important matters that educators leading such trips must keep in the forefront of their concerns.

Research also suggests that pre-visit preparation will need to be backed up by regular opportunities in-trip for discussion and reflection upon events and experiences, especially disturbing ones. McGillivray's (2009) research on Early Childhood Studies students experiencing a study visit to The Gambia reveals that the students' existing views on Majority World poverty, childhood and education were considerably unsettled by first-hand experiences during the visit. She therefore recommends on-going critical debate and deconstruction of their perceptions and interpretations of such experiences to promote a deeper awareness of such issues as ethical intervention.

Some researchers go further. Leibowitz *et al.* (2010) advocate a 'pedagogy of discomfort', as developed by Boler and Zembylas (2003), which forces students to critique their deeply held assumptions, destabilising their fixed views of themselves

and their world, even though this process can be painful and will impact upon all members of the group. This approach is posited on the expectation of students taking a responsibility for wider aspects of their response to cultural diversity. As Boler and Zembylas write:

Taking responsibility for oneself, in this sense, involves acknowledging our situatedness and location, material, historical, and bodily specificity, the interconnections between our well-being and the existence of other. (2003:108).

Such an ongoing pattern of reflection and self-examination is not easy, and only some potential participants will be willing to engage in it without considerable encouragement and support. This emphasises the importance of a clear 'contract' as the basis of taking part in an educational study visit.

Not all researchers advocate such a demanding approach, but there is broad agreement that students in a new culture will learn most positively through active engagement, reflection and trying out new ideas and ways of thinking (Gammonley *et al.* 2007; Berg 2009; Goodwin 2010). There is evidence that many more succeed when there is active intervention by the educators, a clear purpose and shared learning goals (McGillivray 2009; Buczynski *et al.* 2010; Rose *et al.* 2011) and that such a pattern can be effective in enhancing intercultural capabilities. McMullen and Penn's (2011) research into a study-abroad course for American students in Egypt showed that a placement in a community, accompanied by a pedagogical approach called EAR (Education, Action, Reflection), successfully expanded the students' global awareness

and increased their appreciation for global dialogue and resulted in changes in their views, attitudes and beliefs.

3.9 Arriving at my research question

In the current context of globalisation and internationalisation, outlined in Chapter 2, the Literature Review indicates that if international study visits are part of Higher Education programmes of study the aims of such visits should be wider than a colonialist exploitation of other countries and their students to gain 'selfish' benefits, whether for the institution or its students. Such aims should include preparing students to respond appropriately to cultural diversity and making them informed and competent to operate in a global context. A substantial body of recent literature argues that this demands more than just giving experience and imparting knowledge of diversity; rather it involves setting out deliberately to develop a range of attitudes and skills which constitute intercultural capabilities. This is of considerable significance in the field of teacher education, where currently there are increasing demands to train globally informed and competent teachers as part of a social justice agenda.

The literature strongly supports the potential of such visits to lead to significant changes in participants, sometimes resulting in enhanced intercultural capabilities, but raises questions about the underpinning models of learning and about the learning intentions, organisation and pedagogy. The analysis of learning theories in the Literature Review makes it clear that a liberal approach or a narrowly experiential model will be inadequate in promoting intercultural capabilities, and advocates a

critical literacy approach, particularly drawing on postcolonial theory for visits to the Majority World such as to The Gambia. The tutors organising and supporting visits should be knowledgeable about transformative learning and should actively promote intercultural capabilities through opening up sites of enquiry and adopting a pedagogy of discomfort, as well as analysing barriers and resistances and developing strategies to overcome them. In turn, the students need to be prepared and willing to engage in this process. There appear to be four conditions that are deemed necessary to promote students' intercultural capabilities:

- 1) visits with clear learning outcomes and appropriate organisation and pedagogy, led by tutors knowledgeable about intercultural capabilities
- 2) students willing to engage in intercultural learning, based upon explicit agreements about the purposes of the visit
- 3) a robust institutional structure focussed upon developing intercultural capabilities within its programmes of study, including international study visits
- 4) a whole-hearted and consistent institutional commitment to the promotion of international study visits as part of the development of students' intercultural capabilities.

As a result the research questions [are](#) ~~is~~: To what extent are international study visits offered by the University's School of Education meeting these four conditions? Are they planned, organised and run in ways that are likely to develop students' responses to cultural diversity and to promote their intercultural capabilities?

4. The Design of the Research

My study considered current approaches to international study visits in my own School and Faculty and I used Facet Methodology (Mason 2011) to examine the complex phenomenon from different perspectives. It is a relatively new approach used in Mason *et al.*'s (2012) ESRC research into Family Relationships and they argue that Facet Methodology puts creativity and innovation at the heart of methodological practice.

I set out to investigate two major aspects:

- a) Current policy and patterns of international study visits in the School of Education, with a particular focus upon visits to The Gambia but considering aspects of international study visits to the Czech Republic and Hungary, as well as an organised visit to the multi-ethnic, culturally diverse London Borough of Redbridge
- b) The degree to which such patterns might be conducive to the development of the intercultural capabilities of the participants.

To do this, I aimed to gather data from a range of sources (Appendix:4.2). I was aware of the argument that it is necessary for the data to be consistent, based upon similar, complementary assumptions about the nature of social entities and phenomena and underpinned by a coherent epistemology, and that they need to be "...able to be combined into a coherent, convincing and relevant explanation and argument." (Mason 2002:36). This was a demanding requirement as these international study visits do not constitute a systematically organised and evaluated structure in the University's

programmes of study. Their organisation is patchy and *ad hoc*; they are usually promoted and arranged by individuals with specific interest, sometimes as part of particular modules or courses, sometimes free-standing. Thus their organisation is highly contingent upon the involvement of the tutors, their beliefs and pedagogical approaches, which in turn are contingent upon the regimes of truth in the Faculty that inform and shape how University and Faculty policies on Internationalisation and on Teaching and Learning are interpreted and put into use. An appropriate research design for my study therefore needed to take into account how these different dimensions were connected and what power the individual agents within each field had to shape the nature and patterns of the visits. It also needed to consider the lived experiences of students as they engaged in the visits, considering their reasons for going, their patterns of learning during the visit and the ways in which these experiences might have shaped their attitudes towards cultural diversity and affected their intercultural capabilities (Huggins 2013b).

4.1 Facet Methodology

I adopted a Facet Methodology approach (Huggins 2013a – Appendix 3.1) to suit the multi-dimensional nature of the research and my postmodern stance (Hughes 2010).

Facet methodology is suitable because it

assumes that the world - and what we seek to understand about it - is not only lived and experienced, but is multi-dimensional, contingent, relationally implicated and entwined. (Mason 2013).

It enabled me to select from a toolbox of methods, choosing whichever was appropriate to create a facet that would reflect light on an aspect of the overall enquiry that was puzzling. Such facets can be different sizes and shapes and can be presented at different angles, but as a cluster they will reflect intense bright shafts of light on the issue under investigation. Facet Methodology is not like bricolage as a model for enquiry. Bricolage focuses on surface features, on how they appear and the patterns that emerge (Hammersley 2008). It creates a patchwork but the pieces are not necessarily intended to fit together (Nolan et al. 2013). Bricolage's assemblage of different elements of knowledge involves no requirement for entwinement (Mason 2012), whereas Facet Methodology is particularly concerned to identify the contingencies and relationships between the different facets as they shine insights upon each other, demonstrating to me how the ontology and the epistemology are entwined in the research process. Each facet that I selected was a mini-study, but applying the methodology ensured that I was always considering the facets in relation to each other.

A further advantage was that it does not require the collection of a complete or fully representative set of data (Mason 2013), as its aim is to generate insights rather than give an exhaustive coverage (Huggins 2013a), though it was crucial for me to follow an overall strategic plan to avoid generating an eclectic set of data with little connection. The methodology is also responsive to new aspects of the research question that may emerge in the course of the study. When I had a surprising insight from the juxtaposition of two events, or a moment that shone a new light on my existing understandings and suggested a new linked line of investigation, I could select an

appropriate method with which to follow it up. This made the process creative and flexible. In this sense, elements of grounded theory and iteration are apparent as each new facet casts light on data previously collected and these new insights in turn shape subsequent methods and framings of questions. For example, when the interviews with the School of Education tutors surprisingly generated no discussion of intercultural capabilities, I set up a focus group involving several of them to probe this topic further.

However, this did not mean that every avenue that opened up could be explored. For example, asking the same questions of different tutors from different professional backgrounds revealed a diversity of discourse and habitus concerning intercultural capabilities that offered a rich seam to be pursued further – but much of this was not within the scope of my study. So I had to accept that this had cast a particularly illuminating shaft of light on one aspect and move on.

For me, the greatest advantage of Facet Methodology was that it could trouble existing categories and shift prior assumptions (Mason et al, 2012) as well as providing more knowledge. From the outset, I sought to challenge the common assumptions that international study visits are unproblematic and that they will inevitably be positively transformational for the students. It was to be ‘critical’ research (Hammersley 2013) in that I set out to consider the discourse and the habitus (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) of the groups of people that I investigated, all within a critical theoretical framework about the global promotion of intercultural capabilities (Andreotti 2011; Perry and Southwell 2011). This enabled consideration of factors that operate outside the

context of the Faculty and the University, e.g. the degree of benefit to the host communities. Such a factor may be outside the awareness of Minority World participants, since, as Hegel suggests (Hammersley 2008), their understanding will have been systematically shaped by social processes. Facet methodology is useful in illuminating such factors, because of the opportunity to explore the relationship between the different data sources, so that

what we see or come to know or understand through the facets is thus always a combination of what we are looking at (the thing itself, the ontology), and how we are looking at it (how we use our methods to perceive it, the epistemology) (Mason 2011:77).

I needed to adopt an approach that would clearly portray the complexity of the existing situation, catching a close-up of the participants' perceptions with 'thick descriptions' (Geertz 1993) of lived experiences and of their thoughts and feelings about international study visits. I was not looking to test out hypotheses, nor intending to generate findings that would be widely generalisable to other institutions. Rather, I was conducting an investigation into a cultural phenomenon in its real-life context. I was investigating patterns and connections within and between four different study visits, which take place at different points during the academic year. Facet Methodology usefully enabled me to revisit the research design and amend it as a result of initial investigations, for example, responses to questionnaires or comments during earlier interviews.

Mason *et al.* (2012) acknowledge that the Facet Methodology does not contain a recipe for ensuring quality, given the way it plays with epistemologies and involves a

connective ontology. In my study I employed a range of methods in and across the different facets to facilitate a convergence of evidence by comparing and cross-checking the data from my various sources (Atkins and Wallace 2012), in order to create new angles of discovery (Mason 2011) and to demonstrate how I found them convincing. In this way, I was able to capture some of the complexity of the different study trips selected as units of analysis (Cohen *et al.* 2011) and to identify unique features of each, putting forward some of the discrepancies and conflicts between the viewpoints of different participants, without privileging one over the other (Penn 2008). Drawing on positioning theory, I sought to identify the positions that were taken by participants in their conversations or through their writing, and how these positions shaped their behaviours (Zelle 2009). As Harré *et al* (2009) note, a researcher asking 'Why did someone do that/think that?' needs to add the qualification 'in the circumstances'. Thus I had to consider the historical and social contexts of what people involved in international study visits were saying and doing, and the dominant discourses shaping their beliefs and practices. Facet Methodology enabled me to adopt a pluralist disposition to bring together alternative ways of generating knowledge. It gave me permission to try things out, to follow up opportunities as they occurred rather than specifying all the details of the design in advance. I had to be creative in response to the complexity of the issues I was researching and I was able to try out methods I had not explored before, such as the writing frames I introduced to support post-trip reflections on critical incidents. I clearly had some facets of understanding in place at the start of the study that guided my initial research proposal, but these were modified by my critical engagement in the process of the study.

There were drawbacks to using Facet Methodology. One was that as a relatively new approach there were few existing research studies to inform directly my research design and approaches to data analysis, though the commonalities with other qualitative research, especially case study, were informative. Another was that though the Gambia study visits were at the core of my research, Facet Methodology encouraged me to investigate aspects of other trips and identify how far the particular approaches to the Gambia visits were paralleled in them. As a result, I felt a constant pull to investigate and incorporate any aspects of those trips that became accessible, e.g. the difference host families might make on the promotion of intercultural capabilities of the students on the Czech Republic study visit. I had to ensure that I kept a tight focus of the study, both conceptually and organisationally, so as not to diffuse its effectiveness.

The focus of the study was upon a particular subset of the international study visits in one institution (Appendix 5.3). I endeavoured to provide a clear chain of evidence (Yin 2009) that could easily be followed, including careful records of when and how the data was collected, in order to enable any replication to be planned (see Appendix 4.1 for the Research Fieldwork Inventory).

Undertaking such research in my own University and School inevitably created tensions. As a study visits tutor myself, as a colleague of other visit leaders, and as a tutor for some of the student participants, as well as being a researcher, I was mindful throughout of my own positions and of the importance of maintaining a reflexive and

self-critical stance in order to avoid distortions resulting from preconception and self-interest. My position also raised ethical issues which are discussed in Section 4.5.

4.2 The participants

There was a range of participants, both staff and students, in this research study (see Appendix 4.1). I involved all of them through contacting them personally, providing them with information and asking them to participate (see Appendices 1.2 - 1.5). All but three of the tutors approached agreed. One tutor was too busy, another did not consider himself qualified to be involved as he had not yet led any international study visits, and a third did not respond at all to requests to participate.

The participants offered a variety of viewpoints and positions influenced by differing dominating discourses. The Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning, for Internationalisation and for Placements provided Faculty-wide perspectives. From the School of Education, the International Coordinator and five other tutors offered perspectives of those who organise and lead international study visits. I also consulted two tutors from the School of Social Work and one from the School of Health, all of whom had a particular interest in promoting and supporting international study visits and placements, in order to give the study a multi-professional perspective. All the Faculty staff members were aged 35-55, 4 were male and 7 female. They were all white and all but one were British nationals.

It is difficult to quantify exactly how many students participated, as they contributed in different ways, often anonymously. 21 different students took part in the focus groups, and I analysed 44 completed questionnaires, 52 application letters and 23 written

reflections. Some students contributed in more than one category. All the students in the focus groups were white British, except for one who was of British Black Minority Ethnicity, and there was only one male. The age profile of the respondents to the questionnaire was: 39 aged 18-22, 4 aged 23-30 and one aged over 30. This closely corresponds to the student profile of the Faculty (see Appendix 5.4). Further details have not been provided as they would compromise the confidentiality of certain participants.

4.3 Data gathering: The research methods used

4.3.1 Analysis of University policies and structures

The first part of the study involved finding out how the international study visits concerned were perceived within the University, their place in its policy frameworks, the intended learning outcomes for the participants and how these might generate particular practices. I chose to analyse current documents, policies and marketing materials produced by the University and by the Faculty, such as the Internationalisation Strategy 2009-2012 (University of Plymouth 2009a) and the Teaching and Learning Strategy 2009-12 (University of Plymouth 2009b). In turn these were related to and compared with relevant documentation from Government Departments, such as Developing the Global Dimension in the School Curriculum (DfES 2005) and Global Schools Partnerships (DfID 2011). I also made comparison with similar policy documents from another university, which revealed noteworthy differences and made clearer the ideologies underpinning international study visits

and how they were positioned by the Universities concerned (Lankshear and Knobel 2004).

Drew *et al.* (2006) argue that policy documents, often assumed to be factual, in fact represent the perspectives, definitions and visions of reality of those who have constructed them, and the use of language within them can reveal the moral dimension of the positions adopted by the author (Harré *et al* 2009). In analysing them it was therefore necessary for me to take an interpretative stance (Jupp and Norris 1993). I was looking in the first place for underlying discourses and assumptions that informed their creation, including what was taken-for-granted, and what of significance had been omitted from them (Punch 2009). Also, following Ball (1998), I was looking for the potential tensions and contradictions that are inherent in policy formation. Furthermore, critical consideration of the documents, as advocated by Clough and Nutbrown (2007), involved investigating who was involved in writing them, the process by which they were created, their intended audience and an assessment of their impact on other ideas and policies (McCulloch 2011). Deconstructing the official discourses in this way might reveal the key 'regimes of truth' (MacNaughton 2005) that were framing the debate about international study visits and potentially shaping the positions taken by participants.

I also identified and checked the University structures of responsibility for Internationalisation operating in the run-up to my study (Appendix 5.1). This analysis informed the questions for subsequent tutor interviews by drawing my attention to relevant lines of management and to key constructs, such as cultural diversity, which

might be considered central in tutors' understanding of the purposes and organisation of international study visits. It also identified aspects of the current approach that were unspecific, limited or contradictory.

4.3.2 Interviews

Interviewing is a very useful way to get at not only the 'what' but also the 'how' of complex lived experiences (Butler-Kisber 2010). It was valuable for the study to gain a clear picture of the roles of the key figures in the Faculty responsible for overseeing the implementation of these policies, the position each individual adopted with regard to international study visits, what attitudes and beliefs these stemmed from, and what agency they had in terms of directing the trajectories of such policies, or influence in creating new ones. To do this I decided to undertake semi-structured individual interviews with the Associate Dean Teaching & Learning, the Associate Dean Internationalisation and the Associate Dean Placements (Appendix 1.4), each of whom was involved in Internationalisation and Teaching in Learning at a strategic level in the then Faculty of Health, Education and Society, and therefore had a role to play with regards to international study visits. These interviews aimed to identify any Faculty commonalities and differences in terms of theory and practice of study visits. A general structure and set of questions was used for each interview (Appendices 2.2 & 2.3) so that there was a comparability across the respondents (Wooffitt and Widdicombe 2006) in terms of how the Internationalisation and Teaching and Learning strategies had evolved (Cresswell 2009), their place in the structure of the University, and the Associate Deans' perceptions on how they were being implemented.

With each Associate Dean I agreed the most convenient and congenial location for them to be interviewed. Each one opted for the interview to be in their own office, possibly for convenience, but possibly because it was a physical space that reinforced their status and authority. That location may have made me less challenging than I might have been, reflecting Clegg and Stevenson's (2013) observation that power and positionality shape all stages of the research process. It was a complication of my insider position that because of my status in relation to these senior figures in the Faculty I found myself occasionally feeling subservient, insecure and reluctant to press for further clarification in the way someone coming from outside might have done. However, I do have to acknowledge that my researcher identity gave me permission to probe issues and ask questions that I might have not have done otherwise.

I also conducted individual interviews with Faculty tutors engaged in study visits (Appendices 1.3 & 2.1) to gain their perspectives on their involvement, the organisation of the trips and the benefits for students. Tutors included the International Co-ordinator in the then School of Education (Appendices 1.5, 2.4 & 2.5) and the tutors leading and supporting the School of Education trips under consideration – two tutors taking students to The Gambia, one to the Czech Republic, two to Hungary and one to Redbridge. Of these, two tutors had also participated in the School's visits to Finland, Denmark and/or Chile, so I was able to draw upon these experiences also.

Part of the interview for each tutor was closely structured (Punch 2009) with a sequence of standardised questions (Appendix 2.1) in order to get key information

about the organisation and pattern of each particular trip. Whilst much of this information might have been gleaned from a detailed questionnaire aimed at supplementing and extending the data gained from documentary analysis, I wanted each tutor in their interview to relate such information to how they viewed the purpose and value of the trips, how they organised and managed them and how far their objectives included the promotion of aspects of intercultural capability. In achieving this, the second part of the interview guide with more open questions was useful. I was able to determine the way they used reasoning to construct the position they adopted towards the international study visits and the extent to which they were subjected to discourses in the local domain (Harré *et al* 2009).

International study visits are also found in other parts of the Faculty and using Facet Methodology I interviewed tutors from the other Schools, two from the School of Social Work and one from the School of Nursing. From them I was able to gather data about their often different professional perspectives and practices; these shed light on the approaches of the School of Education, an unexpected and valuable facet of the Study. In addition I conducted two interviews with the International Coordinator in the School of Education to gain his overview of international study visits and his role in them (Appendices 2.4 & 2.5) and to investigate some aspects of the distinct and collective histories (Shim 2012) of the different social fields that had merged to create the Faculty of Health, Education and Society. During the interactions I was able to gather his beliefs about the roles and responsibilities of himself and others in the context of international study visits as well as unearthing some taken-for-granted practices (Harré 2009). I supplemented these findings with documentary analysis of

the policies, marketing and guidance materials specific to the Faculty, e.g. the Overseas Elective Handbook (Plymouth University 2012).

Using Patton's (1990) interview guide approach I constructed a set of questions for each category of interviewee, informed by my Review of Literature, my analysis of the University documents and my own experience of being involved in international study visits. Following the methodological approach of radical enquiry advocated by Clough and Nutbrown (2007), I critically analysed my choice of questions, justified their phrasing and considered what I would not ask, and why. I provided an interview guide to each tutor before their interview (see Appendices 2.1, 2.2 & 2.3) so that they were aware of the topics that we would be discussing and could think about them beforehand (Lankshear and Knobel 2004). Although it is impossible to capture in an interview everything that a person feels, thinks and believes to be consequential to the topic under discussion, being prepared may enable them to give wider, deeper and more considered responses. It may however, give them opportunity to think more carefully about what not to say, aspects which might emerge in a more spontaneous discussion, but, given that these were semi-structured interviews, I felt unable to spring totally unexpected questions upon them.

Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and an hour, audio-recorded in order to capture the speech *in situ* (Lankshear and Knobel 2004). This enabled me to focus on the interview without having to write notes, to preserve the complexity of the language use in response to each question and to be more aware of the nature of the interactions that took place. It also meant that I was able to revisit the field text later

to analyse the discourse and check for understandings. As suggested by Willis (2006), I wrote up some commentary notes as soon as possible after the interview, setting myself to remain critically aware of my own position and of how my insider knowledge might shape my interpretation (Clegg and Stevenson 2013). Throughout I endeavoured to produce an authentic representation of the interview (Atkinson-Lopez 2010). This involved reflection, in order to be “hearing with more than the ears” (Atkinson 2006, cited in MacNaughton *et al.* 2010:266), and an engagement with complexities, such as the inconsistencies that emerged within and across interviews, in order to construct an accurate representation of views and attitudes.

The interviews with the tutors in the different Schools were revealing but made demands upon me as a researcher. Firstly, I struggled with the relationship dynamics that arose because I am myself a key player in many of the fields I was researching and because of my relationships with the participants. Some were managers, some were fellow tutors and some were also friends. In the fields of the Faculty, the Schools and the international study visits themselves, there is a range of people who dominate and are dominated at different times, so there are varying inequalities of position (Morberg *et al.* 2012). I was concerned that opting to control the interview by using a structure of questions might have been interpreted as an assertion of my own power over the people I was interviewing.

Secondly, the tutors I interviewed were aware of my agenda and possibly of my philosophy on international study visits and, as Cresswell (2009) argues, this may well have shaped their responses. My social and professional relationships with them had

benefits in that there already existed a sense of trust and a respect for each other's work and ideas, but it also had drawbacks. Such familiarity may have led them to make disclosures of sensitive personal information in an informal way that they might have withheld if I had been a stranger, or *vice versa* (Cohen *et al.* 2011). Moreover, as friends and colleagues, they may have felt obliged to agree to the interview in order to help me with my EdD. I have to consider the extent to which I had exploited my relationship with the tutors in recruiting them for this study (Moore 2012), as well as issues of obligation in my relationship with them (Atkinson-Lopez 2010). This meant, as Edwards (2010) notes, I had to maintain an ongoing ethical concern for those whose experiences were being represented (Appendix 1.1).

Thirdly, I had been in the habit of regularly discussing such professional issues with them, so another key issue was the place and relevance of my own stories and narratives in this process (Trahar 2011). Listening to a tutor's account of an incident often triggered in me a response that supported or contradicted the story. As an interviewer I had to be mindful to remain reflexive and not put myself at the centre of the discussion, nor direct it in a particular way, but this was especially tricky with these colleagues as they were familiar with how my body language and facial expression usually reflect my thoughts and opinions. They would sometimes presume from this that I agreed with, or disagreed with, what they were saying. In identifying this large range of issues that arise when interviewing colleagues, I kept in mind Clegg and Stevenson's (2013) advice to theorise the nature of the interview in order to be clear about the problematic nature of insider research.

I considered having a completely unstructured section of the interview. This would have provided the maximum freedom for each to determine their own responses, to lead the discussion and to introduce new themes, helpful because this potentially reduces some of the power differential between the interviewer and the interviewee (Siraj-Blatchford 2010). However, it would have been likely to generate very diverse data, making comparisons across the various study visits much more complex and difficult, and making it harder for me to keep my research questions in focus. My semi-structured approach did allow me to probe tutor responses further when their responses were not clear, when I wanted them to expand upon a point, and also when they introduced ideas that I wished to explore, though again, as conceded above, I might well have done this more.

I needed throughout to ensure that I was transparent about the aims of the research (Appendix 1.3), in particular to reassure them that I was not planning a critique or evaluation of their practice. It was also vital for me to be rigorous in my reading and interpretation of the field texts generated (Clough and Nutbrown 2007) and to be alert to their positionality (Willis 2006), as well as maintaining a critical stance to the interview responses (Silverman 2010), seeing them as constructed narratives, with the tutors offering perspectives on their experiences which inevitably contained elements of subjectivity.

4.3.3 Study of student perspectives

As well as working with a range of tutors, I looked to gather student perspectives. This was intended to fill out the picture of the way international study visits were run in the School of Education in order to assess the potential effectiveness of the existing pattern, rather than to assess or measure the effect of such international experiences upon students' development of intercultural capabilities. For the trips to The Gambia that were the main focus of this part of the study a range of methods was used: analysis of letters of application; questionnaires with closed and two open questions distributed before the visit (Appendix 2.6); pre-visit and post-visit focus groups (Appendices 1.2, 2.8 & 2.9), with some photo elicitation (Appendix 3.2) and use of drawing (Appendix 3.3); reflective discussions during the visits; and reflective writing frames on return (Appendix 2.10). Aspects of other trips, to Hungary, the Czech Republic and Redbridge, were used to cast further light upon the main findings, and with their participants I used different combinations of as many of the methods listed above as was practicable, given issues of timing, student availability and willingness to participate.

4.3.3.1: Analysis of letters of application

In order to find out whether aspects of the development of intercultural capabilities were seen by student participants as part of their motivation for engaging upon study visits, I gained their permission and that of their trip leaders to analyse their letters of application, in which they had been asked to indicate their reasons for applying. Those

for The Gambia were compared and contrasted with those for the trips to the Czech Republic and Redbridge.

4.3.3.2 Questionnaires

As suggested by Punch (2009), I looked to gather relevant demographic and biographical data about participants through a questionnaire for self-completion prior to the students' departure on their study visit (Appendix 2.6). I largely used closed questions for this in order to generate data that would be easy to analyse and to compare. I wanted to add exploratory, open-ended questions to allow participants to give a wider range of information but I included only two, as I was concerned that too long a questionnaire might deter students from completing it. I followed the detailed advice of Bryman (2012) and Cohen *et al.* (2011) on devising the questions. Cohen *et al.* (2011) warn that the response rate for questionnaires can be low, affecting the validity of the conclusions that can be drawn, but I received 44 completed questionnaires from the 69 issued, which is an acceptable rate of return to produce valid data (Appendix 2.7).

The questionnaires were emailed to the participants, along with the letter inviting participation and the ethics protocol (Appendix 1.2), but in order to preserve anonymity the completed questionnaires were returned to me via a colleague. An advantage of an anonymous questionnaire is that the respondent can be more open and honest (Lankshear and Knobel 2004); moreover, completing a questionnaire can be less time-consuming than an interview, depending upon its design, and the satisfactory return rate suggest that the design was acceptable to the participants.

4.3.3.3: Focus Groups

The major approach used in investigating student perceptions was a series of group meetings with student volunteers from each of the study visits. Three patterns of groups were planned:

- a) pre-trip (for students on the same study visit)
- b) post-trip (for students on the same study visit)
- c) post-trip (for students from different study visits)

The pre-trip groups aimed to explore in more depth themes and issues which had arisen from the documentary analysis, the student questionnaires and the interviews with the International Coordinator and with leading tutors, as recommended by Drew *et al.* (2006). The post-trip groups considered in particular matters arising from trip experiences and from the various types of reflections, both during the study visits themselves and subsequent reflective processes such as the writing frames.

I planned for the group meetings to involve four students from each of the study visits under consideration; given likely numbers participating, this would have provided a reasonably representative sample. In the event, it was a challenge to get students to participate, perhaps because of the voluntary nature of the visits or the students' timetables and assessment deadlines. A total of 21 students took part in the various focus groups (see Appendix 4 for Research Timetable). I conducted one pre-trip group for the students going to the Gambia (3 students) and one for Redbridge (2 students). I conducted three post-trip groups for students on return from the Gambia (4+2+3 students), one for students after their placement in the Czech Republic (4 students) and one for students on return from Hungary (3 students). From these groups I then sought further volunteers to participate in a cross-trip group involving participants

from each of the trips, so that differences and similarities between the four visits could be explored. However, due to the timing of the visits, this last group was not possible as the students were departing for their summer break.

Each group meeting lasted between 30 and 50 minutes and was held at a location on campus convenient for all participants. I provided information on the study (Appendix 1.2) and I requested permission from them to audio-record the interactions (Appendix 1.2), offering to ask a colleague to take field notes if they were uncomfortable with this, but the eventuality did not arise. In each meeting I offered an initial focus chosen from ideas derived from the previous data-generation methods (Appendices 2.8 & 2.9), but I was then flexible in selecting follow-up approaches.

The nature of the meetings as a research method must be clarified, since such small group meetings can be of several different types. They can be 'group interviews', where the investigator puts a range of planned questions to the participants. A limitation, as Clough and Nutbrown (2007) point out, is that this may be over-dominated by the investigator's research preoccupations and schedule and so it may not allow all the individuals to express their ideas. The meetings may also be what Clough and Nutbrown (2007) term 'focussed conversations', where the investigator invites participants to share their ideas and experience on a particular topic or topics; this can be an effective method of incorporating a range of voices into a research project, and eliciting individual stories whilst linking them together to present a collective experience. Or they may be 'focus groups', which allow greater flexibility for the participants to engage with each other in retrospective inspection (Bloor *et al.*

2001), to explore taken-for-granted assumptions (Lloyd-Evans 2006) and to reflect upon why they acted, or reacted, in particular situations on the trip.

I used focus groups since my purpose was not to obtain answers to very specific questions of my own but to gain a clearer picture of the student participants' perspectives. I welcomed the greater flexibility offered, both for the participants to help shape the investigation and for them to interact with each other. Once again, as a tutor taking on the role of researcher I had to be very mindful not to interject and dominate the discussion, whilst at the same time keeping to the agreed focus. I was aware that this would be complicated by the hierarchical element inherent in the tutor/student relationship, with the student usually in a subordinate position. Consequently, I had to work hard to minimise the status differences and to build a more equal relationship in order for the groups to generate the rich data required, trusting in my extensive experience of working interactively with groups of students to make sure that I involved all the participants, including those who were less confident and forthcoming, and that I facilitated a reflexive and participatory approach, as advocated by Desai and Potter (2006).

I also had to treat the ideas and opinions expressed with a certain caution. In a focus group cognitions and experiences are constructed as the participants talk with each other; the talk is designed for that audience which consists of the others in the group and so is only fully relevant in that context (Wilkinson 1999). Asked a similar question in a different context, the answers may be different. So I had to bear in mind that the data were a reflection of the views of the group in that given space and time (Lloyd-

Evans 2006) and, as Clough and Nutbrown (2007) warn, not necessarily representative or generalisable.

I used several elicitation techniques to support the process (Appendices 3.2 & 3.3). The subtle and complex indicators of potential changes in intercultural capabilities are not easily expressed or captured simply through spoken and written language. I therefore looked to use as well visual methods. Having the opportunity to engage in a creative activity and make things is empowering for research participants as it gives the message that what they have to communicate is interesting and that it can be interpreted and represented in a variety of ways (Gauntlett and Holzwarth 2006). It also moves away from using language as the single form of expression, giving participants time to decide on what and how to represent ideas, to reconsider the representation and to change it, potentially leading to a wider range of insights.

The two main visual methods used were drawing and photo-elicitation (Appendices 3.2 & 3.3). In the pre-trip focus groups I gave participants the task of constructing a visual representation of their motivations/aspirations/ expectations/anxieties around the international study visits, possibly through a self-portrait with comments. In the post-trip focus groups I asked them to co-construct a visual representation of their 'journey' through the trip, incorporating shared experiences. Both are techniques I have used before (Appendix 6.2), finding that engagement in the drawing activity leads to rich conversations about experiences, shared memories and emotional responses within each group, and draws out embodied knowledge in a way that writing, or responding verbally to direct questions, may not (Leitch, 2008).

In the Gambia and Czech post-trip focus groups, I also tried photo elicitation. The majority of students take a lot of photos whilst on international study visits, and share many of them immediately on Facebook, using the advances in digital and wireless technology, even in Majority World countries such as The Gambia. I asked each participant to bring to the focus group two or three images that represented for them elements of cultural diversity (see Appendix 3.4). I had discovered in a previous research project that I needed to be very specific in my request for images, as some of the students did not bring any while some brought all they had taken, flicking through them very fast on their laptop with very little comment or discussion. I set clear criteria for the range and scope of photographs to be brought and shared and the students were encouraged to explain and justify their choices. I also asked them to be prepared to describe an image they would like to have captured but did not do so, perhaps for ethical reasons.

Much can be learned about people as social and cultural beings by systematically reflecting on how a photo is taken, interpreted and shared, since it is a “symbolic form embedded in a communication process” (Butler-Kisber 2010:215). In selecting a subject and taking a photo one gives meaning to an experience, and so the photo represents significant aspects of one’s knowledge, identity and emotions. Such a socially constructed artefact can therefore legitimately be used as a vehicle for elicitation, reflection and representation.

The study revealed both advantages and disadvantages of such visual methods. A considerable advantage is identified by Collier, who suggests “The richest returns from

photo elicitation often have little connection to the details of the images, which may only serve to release vivid memories, feelings, insights, thoughts and memories [*sic*]” (Collier 2001, cited in Butler-Kisber 2010:125). Given that I was seeking to uncover how experiences on the trips might lead to subtle shifts in beliefs, attitudes and behaviours, such released material potentially offered rich and productive data that could be analysed for themes, patterns and distinctive elements. Another advantage was that it placed the focus on the photos or drawings rather than directly upon the students themselves. They did not have to maintain eye contact with each other, which generated a more relaxed atmosphere and therefore more discussion. It also helped to offset any possible feelings that the focus group was some kind of test.

At a different level, using such methods enables participants to be active in the research process rather than just respondents (Prosser and Burke 2008) because they have considerable control over the process and what to contribute or omit (Butler-Kisber 2010). This helped to ensure that their voices, rather than my preoccupations, were dominant.

But there were difficulties. In using drawings I found at times that talking took over, rather than it being an integrated process, and so the visual material produced was limited. Possibly those who lacked confidence or skill at drawing were reluctant to engage, limiting their contribution. Similarly, those who did not see themselves as good photographers may have felt inhibited. The focus groups also supported Lankshear and Knobel ‘s (2004) suggestion that using elicitation devices often requires more response time than conventional interview questions, and as a result, less

material is generated, or the discussions lack depth. As a tutor who had shared some of the experiences I had to be careful in my analysis that I did not over-impose my own interpretations of the images. Two factors reduced this danger. Firstly, the discussions of the images were audio-recorded. I took particular care to ask participants to share their thoughts on what they were representing and encouraged them to add comments and/or annotations – information that I could use later to support my interpretations. Secondly, I brought to the task of drawing and taking photos my own experience of international study visits, which made my interpretations more likely to be well-informed and perceptive, not least because I had sometimes been part of the learning context in which the representations were created (Gauntlett and Holzwarth 2006). However, I had to be careful always to engage in what Clough and Nutbrown (2007) term as ‘radical listening’, paying careful attention to all the voices and their messages in order to generate data about contexts, past events, attitudes, motivations and beliefs.

4.3.3.4 Reflective discussions during the visit

As shared reflections had been identified as a valuable part of the process of learning on an international study visit, I provided audio recorders to the students going to The Gambia and invited them to capture some of their reflective discussions during the trip. I had used this method previously (Campbell-Barr and Huggins 2011) so I knew that potentially the response would be limited, and this proved to be the case. 3 groups of 3 students returned the audio recorders with recorded discussions. I also received a recording of a short discussion between a tutor and 4 students on the Hungary visit. All these provided flashes of insight into the nature of such group reflections, the key concerns raised and how they were explored (see Appendix 3.5).

4.3.3.5 Individual Writing Frames

Another method used was to invite students to complete a simple writing frame with sections introduced by carefully phrased questions (Appendix 2.10). The impetus for using this method was that in my previous experience of international study visits critical incidents (Bruster and Peterson 2012), especially ones that caused participants disquiet or discomfort, had often proved an effective stimulus to their reflecting upon and questioning existing ideas and beliefs, and so potentially coming to new understandings. However, Clough and Nutbrown (2007) suggest that although the impact of such critical incidents can sometimes be captured in small group discussion, this method is limited. The individual's whole story can easily get lost as the discussion snowballs, or goes off in other directions. The danger is that a group discussion becomes an individual sharing in turn of particular incidents, describing what happened and the context; before the participant is able to discuss the impact this has had upon his/her thinking another student may well have embarked upon sharing his/her experience. As Bruster and Peterson (2012) argue, focusing on a critical incident can enable students to move beyond being narrowly descriptive to a more reflective stance, but, as Black and Plowright (2010) add, this demands 'space' to facilitate a dialogue; the process has to make links to their beliefs, experiences and worldviews in order to be reflective and reflexive. What is essential is both uninterrupted time and space and a structure to support the construction of a coherent and complete narrative about the incident and its implications.

Writing frames potentially offer such a space and structure, taking into account Ryan's (2012) recommendation that in order to demonstrate learning through praxis there has to be the identification of a clear incident. Arguably "narrative is the perfect

vehicle for inquiry because it illustrates the selectivity of experience, uses the narrative mode to represent the iterative and continuous aspects of experience, and emphasises the social and contextual aspects of understanding.” (Clandinin and Rosiek 2007:39-42, cited in Butler-Kisber 2010:65). The frames could capture how the students made sense of and gave meaning to their experiences, which Drew *et al.* (2006) note is vital to our understanding of social action. I could then use an interpretive approach to analyse the meanings that they “attribute to these experiences and the perspectives through which they define their social realities” (Drew *et al.* 2006:79).

The writing frame was sent to all participants involved in The Gambia, Hungary and Redbridge study visits so that those who were not contributing to the focus groups were still able to put forward ideas that could be used as prompts for the focus groups themselves (Lankshear and Knobel 2004). The frame offered them a simple structure – empty columns with some prompts, questions and headings to respond to as they chose. I encouraged them to write as much as they wanted to. I received eighteen responses from the forty distributed.

There proved to be considerable advantages in using writing frames. They captured the thoughts and words of participants in a form that could be accessed by myself at a convenient time and revisited (Cresswell 2009). Also, because the data was already in a written form, it saved me considerable time in transcription. A disadvantage was that not all students were willing to complete the frames, perhaps because of the time it would have taken but also because it might have been upsetting for them to revisit painful experiences. Moreover, as their stories were highly personal, anonymity and

confidentiality might have been an issue. By contributing to the writing frames the participants were opening up their stories to me and, given the small number of participants in each trip, the write-up may have made it clear to others whose story was being discussed.

Despite the obvious advantages of the method, I needed to be critical about what was produced. The students were aware that by writing and submitting the frame their personal/private thoughts and ideas became public and this inevitably shaped what they chose to write; moreover, as these frames were completed at my request there was a danger that the students wrote only those things that they thought I was looking for, though being able to complete these individually and in private may well have limited such pressures.

I also made requests to the student participants that they share with me extracts from journals or any other reflective pieces that they had written, perhaps for their Professional Development Portfolios as evidence of their learning from the visits, but I only received three of these. The students on the Czech trip, however, did give me permission to read their final short evaluations of the experience, which added a useful perspective.

4.4 Ethical considerations

I had ethical clearance from the Faculty Ethics Research Committee at the outset of the project (Appendix 1.1) but there were ongoing ethical challenges, many due to my position as a researcher with both students and colleagues in my workplace. These

principally involved difficulties of assuring and maintaining confidentiality; ensuring an ethics of care throughout my study which was respectful of the interests and perspectives of the research participants (Lichtman 2010); and, since part of the origins of the study was my sense of disquiet over aspects of the education visits in which I had participated, the possibility of personal and professional disagreement with close colleagues, towards whom I also had similar duties of care.

For students who submitted material electronically, I ensured that the submission came via a colleague who anonymised the responses before forwarding them to me. In supporting confidentiality I allocated pseudonyms to all the participants who engaged in the face-to-face methods. However, Lichtman (2010) alerted me to the fact that the degree of confidentiality and anonymity that I could give to the participants was limited because they were recruited from a very small pool of people who are well-known to others as being involved in international study visits, either as tutor and student participants, or because they had related roles and responsibilities in the Faculty. Since I had to indicate the nature of such involvement and/or responsibilities in order to contextualise the nature and authority of their contribution, it was impossible to guarantee them complete anonymity, but this was made clear to them as a basis for their agreement to participate.

I was careful to be open and transparent with all participants about the aims of the research and the purpose of their involvement (Lichtman 2010). I constructed detailed information sheets about my study for the different participants (Appendices 1.2-1.5), giving due consideration to their particular needs and interests, and to possible issues

of power and status resulting from my relationship to them (Atkins and Wallace 2012), such as student fears that unwillingness to participate might affect their grades. Each participant was provided with the appropriate information sheet about their part in the project. If they were being interviewed and/or participating in a focus group, they also signed a consent form (Appendices 1.2-1.5) giving permission for me to audio-record the conversations. I sent the transcripts to the participants to check for accuracy, and none of them took up the opportunity to change them, although two (Tara and Teresa) provided me with additional information.

I was conscious of my duty of care to the students in the group meetings, and always made it clear that they should only share what they felt comfortable with, and that they were welcome to talk to me privately afterwards if they had been upset in any way. As Cresswell (2009) advocates, I was equally mindful of my responsibilities to the tutors involved, particularly in terms of any possible consequences to their professional reputations through their statements. I do not think they were unwilling to be involved but, as Lichtman (2010) notes, they might have found it hard to say no to my request for an interview because of my professional and personal relationship with some of them and also because of not wanting to appear disinterested in developing the provision for students. As such, much research may be considered to be coercive (Malone 2003) as some individuals may find it difficult to refuse to participate. However, I am confident that my openness and transparency in inviting them to participate, and the assurance through my Ethics Protocol that they would have full oversight of the interview and/or focus group transcripts and of the findings, enabled them to take informed adult decisions about participation.

At the outset of the study, given the commonalities and affinities with my colleagues, I was expecting a broad consensus about international study visits and their benefits. I did not anticipate disagreeing to such a degree with the approaches taken by my colleagues. As it became clear that there were differences in beliefs, values and practices, I became anxious that the findings of the study might be taken as personal criticism, with a knock-on effect on subsequent professional relationships. Positionality theory (Harré *et al* 2009; Moore 2012) was important in enabling me to resolve these anxieties. It helped me to acknowledge that all the participants were drawing upon their personal experiences to argue for their own position with regard to international study visits and that these positions were valid and to be respected, while also showing me how they were influenced, sometimes unconsciously, by dominant pervading discourses. In turn, my own position was being shaped by my growing understanding of theories of interculturalism, an understanding not necessarily shared by colleagues.

In acknowledging this, and in making these all these discourses explicit, I hoped to avoid my findings being perceived as personal criticism, anticipating also that colleagues were used to the conventions of academic debate. Moreover, by sharing these understandings and my findings in subsequent dissemination of my research within the Institute I trust that they will be stimulated to reflect upon and evaluate their own approaches. I have reassured myself that in such a value-laden field as education I cannot avoid a moral responsibility to argue for what appears in the best interests of the students. As Gorski contends (2008), if as an educational practitioner I do not challenge some previously accepted assumptions and positions, then I am not

an intercultural educator. The possibility of disagreement would not be a reason to stop the research with colleagues (Sultana 2007) but rather a stimulus to continue and to make sense of these discourses and their social and historical roots, in order to create new understandings and to inform practice.

4.5 The approach to the analysis of data

It was clear that the Facet Methodology approach would generate a considerable quantity of data in a variety of formats, reflecting my epistemological assumptions that new knowledge could be generated from multi-dimensional data collected through interactions in complex social situations (James 2013). As Mason (2011) recommends, I used different modes of analysis in response to the lines of investigation both in and between facets which had involved interrogation along the question-driven and insight-driven routes across and between the facets. This necessitated the selection of particular comments and incidents to illuminate aspects of the phenomenon under consideration, reflecting its multi-dimensional nature, retaining the complexity and yet providing clear threads of thinking for my arguments.

4.5.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Given that the over-riding approach of the study is critical theory (as indicated on p23), I used critical discourse [analysis](#) in the generation and analysis of the data. I considered who was saying/writing what, what their authority was and the intended audience (Punch, 2009). I looked to see which discourses about international study visits were emerging in different contexts, in what ways they might be related to each other and how they were being operationalised (Fairclough, 2005), for example, in the pedagogy

of the visits themselves. I also sought to identify the interrelationships between the different accounts that I was hearing and to explore why some discourses were being privileged and taken for granted while others were being marginalised (Bryman 2012). This exploration was located in a critique of the neoliberal agenda within Higher Education, considering how this enables or limits opportunities for students (Fairclough 2013). I consciously looked for what was not being said, listening to silences and identifying avoidances, as what is said can be a way of not saying something else (Billig 1991).

With this critical stance, I examined the discourses in relation to the social structures in which they were formed, with an awareness of how they were being shaped by cultural, political, economic, social and personal realities (Gee *et al* 1992). I recognised my own position in this process. My own understandings of the views of others about international study visits are inevitably filtered through my own views. These are essential to my understanding but at the same time may be a source of potential bias (Hammersley 2013). The other element of critical discourse analysis, that of looking for possibilities for alternative approaches and even transformations (Fairclough 2013), is also relevant to this research project. A criticism of researchers using critical discourse analysis is that they rarely acknowledge that texts can be interpreted in different ways by different audiences (Widdowson 1995). I had to be constantly mindful that my arguments were partial, coming as they did from my viewpoints and understandings, but I endeavoured to undertake a critical questioning of these as well as the discourses I encountered. Throughout these processes I used 'critical' in the sense given by Paulo Friere - being critical of the status quo in order to promote change (Breeze 2011)

rather than undertaking a critique for its own sake. This is my justification for offering in Appendix 7 specific recommendations for improving approaches to international study visits.

In line with Bazely (2013) I decided to use NVivo for the initial content analysis and coding of the data from the University documentation, tutor interview transcripts and student questionnaires in order to identify links and patterns between them. From my Review of Literature I had gained some ideas for the nodes to use for analysis, such as the perceived benefits of participating in an international study visit, and using NVivo I was able to identify these from the perspectives of the University, the Faculty, the School and the students themselves. As Cohen *et al.* (2011) suggest, having done so I could refine any node and break it down into sub-categories, such as personal and professional benefits, to look for patterns in the discourses. I followed Richards' (2009) advice to keep in mind three key questions while I was coding: what is interesting; why is it interesting and why am I interested in that? These helped me to take the coding to a more conceptual level (Bazely 2013) and also ensured that I maintained a clear focus on my research questions.

NVivo was a useful tool, both in revealing insights into the particular facets that I was investigating and in shedding light onto other facets. As Seale (2010) acknowledges, such a counting and coding method was helpful in quickly coding the large amount of data I had generated in different formats and in identifying links and patterns across them. It enabled a fine-grained, line-by-line analysis (Punch 2009) and helped the reliability of the analysis in the way that it retrieved all the data without losing the

contextual factors (Cohen *et al.* 2011). The speed of coding enabled me to analyse data as I gathered it at different times and through different methods, and this was valuable within a Facet Methodology since it often quickly alerted me to new areas or new questions worthy of investigation, allowing an iterative process.

But coding is first and foremost a thinking process and there is danger of an over-mechanistic use of NVivo (Bazely 2013). It can lead one into coding and patterning at the expense of a more complex interrogation of the texts; important contextual data can be stripped away, and limited conclusions drawn, if the data are just assembled by the nodes and coding process (Cohen *et al.* 2011). It became clear that I should supplement initial NVivo coding with further analysis. The assigning of meaning, the identification of subtler similarities and patterns and the establishing of the relationships between different facets had to be more a manual exercise. Given my methodological and epistemological stance, it was vital to consider the stories that people told; how they made sense of and constructed their experiences in a social context as part of their identity portrayal and their sense of agency. I therefore read and reread the interviews and transcripts, and listened again to the audio tapes, making notes on a writing frame (Appendix 2.11) to give consistency to my analysis. This process involved a double hermeneutic as I tried to make sense of the participants making sense of what was happening by considering the purposes they served for the narrator (Bazely 2013). I also considered the cultural influences underlying any assumptions and generalisations that underpinned the discourses and interactions between the participants, as well as trying to identify any things not said that I had

anticipated would be, something impossible in NVivo. All this led to a much more detailed and richer thematic analysis.

At times I gained insights from relatively few fragments, but as James (2013) notes, this can be confirmation of the theoretical and epistemological illumination that Facet Methodology offers. I had to be mindful neither to give too much emphasis to fragments that particularly intrigued me nor to arbitrarily discard fragments that did not seem to contribute to the coherence of my argument. However, the data presented are inevitably partial and subjective. I do not aim to provide a comprehensive overview through my analysis, but to offer insights into this phenomenon of international study visits within a particular context and time-frame.

5. Analysis of Data: Recruitment and Motivations

The aim of my study was to consider how far current approaches to international study visits in my own School were conducive to promoting the intercultural capabilities of the participating students. Section 3.5 argued strongly that acquiring such capabilities is central to responding positively and appropriately to cultural diversity, but, as was argued in Section 3.6, it is also a complex and demanding process of personal growth and understanding, often difficult and painful because it may require the changing or replacement of deeply held attitudes and behaviours. This is unlikely to happen incidentally through simple exposure to cultural differences. Therefore, a key concern of the study was to determine whether the development of Intercultural capabilities was planned for, or intended, as a goal of the School's international study visits, and to identify the degree to which the organisation and conduct of the visits was conducive to such development.

In investigating this I considered four main facets:

- the recruitment to the study visits and their accessibility;
- the motivations and attitudes of participating tutors and students;
- the organisation of the visits
- the pedagogical approach.

In this chapter, I analyse the first two of these facets. The other two facets are analysed in Chapter 6.

5.1 Recruitment of students and tutors

If international study visits are seen as a worthwhile dimension of University provision one would anticipate that they would figure extensively in policy documents and in recruitment materials. Such visits are not specifically mentioned in the University Strategy documents that shaped the visits that I am researching but there is a generalised intention to:

develop the global outlook of all students through development in the curriculum, the promotion of study abroad and exchange opportunities through international placements and internships.
(University of Plymouth 2009a:4)

This is strengthened in the recently introduced University 2020 Strategy, a document which pulls together, integrates and replaces previously separate policy documents. It states that the University will

offer a globally relevant and culturally rich experience....andhelp students to develop personally and enhance their employability skills by offering a wide range of extra-curricular experiences including opportunities to take part in research projects, volunteering, placements and internships. (Plymouth University 2013:9)

In the Equality Policy the Vice Chancellor gives a clear message that:

A key strategic priority for us is internationalisation, forging productive partnerships with institutions overseas, and encouraging our staff and students to undertake exchange activities or visits to other countries
(University of Plymouth 2011:4)

This encouragement is reflected in the University's marketing materials for the School of Education, which emphasise the benefits to individuals of such visits as a way of promoting its courses. There is some evidence from students that this approach is effective:

I chose to do my course at Plymouth as it offered the opportunity for me to carry out an international placement..... I have just returned from my latest placement in Finland and I had a brilliant time. (Kate, BEd Primary English)

The Faculty's Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning, whose remit extended to the School of Education, was more explicit about the implications for student learning:

Internationalisation is about working with our students and also with our staff to get that sense of the opportunities that cultural diversity presents. And also to develop a set of competences that enable us to work with people from different cultural backgrounds in an effective fashion, and to actually enjoy doing it. (Mary, Associate Dean Teaching and Learning)

However, in emphasising this aspect, she was a lone voice in the study. In the School of Education, international study visits are marketed as being an exciting opportunity to visit another country and learn about the education system there, and are promoted by the tutors as being of benefit for students' future employment. I found no mention at all in the policies or in the various marketing materials of the development of intercultural capabilities or of related aspects of learning.

This suggests that in the University there exists a common discourse around the purpose of international experiences that they will be engaged in predominantly for the 'selfish' benefit to the institution and its students, which fits with Buczynski *et al.*'s (2010) findings. This is of concern in two ways. Firstly, it perpetuates a colonial approach to other countries and cultures, seeing them predominantly as a resource to be mined. Andreotti (2011) and Martin and Griffiths (2011; 2013) would argue that this is exploitive, showing a lack of ethical regard for those people living in the host country and a disregard of the moral obligation to ensure mutual benefit for all parties from any partnership. Secondly, it fails to recognise that if the students are to learn to

respond positively and appropriately to cultural diversity and difference, they have to be willing to change aspects of both their attitudes and their existing practice. In the absence of any clear contract to do so, they are unlikely to recognise such changes as a principal outcome of their study visit, and will focus on the gains to themselves.

Such concerns would be less worrying if the tutors recruited to organise and lead international study visits within the School of Education were overtly knowledgeable about intercultural capabilities and committed to promoting their development.

However, my study indicates that this was largely not the case. In the interviews with these tutors it emerged that they were usually recruited for their willingness to take on the additional workload and to pay their own way, rather than for any particular expertise. Tutors were chosen to lead visits by the School's International Coordinator and the interview with him made it clear that his criteria for choosing a study visit leader were simple and relatively undemanding. One of the recruited tutors summarised the demands:

We tend to try and make sure it's not a new member of staff, so someone who is ok with the university systems and protocols. Someone who feels comfortable. Someone who has a good relationship with students and staff. But there is nothing actually written down, there's no set guidelines. (Thomas, Tutor 1, Education)

There was no expectation of any knowledge about or commitment to the development of Intercultural capabilities. Unsurprisingly, some tutors leading the visits studied were unclear about the criteria for their selection:

You need a first aider, but apart from that I have no idea. I would imagine that the criteria seems to be staff here in the first place and obviously, I imagine, that's enough. (Colin, Tutor 5, Health)

No, I don't, is a straight answer. I was asked to do this based upon my interest and experience, but apart from demonstrating this new first aid requirement, my understanding is that you can go if you're willing. (Theo, Tutor 4, Education)

It emerged that the tutors were not 'contracted' to engage in any particular interventions to develop the learning of the participants, as will be discussed later in connection with the organisation of the visits, so it was hardly surprising that they did not identify this as a key aspect of their role.

It is true that the current undemanding model of recruiting and developing leaders of international study visits in the School of Education has ensured that more tutors have taken on this work and has facilitated an increasing variety of international opportunities for students, so if one considers it simply in terms of the numbers of students having access to an international experience, it is a successful approach. Yet there is no training for tutors so it is only those who have some interest in international work and are keen travellers themselves who have stepped up to take on the responsibility for leading trips.

5.2 Student access to international study visits

The importance attached to international study visits and placements within the University's and School of Education's approaches to internationalisation would suggest that they should be accessible to at least a substantial proportion of the student cohort. The School of Education offers more opportunities than many other Schools in the University, but even with the international study visits studied I found

that a variety of barriers restricted accessibility and appreciably shaped the profile of those who were able and willing to participate.

The main barrier is financial. The University offers little or no financial support as these visits are considered to be extra-curricular. For the trips to The Gambia, student participants have to pay the costs in full, which can be as much as £1000 for the week's experience. Thus those who opt for an international study visit have to have access to sufficient resources to pay for it, as well as believing it is worthwhile, so this may skew uptake towards the more affluent or those with parental financial support (Nonis and Relyea 2014). Another of the trips investigated, to the Czech Republic, involves a six-week placement in a school, and students can access financial support for this from the Erasmus scheme. However, to qualify for this funding they have to stay in the country for three months, so many travel for the last six weeks, which again requires considerable self-funding. In the current climate of student debt through self-payment of fees this inevitably restricts accessibility.

Another discouragement is that most of the trips are not directly linked to particular modules, and even trips offered which have such links allow the requirements of the module to be fully satisfied otherwise, e.g. by a local placement. With the Hungary trip, which is linked to a module on Comparative Education, one of the tutors noted:

The students have to pay for it; it's sold to them really as an enrichment experience. They can have equal chance of getting a lot out of the module, and obviously passing the module and having full participation in the assessment process for the modules, without going. (Theo, Tutor 4, Education)

Making international study visits extra-curricular options immediately reduces for many students their perceived significance and relevance, despite the University's marketing, and so discourages their participation.

A further consequence of this extra-curricular status is that the timing of visits and the possibility of student participation may be constrained by the requirements of compulsory modules and courses. Professional courses such as Teacher Education demand a specific number of hours spent in particular areas of study, such as practice placements, and require attendance at particular timetabled events, which may clash with the international study visits. Similarly, inconvenient submission dates for assignment work may discourage participation for some students, especially for those who are not strong academically. The study confirmed that these were all significant factors in discouraging students from participating.

There may also be influential external constraints. Not all parties may consider such visits to be necessary or worthwhile. As the Associate Dean for Placements for the Faculty, working in the Health discipline, pointed out:

We are commissioned with our students to provide a workforce for the local community. Not to travel abroad. (Sarah, Associate Dean for Placements)

Broader concerns, for instance about Health and Safety, ethical behaviour and accountability for any hurt or damage, may also loom very large when considering international study visits. The School of Education, whose international visits are the subject of this study, is relatively unconstrained by these concerns, but within the same Faculty the Schools of Health and Social Care have very extensive written

guidelines for international placements and a very detailed and demanding Electives Handbook (Plymouth University 2012) which must be followed in full if an international visit or placement is to take place. Were these requirements applied to the School of Education visits, almost none would be able to be offered and very few students would be willing to undertake them. The Health and Social Care tutors interviewed expressed confidence that their students do gain considerably from international study visits, sharing their Education colleagues' belief that both personal and professional development are enhanced. However, the Associate Dean Placements, Sarah, made clear her two reasons for thinking that, given existing constraints and concerns, they are largely impracticable:

The first is, in the current climate I would prefer not to have international experiences for our students and that is because of the volume and complexity of work involved in ensuring the safety of our general public and our students whilst abroad. And the general lack of resources from a University perspective, not specifically a Faculty perspective, but a University one, in facilitating those experiences. The second point I'd like to make, is whilst we are frequently charged with the need to consider our programmes from a truly international perspective, again I don't believe we have the human resource to undertake that activity. (Sarah, Associate Dean for Placements)

It is unsurprising that in those two Schools only three or four students are placed abroad each year. This reminds us that even when University policies are in place and there is encouragement and enthusiasm at many levels for such an approach, there may be other factors specific to one part of the institution that are restrictive.

A further major factor restricting access to international study visits is the nature of students' personal commitments and responsibilities. The common image of undergraduates as young people on the threshold of adult life, free to engage in

international study visits and even gap years before entering the world of work, is very far from accurate today. At the time of the study 42% of the students in the Faculty of Health, Education and Society were over 30 years old (Appendix 5.4); almost all of these, and many younger students, had substantial family and/or caring responsibilities, as well as part-time employment commitments necessary for them to remain financially solvent. Given this profile, a revealing finding was that none of the students participating in the international study visits studied was over 30 (Appendix 2.7) and one student studied, a parent of school-aged children, made it clear how her responsibilities and her financial situation constrained her options:

I am not in a position to apply for any of the long-term school experiences in Finland, Denmark and so on. However, a short trip to London.....would be well within my financial capabilities and also be more acceptable to my family situation. (AL RB5)

The study therefore indicates that only a minority of students in the Faculty, even within the School of Education, can currently access international study visits due to caring responsibilities, timetable constraints and lack of funding. This goes against University policy, as Mary, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning, makes clear:

If we are not careful with how we manage opportunities for international study, then, you know, we are working against our widening participation mission because we are excluding people that are already excluded. (Mary, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning)

However, I found that there were more subtle factors at work in restricting the uptake of places on the visits, particularly by those students who, because of limited exposure to cultural diversity, are arguably more in need of the experience. There is a lack of ethnic diversity in the student body in the Faculty of Health, Education and Society,

where 93.5% are white (Appendix 5.4), and a majority are recruited from the South West of England. Many of them plan to work in the area after graduation and some may think that international study visits offer little in their intended career as, say a Key Stage 1 teacher or a nurse in rural Devon. Blum and Bourn (2013) assert that students have to see a specific link to their own practice and professional development before they are interested in international aspects of their discipline.

A further factor is that many have limited experience of travel abroad, limited interest in other cultures, limited motivation to find out more and often anxieties about foreign travel. As the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning notes:

some students don't want to go abroad, they don't like to travel, the idea of even leaving Devon frightens them. (Mary, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning)

Part of this fear, also identified by Goodman *et al.* (2008) in their study of Plymouth University Nursing students, is that the majority are monolingual English-speakers and many are very reluctant to place themselves in an area where they fear they will not understand or be understood, such as remote parts of Africa. This anxiety was also raised by 12 respondents to the questionnaire (27%), who, even though they were volunteering to go on an international study visit, stated that language was a concern for them. However, this was outweighed by concerns about personal safety and health (16 respondents; 36%) (Appendix 2.6 Q13).

Because of all these factors, uptake is very limited. Even in the School of Education, with its wider range of international study visits, the study found that no more than 160 students took part in a year, about 7% of those eligible. In the other Schools of

the Faculty, the proportion was substantially less than 1%, with only 3 or 4 students placed in a year. All tutors interviewed agreed that finance is the major barrier, followed by personal constraints, especially for mature students and/or those with children.

Given the potential benefit to many students of wider exposure to cultural diversity, one would hope that those with limited experience would be well represented on the trips. The largely regional origins of the student participants were confirmed by the results from the 44 questionnaires received (see Appendix 2.7), which revealed that just over half of the students who responded originated from the South West region, with a further third (36%) from the South, South East and the Midlands. This might have meant that many had had limited exposure to cultural diversity. However, this was far from the case. A sixth of the students (16%) had lived outside the UK for a period of time, and nearly half of them (44%) had relatives who had lived abroad for periods ranging from 3 months to 30 years (Appendix 2.7), perhaps confirming the growing movement of people around the world identified by Bagnoli (2009).

Moreover, many of those applying for the trips were already experienced travellers. Analysis of the questionnaires revealed that less than 5% of the participants had not travelled out of the UK before, while over 70% had travelled more widely than just Europe. The following quote is not untypical:

I love travelling and have travelled to various places throughout Europe, North America and Africa since I was very young. QG³ 11.

³ I make reference to questionnaires, application letters and writing frames received anonymously. In order to avoid frequent and unnecessary wordage these will be identified using the following coding: Q denotes Questionnaire. AL Application Letter and WF Writing Frame.

This all suggests that few of those arguably most in need of such experience are willing or able to undertake it. Clearly, those with limited economic capital are unlikely to go, but limited economic capital often results in limited cultural capital (Allen *et al.* 2012). International experiences tend to be taken up by those with not only the necessary wealth but also the already acquired cultural capital (Jakubiak 2012) and self-confidence gained from previous travel (Nonis and Relyea 2014). This was very largely the case in the trips studied. It reinforces concerns that certain students are able to enhance their employability prospects because they have the economic capital to undertake activities to optimise their CV, leaving others further disadvantaged by the pattern of University provision (Allen *et al.* 2012). The study suggests strongly that with such limitations to access it is impracticable to see international study visits as a way of developing the intercultural capabilities of all students or of making them an essential part of the internationalisation of the curriculum. This leaves unresolved the substantial issue of how and what to provide for those students who do not participate in international study visits.

5.3 Motivations and goals

I analysed data from the students' application letters, from the focus groups and from the interviews with tutors and students to get a sense of the participants' motivations for engaging in international study visits and what they hoped would be gained from doing so.

G denotes Gambia, CZ Czech Republic, H Hungary and RB Redbridge.

Overwhelmingly the strongest theme to emerge was that of the potential benefit to be gained in terms of the enhancement of the students' CVs and future employability prospects.

I feel I will get a great deal from this experience that I can use in my chosen career and as life experience, which will look great on my CV and any job that I apply for. (AL G10)

This matches the rhetoric of University policy documents about developing students as global citizens and about the necessity to take advantage of extra-curricular activities to support this. One tutor too identified this as a motive:

Well, I think it's because, as I always say to the students, you have got to do something different. Over and above being a good University of Plymouth, Newly Qualified Teacher, what else can you do? (Tara, Tutor 2, Education)

Students appeared to agree with this employability enhancement agenda, considering that engagement in an study visit would demonstrate to future employers that they had done more at University than just their degree. This was a typical response:

This trip would show that I have taken into consideration the education (systems) of third world countries and how they present their curriculum. It will also show that I have extended my studies outside the lecture theatres, which will display that I can put my studies into practice. (AL G7)

Many students commented that it would also indicate their values and a wider international perspective:

I think it shows passion as well, it shows that you're committed to children and you, you want to go that extra mile to really sort of have this holistic idea of how teaching works all over the world and not just in this country. (Ginny GS1 FG1)

The students also suggested that the experience, as well as enhancing their CVs, would benefit their studies, that it would:

.....help me with my current degree.....also help with my future studies and make me stand out when looking for a job in the future, as employers will be able to see I have a wider knowledge of childcare that is not just in this country. (AL G2)

This may suggest that the students had been persuaded by the rhetoric surrounding international study visits put forward by the University marketing materials and by tutors during Open Days. However, they may also have felt a requirement to justify the considerable expenditure on a study visit, especially if funded by parents, in terms of concrete benefits to their career, rather than in terms of less tangible aspects of learning or of personal enjoyment. They considered that simply by participating in an international study visit to put on their CV they would acquire both symbolic and cultural capital. Understandably there is no recognition that this belief is based upon an assumption that learning would automatically arise from participation, or that they may be faced with difficult issues on the visit, or that their values and attitudes might be changed by such participation.

There was evidence that the students were also becoming aware of the changing nature of the schools in the UK (Perry and Southwell 2011), and of the implications of this for their future careers:

Schools in the UK are becoming more diverse in terms of culture and ethnicity. However there is still a minority in the South West schools. Therefore this trip will broaden my knowledge of working with different cultures and will benefit my practice. (AL G15)

This can happen without an international visit, as similar benefits can also be derived by those choosing the visit to a multi-ethnic inner-city area of London. A participant in the latter made a very similar point – that it would:

provide an insight into how teachers manage a multi-cultural class and will enable me to learn, first-hand, about some of the practices that have to be factored in to teaching to enable each child to learn and feel comfortable in that environment. (WF RB2)

Another dimension of this 'selfish' motivation about employability was that some students expressed their interest in preparing themselves for working abroad in the future:

When I finish my degree I'm hoping to work with children in Third World countries, especially in Africa. (AL G1)

A tutor leading the trip to Redbridge suggested that a number of the students involved were considering working in inner-city schools, whether for selfish or altruistic motives, and again saw such a visit as an opportunity to evidence some experience on their CV:

We have students who specifically want to apply for a first job in a big city and they're particularly interested in large multi-cultural schools, many languages. Interested in improving their own expertise with EAL (English as an Additional Language). (Tara, T2, Education)

In general, the students seemed to place more emphasis on the improvement in their own professional practice than on learning more about the pupils they might encounter. A student visiting the Czech Republic comments:

From a professional point of view, I am looking forward to seeing how the Czech education system works, and hopefully pick up some useful teaching approaches that will help me become a better teacher back in England. (AL Cz1)

Even when they commented on experiencing teaching with limited resources, the emphasis was upon how this might make a difference to their practice through acquiring better techniques:

Within the western world we have access to a large amount of resources, including the latest modern technology, that can aid us in our teaching. Having the chance to see teachers in action that do not have access to these luxuries will help me learn new and inventive techniques for creating enthusiasm within the classroom. (AL G17)

There was very little emphasis upon providing more appropriately for children's learning in different situations by coming to appreciate differences in cultural contexts.

Some did touch upon the wider dimension, like the student who asked:

How are such important topics conveyed to the children without the "necessary" resources? Is the learning as effective?..... It also interests me how children of African cultures learn language and speech. Phonics is obviously an essential aspect of early years education in the United Kingdom but with many people of African backgrounds speaking a number of languages how are these effectively taught? (AL G3)

This curiosity and questioning clearly offers the potential for students to consider the socio-historical contexts of key educational approaches, such as the teaching of phonics, which could lead to an enhancement of their intercultural capabilities.

Some students mentioned increased cultural awareness as a motivation, and the idea of a 'cultural shock', shaking up their existing ideas; a student visiting Redbridge argued:

I feel that I need a culture shock, by being thrown into a trip with many diverse cultures working together. (AL R4)

Tutors too touched on aspects of cultural development, for example:

I hope to perhaps enable them to get rid of any cultural stereotypes and to enhance their subject knowledge with English as an Additional Language and Religious Education. (Tara, Tutor 2, Education)

There is some evidence that their motivations for participating in an international study visit were in part to experience new cultural experiences, to learn about alternative ways of doing things and to learn from others – all of which, according to

Deardorff (2006), could help to develop intercultural capabilities. But what was also evident was that the students did not articulate their motivations as being to develop their intercultural capabilities, as it was not a concept they were familiar with, and had neither been highlighted through the marketing and recruitment nor articulated by their tutors.

A more specific focus for this opportunity to experience the new was strongly articulated by tutors - gaining first-hand experience of different educational systems, sometimes with links to comparative education or other modules. One tutor claimed:

They certainly get a good insight into the kindergarten or pre-school system over there and so are able to make comparisons with their own experience in England, so in terms of enriching their study and that particular module, that's very good for them as well. Professionally. (Theo, Tutor 4, Education)

and Ian, the International Coordinator, concurred:

I think it can add to their perspectives of what education can be about, if they have been brought up in one country and experienced one educational system and one method of teaching approach. (Ian, International Coordinator)

But it is crucial to recognise that, as Hill (2006) argues, simply gaining knowledge about a different system and culture is not enough in itself; there has to be an active desire to understand and appreciate the differences in approaches (Chen and Starosta 1998) and in particular, a humility and a respect for the 'other' which can lead to a willingness to learn from these experiences. This was understood by the tutor who commented:

From the School of Education point of view my biggest thing is that they look at education outside of their own experience.....to question education, not just to accept it, but actually to look at it, form opinions on it and I think the more international experiences, the more

different perspectives they can gain, the better. (Thomas, Tutor 1, Education)

Such approaches are opening up possibilities for critical questioning and learning to learn from the practice of others, central aspects of Andreotti's (2011) stages in developing intercultural capabilities. One of the Social Work tutors interviewed clearly understood the limitations of a comparative approach based simply upon knowledge of other systems and saw it as her responsibility to take a more active role in encouraging and developing critical thinking, leading to potential changes in practice:

.....part of that discussion is looking at it not as a comparative model. So we're not saying "You go over and, say, look at how they do things there and compare it to here", but actually "What do you as a learner get from being there and how do you then bring that back into the UK? Make sense of it so that you can incorporate that learning into how you are as a social work practitioner here in the UK". (Charlotte, Tutor 9, Social Work)

Having opportunities to find out about a different education system was also identified as a motivation by many students. Typical comments were:

I believe that the experience will add real depth to my understanding of alternative approaches to the provision and practice in early years; which in turn will enable me to be a better-rounded professional. (AL G16)

Exploring different methods of childcare and teaching styles within [The] Gambia will give me the chance to see what is important to others from a different culture, therefore also giving me an insight into different perspectives and cultural differences. I can use this new understanding to then go on and implement it in my own practice whilst caring for children. (AL G13)

The motivation of experiencing first-hand a different educational context also applied for the students going on trips to European countries or to Redbridge. The latter emphasised the benefits to their future pupils of improving their own subject

knowledge for Humanities and their understanding of teaching children with English as an Additional Language, and this sometimes went further than a mere functional increase in skills and/or knowledge:

As a trainee teacher, if I could learn more about communities in London, building and reflecting on my experiences as a child, I will have a more in-depth understanding of the cultures and religions of those I hope to teach in the future. I want to learn so much more about celebrating diversity in the classroom, improving my professional knowledge and experience of aspects such as English as an Additional Language and Modern Foreign Languages so that I can become a teacher that values and includes every child in my class. (AL R1)

Such motivations again open up the possibility of developing intercultural capabilities, particularly through being prepared to try new ways of thinking and doing. Hansen (2002) argues that this will lead them to become 'worldminded' through the development of their professional knowledge, and there is a clear potential here to build upon such interest in alternative approaches to look critically at their existing practice, and to learn from others. However, Andreotti (2011) would argue that this will only happen consistently if they are exposed to a deliberate process of making connections with the socio-historical processes that have shaped these different contexts.

Another clear element in the motivation of many of the students might be described as 'curiosity', or, in the formulation of Andreotti and De Souza (2008a), the 'tourist' motive. For some, their own limited experience was a driver to going on a trip:

coming from rural Devon, you do not get to experience different cultures and religions working together. (AL R4)

Having lived in Devon my entire life, I have only ever gained experience in primary schools and early years settings within Devon

and Cornwall. I understand that pupils in Gambia are often under-privileged in terms of access to education and that resources can be scarce. Therefore, teaching within a Gambian school will be a vast contrast from what I am used to here in the Westcountry. (AL G16)

And for a student going to Redbridge:

because I'm from Devon, so I have never really come across people with English as an Additional Language. (Ruth FG8 RS2)

Some participants saw international study visits as an opportunity to enlarge their experience, to encounter a new country and a new culture in an organised and protected way by travelling in a group with experienced tutors. Some welcomed the chance to do this before getting caught up in full-time work after qualifying. Some were explicitly attracted by the chance of cultural encounters, which links with Aman's claim that students are driven "by desire, a longing for the remote and a yearning for the cultural Other. Other cultures are somewhere elsewhere, spaces on to which fantasies can be projected." (2013:17).

A student engaging in a reflective exercise before the trip to the Czech Republic exemplified this element of motivation:

So how do I feel about spending a considerable amount of time in a country where I probably won't understand a whole lot of the language, where I might encounter strange customs and a different system of educating children? Surprisingly excited! (Cz S Pre-trip Reflection)

Once again, there were possibilities for the promotion of intercultural capabilities, with the students curious, excited, eager to travel and have new experiences, and tutors who wanted to provide them.

However, the study revealed a tutor dilemma over this. Several tutors defined many student participants as not being ready to encounter the challenges of cultural diversity – a surprising perception given the high proportion of participants who were experienced travellers.

There's a lot of them that haven't travelled; there's a lot of them who are very dependent still on family. They have got the roots but they haven't got the wings and I think that this helps with that (Teresa, Tutor 3, Education)

The same tutor acknowledged the benefits in terms of widening the experience and developing the self-confidence of students but looked to shield and support them:

Because an awful lot of them would not go away under their own steam. And to sort of empower them to travel, and with, for example, the Denmark trip they are second years, they are quite young and a lot of them have not done much travelling. After their placement they have to travel for a month under the terms of the Erasmus funding and when we see them in the September they've been all over the place and Europe you know and trains and stuff like this and that's just amazing. (Teresa, Tutor 3, Education)

It was as if they were taking on a protective 'parental' role, a possibility that Akinbode (2013) identified in her work with teachers. But there is a real danger here that students who feel uncomfortable or even threatened by any unfamiliar experiences will be shielded from considering the implications, and so will be unlikely to shift from their ethnocentric stance (Hiller and Woźniak 2009). This may even lead to a regression to previously held ideas rather than to an enhancement of their intercultural capabilities (Jackson 2010).

On the other hand it may result in gains in confidence, independence and understanding – goals identified by some students and by tutors as a motivation. As one student put it:

Experiencing such things would mean I can bring home a fuller understanding, develop important life values and use the skills and knowledge within my practice to my advantage as a teacher. (AL G19)

A feature of the tutors' comments was that they often commented more strongly on what they saw as the personal growth of the students than on the professional, instancing, for example, increased confidence and the ability to work with others as the major gains:

I always make it very clear that, that going overseas is all about..... team work in a sense, particularly with the BEs. You are not going to survive in a school unless you are prepared to see yourself as part of a team. And there's nothing like being, finding out how a team works and who can play to their strengths.....if you are out of your comfort zone. (Theo, Tutor 4, Education, in FG2)

Leadership was also highlighted:

Something I have really noticed with the trip to the Czech Republic and subject specialists, is that the leaders in the group can change and there is an opportunity for leadership perhaps with people who've got that edge on the confidence about being out and about in a new place, who may not necessarily have emerged as leaders in the activities here. (Tara, Tutor 2)

And Ian, the International Coordinator, took this further with his confident, if unsupported, assertion that:

Research shows that students who go on trips abroad have likelihood in the future of being leaders in certain fields. (Ian, International Coordinator)

The students themselves did not articulate the development of these abilities as a motivation, but they often commented after the visit that they felt their confidence had increased.

Another strong motivation frequently expressed by students going on the Gambia study visits was that of wanting to 'help' the less fortunate, providing aid and resources, with a strong underlying sense that it would bring pleasure to the recipients and therefore to themselves. Typical comments were:

I've always been passionate about helping others who are less fortunate than me and looking at ways in which outcomes for children and their families living in poverty can be improved. (AL G13)

I always thought that I would like to take resources out to an African school myself, in the future and see the delight on the children's faces. (AL G14)

The benign intentions behind such motives are obvious but current research in development education, as discussed in Section 3.4, warns us that underpinning this stance is likely to be an ethnocentric 'colonialist' assumption of the superiority of one's own way of life and of its systems, of an unquestioned right to share this superior knowledge and expertise and of the necessary benefit to the recipients. One student epitomised this stance:

I will be able to give something back to the community I visit. This could be by having the opportunity to teach the children and maybe show them techniques, games and lessons that would help them that they have never experienced before. I am sure they will be interested to learn about my lifestyle and how life differs back here in England. (AL G17)

There was often an assumption that aspects of life in The Gambia were inferior:

Through experiencing a way of life which is less fortunate than our own it helps us to be less selfish and appreciate what we have and how lucky we are compared to others.This trip to Gambia would be an eye-opener and will give me an insight into some of the barriers in life which developing countries have to face. This will enable me to explore my own thoughts about ways in which I could help children and families that I come into contact with throughout my profession, whilst also developing my knowledge and understanding, helping me to empathize with their situations. (AL G13)

The last comment encapsulates one of the major themes emerging from the study. International study visits may well offer an influential context for the reconsideration of many key issues and participating students may be predisposed and motivated to learn from them. However, without a challenge to any existing preconceptions and the introduction of new perspectives, the students may be left with their existing attitudes about the Majority World and may even have them reinforced (Martin and Wyness 2013). For example, it was interesting that the immediate reaction of participants on their return from one trip was to raise money for a well ⁴ for a community they had visited, following one of the stereotypical 'aid' patterns presented in the media, rather than choosing one of the several more interesting and different opportunities and possibilities that they had encountered, such as supporting the training of young unemployed Gambian men in organic gardening.

The motivation to 'help' did not figure at all in the Education tutors' comments. It may be that this reflected a greater sophistication in their understandings of the limitations and even dangers of 'aid' for the Majority World, but they did not identify such matters in talking about student learning from the trip, nor did they see challenging and developing student attitudes as part of their role in leading a trip. By contrast, the Health Tutor interviewed was very conscious that there may be gaps and limitations in student motivations for undertaking placements:

They're going for very personal reasons. They're going because they want to see differences in clinical practice. I don't think they are alive to, in the preparation of it and the run up to it, cultural diversity and

⁴ In February 2011 a group of students visited a family in a rural area of Gambia whose well had collapsed. Back in the UK they organised a series of fund-raising events, such as a 24 hour sponsored walk, and raised a sum of money to build a new well.

ethnicity, for example, as issues that they want to explore. (Colin, Tutor 5, Health)

He clearly saw the tutor role as using placement experiences as the basis for extending student understanding. He argued that tutors must be professionally concerned to enhance their students' capabilities through the learning activities that they are involved with, and so this should be a foremost motivation for tutors to participate in international study visits.

The participation of Education tutors was largely motivated by the professional satisfaction and the personal enjoyment gained from leading trips:

Because of my own interest in religious education, multi-cultural education, and so on, that really appeals to me.....I get a huge amount out of travel myself and I really like to share that experience with trainee teachers who perhaps have not had that experience before. (Tara, Tutor 2, Education)

It might be selfish but I get enormous kicks seeing these students develop as individuals and having that opportunityI think with The Gambia, they, nearly everybody, just says it's life-changing and to see, to sort of do a very similar trip each year, and to see it through their eyes every year, it's just a real privilege, amazing. (Teresa, Tutor 3, Education)

All tutors were asked what they saw as the likely benefits to students of engaging in an international study visit. Ian, the International Coordinator, saw this as a very broad question:

Well, one basic question should be asked before any trip commences and it's about gain. How are the students gaining by going on this trip? Because we're not in the holiday experience business, we're in education. So how are the students gaining? But that's a very broad question and I guess a subset of that should be in what ways are they gaining? And is that gain the same over time or does it change? (Ian, International Coordinator)

When asked to expand on this, to get a clearer idea of what he expected students to be learning from international study visits, his response was initially unspecific:

..... it's very individual, each trip is so different in terms of its opportunities that [long pause] I do like to have an idea, a clear idea about what the trip's for.....But I think some basic questions such as: How do students gain? In what ways do they gain? How does gain change over time? And is it value for money and value for effort [long pause] by all parties? (Ian, International Coordinator)

But he added that international study visits were to enable students:

to go abroad to gain experiences that enhance their education here at university, that underpin aspects of modules, that provide students with support with modules that have been taught or will be taught. It provides students with valuable experiences that they hitherto probably couldn't gather or gain here in Britain. (Ian, International Coordinator)

These goals are very much those identified in the previous section on Recruitment and relate to the University's drive to internationalise the curriculum. Mary, the Associate Dean Teaching and Learning, supported these goals for an international study visit, suggesting that:

it's about being able to see, to interact with people within their own contexts. We cannot create those contexts within a classroom or lecture theatre. (Mary, Associate Dean Teaching and Learning)

There was an implication that international study visits offer the possibility of promoting cultural awareness from within the culture through interacting with, empathising with, and coming to understand it in terms of its own frame of reference, a key element in the development of intercultural capabilities. Yet this was not made specific.

Exploring the facet further with the Health and Social Work tutors proved to be illuminating, as they were more able than the tutors in the School of Education to

articulate what they saw international study visits adding to the students' University experience:

Well, for me the whole point of international electives is not just for professional development. It's not just an opportunity to enhance professional skills and competencies. They have three years with us to do that. So for me it's more about personal growth and self-development. The old chestnut of expanding horizons, challenging oneself, getting out of one's comfort zone. All those issues about meeting new people and new cultures, which are not quantifiable but as we all know, those of us that have done it, can bring enormous benefits personally... (Colin, Tutor 5, Health)

And Charlotte, one of the Social Care tutors, placed this process in a wider international and cultural context:

I think the greatest learning for them is what they learn about themselves, I really do ... having the courage to put yourself in a place where you don't know any of the rules, having the courage to explore a placement, an agency, a setting where English might not be a first language. Trying to make sense of it and just, all the stuff it teaches them about themselves in terms of their own resilience, their own understanding of what social work is, their own identity as whether they are a white western British person or not, you know, whatever that means. So for some students it's about being an ethnic minority and everything that goes with it. Understanding colonialism and the history of a country and their part you know, how long a list could be, it is just endless and I feel very much that those placements for those students are transformational. They are absolutely transformational ... (Charlotte, Tutor 9, Social Work)

What was also missing from the Education tutors' comments was any identification of their own learning from the experiences. The Social Work tutors expressed a stronger sense of being themselves professionally developed through supporting students undertaking international placements:

because it is interesting to kind of broaden my understanding of social work through those international lenses. So I learn a lot from supporting those students here, as well as offering them an opportunity to learn as well. (Jane, Tutor 6, Social Work)

Charlotte identified that students on international placement are:

actually trying to make sense of it, in a social work, in a global social work way. Which is fantastically challenging for us as supervisors or tutors that support them. Because, I can't know everything about the countries they are going to, so they teach me. (Charlotte, Tutor 9, Social Work)

As a result,

the fact that you have students undertaking such a massive learning experience and sharing that experience with us means that we undertake quite a lot of learning with them and it can't help but permeate what we do and how we do it. (Charlotte, Tutor 9, Social Work)

One reason for this stronger element of tutor learning was that Social Work students are formally debriefed on their return and are required to present their findings to fellow students as a process of dissemination.

It is clear from this analysis of motivations that for the students the key motives for going on an international study visit fits with the analysis of Andreotti and De Souza (2008a), being a varied mix of 'selfish' gains in personal and professional development (the 'career teacher'), the wish to help and improve (the 'missionary'), the interest in widening their own limited experience of abroad (the 'tourist'), and the concern to observe and compare cultural difference (the 'anthropologist').

Not one of these motivations will in itself lead to the development of intercultural capabilities since, as indicated in Section 3.8, each has inbuilt limitations. However, each can offer potent experiences to students on the trips and these experiences in turn offer considerable opportunities for the development of intercultural capabilities, provided that participants are given support to rearrange their cultural baggage and to

consider other perspectives, as urged by Andreotti and De Souza (2008a). However, such a process of support was not explicitly identified as a major goal by the Education Tutors, for reasons to be discussed, so such learning is likely to occur only with those individuals who are already predisposed and motivated to take on board the wider issues, such as this student:

Within my society I feel there is a limited amount of information shown and discussed regarding the issues and situations I would expect to experience in The Gambia. Because of this, I am looking forward to having the chance to experience this first hand and produce my own opinions and views. (AL G17)

5.4 Summary

In analysing the data for these two facets, Recruitment and Motivation, I discovered that the Education tutors were not specifically recruited to promote intercultural capabilities during international study visits, whereas the Social Work tutors articulated the way that such visits can support the promotion of intercultural capabilities and an understanding of postcolonialism and saw this as their role. The Education students were not recruited on the basis that the visit would enhance their intercultural capabilities. The focus was on learning about the educational practices of another country and on improving their confidence and team-work skills in order to boost their CV. The trips are extra-curricular with no funding from the University. This leads to a financial barrier for the majority of students, compounded by some personal resistances and policy barriers.

6. Analysis of Data: Organisation and Pedagogy

In this chapter, the second two facets, organisation of the visits and pedagogical approach, are analysed and discussed to ascertain the ways in which these may promote the students' intercultural capabilities.

6.1 Organisation of study visits

It was noted in Section 2.5 that the international study visits in the School of Education enjoy an uncharacteristic independence from the usual patterns of academic oversight unless they are part of the school experience of student teachers, when they are governed to a degree by the criteria and Standards covering such placements. The trips to The Gambia, the main focus of this study, were particularly 'extra-curricular' since they involved no element of placement or teaching practice and no direct link with a module. The teaching and learning during the visits were very much shaped by the approaches of the tutors involved and in particular by the School of Education International Co-ordinator. I therefore conducted two interviews with Ian to explore this aspect.

Firstly, it was a surprise, in the light of my analysis of the relevant University and Faculty policy and structure and of its importance in transmitting and implementing strategy, to learn that he had been appointed with no specific job description or detailed remit.

Interestingly, I have never been given a remit of the role.....So formally there is no itemised list within my field of expertise or roleI think that actually works better for both parties. (Ian, International Coordinator)

He conceded that initially this had been a drawback, as he was unsure of how best to develop the international aspect of the School of Education's work, but subsequently he considered the lack of clear expectations to be an advantage, in that he could be innovative and creative, following up opportunities as they arose without having to seek University approval or being bound by detailed guidelines or regulations. When asked about the impact of guidelines for international study visits, Ian was aware of the University's Fieldwork Guide and of the then Faculty's Guidelines for Health and Safety, stating that these were currently under review and that he was involved with the discussions, but he did not indicate that they were taken into account for the trips he organised.

There appeared to be no direct, formal lines of communication between Ian and the Internationalisation Committee through the Faculty and School structures. This would have been covered if there had been a strong line of accountability and reporting by Ian to Adam, who as Head of School was Ian's line manager and the lead on Internationalisation. However, historically this link had been tenuous, since responsibility for the conduct and evaluation of international study visits was devolved almost entirely to the International Coordinator and the trip leaders working with him. Similarly, Ian did not have any direct link or two-way flow of information with the Teaching and Learning Committees. He did report to the ITE Primary Programme Committee in their termly meeting (Appendix 5.1), but not to the other Programme Committees in the School. What this meant was that although he could and did take account of University policy, he was in practice decoupled from it, from the Teaching and Learning Policy's focus on the internationalisation of the curriculum, and so from

any expectations or requirements that international study visits would promote any particular learning goals. In response to my question about Faculty or University guidelines (Appendix 2.4 Q3). Ian made no reference to the Internationalisation Strategy or the Teaching and Learning Strategy, nor did he indicate how these might potentially shape the nature and the pattern of international study visits. He also did not reveal whether he had any input into updating these. He did recommend that in the Faculty the management of internationalisation activity should be streamlined, as some aspects might be being duplicated; he was willing to take this on, but this had yet to be decided by the Faculty leadership team.

Although this level of ‘independence’ in no way constitutes a necessary weakness, it does mean that international study visits in the School of Education have been conducted almost entirely within Ian’s philosophy and preferred approach, which is based upon a very particular definition of experiential learning. He did not see the visits as promoting any specific types of or areas of learning but as enabling students to:

gain experiences that enhance their education at university, that underpin aspects of modules, that provide students with support with modules that have been taught or will be taught. It provides students with valuable experiences that they hitherto probably couldn’t gather or gain here in Britain. (Ian, International Coordinator)

Notably, he insisted that these experiences would and should be entirely individual, not defined or shaped by tutor expectations or pre-empted by pre-trip preparation. The experience itself would be (almost) everything and the resulting learning would occur through the individual’s own process of making sense:

.... to a certain degree, nothing beats going abroad. I think some things can be helpful for students who can't go abroad in gaining some of the advantages that some students have by going abroad. But there again I think that opens another can of worms, which is, if in the future those students did go abroad, has some of their experience been interrupted or pre-empted or has their vision been tainted before going abroad, as one of the values of going somewhere like Africa is the true immersion with little research done beforehand. And I have seen first-hand that effect of students doing too much research beforehand, their prior-held expectations influence the actual experience. (Ian, International Coordinator)

For him it is important there should be major restrictions upon the sharing with others on the trip and upon any kind of subsequent dissemination of the learning to those students who have not been able to participate or who may be planning to participate in future trips, since without such restrictions the 'purity' of their vision may be 'tainted' and their learning somehow compromised. Because the Gambia study visits are extracurricular, such a position is tenable, though highly debatable. As discussed in Section 5.1, students are not recruited on the promise of particular learnings to be gained but of personally meaningful and enjoyable experiences and an enhancement of their CV.

Almost all of the student participants in the study expressed positive views about the trips, though it might be argued that some of this resulted from avoiding cognitive dissonance, in that the considerable expenditure of time and money demanded justification in terms of benefits experienced. The positive comments, such as "A life-changing experience" (WF G8), were usually very general, even when expressed at greater length:

I feel making these links across cultures and countries can help you learn so much, not just on a personal level but in terms of opening your eyes and views up to the world around us. This experience has truly impacted upon my views of the world and our place within it, and

will remain a memorable and life-changing event for me. (Gambia PDP2)

Tutors also expressed a strong sense that individuals had gained considerably from the experience, for example this tutor's comment about a student who had been to The Gambia:

She came back, I think, transformed by it....its difficult to quantify those things before you actually go... (Teresa, Tutor 3, Education)

though it may be relevant that once again the benefits identified were unspecific. A vague sense of pleasure and gain is a very different outcome from a clear awareness of resulting changes in attitudes and understandings.

The experiential approach offers opportunities for such changes but it can be critiqued on several levels. As practised in the visits studied, it was a 'laissez-faire' approach, in which the tutors were organisers and facilitators, following Ian's beliefs that preparing the students and directing their responses in any way would somehow restrict or even 'contaminate' their individual experience. This had very powerful effects upon the ways the trips were organised, as will be seen in the following sections. Another criticism is that it considerably limited tutors in the ways that they could make use of situations where students experienced cognitive or emotional disequilibrium. For example, whilst tutors were prepared to handle with reassurance and protectiveness distressing situations, such as a female student being propositioned and harassed in the street, they felt inhibited in using them as the basis for deepening understanding and empathy, for instance by considering why young Gambian males might consider white females as wealthy and sexually available. Students were sometimes left with

disturbing experiences unresolved. The following, from a focus group, showed a student still affected some time later:

And I just remember thinking “You are here and the children want to spend time with you and talk to you and you have to do it” and I was just thinking, “Please, I am so tired”, and I had really mixed emotions because I was frustrated with myself for not wanting to participate as much as I should but then I just physically didn’t have the energy to do it and it was a really weird situation to be in... obviously we all love children and that is why we are here but I just remember thinking, “Oh gosh!” cos it wasn’t just one child, it was three or four, and I barely had the energy to keep myself going, never mind the weight on your arms and it wasn’t just the physical contact, it was the conversation they wanted and I just remember thinking “I just can’t... I can’t talk to you”, I just needed to take five and just ... that is something I found really difficult and I guess I still feel a bit guilty in a way. (Greta FG3 GS2)

The in-trip reflective discussions reflected this sense of confusion throughout (Appendix 3.5). Even when students ‘resolved’ unexpected or unpleasant situations with an explanation, the experiential approach left them open to arriving at unjustifiably negative or prejudiced explanations, or to closing off consideration of other, more likely, conclusions, as with this student’s experience in the market:

We found that as we walked around the market we received quite a bit of hostility. People pushed and made clicking noises at us if they wanted us to move. Our presence attracted negative attention. This is understandable as we were probably considered to be slowing their pace of activity. (WF G12)

This experiential approach to the conduct, organisation and pedagogy of the international study visits, particularly the ones to The Gambia, was all-pervasive, since Ian had always inducted new tutors into this approach, as he described:

So far the model I have used for the past six years is to set up a trip myself, to run it myself and then to pass it over to another member of staff, probably after running it myself for at least two years. Run the trip with the person, probably for two years. Get to know how good

they are at it, how efficient they are and gently hand over the experience to them. I'll then be in close contact for any handover issues, or new developments, there always are some. (Ian, International Coordinator)

He considered that direct experience of his model was the best training and preparation for leading a trip oneself:

perhaps to go and join another trip to see how that's run before embarking on their own on a new trip. To try and learn from the experience of others doing one. (Ian, International Coordinator)

Whatever the limitations of this, Ian's colleagues were certainly very positive about the support they had received from him and about the major contribution he has made to extending international opportunities in the School, as discussed in Section 5.1.

But possibly the greatest concern about adopting an experiential approach to an educational visit is that it is likely to lead to vagueness about pedagogy and about learning intentions and objectives, a concern which was discussed in Section 3.6. I therefore asked each of the tutors whether there were set criteria or guidelines for their particular trips. Their responses initially focussed almost entirely on Health and Safety issues and on procedures for gaining permissions. When pressed about learning objectives, the tutors made no mention of intercultural capabilities or related ideas and once again stressed the experiential emphasis upon individual learning:

Although we do have a set programme, there is freedom within that....We do tend to stick to a tried and tested formula but we try to adapt it. It's evolving year on year as new experiences come up and we try things, and it also depends on the groups, because each group coming at it is different, has different needs. So I think we have the flexibility because we haven't got specific learning objectives to match, so it's a nice advantage of an experiential trip. (Thomas, Tutor 1, Education)

Several times a vague and unspecified shared understanding between colleagues was invoked rather than planned objectives:

... we have got no written objectives for Gambia but a colleague and I are very much on the same wave-length, I think, in terms of what we want them to get out of the trip. (Thomas, Tutor 1, Education)

The danger of this is that it leaves students with an colonialist anthropological lens, as evidenced in Lines 27-33 of Appendix 3.5.

This attitude also emerged when talking to tutors involved with study visits other than the ones to The Gambia. A strategy involving a 'making-it-up as we go along' approach, both before and during a trip, but within an agreed organisational framework, was clearly explained by one of the tutors:

Well, I have just worked that one out as we have gone along, because the Redbridge one is linked anyway to placements and school experience, and the Humanities visit to the Czech Republic is linked to modules, but it's loosely linked in as much as it's largely about enrichment in the Humanities subjects and the experience as well. But, yes, it needs to have some sort of a connection to what the students are doing here rather than being an excuse to go on holiday, because they can do that for themselves. (Tara, Tutor 2, Education)

whilst another invoked shared professionalism:

Nothing that I know that's written.....I think it's sort of our professional judgement really. (Theo, Tutor 4, Education)

This is possibly a valid approach if the international study visits are seen as extracurricular experience on a voluntary basis but less satisfactory if they are claimed to be contributing specifically to crucial areas of learning. The degree to which this approach was specific to the School of Education was confirmed by the interviews with colleagues from the other Schools of Health and Social Care. Charlotte, Colin and Jane

made it clear that their international placements were tightly tied to specific programmes of study and therefore were expected to result in relevant learning outcomes.

6.2 Conduct of the study visits

The strongly experiential approach to the visits to The Gambia and the tutor imprecision about learning objectives shaped many aspects of trip organisation, with consequent implications for the ability to develop the students' intercultural capabilities. The reluctance to direct the student experience meant that the tutor role was almost entirely facilitative and responsive, taking direction mainly from the progress of events and from student initiatives, requests, anxieties or complaints.

The Review of Literature, Section 3.9, suggested that certain aspects of the organisation of an international study visit have to be in place if it is to be conducive to the promotion of students' intercultural capabilities. The nature of the trip organisation is therefore considered under the following four headings: pre-trip briefing, in-trip activities, post-trip reflection, and dissemination to the wider student body.

6.2.1 Pre-trip briefing

It emerged from the study that students invited to participate in the trip on the basis of their letter of application (see Section 5.1) were emailed by tutors to invite them to a single pre-trip meeting. The tutor role there was relaxed, concerned largely with

practicalities, and the meeting was allowed to be considerably shaped by student responses, as described by two of the tutors:

(We see it as) providing an information session, which I really like doing because we go in with the same attitude as we do with the whole of the trip and go in and say “We are not going to tell you anything unless you ask us the questions”, and they have to get into little groups and make a list of questions and ask us. (Teresa, Tutor 3, Education)

One year, we spent over thirty minutes answering questions and not a single person asked us how much the trip would cost! We tell them very little about the itinerary..... It is one of the privileges of our work that they trust us totally and don't feel the need to know every detail. (Thomas, Tutor 1, Education)

The tutors were even prepared to restrict the information they gave out, or to refuse to answer a question, depending upon whether they thought this would give away too much information about the kind of experiences the students would encounter. One of them explained that the aim was to:

orientate them and to answer questions and prepare them to go. Without telling them too much information. It's getting that balance right. (Teresa, Tutor 3, Education)

Clearly the purpose of the pre-trip meeting was seen as offering the minimum necessary to reassure participants, to:

make sure that they are not scared, that they know they are going to be safe and secure. (Teresa, Tutor 3, Education, FG2)

provide a certain amount of the information there, really the basics they need to be able to travel out there safely and comfortably. (Thomas, Tutor 1, Education)

When viewed in the light of the literature on the promotion of intercultural capabilities (Sections 3.6) and on preparing students to respond to cultural diversity (Section 3.8) this approach can be seen as minimal. There is no element of agreed learning goals; no

establishing of expected levels or types of participation; no clarification or discussion about the possibility of painful or disturbing experiences and how these will be handled; and no input of material to help the participants come to grips with the aspects of cultural diversity they may encounter. All these are seen by such researchers as de Souza and Andreotti (2007) and Martin and Griffiths (2013) as important aspects of pre-trip preparation for intercultural learning. Instead the implicit messages seem to be “You don’t need to know anything about the cultures you’ll encounter” and “Come and experience/enjoy whatever happens’, with the assurance that “You will be ok’.”

The limitations of such preparation are emphasised by information emerging from the focus groups, which indicated that a number of participants had not attended the pre-visit meeting. Sometimes this was because of timetable clashes and placement issues, but sometimes it was because they expected to receive any information about the organisation and the itinerary by email, so did not give the meetings a priority. They did not see them in terms of being part of the experience. Such absences were not followed up by the tutors since they would presume that the students did not have concerns to raise or questions to be answered. This lack of preparation leaves students with a vagueness as to the purpose of the visit, as seen in Abi’s comment in Line 27 in Appendix 3.5, which she picks up again later in the discussion. They are often left drawing upon discourses that reflect deficit models of the Majority World (Martin & Griffiths 2013).

A further consequence of the Gambia trip tutors' emphasis upon the immediacy of first-hand experience in the country itself is that they actively and strongly attempt to discourage participants from doing any research beforehand, however unrealistic this attempt might be. Some students still did:

After doing some background research into the nurseries in Gambia, I was quite surprised with the amount of influence the UK had on the nurseries. Before, I just thought that we donated towards stationeries, but after reading a few articles I discovered that the UK educational system has a major influence on these nurseries, especially with teaching techniques used with the Early Years children, such as phonetics [*sic*]. (AL G23)

The student is starting to learn about the Gambian context and has the potential for furthering this understanding. Discussing in a pre-trip meeting why there is such an English influence, and what the potential benefits and limitations are, could be the basis of a subsequent post-colonial critique. It would also be possible for tutors to direct attention to topics or websites of direct relevance, if only as background – a summary of the current political situation in the host country might be both interesting and useful. In the absence of this permission and guidance, many students still looked to find out more, if only in the limited way of contacting previous participants:

have heard only excellent things from the girls who went this year (AL G11)

I was extremely envious of those who went and came back reporting what a fantastic time that they had. (AL G1)

Others drew on the prior experiences of people they considered to be reliable sources:

My parents and partner have visited Gambia and I have seen in pictures how happy and friendly the children and adults are, even though they are a lot less fortunate than ourselves. (AL G8)

The limitations of such contacts are that they are just as likely to confirm existing attitudes and even stereotypes as to open minds to new possibilities, so they compromise the hypothetically 'open-minded' approach of the experiential position, whilst losing the potential benefits of planned preparation.

The limitations of this Gambian pattern were for me shown up by becoming aware of the approach of other trips in the School and the Faculty. For some international study visits, such as the ones to Hungary and the Czech Republic, there was recognition by tutors of the importance of preparation, for example:

the students could get more from the trips if we better equip them with that appreciation, that more kind of critical standpoint, when we look at doing comparative perspectives. (Vicky, Tutor 10, Education)

For these visits, a series of pre-trip meetings offered the participants opportunities to meet with some host-country students who were studying on the same course at Plymouth University. Thus the UK students learned about some cultural aspects and picked up some basic language:

I think I find it quite interesting, like, because the Hungarian students came over here, it was kind of nice to talk to them outside of lectures to find out more about them. (Holly FG7 HS13)

The UK students had also often undertaken their own research on the weather, the food and their accommodation, and so were already beginning to encounter aspects of cultural difference. However, there was no mention in the focus groups with them of tutors presenting deliberate strategies to engage them in reflecting upon their motivations for going, and to perhaps challenge some of the lenses discussed above. There were instances, such as with the Czech trip, where the students' preconceptions were discussed, for example on racism, in order to prepare them for potentially

disturbing situations they might well encounter, and they were given suggestions as to how to respond. However, this was very much a particular focus resulting from the tutor's own previous experiences, rather than being generalised to wider cultural issues.

A different kind of pre-trip preparation was embodied in the Redbridge visit which also required students to apply for a place in writing. The tutor very clearly set out in advance the aims of the visit and expected a clear response to these in the application letter:

I am looking for why is it that they want to go to London Borough of Redbridge. How will they connect it to their broader learning, their subject knowledge, particularly EAL and religious education? How are they linking it to their own plans for teaching? Their own experience? And also what it is that they feel that they can contribute to the trip, which they find more difficult, obviously, but to have some sort of an idea that that part of it is important. I have had letters from some - they just said they would like to go to London because they have not been there before. But that's not really what I am after. (Tara, Tutor 2, Education)

This pattern at least gave the students some prior sense of the trip's learning intentions and what would be expected from them.

I found even more of a contrast in interviewing the Health and Social Work tutors, whose approach appeared to fit well with Andreotti and de Souza's (2008a) stages of learning, outlined in Section 3.8. The Social Work and Nursing students on international placements had to follow very strict guidelines set out in the Electives Handbook (Plymouth University 2012). They had to write their own learning objectives for their international placement, source it themselves, and make all of the

arrangements. They were encouraged to start the process at least a year before they left and had to write a paper about what they hoped to gain from the placement. The Electives Handbook did include sections on Health and Safety, but also made the students consider cultural and educational issues, which the Education students going to the Gambia did not. In addition, the Social Work students were supported by their tutor in conducting prior research on the placement setting, so they learned about aspects of the historical, social, political and economic context of the locality, as well as being provided with journal articles on international experiences and intercultural capabilities. Moreover, students who had been the previous year were invited back to talk to them about the differences between going on a holiday and doing a social work placement, and also to provide examples of the paper they wrote as part of the application process. The result of this intensive pre-trip preparation was that, although only 3 or 4 of the 15-20 who initially expressed an interest actually did an international placement, they were clear about why they were going, both professionally and personally, and had given due thought to the intercultural and postcolonial issues they might face.

The importance of being prompted to make links with prior experiences in order to open up possibilities for learning was emphasised during the focus group discussions with students who were going to Redbridge (FG8). I drew attention to the potential link between their own experiences of being in a situation where they did not understand the language around them and how this might enable them to empathise with children learning English as an additional language in their teaching settings. The students' response was that they had not made the connection until I had raised it.

This demonstrated to me the importance not only of being made aware of how one's own experiences shape one's responses and understandings in intercultural situations, but also of drawing on this to appreciate the perspective of others in similar situations. However, if this is to be the basis for substantial learning it cannot be left to a chance response to a particular comment from a student but must be part of deliberate, planned interventions. It can also be argued that alerting students to such possibilities in advance increases the likelihood that they will notice examples during their visit and that they will then reflect constructively upon them, thus enriching and extending the learning to be gained. All this suggests that the very limited pre-trip preparation which is a feature of the Gambia visits may have substantially limited their contribution to the development of intercultural capabilities.

6.2.2 In-trip organisation

Another consequence of the experiential approach underpinning the Gambia study visits was clearly set out in this tutor's description of the way the trip was run:

Once we have landed in The Gambia we organise the basics, the accommodation, make sure that's ok, and each day we lead in the experience. So we will set them off with a brief meeting in the mornings explaining what the aim of the day is, which vary. We then, ideally, get the students to experience it first-hand, on their own terms as much as possible, without us doing too much leading, and then towards the end of each day we have a chance to reflect on the experience and deal with questions and sometimes it's about preparing them for a further experience. Sometimes we have guest speakers in to hopefully give a different view point. We try and keep those as open and unprejudiced as possible, so, without having the students all sharing maybe our own thoughts, try and let them make up their own minds, about whether they agree with people, disagreeing, watch them gradually form their own opinions throughout the week. (Thomas, Tutor 1, Education)

Here there were some hints of potential learning outcomes, but the undirecting, facilitative role of the tutors was made very clear. They aimed to provide exciting, challenging and often unexpected experiences, not over-determining or over-prescribing them. Students often expressed appreciation for this approach:

I really liked the idea of finding out what we were doing that day early in the morning, I think it was great to go with the flow and even the boat ride last thing on the Monday was great as we all did think we were going back to the hotel. (WF G13)

The students also gave examples of the approach giving rise to experiences which they saw as significant and powerful:

The school visit. You will never see the human impact of a poor society as vividly as when children are living it. I was upset, angry even. I began to relate what I was seeing to my child's life and couldn't, it would not compute! As time has passed and I have looked at the photos and relived the memories, there are many things that were in fact relatable; the sound of children playing football at break time, some engaged students in the class and some in another world, etc. In shock, you see only the surface, (dirt, dust, poor, no electricity, razor blades for pencil sharpeners, a hole to go to the toilet in, etc). In retrospect, however, you remember the smiles, the children that were so lucky to be in school, the intrigue and curiosity in their expressions and the general feeling of happiness and joy within the school walls. A life-changing experience. (WF G8)

However, for other students, the lack of advance preparation caused anxiety which detracted and distracted from the experience, and for a proportion there was unexpected sensory overload, as discussed by Pusch and Merrill (2008), that led to confusion, even panic:

I found the market quite claustrophobic and the smell was just... in places it was just horrible, it was so overpowering and when you're really hot and thirsty and can't move and there is that smell there is a sense of, oh my gosh, get me out of here, I can't... yet you are trying to take everything in and it's just like there is this constant buzzing in your ear and you keep catching different parts of conversations and

people on the market shouting... I suppose you are a bit like a rabbit in headlights.....(Pam FG5 GS7)

Sometimes, in tune with the tenets of experiential learning, it was possible for the students to resolve such initial confusion for themselves; one described a similar initial response to the markets but had been able to come to terms with the situation:

However, after a while of being inside the markets, I quickly came to realise that the people were very friendly and helpful, and the food situation was just a way of life over there and I shouldn't have judged. I felt much more comfortable going into the market the second time compared to the first. (WF G4)

Transformational learning requires an acceptance and an endurance of difficult emotions (Boler and Zembyas 2003; Lanas and Kiilakoski 2013). But some participants may be unwilling or unable to endure; consequently they may reject the experience, or redefine it to fit their existing beliefs and even prejudices. Moreover, even student WFG4's resolution of discomfort in terms of it being "just a way of life over there" essentially avoided serious consideration of the tricky issues raised and illustrates an ethnocentric minimisation (Bennett 2009). There was evidence of this occurring in the reflective discussion on the journey home, with the students concluding that the Gambians were poor but happy (Appendix 3.5, lines 96-110), with no recognition of the diversity within Gambian society (Martin & Griffiths 2013).

Another limitation of the experiential approach is that some painful and shocking experiences may leave students in a state of disequilibrium, which can be emotionally very upsetting, especially if the uncertainty and distress continues. There are a number of responses of this kind described in the data:

You are completely overwhelmed and when you are so overwhelmed like that and you can't do anything... I think we all did have a cry in the evening after a day when we got home. (Paula FG5 S8)

Often the students did not resolve this turmoil and were left in varying states of confusion:

For me I felt a bit uncomfortable, not because... you know, they were welcoming and they had cooked food for us but here we are, you know, wealthy to them, white people, British people and all around us are the kids and we got chairs while the kids were behind us and I felt uncomfortable and you don't know when the kids last ate or, you know, when they would eat, so I was, I'll try it because that's respectful. (Denise FG3 GS5)

we all just looked at each other and thought we can't do this... I didn't have a clue how poor they were or if you know... they know we are a lot richer than them and we can go back to the hotel and have.....(Della FG3 GS6)

In many cases, as in the following extract, the lack of resolution seemed to cry out for offering a structured and supported opportunity to talk through the issues in the presence of knowledgeable others, as advocated by Goodwin (2010):

They were going on about silent ee's and words and stuff when there wasn't silent ee's and words, and.... I really wanted to get up and go "no, no, no", and I thought no, I can't, that's undermining the teachers and that is how she has been taught. In the nursery as well..... they said they do Jolly Phonics and have some of the sound sheets in the classroom on top of the white board and I thought, no, they must be teaching the same because that is their sound sheets and I was thinking, are we wrong or are they wrong, who is teaching it wrong? (Pam FG5 GS7)

Even when students did 'resolve' for themselves such unexpected or unpleasant situations, there was arguably room for an immediate opportunity to share and to test out their 'resolution', allowing them to consider other possibly more plausible

conclusions. This certainly might have saved the following student from unnecessary self-castigation over an incident:

Yes, there was an aggressive situation⁵ that occurred. At the time I felt silly, duped, manipulated. Now I realise that I couldn't have reacted differently and the perpetrator was conditioned to act in the way he did. A symptom of society. (WF G8)

Another benefit of such reflective sharing can be that it affords tutors and fellow students the opportunity to extend and deepen the conclusions arrived at. In the following a student commented on issues of the dress code in another culture:

There was one issue which kept reoccurring, purely from a practical aspect. I had no idea what to wear in The Gambia as I didn't want to offend anyone, but at the same time I didn't want to melt in the heat! I had been told that The Gambia was a religious country with 90% of people Muslim. I had never visited an Islamic country before, and really didn't know what to expect. If I were to wear something above my knee, would I get shouted at in the street? Would I get in trouble with the authorities? Would the Gambians resent me being there, dressed in such a way? This was the one thing that made me the most nervous. I now know that in The Gambia, it's not so much about what you wear but how you present yourself. If you are polite, happy and smiling, most locals don't seem to mind. I felt so much more relaxed than I ever thought I would. (WF G4)

This simplistic conclusion, though helpful for the individual at the time, ignored, for example, the pressure upon many Gambians to tolerate certain disliked behaviours by tourists who are a major source of their income. Leaving students to discuss and reflect upon their experiences can help to resolve some of the dilemmas they have encountered, as they find out that they are not the only ones feeling discomfort and unease. However, it can still leave some issues unresolved, which comes out strongly

⁵ This participant had been hassled by a group of Gambian men in a back street. They demanded money from him.

in Appendix 3.5 as the students share their thoughts about The Gambia visit as they travel home.

A further limitation of the narrowly experiential approach is that at times it may well confirm and reinforce the existing misguided perceptions of visiting students, as in this student's sense of responsibility to help and 'make a difference', reflecting the missionary perspective:

Before going out to the Gambia, I was not really sure of what to expect. I thought that there would be extreme poverty (which there was) but it seemed different seeing it in person. On a TV it is almost not really real as you have not seen physical evidence. Having seen this first hand and walked through the streets there, I have a strong appreciation for what I have but also the difference I can make; this is as a teacher but also as a member of society. (WF G1)

If this is not unpicked and challenged these are the impressions that will remain with the student and be shared with others, thus perpetuating colonial attitudes (de Souza and Andreotti 2007; Gorski 2008). Even when there is an enhanced awareness of being the 'outsider' and a greater understanding of what this is like, the issues may still need further problematising:

I believe I am much more open minded since visiting The Gambia and my cultural awareness has increased. My visit to The Gambia reinforced my desire to work with children in low socio-economic areas, particularly working with children with EAL. Having visited The Gambia I now have first-hand experience of being the 'outsider' and I think this will definitely influence my professional practice. (WF G7)

There is clear evidence from the study that some of the students were aware of the complexities, for instance questioning the 'authenticity' of the experiences offered on the visit:

Our view was one that we tailored from what [the guide] took us to, the compounds he knew that would look after us and maybe if it was just a random compound it might not have been like that, I don't know. (FG5 GS8 Paula)

as well as appreciating some of the underlying social and cultural issues:

I understand that for the people to learn to read, write and speak English is a great way forward to develop education and make more for themselves within another country but I can't help but think that this will result in their culture, traditions and belief changing over time, which will be sad. (WF G13)

However, there can be no guarantee that all participants in the trip will be able to do this without elements of support and direction.

It is for reasons such as these that Section 3.6 argues that during the visit itself there ought to be not only opportunities for reflection on the daily experiences but also focussed analysis of the underlying process and premises. The experiential approach, as is argued by Zink and Dyson (2009), has the limitation of leaving such reflection and analysis largely to the individual's response to their personal experience, with only incidental and 'chance' support from tutors and the group. Instead, research suggests that tutors should adopt an active 'pedagogy for discomfort' (Boler and Zemblyas 2003) as a catalyst for developing students' perceptions and attitudes, picking up upon situations of uncertainty and helping the participant to probe further into the underlying issues. The tutors on the Gambia trip sensed that they did not have a mandate to engage with students in this way at the end of the day, when most were expecting the chance to relax socially in the hotel. Some sharing did take place at these times, but it was usually in the form of a 'report-back' and an anecdotal exchange,

following the pattern of a reflective discussion between students as illustrated by Appendix 3.5, rather than a more intensive learning session.

Once again, other patterns of visits or placements organised in the Faculty offered some revealing contrasts. For instance, tutors on the Hungary visit took a proactive stance over issues that arose:

We are very careful how we approach things and word things. But there's always that slight feel, like one of the nurseries we went to had a couple of children, one with autism, and I can't remember what the other one was, one had speech and language, one developmental delays and they took us to observe a session with these three children and it was a little bit like watching monkeys in the zoo.....But it did just kind of raise a little flag up, that actually, these countries are very different and actually, their views on inclusion aren't perhaps as liberal as ours. I felt particularly uncomfortable about it and I think the students did to some extent. But it was also this thing that there was a potential to ask students questions that would actually challenge what they (the Hungarian teachers) believe to be a very, very good approach in Hungary. (Vicky, Tutor 10, Education)

Once they had tours of the schools..... encouraging them to ask questions, asking the students afterwards 'How did you find that?' 'How did she (the teacher) get on with that?' and so on. (Vicky, Tutor 10, Education)

But she acknowledges that this was informal:

one of the nice things over this, was that we always had breakfast, lunch and dinner together. So we could ask them, 'What have you done today?' 'What have you learnt?' And so on. Umm, on bus journeys and things like that. (Vicky, Tutor 10, Education)

Tutors on the Gambia trips also identified such informal contexts as opportunities for sharing and reflection, but they largely saw these informal events as sufficient, whereas the Hungary trip tutor thought that some of these opportunities should be made more formal. Appendix 3.5 reveals some of the dangers of such informal

approaches. The Redbridge trip tutor also identified that the range and complexity of the experiences encountered were difficult to process within the limited time available:

Less tangible [than the diversity of languages encountered] and slightly more complex, I think, for them is the whole sort of bigger cultural picture where language and different inter-faith dialogues, what you eat, what you wear, and everything else, how that all fits together. And I think because we are there for such a short time they spend half the time sort of standing with their eyes popping out and the other part kind of really assimilating it... Tara, Tutor 2, Education

Once more, the need for organised opportunities to process the complexity of their experiences seemed clear. Contrasting the Gambia trips with the approach for Social Work placements again offered revealing insights. The latter is a more rigorous and organised approach, influenced perhaps by the important role of supervision in social work practice. The nature of tutor support for the Social Work students has to be quite different to that of the School of Education visits, in that the tutors do not accompany the students on placement at all. However, there is organised support online, usually through a weekly Skype session or via telephone if access to such technology is limited, and as Charlotte explains:

The intimacy of the relationship changes because there is a very different sense of how you support somebody who is 12000 miles away on their own and trying to look at a placement through a social work lens, not going as a volunteer, not going on holiday....

I'm saying I would like them to get what they need from it (the placement) and of course they do, 'cos I can't control it. What I can do is support them and those supervisions that we have weekly are very often a couple of hours because there is so much material there in terms of what they need to talk about and what they need to think about and so they do get a much greater intensity of support but that feels completely appropriate. (Charlotte, Tutor 9, Social Work)

Her colleague emphasises that:

the tutor will have gone through the issues and done some research and thought about it. You know it is a, it's not a kind of 'there, there, dear, you will be alright'. It's an academically rigorous level of support that is actually about reaching the student's kind of learning need, whatever that might be. (Jane, Tutor 6, Social Work)

Although the tutors clearly take their lead from the issues raised by the students, they will previously have identified areas of significance and considered carefully what might be aspects of learning to be promoted. It is arguable that tutors engaging in educational and cultural activities during the Gambia visits bear similar elements of responsibility towards students, but this responsibility is not being taken within the existing organisation of the trips.

6.2.3 Post-trip activities

Debriefing after the return to the home country supports the promotion of intercultural capabilities (see Section 3.9). In the School of Education this process is very limited. The tutors leading the Gambia international study visits do consider that they include an element of debriefing on the long return journey:

And then part of the dissemination happens on the way back, because you are travelling back. You are on the plane for several hours, again in the coach coming back, and that's pulling out the experience and also preparing them that actually it doesn't just end there. They are going to be thinking about this at least for a few days. They may have issues of communicating with other people that haven't joined them on the experience. Preparing them for that, and that it is actually an experience that could last a lifetime and get them to think about that. (Thomas, Tutor 1, Education)

However, this process is incidental and may only involve some individual students, those who are not asleep! It is also not necessarily focussed and so easily may become reminiscence and social chat:

We got there quite early at the airport and there's nothing at this airport [laughing]. It's an old army airport so it's just like an aircraft hangar basically. So we sat them all down and we had a conversation; they were all looking at their pictures and so on. (Vicky, Tutor 10, Education)

Indeed, the use of 'sat them all down' in this comment is reminiscent of a teacher with a group of children and perhaps links with the tutors' discourses in terms of looking after the students rather than organising their learning.

The request to audio-record thoughts and feelings on the journey home from The Gambia (Appendix 3.5) gave students the opportunity to share their experiences and knowing it was being recorded might have given more focus to the discussion. The transcript makes it clear there are a number of issues that are concerning the students that are not being resolved or developed. In this discussion, the students cover the assumption of the superiority of Minority World educational patterns; a questioning of the Minority World and UK developments in society by comparing the Gambian society with the loss of community in the UK because of affluence, consumerism and technological advances; a challenging of the media-based stereotypes of Africa, e.g. helplessness, poverty, 'happy Africans'. The contact with various Gambians through the visit had made these issues personal, allowing an authentic personal response to the experience. They acknowledge that the Gambians, in their perception of 'toubabs' as wealthy and to be exploited, have as distorted a perception of the Minority World as they themselves have of the Majority World, and in this show that they are open to new ways of thinking and talking about their experiences, which could have been teased out by a more knowledgeable other using a postcolonial approach to challenge the forms of knowledge they were presenting (Martin & Griffiths 2013).

The tutors do arrange a post-trip meeting, but the attendance is usually very low as the students have to give precedence to other timetable and placement commitments and it is not easy to find a time when they are all available. The students are invited by the tutors to come and celebrate and perhaps to discuss fund-raising initiatives arising from the trip, so it is unlikely that the meeting will explore serious issues of cultural diversity, since the tone of the invitation and of the meeting is that of sharing enjoyable experiences.

Organising debriefing for most of the School of Education trips is a real challenge because of their timing in the academic year. Most of them take place late in the Summer Term, and participants have often left the campus. There are no opportunities planned in for debriefing in the Autumn Term. Tutors leading trips recognised that this was a weakness of the current pattern. In the first place, some of the upsets, confusions and uncertainties arising during the trip may well not have been resolved through in-trip support, or indeed may surface after return. It was clear from the focus groups and writing frames that, weeks after, there were still unresolved personal and professional issues that would have benefited from further exploration, as seen in the comments of Pam FG5 GS7, WF G4 and WF G8, already identified in Section 6.2.2 and in this case:

I was shocked to find out that they used corporal punishment and it did make me very sad to see a girl get a smacked bottom, pulled harshly off the table and on to the chair. After a few seconds I said politely to the teacher that we are not allowed to smack in the UK, and we would lose our job if we did. She said she knew and that they didn't want to hurt them and the stick is just for threatening them with and how it keeps them in check with the behaviour and the respect. I

agreed with her and said we have gone too far the other way in the UK. She said she knew and I felt a slight embarrassment as I could only agree really at how worryingly incorrect our system is here in the UK. After much thought, I do think, after seeing the respect they have for each other, that maybe it is not so wrong. But then I say to myself but surely you can gain respect and good behaviour without smacking. In the UK we have not been able to use a cane on children for over thirty years and I would say it is only in the last ten years that standards of morals and behaviour have become a problem. And I feel it is parenting to blame. That's just my thought and I could be wrong. WF
G13

In the second place, a further process of debriefing after time for reflection would be likely to extend and deepen some of the learning from the trip.

After those visits that involve a teaching placement, like the one to the Czech Republic, the students do complete a written reflection for their Professional Development Profile and this may be discussed with their Professional Tutor. However this will tend to focus on the Teaching Standards achieved, rather than upon aspects of intercultural capability.

The students themselves naturally engaged in their own 'debriefing' via informal chats to their friends and family, sharing photographs, Facebooking and at informal social gatherings. However, as they readily acknowledged (Campbell-Barr and Huggins 2011), this was usually at a superficial level, since most of such an audience was not motivated to discuss serious matters. It certainly did not provide a forum for sharing and tackling difficult and painful issues. One student who had been to the Czech Republic commented at the end of the focus group discussion:

We have just chatted for about forty minutes on what a great time we have had, so it's going to give you a great experience if anything to

look back on. I mean every time I think about it I have always got a smile on my face; it was such a great time. (Clare FG6 CS12)

It is notable that she defined this as 'chatting' rather than as a more rigorous debriefing opportunity, perhaps reflecting that the trip was seen more as an enjoyable experience to be shared than a considerable learning opportunity.

This informality, and the lack of planned opportunities to debrief the students, was in sharp contrast to the practice in the School of Social Work, where the tutor ensured at least one major supervision meeting on the student's return to the UK. This was to give the emotional support that was often necessary as the student made sense of the learning on the placement, and it allowed for serious discussion of issues of direct relevance to the student. The students were also involved in organised dissemination activities, which will be discussed in the following section; preparing for these was a further opportunity to reflect upon and consolidate learning from the trip.

6.2.4 Dissemination

Both the tutors and the students involved in the international study visits to The Gambia, Hungary and the Czech Republic commented on the considerable personal and professional learning that is gained from them, yet there was minimal planned dissemination of this learning, whether to the wider student body or to the academic staff, something seen as highly beneficial by Walters *et al.* (2009). The study revealed a number of barriers to doing so.

The lack of dissemination for the Gambia study visits clearly derived from the underpinning emphasis upon a particular experiential approach. Some tutors considered that experiences cannot be shared but have to be experienced individually, and so other students will not benefit from learning about those experiences at second hand. There was also the view that hearing about what had happened on the international study visits would 'spoil' the experiences for those students who might want to go on the next trip since they would not experience the shock of novelty. The limitations of this viewpoint have been discussed earlier, but for the moment it remains a major factor inhibiting planned and supported dissemination to other students and tutors.

Once more, as with the post-trip debriefing, there were constraints arising from the timing of particular trips, as well as problems in co-ordinating dissemination events in a highly crowded timetable and with the pressure of students' other commitments. The Gambia trips are not linked to any particular module, so separate opportunities would have to be organised to make dissemination possible, but other trips do have such a link; for instance, the Hungary visit is linked to the Comparative Perspectives module, in which there is a presentation session timetabled after the students' return. Within the module, more general opportunities can arise through the sharing of experiences and learning in seminars, and in formal and informal discussions, particularly among the 3rd and 4th years, when students who have been on international study visits can share the different practice they have encountered.

Promoting such dissemination relies upon the students being willing to share their insights, and upon a tutor effectively encouraging and facilitating such sharing. Tutors identified that there were subtler obstacles, often deriving from the accessibility issues discussed earlier. There was an anxiety amongst them that such sharing could reactivate resentment among those students who had been forced to forgo an international study visit because of family and/or financial reasons. One of the tutors made explicit this thinking:

I don't ask those that have been, third years that have been on the Humanities trip to the Czech Republic. I don't ask them back to serenade to the rest of the group because we have to ask them to pay for it. Many of the rest of the group would have liked to have gone too and it doesn't help them to then rub their noses in it that they didn't go and everybody else had a fantastic time. (Tara, Tutor 2, Education)

Such lack of an insistence upon reflection and engagement in dissemination devalues the learning dimensions and supports the frequent perception that such trips are largely for personal satisfaction and enjoyment. Sensitivity to student feelings, perhaps again arising from a parental stance, results in a strange dimension to the presentation session on the Comparative Perspectives module already referred to. Ironically, the students who have been on the trip to Hungary cannot choose Hungary as the subject of their presentation, because of an anxiety that the assessment process must not disadvantage those who were not able to go on the international study visit.

Of course, much dissemination that does happen is unplanned and informal. The students themselves often disseminate to the settings where they are working and to their own family and friends. As one student explained on return from The Gambia:

I feel that it is important for our children to understand that their life is very different to many other children's in the world and how lucky we are to have many resources in school. After showing a friend my photos, her 6 year old boy said that he didn't need the £60 he had just been given for his birthday and would like to send it to Africa! I have also been showing the nursery children photos and telling them stories from my trip. A few parents have commented on what they have said at home and how good it was that they are more aware of issues in other countries. One girl wants to help fundraise to build a well in Africa! Whether they do or not, it makes me wonder if my sharing of the trip to Gambia will become a memory for them and stay with them till they are older, leading them to do amazing volunteering, fund raising or sponsoring. (WF G13)

This is laudable, but it does illustrate the potential difficulties that may arise if there is no debriefing, in that in this dissemination the 'missionary' perspective is replicated with the children being encouraged to perpetuate the belief in an obligation to help, fundraise and provide aid to the Majority World. This is despite this same student's acknowledgment that:

Before my visit I thought how wonderful it would be to have nursery settings funded and set up by English people but as I have reflected over the weeks and had chats with many people about this I can't help but wonder if it is either good to give a child the best start in life when they are going onto a school with very little resources, or surely it's good to ensure the very best start in life as our government are finally agreeing in the UK, resulting in more funding for Early Years, and even though I still struggle to decide whether it is a good thing I feel that I would be very interested in working within one of the nurseries. (WF G13)

This again demonstrates the importance of continuing to work with these students as they go on making sense of their experiences, unlearn some of their earlier beliefs and understandings (Andreotti 2011) and translate new insights into practice:

My experience has already started to make a difference as I like to take every opportunity to share my experiences and to encourage an understanding of what needs to be done. Not only that but I do also have a selection of resources which I can use to support the teaching and learning about The Gambia and Africa in general. These include videos, pictures, instruments, clothing and homely items like brushes. I

now feel passionately about improving education at home as well as around the world and know that educating children about what they can do to help and allowing them to understand about that culture will hopefully keep that passion rolling. (WF G1)

It is worth mentioning in conclusion that the study confirmed that in the School of Education there was also no planned dissemination process for the tutors themselves, either student to tutor or tutor to tutor. This again was in sharp contrast to the practice in the School of Social Work where the students were expected to present their international experience to their peers and to the other year groups, as well as to their placement supervisor; it was seen to be a vital aspect of the process, as well as a responsibility to share what they had learnt. This differed completely from the highly individualistic emphasis underpinning the approach to the Gambia study visits, which rejected the idea that dissemination could make any significant contribution to a wider University agenda for teaching and learning.

6.3 Summary

The analysis of the data generated through the different methods has thrown light on the organisation and pedagogy of the international study visits under investigation. The considerable influence of the beliefs and attitudes of the International Coordinator permeates the practice within the School of Education, with an emphasis on an experiential approach. The promotion of intercultural capabilities is not articulated as a learning intention and the tutors do not actively plan and organise the visits with this in mind. There are some reflective activities, but the role of the tutor is more facilitative than challenging, with a parental discourse focusing on giving the students a

good time and making sure they are safe. Some students are left in a state of disequilibrium, making sense of their experiences by drawing on missionary and colonialist discourses.

7. Findings and Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

In this research project I have investigated the potential of international study visits for developing student teachers' responses to cultural diversity, an essential issue for teacher education. In the 21st century teachers have to be able to respond sensitively and appropriately to the diverse cultures and learning needs of the children they will encounter. To do this, they must be interculturally capable, and so these capabilities should be promoted in their training. Despite this, little attention has been paid to ways in which teacher education programmes in general can include this in their programmes or, more specifically, to what international study visits can offer in this area.

7.2 Findings

I investigated a particular range of international study visits within the School of Education in terms of four main facets, recruitment, motivation, organisation and pedagogy, in order to shed light on how far such visits might develop the students' responses to cultural diversity and promote their intercultural capabilities.

My findings clarify the extent to which the study visits meet the four conditions identified in Chapter 3 that are deemed necessary if visits are to promote students' intercultural capabilities.

7.2.1 Effect of organisation & pedagogy of visits on intercultural capabilities

I found that the organisation and the pedagogy of the visits studied, particularly those to The Gambia, were unlikely to develop the intercultural capabilities of all of the participants, being ineffective in bringing about transformative learning (Mezirow 1990). In placing an emphasis upon simple exposure to new experience, they did not encourage (or require if appropriate) examination and revision of participants' interpretations of experience, nor offer challenge to existing unhelpful attitudes and beliefs such as prior ethnocentric judgements of cultural differences based upon civilising agendas. Such a critical pedagogic approach demands the organisation of safe and appropriate arenas within which these processes can take place before, during and after the visit, but these were provided only informally and occasionally.

The organisation and implementation of such a transformative approach requires knowledgeable tutors actively engaged in supporting and shaping student learning, as advocated by Fiedler (2007) and Hickling-Hudson (2011) amongst others. The most surprising and potentially important finding of the study was that the Education tutors were seemingly unaware of the notion of intercultural capabilities, despite being very conscious of the University's drive for Internationalisation. It may be that at an unconscious level they are resisting addressing this area because to do so would be to accept a greater responsibility to be active in promoting student learning, increasing their workload and the emotional demands made upon them during a trip. Another possibility is that they had been trained as teachers at a time when the conceptualisation of approaches to cultural diversity such as multiculturalism (Andreotti 2006b; Barrett 2013) was more limited and they had not had subsequent

professional development opportunities. This may mean that they do not see preparing students to respond to cultural diversity as being an important aspect of their responsibilities, despite it being University policy and widely seen to be a key mission of Higher Education (McMullen & Penn 2011). Another possibility is that they are still influenced by the multicultural knowledge-based approach rather than by more recent discourses on interculturalism (Cantle, 2012a). Some did specify a response to diversity that involved providing the subject knowledge required to teach Humanities, but Hill (2006) advises that this is too narrow an interpretation. The current emphasis in the UK upon training teachers to meet the needs of the individual child in terms of promoting and assessing their progress in academic standards may mean that the development of intercultural capabilities and the wider social justice agenda may be low on the list of priorities for teacher educators. Another consideration is that they are not on the whole Early Years specialists. The strong emphasis within Early Years teacher education upon preparing students to have ongoing close contact with the families of the children they work with and to be aware of and responsive to the needs, beliefs and wishes of the local community, means that Early Years tutors may be more sensitive to issues of cultural diversity and more likely to promote aspects of intercultural capabilities, even when, as in this study, they are working in an area which is not ethnically diverse.

In contrast to the colleagues from the School of Education, colleagues from the other Schools of Health and of Social Care, also involved in educating professionals for the caring professions within the same local area, were clearer and better informed about these issues. They were active in planning and organising international placements

that offered an academically rigorous stance, well-articulated learning opportunities linked to the individual student's needs, and a sound justification for the pattern of ongoing tutor support and intervention, all underpinned by a clear postcolonial theoretical perspective.

The Education tutors, on the other hand, showed minimal awareness of this dimension even when pressed in the focus group. McGillivray (2009) and Buczynski *et al.* (2010) suggest that identifying clear learning intentions for a visit and accepting a responsibility for achieving these is a normal expectation of trip leaders. However, in this study there was little evidence that tutors accepted this, seeing their role as an enabler/facilitator of experiences, rather than the critical pedagogues that are deemed necessary by Andreotti (2011). This finding supports the argument of Mills (2007) that without such a pedagogical perspective they are likely to be agents of reproduction rather than transformation. Though the tutors sometimes relayed stories of the students' discomforts and made some links to learning that might have been gained from them, the links were never articulated in terms of the transformational learning theories discussed by Andreotti and de Souza (2007) and Leibowitz *et al.* (2010), but rather, as Shim 2012 also found, were embedded in tutor discourses in an unreflective way. This may have been because the lack of post-trip dissemination and evaluation gave them limited opportunities to reflect upon the nature and purposes of the study visits. The underpinning philosophy and experiential approach may also have encouraged a tendency to repeat previous patterns and approaches, underpinned by taken-for-granted assumptions based on anecdotal evidence from students that the visits were life-changing and transformative.

The Education tutors were enthusiastic, very committed to international study visits and positive about the presumed personal benefits for the students in terms of their employment prospects and their confidence, based upon the historical discourses that have surrounded such trips, and reinforced by the wider University rhetoric. However, there was no awareness of the criticism made by Zemach-Bersin (2007) and Jakubiak (2012) that this was enabling students to harvest cultural capital from Majority World contexts in order to advantage their status and career within their social fields. They concurred with Walters *et al.*'s (2009) valuing of students developing a critical appreciation of education in another cultural context, something with potential for the development of intercultural capabilities, but once more this was not articulated in detail, either by the tutors or by the students.

Although a pedagogical approach effective in promoting intercultural capabilities was almost entirely lacking on the trips to The Gambia, some elements were seen in the Hungary, Czech Republic and Redbridge trips. Usually some small degree of reflection upon student experiences took place but the process of systematic critical reflection advocated by Mezirow's (1990) work and recognised as necessary for transformative learning by recent research in this area, (e.g. Edwards 2011), was not planned into any of the School of Education's study visits. Thus, even when students engaged in activities that had the potential for developing their intercultural capabilities, such outcomes were incidental, and there was no evidence of students understanding and acknowledging that the development of their intercultural capabilities might be an important and necessary aspect of their participation in an international study visit. This must be seen as a serious limitation in light of research such as Gammonley *et al.*

(2007), which found that a purposefully designed international study visit with an intense learning structure provided a deeper level of learning than one that was more open and flexible. Instead, the process of learning that did take place was very individual and unpredictable and highly dependent upon the student's openness and willingness to change.

The limited opportunities for critical reflection and group support appeared to leave some students in a state of disequilibrium and confusion, whilst the particular model of the experiential learning espoused by the tutors, especially of the visits to The Gambia, ruled out most of the pedagogical approaches identified above, including systematic, planned reflection upon experiences and challenge to questionable or inappropriate views, attitudes or interpretations of experiences. Thus the organisation and pedagogy of the visits is seen to be only minimally conducive to the promotion of intercultural capabilities. If such are seen to be important, it suggests that appropriate training for tutors, certainly for those who organise and lead trips, is indicated.

7.2.2 The 'contract' with students participating in international study visits

My investigation showed that there were no specific agreements with students that developing intercultural capabilities was a purpose of any of the visits and no clear 'contract' specifying what was required of them as participants was in place.

In every educational context there is such a 'contract' between institution and students, implicit or explicit, as to expected requirements and learning outcomes. It became clear from the study that there was often a lack of clarity about the contract

for both students and tutors participating in an international study visit. This was in marked contrast to placements in the Faculty's Schools of Health and Social Care, where the Electives Handbook (Plymouth University 2012) spelled out in detail the requirement for students to engage in critical reflection and dissemination and where tutors made clear their intention to develop intercultural capabilities through a transformative pedagogy. Such aspects were also made explicit in the professional standards for social care workers (HCPC 2012).

However, for the School of Education international study visits the contract was less clear and in the visits to The Gambia that were my main focus the contract was implicit and, as described in Section 6.2.1, almost entirely concerned with the practicalities and the activities to be offered. The other visits studied were linked to modules or elements in programmes of study, and so had some explicit expectations and learning requirements deriving from these programmes – for the Hungary visit, comparative education, for the Czech visit, school experience, and for the Redbridge visit, multi-cultural education and subject knowledge for teaching Humanities. But for none of the trips was the development of intercultural capabilities specified as a learning objective; nor was the potential of a trip for such learning made clear to the students; nor were they alerted or sensitised to the kinds of experience which might produce such an outcome.

This restricted the impact of the trips. In order to be successful, there has to be an awareness, a willingness and a desire to achieve intercultural capabilities (Deardorff 2009). There was minimal evidence in student responses of these attitudes, suggesting

that their perception of the contract was limited. Moreover, developing intercultural capabilities on a visit requires active and consistent participation in the programme of learning experiences offered. The study found a number of examples of students opting out of activities if they felt upset, uncomfortable or just disinclined, perhaps because in the absence of a clear learning 'contract' they saw the visit as an optional 'holiday-type' opportunity (Campbell-Barr and Huggins 2011). For instance, one activity suggested to participants as beneficial was engaging in written reflection, whether through journaling or through writing about critical incidents. However, most students only engaged in such written reflections in order to prepare for a module assignment, or if it was required to provide evidence for their portfolios, linked to the Teaching Standards (DfE 2011, updated 2013), which do not include any mention of intercultural capabilities. Since the shake-up or disequilibrium of existing perceptions and attitudes caused by discomfiting experiences is a powerful basis for developing intercultural capabilities, particularly in terms of Andreotti and de Souza's (2008) concept of 'learning to unlearn', it is arguable that students ought to commit to engaging in such experiences and activities and to be prepared to be challenged, both by tutors and by peers. Instead, the tutors leading visits, especially to The Gambia, made it clear that they were not prepared to require such commitment of students, since within their particular model of an experiential approach they did not see this as the role of a tutor.

There emerged a further problem from this lack of clarity about learning intentions. The changes involved in developing intercultural capabilities will at times necessarily be upsetting, painful, even threatening, sometimes causing distress, even anger (Che

et al. 2009; Leibowitz *et al.* 2010;). Working against internalised dispositions is a struggle and there is inevitably resistance to change (Shim, 2012). It would seem appropriate that students should only be expected to engage in such a deep and demanding process on the basis of a clear contract and that tutors should have the support of such a contract with students in undertaking such difficult work. No such contract was in place. Some tutors interviewed did sense the importance of this and were willing to organise a 'third space' (Martin & Griffiths 2011) in which to engage in discussion about these discomforts but this was usually *ad hoc*, only in response to individual students' comments or requests, and undertaken more in a parental role than that of a critical pedagogue.

As a result, both students and tutors defined the benefits from such visits largely in terms of the discourses of 'selfish' gains – professional, such as enhanced CVs, better employment prospects, new ideas for their own teaching, especially with more culturally diverse classes, knowledge of a wider range of schooling systems and approaches – and personal ones, such as enjoyment and excitement, improvements in their self-confidence and their willingness to try out new experiences, realising leadership potential, knowledge of other parts of the world. Clearly the visits do enhance students' cultural and social capital and so position them to enhance their academic, professionally-oriented and economic capitals but such a largely 'selfish' agenda shapes engagement with the learning opportunities offered (Oliver and Kettley 2010). Without a more specific contract for both students and tutors that commits them to engage in demanding learning activities during the visit, there is unlikely to be any revision of beliefs or the perspective transformation (Erichsen 2011) which can

result from a more deliberate and planned approach to international study visits (Rose et al 2011). The idea of a clear contract to develop students' responses to cultural diversity does not figure in the literature on international study visits but my study suggests that it needs to be the basis both for the recruitment of students and for the organisation of the visit.

7.2.3 The place of international study visits in the teaching and learning structure of the institution

The positioning of the visits studied outside the normal academic structure of course approval, monitoring and evaluation is a major weakness, resulting in a lack of solid evidence for the marketing and recruitment claims of the benefits to student participants and for the nature and quality of the resulting learning. Such a weakness, and the problems identified in terms of the 'contracts' underlying international study visits, emphasise the importance of them having a clearly defined place in the institution's Teaching and Learning structure.

The structure is in place. The study found that there were key named personnel with responsibility for internationalisation at all levels of the University (Appendix 5.1), with an accompanying committee structure to support the flow of information between the fields within the institution and to monitor policy implementation. However, the study pointed up the vulnerability of such structures to intra-institutional problems and pressures. Before and during the period of the study there was extensive institutional disruption caused by staff changes at both University and Faculty level and by the creation of the Faculty of Health, Education and Society through merger (see Section 2.7). As a result, the internationalisation process was not consistent, even though

internationalisation was a frequently repeated discourse of the policy makers, and the promotion of intercultural capabilities was given little emphasis or encouragement. My investigation of the University's Policy and Strategy documentation revealed a range of recently introduced material of which I was not aware and to which my attention had never been drawn, even as a senior and experienced lecturer with a prominent interest in this field. Thus the structure was not being effective in enabling the individual agents in the various fields to communicate and implement University policy.

The newly formed Faculty of Health, Education and Society had no coherent policy in this area as different interpretations of the internationalisation agenda were being applied in different Schools and there was an absence of clear direction. Key senior personnel responded to the idea of international study visits in very different ways, privileging certain capitals, such as economic and professionally orientated capitals, based on their differing professional priorities and histories. The Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning offered support and encouragement for the visits and valued their role in promoting intercultural capabilities as part of a clear overall strategy focused on teaching and learning; the Associate Dean for Internationalisation was in favour of them but with an emphasis on business needs, focussed upon finance and student numbers; and the Associate Dean for Placements was discouraging of them, due to perceived lack of financial support from the wider University and to concerns about Health and Safety. Some of this mismatch clearly stemmed from their different professional backgrounds, some from them using the conceptual tools of their discipline and some from the policy pathways followed by the different Schools prior

to their merger in 2011. Once more, the importance of robust institutional structures to coordinate and implement policy statements is highlighted.

The visits in the Faculty's School of Education were less constrained and shaped by institutional policy and structures than were visits in other parts of the Faculty. This was because the Education visits were under the remit of an International Co-ordinator who was not limited by a written job description for his role or by any Faculty Guidelines. Moreover, because there were no direct formal lines of communication and limited reporting requirements from his post to the Faculty Committees he was neither bound to implement their interpretations of University policies nor accountable to them for evaluating the international study visits he organised. His lack of awareness of the field of intercultural capabilities meant that they were not consciously promoted in the visits for which he had overall responsibility. His status as International Coordinator also gave him symbolic capital and considerable power to shape the habitus of the international study visits, as it was he who inducted new tutors into the community of practice as apprentices of his pedagogical approach and shaped their subsequent practice.

Such freedom from the constraints of institutional structure enlarged the range and number of visits that were offered by the School of Education. At the same time the study indicates that it hugely restricted the nature of the learning journey deriving from them. This suggests that a strategic decision about the location of international study visits within the structure is important, as is the professional development of staff. During the period of the study the University's and Faculty's substantial

programmes of Continuing Professional Development offered staff no guidance or training on how to organise and conduct international study visits or on how to promote intercultural capabilities within their teaching. Given the limitations in the tutors' understandings of this area, such professional development is an important area for consideration. All this indicates that the promotion of intercultural capabilities, which I argue should be valued and privileged as a cultural resource for all students, is therefore not being well supported by the current structure.

7.2.4 International study visits and the University's internationalisation strategy

Plymouth University's policy and strategy documents give strong support for the internationalisation of the curriculum and embody an expectation that an international dimension will be incorporated into all modules and programmes of study.

International study visits and placements are briefly referred to as contributing to such internationalisation, in response to the increasing marketisation of Higher Education and the pressure to produce 'global citizens' for the global workplace. Moreover, as noted earlier, the University's commitment is reflected in a hierarchy of posts at different levels within the institution with responsibilities for internationalisation, together with a related committee structure.

However, there are considerable limitations in how this commitment to internationalisation is manifested and implemented both in terms of the wider curriculum and in terms of international study visits themselves. Firstly, the University's Policies and Strategies for internationalising the curriculum are simply presented as key indicators of performance. There have not been the necessary accompanying discussions by tutors and student representatives within Faculty

programme committees to reach agreement either about definitions of globalisation and internationalisation or about implementation strategies and requirements, as are recommended by Buczynski *et al.* (2010), Guo and Chase (2011), Gopal (2011) and Ng (2012). Moreover, there has been little active and practical support for their implementation. As a result, there has been only limited incorporation of an international dimension into modules and programmes of study, and this only in terms of intercultural awareness, not of intercultural capabilities, as discussed in Sections 2.4.2 and 2.5.

The influence of this on international study visits has therefore been limited and partial. The justification for international study visits is outward-facing and essentially 'selfish', focussing on the financial and status gains for the University, as well as for its students, and almost entirely seen in terms of the students 'harvesting' cultural and economic benefits, which resonates with Zemach-Bersin's (2007) work. There are only token gestures towards partnership and reciprocity, thus perpetuating colonialist attitudes to knowledge exchange. There is no specific encouragement to widen the limited participation in international study visits and almost no financial support – most visits in the Faculty have to be self-funded, thus inevitably restricting the range of those participating. This means that those who cannot afford the extra-curricular international study visits are marginalised and are unlikely to be exposed to the international perspectives that the University declares as desirable for their education and to enhance their employability, especially as intercultural capabilities are not promoted within the curriculum. It is hard to argue, therefore, that the University's

commitment is whole-hearted, or that it is undertaking any specific measures to develop the intercultural capabilities of its student body.

7.3 Summary of findings of the study

The analysis of the findings lead me to conclude that the international study visits offered by the Institute's School of Education are unlikely to develop positively all students' responses to cultural diversity or to promote their intercultural capabilities in a planned and purposeful way. Reasons for this include:

- the visits lack clearly defined learning outcomes related to intercultural capabilities;
- there are no explicit learning contracts with the students identifying the development of intercultural capabilities as a key purpose of the international study visits;
- they are run by tutors with limited knowledge of intercultural capabilities and no clear intentions to develop them;
- there is no co-ordinated University or Faculty professional development to develop tutors' own intercultural capabilities and introduce strategies for working with students on study visits.
- the tutors' pedagogical approaches are largely underpinned by theories of experiential learning and lack the elements of systematic critical reflection and dissemination required for transformational learning.
- the international study visits sit outside the University procedures for monitoring and assessment, leading to a lack of evaluation of the nature and quality of teaching and learning activities.

I wish to reiterate that the visits studied have many positive outcomes for almost all participants. They provide enjoyable learning experiences for the participants, seeming to lead to an increase in the students' confidence. The students also gain knowledge

about different schooling systems and ideas for teaching culturally diverse groups. All this potentially benefits them in terms of enhancing their CV and their employability prospects. But if, as I have argued, an important dimension of their provision and organisation as part of programmes of study should be the development of intercultural capabilities then this investigation would suggest that the visits currently fall short.

7.3.1 Positionality

A broader finding of this study concerns positioning (Burr 2008). During my work in the Faculty I had picked up a widely held assumption that international study visits were generally considered a good thing. At the outset of this investigation, as discussed in Section 2 (Context), I presumed that there would be a general consensus in the positions of the various people in my Faculty and School of Education with regard to the nature, conduct and benefits of international study visits and that my own position would be broadly in line with those of my colleagues. Instead the study has shown that the positions taken by the participants from the School of Education and the discourses articulated fell far less in line with my own than I had anticipated. The unexpected marked differences that I encountered therefore caused me both surprise and major ethical and professional difficulties, but the application of positioning theory (Davies and Harré 1990) has enabled me to overcome some of these.

The first surprise was to find marked differences between the positions adopted by the Education tutors and those of tutors in Social Care and Health, despite them all operating under the same University policy framework and in the same Faculty. It emerged that both the differing professional standards and the different levels of

professional experience at firsthand with cultural diversity influenced their positioning. For instance, aspects of postcolonialism and interculturalism came through strongly in the interviews with the Social Work tutors but were absent from those with Education tutors. I increasingly recognised that my own experiences in Africa and my academic interests and studies made my position more aligned with them than with colleagues within my own professional sphere in Education.

A second surprise was that the Education tutors privileged an experiential learning discourse, positioning themselves on international study visits in a facilitative and enabling role, rather than the more interventionist teaching role that I adopt as a critical educator. Moreover, they often assumed a parental and protective role on the visits, positioning the students as being inexperienced and in need of looking after, even though most of the students were quite experienced travellers and saw the international study visits as an opportunity to be independent. By contrast the Social Work tutors positioned their students as competent and gave them a considerable degree of responsibility for the planning, organisation, conduct, and reporting/dissemination of their placement, as well as requiring them to support next year's cohort. Again, I found myself more in tune with the colleagues from Social Work who articulated the necessity for systematic critical reflection to shift students' worldviews. Further reading and research on the nature of transformative learning has subsequently confirmed my position on the importance of this in promoting students' intercultural capabilities.

The multicultural discourse, which is increasingly perceived as inadequate in our super-diverse world (Cantle 2013), was a strong feature of some of the discussions with tutors and students. In particular, Education tutors seemed to privilege knowledge

about cultures over an interculturalist approach focused on relationships, empathy and respect, and to stress personal and professional benefits to the student participants over the positive things they might be able to offer to their future pupils, of whatever cultural backgrounds, as a result of their learning from the visit.

The multiple positionalities of the Associate Deans with regard to international study visits, as discussed in Section 7.2.3, reflected their roles within the Faculty and some of the discourses in the policy documents. Thus although there was an overarching assumption that international study visits were generally a good thing, the positions adopted by lead figures in the Faculty showed considerable differences.

In this study I have been able to critically reflect upon the discourses framing international study visits in the School of Education and through my reading and research open up potential new discourses as alternatives for people to consider.

7.4 Strengths and limitations of the study

There are several strengths to my study. I engage with an under-theorised area and build on previous research by considering the issue of intercultural capabilities and international study visits in my particular context. This has brought into focus the importance of the idea of intercultural capabilities as a necessary part of student learning, in particular for all those who will be working in education. I draw on relevant theoretical perspectives, such as the work of Bourdieu, Andreotti and Martin to design the study, to support the analysis of data and to inform the subsequent findings.

My use of positioning theory is also a strength of this study. It enables me to shed light on and to analyse the participants' discourses, what set of ideas they are drawing on and their possibilities for action (Burr, 2003). I have been able to indicate the discourses that are more powerful in shaping the practice of the international study visits, while maintaining an ethical and professional status towards the participants.

The use of Facet Methodology is a considerable strength. It is a relatively new approach and has only been used in a few previous research projects (Mason *et al.* 2012). In this multi-faceted, mixed-method research project, it gives coherence and offers unexpected flashes of insight that reveal key findings, for instance, the approaches of colleagues in other disciplines. It offers potential for use in interdisciplinary research, something pertinent to the investigation of intercultural capabilities. Through Facet Methodology I have been able to gather the views of a range of key stakeholders, using methods flexibly and responsively, and then analyse them in an ordered way to ensure coherent conclusions.

There are limitations to the study. The first is that the range of data generated, especially from the students, was restricted, mostly by factors outside my control. The timing of the various international study visits often limited my ability to systematically collect data before, during and after each visit, so there had to be compromises as I gathered what I could, leading to uneven coverage. The fact that the majority of the trips studied were optional, and not integral parts of modules or programmes of study, resulted in problems of timing, timetable clashes and the unavailability of certain

groups and individuals at key times. This led directly to a lack of pre-trip focus groups for two of the visits studied.

The voluntary nature of students' involvement in my research, together with the extra-curricular status of the trips themselves, rightly permitted participants to opt out of involvement in focus groups and completion of writing frames, and so proved difficult for me to gather the range of responses that I had planned for each of the four visits studied. A stronger and clearer agreement with student participants as to the expected level of their contribution would have been advantageous before committing myself to the study of their trip. Because of these limitations, the extent of evidence from individual visits varies. However, I would argue that by using Facet Methodology (Mason, 2013) I have identified sufficient commonality and shared discourses to present a useful representation of the pattern of international study visits currently conducted by the School of Education.

As discussed in Chapter 4 (Methodology) and Chapters 5 & 6 (Analysis of Data), some limitations in my research may have arisen from my insider position and my relationships with the participants. I may not have pursued some lines of enquiry as rigorously as an outsider would have done, particularly in terms of exploring the limitations of tutors' understandings of intercultural capabilities, but I would argue that this was outweighed by the considerable advantages of my insider status, for instance that the participants might not have been so forthcoming to an outsider. I have maintained ethical reflexivity and acknowledged how my value positions may have influenced the processes and outcomes of this study.

Since the study was not designed to assess or evaluate the impact on student learning of participation in international study visits, the conclusions to be drawn are more impressionistic and indicative. What and how much students learn on international study visits deserves further investigation to inform changes in practice and such researches will be able to make use of the insights gained from this study.

7.5 Recommendations arising from this study

My research supports the view that if international study visits are to be considered as useful and integral elements of programmes promoting the intercultural capabilities of students, rather than as optional, extra-curricular enrichment, they need to be embedded in the structure of the University's teaching and learning strategies and procedures and to be led by tutors knowledgeable about the development of intercultural capabilities and the appropriate organisation and pedagogy. The last has clear consequences in terms of Continuing Professional Development. These recommendations, including more radical proposals, are outlined in Appendix 7 (Recommendations for Policy).

7.6 Recommendations for further research in this area

It would be worthwhile to undertake a study comparing the impact upon participants in a visit to The Gambia where the current experiential approach is taken with another trip that uses the organisation and pedagogy that I am suggesting. This would involve designing a structure of investigation, pre-trip, within-trip, immediately post-trip and

after a further period of reflection. Such studies would benefit from being undertaken across a range of Universities.

My study indicates the necessity for professional development for the tutors involved in teacher education. A useful preparation for this would be to identify current understandings amongst tutors about the characteristics of a globally competent teacher and the relevance of this to intercultural capabilities. The facet of my study which investigated tutors in the Schools of Health and Social Care would suggest that a cross-Faculty study, rather than one confined to the current Institute of Education, would be both revealing and productive, as would a comparative study with another university.

A very different area for research, building on the work of Martin and Griffiths (2013), would be to consider the benefits (or otherwise) to the host community of international study visits, and how we could work together in an ethical and mutually beneficial way to support students' learning.

7.7 My professional and personal development

As is often the case with social research, I was led into this study by the interaction of a public issue and a private trouble (Mills 1959). The former was raised by the increasing pressure to internationalise the curriculum of the University, provoking growing interest in the potential for learning from international study visits and focussing on the concerns raised by some researchers (e.g. Martin and Griffiths 2011 & 2013) that some visits might reinforce rather than challenge stereotypes and prejudices, and

might even perpetuate global inequalities. The latter was caused by my personal discomfort over aspects of study visits in which I participated, particularly by Minority World students to a Majority World country, which was not seen by those shaping the visits as a public issue of importance. As such, this study is a blend of responses to an intellectual question and to a personal issue (Roberts 2007b), and requires a reflexive approach to both aspects in this conclusion.

I have brought to this study my own gendered historical self with its shifting identities (Denzin 2001). I am conscious that I have my own history with the situated practices that have defined and shaped the issues, both private and public, studied in this project, and that I will be part of their future development. As such, I have to take a political stance and state my views, whilst acknowledging that they form just one facet in the debate.

The study threw up particular issues for me. Carrying out an investigation in my own workplace was always likely to be problematic, but as it became obvious that the tutors I was interviewing showed little knowledge about intercultural capabilities and, even when prompted, made little discussion about responses to cultural diversity, I struggled to accept these findings and wanted to sideline them in order to avoid causing upset. Given my prior expectation that my colleagues would be able to engage informatively in this debate I had not set out to explore their understanding but I was left having to make public the difficult knowledge (Britzman 2003) that without this understanding the international study visits were hardly likely to promote intercultural capabilities. I feared that they might interpret this finding as a criticism of their

professionalism. However, I was able to apply the ideas of the pedagogy of discomfort to my own learning and reasoning, and so to consider the range of constraints within which the tutors had operated and their positionalities. My investigation of the issues from the perspectives of the different subject disciplines revealed what might have been limiting their ideas. The current discourses in teacher education are shaped by requirements for students to achieve a range of Standards that do not encompass the terminology of intercultural capabilities. My colleagues may not have encountered these ideas, whereas my thinking has been considerably shaped by exposure to them on the EdD course. Accepting this, I am emboldened to share my findings with colleagues as a basis for taking forward the issues together.

The process of engagement in this research study has enabled me to critically reflect upon the nature and purpose of international study visits, particularly those to Majority World contexts, and to unpick and resolve many of the uncertainties and disquiets I initially experienced as a participant in them. I have come to reasoned conclusions how they might be conducted ethically and in ways that purposefully promote the students' intercultural capabilities, which I now see as of enormous importance. I am confident that I can employ postcolonial and transformative learning theories to improve the learning opportunities of the students on future visits to The Gambia and other destinations, which will be promoted as opportunities for intercultural learning rather than for simple experience of another culture.

The visit itself will be conducted and organised based upon transformational learning approaches, as advocated by Martin and Griffiths (2103), with spaces opened up for

critical reflection and analysis, drawing on postcolonial perspectives. Planned learning activities will be set up wherever possible to provide opportunities for an exchange of ideas and perspectives between the students and their hosts. This will enable a questioning of habits of mind and a challenging of assumptions to occur in a supportive way. Throughout I will make specific links between these intercultural encounters and the implications for the students' practice, shaping their professional identities as teachers and raising their consciousness about their role as critical educators of the future. In identifying such approaches my study has made new and strong links between previous studies of international study visits and the theoretical and practical studies of intercultural capabilities.

There will be carefully planned pre-trip activities, building on Andreotti and de Souza's *Through Other Eyes* (2008) framework, which will challenge the students to rearrange their cultural baggage and prepare them for potential intercultural encounters in the Majority World. I will engage them in a critical examination of their motivations for participation using the four lenses (tourist, anthropologist, missionary and teacher) and, using postcolonial theory, will make explicit the links between these underpinning discourses and the social/cultural context in which they were formed. This will lead to identifying shared goals for the visit centred on the promotion of their intercultural capabilities through intercultural encounters, which will form the basis of the contract for the visit.

Working with the wider student body on campus, I have become increasingly confident in my role as a 'provocateur'. I now conduct deliberate work with students on shaping

their professional identities. I introduce the concept of intercultural capabilities whenever it is relevant, and explore ways to enhance them through the use of displacement spaces and the analysis of critical incidents. I challenge students to consider how their beliefs and attitudes are shaping their professional practice and to critique the taken-for-granted. I am more willing to engage in 'risky' teaching, deliberately exploring with the students potentially troublesome issues such as whiteness and racism, as I am now conscious of the need for a politically aware teaching force ready to challenge inequities in their workplace (Picower 2103). I will actively seek similar opportunities to extend this role of provocateur when engaging in professional dialogues with colleagues.

I have also become more aware of my power and agency as a teacher educator to promote or demote particular perspectives (Pugh and Robinson 2011). If I am not to be accused of uncritically advocating my preferred approach, or unwittingly reinforcing what I am seeking to change as I work with the students, I must remain self-critically reflective. I must model for students and colleagues the process of critical reflection upon my own thinking processes and on the material I use, and I must work with them as they shape their professional identities, not seeking to impose my own conceptions. In doing so, I will be exemplifying how the personal and professional, the intellectual and the emotional, are inextricably entwined in the act of teaching (Akinbode 2013).

The study has also enabled me to understand better my own institution's policies and practices, their historical origins, their professional dimensions and their underpinning drivers. Given these new perspectives and my enhanced theoretical knowledge, I will

be able to plan and implement a strategy to argue for the promotion of intercultural capabilities as central to the teaching and learning process in the Faculty. I am no longer on the periphery of this community of practice and I will be able to work actively for change in my Faculty and in the wider University. This fits with my original intention to conduct research that enhances teaching and learning, works towards social justice and matches the purposes of the EdD programme.

Using Facet Methodology has drawn my attention to a wider range of research methods and encouraged me to try things out and be creative. Conducting a research study in my own workplace has meant I have had to work through and resolve a complex range of ethical dilemmas, a process that will certainly inform future research projects. I now appreciate that conducting research on a larger scale and over a longer time-frame than previous studies demands tighter organisation and monitoring than I at first realised, especially as, like many colleagues who will undertake the EdD programme, I have also been working as a full-time teacher educator.

A benefit of this study, and indeed of the whole EdD programme, is the way that it has appreciably enhanced my skills both as a researcher and as a teacher, with accompanying shifts in my understandings and my practice. I now see research-informed teaching as integral to all aspects of my role, rather than, as when I entered teaching in Higher Education, being scared and faintly resentful at having to conduct research. Now it is not just a matter of drawing on my own research, or that of others, to inform my teaching, nor of simply undertaking research into my practice. Rather it is part of a larger critical pedagogy, a constant questioning and challenging of my taken-

for-granted ways of doing things and ways of thinking about key issues, in which I actively involve my students in discussing and coming to new understandings. As such, it has been transformative for me.

I confess to having experienced both anger and frustration many times during the project, often generated by the pressures of having to do it as well as working full-time as a lecturer. I have also experienced a sense of resentment at having to compromise on some aspects of the study because of time pressure and other work commitments. However, now that I am nearing the end of this particular part of my research adventure I can appreciate that all projects involve compromise, negotiation and prioritisation, and that all these emotions are to be expected if one is passionate about one's project and wanting it to be as ethical, thorough and professional in all areas as possible. In the end I empathise and agree with Moch's (2000:7) comments on the difficulties of being in two roles – a researcher and a practitioner – which for her proved to be a source of 'great reflection, inner struggle and ethical questioning'. She acknowledges that

Sometimes, the difficulties arose because of my experiences as a mother, wife, midlife woman or professor. In other words, the research experience and all the reflection and struggle happened, in part, because of who I am. And I don't want to change that.

Nor do I.

8. References

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Appendices

Appendix 1.1: Ethical Approval

**School of Education
Faculty of Health, Education & Society**

Application No:

11/12-107

(for EdREC use)

APPLICATION FOR SCHOOL ETHICAL APPROVAL

Part A: Ethics Cover Sheet

Part B: Ethical Review Statement

Part C: Ethics Protocol Proforma

This form consists of three sections. Parts A and B must be completed in ALL cases. Depending upon the method of data collection / analysis, Part C may also be required (see the Ethics Review Statement).

All documentation should be submitted **electronically** to Claire Butcher, Administrative Assistant (Research), tel: 85337, claire.butcher@plymouth.ac.uk. At the same time, a hard copy of this application form, signed by all relevant parties, should also be submitted to Claire Butcher.

Part A: ETHICS COVER SHEET

1	Principal Investigator: Valerie Huggins
2	Other members of project team who will have access to the research data:

	N/A
3	<p>Project Title:</p> <p>Preparing student teachers to respond to cultural diversity: the role of international study trips</p>
4	<p>Repeat Submission? No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Version Number:</p>
5	<p>Proposed project start date:</p> <p>May 2012</p>
6	<p>Summary of aims, objectives and methods (max 250 words)</p> <p>School of Education students participate in a number of international study visits as a key part of the University's internationalisation strategy and these are welcomed by both participants and tutors. However, do such trips necessarily develop in the students a positive response to cultural diversity, enabling them to communicate more effectively across cultures and have the confidence to question and challenge where appropriate their own values and those of others (Killick 2008)?</p> <p>Both the School of Education's teaching teams and the wider academic community have concerns over the design, purpose and outcomes of international study visits, especially when they involve students from the Minority World visiting the Majority World. Martin (2008) has suggested that some approaches to such trips may reinforce rather than challenge stereotypes and prejudices, and this is supported by our own TFA-funded evaluation research into Plymouth University study trips to The Gambia (Campbell-Barr and Huggins 2011). Gammonley and Rotabi (2007) suggest that careful pre-trip planning is essential to achieve a study trip's objectives and de Souza and Andreotti's (no date) Through Other Eyes project www.toe.org argues that these trips can be carried out on a sounder ethical basis by giving due regard to interculturality, co-operation, mutuality and respect. How far are these features of the School of</p>

Education trips?

This research project is aimed at investigating the ways in which current international study trips deliberately foster in student teachers an awareness of and approaches to cultural diversity; at gaining an insight into the impact upon participating students of different patterns of trips; and at making possible recommendations about the worthwhileness and the conduct of such trips in the future.

This is building on a pilot project (see Ethics Approval 11-12-107).

Recruitment

I will seek volunteers from the students on the BEd and BAECs programmes, as well as sociology students, who have taken part or who will be taking part in international study trips between May 2012 and July 2013 and from staff members who have also participated in one or more comparable overseas study trips, including the International Coordinator for the School of Education. I will be clear about the purpose of the research study and of their contribution and will answer any questions arising.

Methodology

I will be working within a sociocultural paradigm, taking a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of tutors and students involved in international study trips. I aim to identify their perspectives and consider their interpretations in light of the social and cultural factors shaping their understandings, such as policies and key discourses on internationalisation and globalisation. I will be interpreting their responses in light of my own experiences, values and views.

Sample

I aim to investigate 4 trips that have different patterns in terms of such factors as the country/continent, the length of stay, whether they offer work experience and whether they are assessed or not assessed. I aim to recruit 1 tutor and 4 students from each.

Methods of data collection

Pre-trip activities

Documentary evidence :

I will analyse the current University and Faculty internationalisation policies and having identified the range of trips offered by the School of Education, will analyse their organisation and goals.

Semi-structured interviews;

I will conduct semi-structured interviews with the International Co-ordinator of the School of Education and with the tutors responsible for 4 of the international trips run by the Faculty to identify the goals and objectives of such trips.

Establishing Baselines

- All students wishing to participate in a study trip will have been asked to submit an application statement for the international experience, setting out their personal and professional goals, their motivations for wanting to be selected and their aspirations for the trip. With their consent, the statements of those volunteering to take part will be analysed for key themes.
- Short questionnaire to gain evidence of the student's previous relevant experience, e.g. living abroad, travelling, volunteering.
- Focus group interviews: Following this, I will facilitate a focus group discussion with the research participants to explore in more depth the key themes identified from their application forms. They will be asked to talk about their motivations and aspirations for the trip, as well as their experience of cultural diversity. This will provide an impression of the students' response to cultural diversity at this stage of the project.

Online discussion and reflection:

I plan to set up a secure, password-enabled group blog where students can offer their thoughts, expectations and reflections before, during and after the trips. The blog will only be viewable by those who are members of the site (those will be invited once they have volunteered to participate in the research project). They will be encouraged to post their reflections, and also read and comment on the reflections of their peers. They will be made aware that the posting may be used as data for the research project as indications of their intercultural capabilities and response to cultural diversity.

In-trip reflective activities

The research participants will be invited to keep a reflective diary/log of the experience in a form that they choose, written, visual, spoken, or a combination. It is anticipated that they will draw upon these in the follow-up focus group discussions, but only to share those parts that they are willing to reveal.

Post-trip activities

Writing frame

Following the trip I will provide the students with a writing frame with key questions to prompt their reflection and evaluation of the experience, with a focus on 'critical incidents' that may have challenged their previously-held ideas and beliefs and/or caused them discomfort.

Post-trip focus groups

- a) Inter-trip – 4 participants from each trip
- b) Intra-trip – 1 participant from each of the 4 trips

I will facilitate focus group discussions with the research participants. The students will be tasked with creating representations of their learning from the visit, using visual methods such as photomontage, drawing, collage, video-narrative and photo-story. These visual representations will be used as a starting point for further discussion. The discourses evident in them

	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> . No: <input type="checkbox"/> (Please see School Research & Enterprise Officer as soon as possible)						
13	Peer Review <input type="checkbox"/> obtained <input type="checkbox"/> not yet obtained						
14	Partners & Institutions:						
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Name (including title)</td> <td>School:</td> <td>Institute / Organisation:</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Name (including title)	School:	Institute / Organisation:			
Name (including title)	School:	Institute / Organisation:					

Part B: ETHICAL REVIEW STATEMENT

The purpose of this statement is to clarify whether the proposed research requires ethical clearance through an Ethics Protocol. Please read the relevant section of the guidance notes before you complete your statement.

Please indicate all the categories into which your proposed research fits:

	Data collection / analysis involved:	Action required:	
1	This study does not involve data collection from or about human participants.	➤ <i>Complete this Ethical Review Statement and add a brief (one page) description of your research and intended data collection methods. No ethics protocol required.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	This study involves the analysis or synthesis of data obtained from/about human subjects where such data are in the public domain (i.e. available in public archives and/or previously published)	➤ <i>Complete this Ethical Review Statement and add a brief (one page) description of your research, the nature of the data and intended data collection methods. No ethics protocol required.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	This study involves the analysis of data obtained	➤ <i>Complete this Ethical Review Statement</i> ➤ <i>Please complete Part C – Ethics</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	from/about human participants where the data has been previously collected but is not in the public domain	<i>Protocol Proforma</i>	
4	This study draws upon data already collected under a previous ethical review but involves utilising the data in ways not cleared with the research participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Complete this Ethical Review Statement</i> ➤ <i>Please complete Part C – Ethics Protocol Proforma</i> ➤ <i>Submit copy of original ethics protocol and additional consent materials (if relevant) attached.</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	This study involves new data collection from/about human participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Complete this Ethical Review Statement</i> ➤ <i>Please complete Part C – Ethics Protocol Proforma</i> ➤ <i>Submit information for participants AND consent forms in style and format appropriate to the participants</i> 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please Note: Should the applicant wish to alter in any significant regard the nature of their research following ethical approval, a resubmission should be made to the School Research Ethics Committee. The resubmission should be made with reference to one or more of the categories laid out in this document. ‘Significant’ should be interpreted as meaning changing in some fundamental way the research purposes and processes in whole or part.

Applicant contact information:

Address: School of Education, Rolle Building, Floor 5

Email: Valerie.huggins@plymouth.ac.uk

Fax:

Telephone: 01752 585355

Date 11 November 2011

Part C: ETHICS PROTOCOL PROFORMA

Please indicate how you will ensure this research conforms with each clause of the University of Plymouth's *Principles for Research Involving Human Participants*. Please complete each section with a statement that addresses each of the ethical principles set out below. Please note that you should provide the degree of detail suggested. Each section will expand to accommodate this information.

Please refer to Guidance Notes when completing this proforma.

1	<p>Informed consent</p> <p><i>Please attach copies of all draft information / documents, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules, etc intended for the participants, and list below. When it is not possible to submit research instruments (e.g. use of action research methods) the instruments should be listed together with the reason for the non-submission.</i></p>
	<p>I will provide a clear outline of the research project to the participating tutors and students, explaining the purpose of the research, the methods to be used and their contribution and I will answer any questions arising. This will be supported by a clear information sheet. The students will opt in to the research project as an additional element of the study trips, and it will be made clear that this is voluntary. Participation/non-participation will have no impact upon any student's marks for assessment or upon my University reference and their individual contributions will not be shared with the tutors in a way that they can be identified.</p>
2	<p>Openness and honesty</p> <p><i>It is generally accepted that research with human participants would not involve deception. However if this is not the case, deception is permissible only where it can be shown that all three of the following</i></p>

	<p><i>conditions have been met in full.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Deception is completely unavoidable if the purpose of the research is to be achieved.</i> <i>2. The research objective has strong scientific merit.</i> <i>3. Any potential harm arising from the proposed deception can be effectively neutralised or reversed by the proposed debriefing procedures.</i> <p><i><u>If deception is involved</u>, applicants are required to provide a detailed justification and to supply the names of two independent assessors whom the Committee can approach for advice. Please attach relevant documentation and list below.</i></p>
	<p>I aim to be open and honest about the overall nature of the research and its aims in exploring responses to cultural diversity. The initial written explanation of the research project will cover this and in subsequent discussions I will ensure that I maintain this stance. I will be clear that this research forms part of my doctoral studies, and that data gathered may be analysed with a different focus as my study progresses.</p>
3	<p>Right to withdraw</p> <p><i>Please provide a clear statement regarding what information has been provided to participants regarding their right to withdraw from the research.</i></p>
	<p>Students and staff who agree to participate will have the option to withdraw from the study at any time before the end of data collection and to choose not to answer any question they are uncomfortable with. During the focus groups, participants may ask at any time for the audio recording or note-taking to be stopped. Once collected it will not be possible for data from an individual contributor to a focus group to be withdrawn and participants will be informed about this. Those who choose not to take part in the study or who choose to withdraw during the study will not be penalised in any way. Participation/non-participation will have no impact upon any student's marks for assessment or upon their University reference.</p>
4	<p>Protection from Harm</p>

Indicate here any vulnerability that may be present because of the:

- participants e.g. children or vulnerable adults.
- nature of the research process.

If you tick any box below, please indicate in “further information” how you will ensure protection from harm.

Does this research involve:

Children	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vulnerable adults	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensitive topics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Permission of a gatekeeper in place of consent from individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subjects being academically assessed by the researcher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research that is conducted without full and informed consent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research that could induce psychological stress and anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intrusive intervention (eg, vigorous physical exercise)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Further information:

I do not anticipate that this research study will cause any harm to any of the participants. However, the focus group discussions and the writing frames may raise some tricky personal, emotional and ethical issues for the participants which cannot be predicted. I will respond sensitively and appropriately in order to support them through the process and to

Do ALL researchers in contact with children and vulnerable adults have current CRB clearance?

Yes: . No: N/A:

If Yes, Please give disclosure number(s).(Use extra sheet if necessary)

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Number</i>
	<i>Valerie Huggins</i>	<i>001278097262</i>
	If No, please explain:	
5	External Clearance <i>I undertake to obtain written permission from the Head of any external institutions (school, social service, prison, etc) in which research will be conducted. (please check box)</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6	Participant/Subject Involvement <i>Has this group of participants/subjects already been the subject of research in the current academic year?</i> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7	Payment <i>Please provide details of any payments, either financial or in kind, made to participants for participation, compensation for time given, etc.</i>	
	N/A	
8	Debriefing <i>When? By whom? How? Please provide a clear statement regarding what information has been provided to participants regarding debriefing.</i>	
	I will feedback the key information arising from the research to the participants in face-to-face talks and in the form of a short written report.	
9	Dissemination of Research	

	<i>Please provide a clear statement regarding what information has been provided to participants regarding dissemination of this research.</i>
	I intend to use the findings of this study to inform the development of international study trips run by the School of education and to inform the research for my EdD thesis. I also intend to present them as part of the subsequent research project at one or more peer reviewed conferences and also, eventually, to submit at least one article for consideration by a high-impact, peer-reviewed journal.
10	<p>Confidentiality</p> <p><i>Please provide a clear statement regarding what information has been provided to participants regarding confidentiality issues.</i></p>
	All data collected, including notes from focus groups and any transcripts, will be confidential to the participant and the researcher and only used for the purposes outlined above relating to this study. I will remind participants in the focus groups about the importance of treating whatever is said as confidential both at the beginning and at the end of the session. The final report and any subsequent publications will protect the identities of the research participants and the contexts of professional practice and every effort will be made to ensure that participants are not identifiable in any way. However, given the small number of participants it is accepted that this may not always be possible and so outcomes will be shared with participants prior to any publication to ensure that they are happy with the level of anonymity. The University's research ethics policy states that data should be securely held for a minimum of ten years after the completion of the research project. Electronic data will be stored on password protected computers or laptops and individual files and/or discs will be encrypted. Hard copies of data will be stored in locked filing cabinets and will be disposed of securely when no longer required.
11	<p>Ethical principles of professional bodies</p> <p><i>Where relevant professional bodies have published their own guidelines and principles, these must be followed and the current University</i></p>

	<i>principles interpreted and extended as necessary in this context. Please state which (if any) professional bodies' guidelines are being utilised.</i>
	N/A

Campbell-Barr, V., and Huggins, V. (2011). " Enhancing student learning from international study trips: An exploration of the possibilities and difficulties of using digital technologies to share experiences", R. Erzsebet, (ed.) *Tarsadalomtudományi Tanulmányok IV*. City: Debreceni Egyetem Kiado Debrecen University Press: Hungary pp. 29-35.

de Souza, M., and Andreotti, V. (no date). "Learning to read the world through other eyes ". City: CSSGJ.

Gammonley, D., and Rotabi, K. S. (2007). "Enhancing Global Understanding with Study Abroad -- Ethically Grounded Approaches to International Learning." *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 27(3), 115 - 135.

Killick, D. (2008). "Cross-Cultural Capability and Global Perspectives: Guidelines for Curriculum Review ". City: Leeds Metropolitan University: Leeds.

Martin, F. (2008). "Mutual Learning: the impact of a study visit course on UK teachers' knowledge and understanding of global partnerships." *Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices*, 2(1), 60-75.

Appendix 1.2: Exemplar letter to students

Preparing student teachers to respond to cultural diversity: the role of international study visits

Dear Students

I am writing to invite you to participate in a small research project focussed upon your international experience while studying at Plymouth University.

The project is stimulated by recent research into international study visits which suggests that although it is assumed that it will be beneficial to you personally and professionally, particularly in terms of your understanding of cultural diversity and your responses to it, the evidence for this assumption is limited. I therefore want to investigate the impact of different patterns of international study visits that the Faculty of Health, Education and Society provide. Such impact is highly personal and so in any research it will be crucial to gather the views and responses of individual student participants.

The outcomes of this research will be used in the School of Education and also in other University faculties to make future study visits more effective. They will also be highly relevant to me as a leader of such visits, and will be used to inform my doctoral studies.

What will the research entail for you?

- You and other participants will have written an application statement for your study visit. I would like your permission to read your statement to gain a sense of what your motivations were for wanting to go, and what aspirations you have for your personal and professional development. All statements will be anonymised before I see them so I will not know who has written which one.
- You will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about your previous international experience and travel abroad.
- You will be asked to participate in a small focus group discussion where we will talk about your experiences during the international placement. This discussion will be audio-recorded if all the participants have given their permission.
- During the study visit, you were expected to keep a diary/log of your experiences. This may be written, spoken, visual or a combination. You will be expected to draw upon this in any post-visit discussions, but only to reveal those parts that you are willing to share with the group.
- You will be asked to complete a short writing frame with key questions to prompt your reflection and evaluation of the experience.
- You may be invited to participate in a focus group with students who have been on different study visits so as to discuss and compare experiences.

What do you need to do next?

Read the attached information sheet and think about whether or not you are willing to participate. If you are, then please sign the attached consent slip and return it to the Student Counter, Rolle Building, marked for my attention.

With best wishes,

Valerie A Huggins

Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies, School of Education

Information sheet for students

Informed Consent

In order to achieve as informed consent as possible, I will outline the research project to you verbally. I will also provide you with a clear written outline of the research, and provide an opportunity for you to ask me any questions at any stage, either in person or by email. I acknowledge that issues may arise when a tutor becomes researcher and students become the research participants and I emphasise that your participation will be entirely voluntary, and in no way linked to any assessment. There will be neither reward nor penalty for being involved.

Openness and Honesty

I will be open and honest with you about the overall nature of the research and its aims. The initial explanation of the purpose of the research, and the opportunity to ask questions, will cover this. This research forms part of my doctoral studies and data gathered may be analysed with a different focus in future research projects.

Right to withdraw

Once you have given agreement for me to share your application statement, it will not be possible for you to withdraw permission as the statements will have been anonymised and I will not be able to identify an individual one. If you give consent to participating in the focus group and then change your mind, you can withdraw. Once the focus group has taken place it will not be possible to take out data recorded during the discussion. You will be able to withdraw your individual questionnaire, logs, recordings and other personal reflections at any stage.

Confidentiality and anonymity

The personal application statements will be anonymised by a colleague prior to being sent to me. All data collected, including notes from focus groups and any transcripts, will be confidential and only used for the purposes outlined above relating to this study. I will remind all participants in the focus groups, both at the beginning and at the end of the discussion, about the importance of

treating whatever is said as confidential. The final report and any subsequent publications will protect the identities of the research participants and the contexts of professional practice and every effort will be made to ensure that you are not identifiable in any way. However given the small number of participants, it is accepted that this may not be possible and so outcomes will be shared with you prior to any publication to ensure that you are happy with the level of anonymity. The University's research ethics policy states that data should be securely held for a minimum of ten years after the completion of the research project. Electronic data will be stored on password protected computers or laptops and individual files and/or discs will be encrypted. Hard copies of data will be stored in locked filing cabinets and disposed of securely when no longer required.

Protection from harm

It is hard to envisage how the project might lead to harm, although it is always possible that while engaging in reflections on personal matters participants may become disturbed or emotionally upset. Should this occur I undertake to support you and to act with appropriate sensitivity when communicating with you.

Debriefing and Dissemination

You will be given the opportunity to read the written outcomes of this research and will be offered the opportunity to comment. The research may be disseminated as part of lectures to students and via presentations at team meetings, research meetings and conferences as well as in journal articles.

Student consent slip:

I hereby give my consent for the information that I provided in my application statement to be used to inform the research project being carried out by Valerie Huggins, Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies, Plymouth University.

I have read and understand the ethics protocol for this project.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student consent slip:

I hereby give my consent to participating in a focus group and for the information that I provide to be used in the research project being carried out by Valerie Huggins, Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies, Plymouth University.

I am willing for the discussions in my focus group to be audio-recorded.

Yes/No

I have read and understand the ethics protocol for this project.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student consent slip:

I hereby give my consent to for the material that I provide in the form of a questionnaire, reflections and/or writing frame to be used in the research project being carried out by Valerie Huggins, Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies, Plymouth University

I have read and understand the ethics protocol for this project

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1.3: Exemplar letter to tutors

Preparing student teachers to respond to cultural diversity: the role of international study trips

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project investigating the international study trips that you are involved in.

The project is stimulated by recent research into international study trips which suggests that although it is assumed that they will be beneficial to the students personally and professionally, the evidence for this assumption is limited, particularly in terms of their understanding of cultural diversity and their responses to it. I therefore want to investigate further the impact of different patterns of international study trips that the Faculty of Health, Education and Society provides.

The outcomes of this research will be used in the School of Education, the wider Faculty of Health, Education and Society as well as in other University faculties, to inform the future development of the study trips. They will also be used as part of the next step of my doctoral studies.

What will the research entail for you as a tutor on the trip?

You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview, with a focus on the purpose and organisation of the study trip that you lead. This discussion will be audio-recorded if you have given permission.

You will be asked to share with me any relevant documentation, materials and evaluations that you have that you consider pertinent to the focus of the investigation.

The students usually write application statements for such trips which I would like to read in order to see what their motivations are for wanting to go, and what aspirations they have for their personal and professional development. You will need to give your permission for me to do this and I will obviously be asking the students' permission for you to share them with me. I will need you to anonymise them before sending them to me.

What do you need to do next?

Read the attached information sheet and think about whether or not you are willing to participate.

If you are, then please sign the attached consent slip and return it to me by hand when we meet or via the Student Counter, Rolle Building, marked for my attention.

With best wishes,

Valerie A Huggins

Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies, School of Education

Information Sheet for tutors

Informed Consent

In order to achieve as informed consent as possible, I will outline the research project to you verbally. I will also provide you with a clear written outline of the research. I will provide opportunities for you to ask me any questions, either in person or by email and I will keep you informed at each stage of the research. I acknowledge that issues arise when colleagues are researching each other's practice, and I emphasise that your participation will be entirely voluntary.

Openness and Honesty

I will be open and honest about the overall nature of the research and its aims. The initial explanation of the purpose of the research, and the opportunity to ask questions, will cover this. This research forms part of my doctoral studies and data gathered may be analysed with a different focus in future research projects.

Right to withdraw

If you consent to participate in the interview and then change your mind, you can withdraw. Having been interviewed, you have the right to require that the data collected is not used in the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity

All data collected, including recordings and notes and transcripts from the interview, will be confidential and only used for the purposes outlined above relating to this study. The final report and any subsequent publications will protect the identities of the research participants and contexts of professional practice and every effort will be made to ensure that you are not identifiable in any way. Given the small number of participants however, it is accepted that this may not be possible and so outcomes will be shared with you prior to any publication to ensure that you are happy with the level of anonymity. The university's research ethics policy states that data should be securely held for a minimum of ten years after the completion of the research project. Electronic data will be stored on password protected computers or laptops and individual files and/or discs will be encrypted. Hard copies of data will be stored in locked filing cabinets and disposed of securely when no longer required.

Protection from harm

It is hard to envisage how the project might lead to harm, although it is always possible that while engaging in reflections on professional and personal matters the participants may become disturbed or emotionally upset. Should this occur I undertake to support you and act with appropriate sensitivity when communicating with you.

Debriefing and Dissemination

You will be given the opportunity to read the written outcomes of this research and will be offered the opportunity to comment. The research may be disseminated as part of lectures to students and via presentations at team meetings, research meetings and conferences, as well as in a journal article.

Tutor consent slip:

I hereby give my consent for Valerie Huggins to analyse any materials, documentation and evaluations from the study trip of which I am the leader and which I provide to her. I understand that this will be used to inform the research project being carried out by Valerie Huggins, Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies, Plymouth University.

I hereby consent to participate in a semi-structured interview.

I am willing for the interview to be audio-recorded. Yes/No

I have read and understand the ethics protocol for this project.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1.4: Exemplar letter to Associate Deans

Preparing student teachers to respond to cultural diversity: the role of international study trips

Dear colleague,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project investigating the international study trips that the Faculty facilitates.

The project is stimulated by recent research into international study trips which suggests that although it is assumed that they will be beneficial to the students personally and professionally, the evidence for this assumption is limited, particularly in terms of their understanding of cultural diversity and their responses to it. I therefore want to investigate further the impact of different patterns of international study trips that the Faculty of Health, Education and Society provides.

The outcomes of this research will be used in the School of Education, the wider Faculty of Health, Education and Society as well as in other University faculties, to inform the future development of the study trips. They will also be used as part of the next step of my doctoral studies.

What will the research entail for you?

You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview, with a focus on the purpose of international study visits. This discussion will be audio-recorded if you have given permission.

You will be asked to share with me any relevant documentation, materials and evaluations that you have that you consider pertinent to the focus of the investigation.

What do you need to do next?

Read the attached information sheet and think about whether or not you are willing to participate. If you are, then please sign the attached consent slip and return it to me by hand when we meet or via the Student Counter, Rolle Building, marked for my attention.

With best wishes,

Valerie A Huggins, Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies, School of Education

Information Sheet

This research project is aimed at investigating the ways in which current international study trips deliberately foster in student teachers an awareness of and approaches to cultural diversity; at gaining an insight into the impact upon participating students of different patterns of trips; and at

making possible recommendations about the worthwhileness and the conduct of such trips in the future.

Informed Consent

In order to achieve as informed consent as possible, I will outline the research project to you verbally. I will also provide you with a clear written outline of the research. I will provide opportunities for you to ask me any questions, either in person or by email and I will keep you informed at each stage of the research. I acknowledge that issues arise when colleagues are researching each other's practice, and I emphasise that your participation will be entirely voluntary.

Openness and Honesty

I will be open and honest about the overall nature of the research and its aims. The initial explanation of the purpose of the research, and the opportunity to ask questions, will cover this. This research forms part of my doctoral studies and data gathered may be analysed with a different focus in future research projects.

Right to withdraw

If you consent to participate in the interview and then change your mind, you can withdraw. Having been interviewed, you have the right to require that the data collected is not used in the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity

All data collected, including recordings and notes and transcripts from the interview, will be confidential and only used for the purposes outlined above relating to this study. The final report and any subsequent publications will protect the identities of the research participants and contexts of professional practice and every effort will be made to ensure that you are not identifiable in any way. Given the small number of participants however, it is accepted that this may not be possible and so outcomes will be shared with you prior to any publication to ensure that you are happy with the level of anonymity. The university's research ethics policy states that data should be securely held for a minimum of ten years after the completion of the research project. Electronic data will be stored on password protected computers or laptops and individual files and/or discs will be encrypted. Hard copies of data will be stored in locked filing cabinets and disposed of securely when no longer required.

Protection from harm

It is hard to envisage how the project might lead to harm, although it is always possible that while engaging in reflections on professional and personal matters the participants may become disturbed or emotionally upset. Should this occur I undertake to support you and act with appropriate sensitivity when communicating with you.

Debriefing and Dissemination

You will be given the opportunity to read the written outcomes of this research and will be offered the opportunity to comment. The research may be disseminated as part of lectures to students and via presentations at team meetings, research meetings and conferences, as well as in a journal article.

Consent slip:

I hereby give my consent for Valerie Huggins to analyse any materials, documentation and evaluations concerning international study visits which I provide to her. I understand that this will be used to inform the research project being carried out by Valerie Huggins, Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies, Plymouth University.

I hereby consent to participate in a semi-structured interview.

I am willing for the interview to be audio-recorded.

Yes/No

I have read and understand the ethics protocol for this project.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1.5: Exemplar letter to International Coordinator

Preparing student teachers to respond to cultural diversity: the role of international study trips

Dear International Coordinator

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project investigating the international study trips that you facilitate in your role as International Coordinator.

The project is stimulated by recent research into international study trips which suggests that although it is assumed that they will be beneficial to the students personally and professionally, the evidence for this assumption is limited, particularly in terms of their understanding of cultural diversity and their responses to it. I therefore want to investigate further the impact of different patterns of international study trips that the Faculty of Health, Education and Society provides.

The outcomes of this research will be used in the School of Education and also in other University faculties to inform the future development of the study trips. They will also be used as part of the next step of my doctoral studies.

What will the research entail for you as an International Coordinator?

You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview, with a focus on the purpose and organisation of the study trips that you facilitate. This discussion will be audio-recorded if you have given permission. You will be asked to share with me any relevant documentation, materials and evaluations that you have that you consider pertinent to the focus of the investigation.

What do you need to do next?

Read the attached information sheet and think about whether or not you are willing to participate. If you are, then please sign the attached consent slip and return it to the Student Counter, Rolle Building, marked for my attention.

With best wishes,

Valerie A Huggins

Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies, School of Education

Information Sheet for International Coordinator

Informed Consent

In order to achieve as informed consent as possible, I will outline the research project to you verbally. I will also provide you with a clear written outline of the research. I will provide opportunities for you to ask me any questions, either in person or by email and I will keep you informed at each stage of the research.

I acknowledge that issues arise when colleagues are researching each other's practice, and I emphasise that your participation will be entirely voluntary.

Openness and Honesty

I will be open and honest about the overall nature of the research and its aims. The initial explanation of the purpose of the research, and the opportunity to ask questions, will cover this.

This research forms part of my doctoral studies and data gathered may be analysed with a different focus in future research projects.

Right to withdraw

If you consent to participate in the interview and then change your mind, you can withdraw. Having been interviewed, you have the right to require that the data collected is not used in the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity

All data collected, including recordings and notes and transcripts from the interview, will be confidential and only used for the purposes outlined above relating to this study.

The final report and any subsequent publications will protect the identities of the research participants and contexts of professional practice and every effort will be made to ensure that you are not identifiable in any way. Given the small number of participants however, it is accepted that this may not be possible and so outcomes will be shared with you prior to any publication to ensure that you are happy with the level of anonymity. The university's research ethics policy states that data should be securely held for a minimum of ten years after the completion of the research project. Electronic data will be stored on password protected computers or laptops and individual files and/or discs will be encrypted. Hard copies of data will be stored in locked filing cabinets and disposed of securely when no longer required.

Protection from harm

It is hard to envisage how the project might lead to harm, although it is always possible that while engaging in reflections on professional and personal matters the participants may become

disturbed or emotionally upset. Should this occur I undertake to support you and act with appropriate sensitivity when communicating with you.

Debriefing and Dissemination

You will be given the opportunity to read the written outcomes of this research and will be offered the opportunity to comment. The research may be disseminated as part of lectures to students and via presentations at team meetings, research meetings and conferences, as well as in a journal article.

Coordinator consent slip:

I hereby give my consent for Valerie Huggins to analyse any materials, documentation and evaluations from the study trips which I provide to her. I understand that this will be used to inform the research project being carried out by Valerie Huggins, Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies, Plymouth University.

I hereby consent to participate in a semi-structured interview.

I am willing for the interview to be audio-recorded. Yes/No

I have read and understand the ethics protocol for this project.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2.1: Interview schedule for study visit tutors

Q1 Please can you give a brief outline of your role as a tutor leading an international study visit?

Q2 What drew you to this role – what particularly appealed to you?

Q3 What prior experience have you had that you think is particularly relevant to being a leader of an international study visit?

Q3 Are there any specific guidelines/criteria that all School of Education international study visits have to meet – apart from the obvious Health and Safety/Risk Assessment?

Q4 Do you know whether there are any specific criteria for the approval of staff who lead international study visits?

Q5 Is there any support/training offered to you?

Q5 What do you hope/anticipate that School of Education students will gain from engaging in international study visits?

Q6 In your experience, what are potential tricky issues/difficulties that arise when students are on international study visits?

Q6 What about the students who don't/can't/won't go?

Appendix 2.2: Interview Schedule for Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning

Q1 Given your role as Associate Dean for Teaching & Learning, what are your thoughts about the place of an international dimension in the teaching and learning within the Faculty?

Q2 What might be some of the qualities that you would hope were being developed in the Faculty's students to prepare them for increasing globalisation and diversity?

Q3 One of the strategies used to promote this dimension can be international study visits, which are the main focus of my research. What specific contribution, if any, do you see such visits making to the student experience?

Q4 Are there any Faculty guidelines with regard to international study visits?

Q5 Is there any support/training offered to tutors involved in international study visits?

Q6 In your experience, what are potential tricky issues/difficulties that can arise concerning international study visits?

Q7 Do you think that such study visits should be part of the experience and preparation of all students in the Faculty?

Q8 What about those students who are unwilling or unable to participate in such visits?

Q9 I gather that there is potentially a review of the University's and the Faculty's Teaching and Learning strategies for 2013. In what directions do you envisage the international dimension being developed?

Appendix 2.3: Interview Schedule for Associate Dean for Internationalisation

Q1 Given your role as Associate Dean for Internationalisation, how high a priority do you think internationalisation should be given by module leaders? How important is an international dimension in the teaching and learning within the Faculty?

Q1A What might be some of the qualities that you would hope were being developed in the Faculty's students to prepare them for increasing globalisation and diversity?

Q1B What are your responsibilities as AD for Internationalisation?

Q1C Are you a part of Faculty groups/committees in this area? What is your structure of line management in this area? Up and down, e.g. relationship with the international co-ordinator. How would you define his responsibilities?

Q2 What do you see as any difficulties in encouraging staff in the Faculty to follow the University's clear policies and guidelines on internationalisation?

Q3 One strategy for promoting this dimension can be international study visits, which are the main focus of my research. What specific contribution, if any, do you see such visits making to the student experience and learning?

Q4 Are there any Faculty guidelines with regard to international study visits?

Q5 Is there any support/training offered to tutors involved in international study visits?

Q6 In your experience, what are potential tricky issues/difficulties that can arise concerning international study visits?

Q7 Do you think that such study visits should be part of the experience and preparation of all students in the Faculty?

Q8 Some students are currently unwilling or unable to participate in such visits. Do you think that the Faculty should give encouragement and support for a larger number of students to participate?

Q9 I gather that there is a review of the University's and the Faculty's Internationalisation strategy. In what directions do you envisage the international dimension being developed?

Appendix 2.4: First Interview Schedule for International Coordinator

Q1 Please can you give a brief outline of your role as International Co-ordinator for the School of Education.

Q2 What drew you to this role – what particularly appealed to you?

Q3 Are there any specific guidelines/criteria that all School of Education International Study Visits have to meet – apart from the obvious Health and Safety/Risk Assessment?

Q4 Are there any specific criteria for the approval of staff who lead International study visits? Is there any support/training offered to them?

Q5 What do you hope/anticipate that School of Education students will gain from engaging in International Study Visits?

Q6 What about the students who don't/can't/won't go?

Appendix 2.5: second Interview Schedule for International Co-ordinator

I've now had the chance to interview several colleagues in the Faculty concerned with international study visits (ISVs) and with the promotion of aspects of internationalisation and the global dimension in teaching/learning within all academic programmes. This has raised a number of further matters on which I would appreciate your views as the International Coordinator for School of Education.

Q1. Does your role as International Coordinator for the School of Education involve you with any Faculty-wide committees or networks, informal or formal, in considering the conduct and development of ISVs and related issues?

Q2. To who are you responsible, in the University and the Faculty, for this aspect of your academic work?

Q3. Are there any Faculty or University guidelines for ISVs which define or shape your responsibilities in this area? If so, have you been able to contribute to their form or content?

Q4. You said interestingly, in the first interview, that the lack of a specific job description for you 'works better for both parties'. Can you expand on that?

Q5. From our previous interview, you have a very particular and individual theoretical approach to the benefits gained from ISVs and a specific induction of trip leaders into your preferred way of running them. If a tutor were to return from a trip with clear arguments for changing the approach, do you think they should be given the opportunity to do so?

Q6. Do you think, given the perceived value of ISVs, that the University and Faculty should be doing more to support a larger number of participants?

If yes, any suggestions for how?

If no, why not?

Q7. How are potential new trips/venues identified and how do they get approved or rejected? Who has the say in this?

Appendix 2.6: Questionnaire for student participants

The role of international study visits in fostering understanding of cultural diversity

Student Questionnaire

[This should take about 10 minutes to complete. Please use ticks where there are alternatives.]

Your Age:

Degree/Course:

Gender:

Year of study (please tick one): 1 2 3 4 Postgraduate

Home Town/City/Area:

1. Have you ever lived abroad?

Yes

No

2. If 'Yes', for how long?

Years

Months

3. If 'Yes', in which country(ies)?

4. Have you travelled outside the UK before?

Yes

No

5. If 'Yes', to which continents? (please tick all visited)

Europe

Africa

North America

Central & South America

Asia

Australasia

6. Have either of your parents, or a close family member, lived abroad?

Yes

No

7. If 'Yes', for how long?

Father	Years	Months
Mother	Years	Months
Other close relative	Years	Months

8. Did you study (at school or elsewhere) any languages other than English? Yes No

9. If 'Yes', to what level?

Language	Basic	GCSE	A Level	Degree Level

10. Do you speak any languages other than English? Yes No

11. If 'Yes', to what level?

Language	A few phrases	Practical basics	Conversation	Fluency

12. Give three main reasons why you chose to go on this international study visit.

a)

b)

c)

13. What fears/concerns (if any) do you/did you have about going on this international study visit?

Examples of completed questionnaires can be seen on request

Appendix 2.7: Student Questionnaire Synopsis

Your Age:

18-22	23-30	Over 30
39	4	1

Gender:

male	female
4	38

Year of study:

1	2	3	4	PG
2	27	7	6	2

Home Town/City/Area:

SW	S/SE	Midlands	Overseas	No answer
24	8	8	1	3

1. Have you ever lived abroad?

Yes	No
7	37

2. If 'Yes', for how long?

Ranging between 2 months and 2 years

Africa	1
New Zealand	1

3. If 'Yes', in which

Europe	5
--------	---

country(ies)?

4. Have you travelled outside the UK

Yes	No
42	2

before?

5. If 'Yes', to which

Only Europe	12
Europe +1 other	15
Europe + 2 others	12
Europe + 3 others	1
Europe + 4 others	3

continents?

6. Have either of your parents, or a close family member, lived abroad?

Yes	No
19	25

7. If 'Yes', for how long? Ranging from 3 years to 30 years

8. Did you study (at school or elsewhere) any

Yes	No
37	7

languages

other than English?

9. If 'Yes', to what level?

Language	Basic	GCSE	A Level	Degree Level
	3	29	5	0

10. Do you speak any languages other than English?

Yes	No
27	17

11. If 'Yes', to what level?

None	A few phrases	Practical basics	Conversation	Fluency
17	8	15	3	1 (international student)

Appendix 2.8: Pre-visit focus group plan

Introduction and Ethical Issues

Remind participants of the expectation of confidentiality and protection from harm.

Outline the aims of the project. *“I am interested in how the experience of an International Study Visit shapes and influences student teachers’ professional identities, with a particular focus on our ability to respond to cultural diversity, which is a key competence for all teachers.”*

“You have all agreed to this session being audio-recorded and so understand that your contribution will not be able to be withdrawn subsequently. Also I am going to ask you to participate in some creative activities; again, it will not be possible for you to withdraw your contribution once made. However, you are free to leave at any time during the session, should you wish.”

Questionnaires: motivations and aspirations

Share with the group key motivations and aspirations emerging from analysis of the questionnaire responses and invite comment and discussion:

Gaining experience in another part of the country, potentially linked with aspirations about working in London when qualified; interested in developing subject knowledge in Humanities, with a focus on cultural diversity; low cost compared to the international experiences;

Questionnaires: concerns

Share with the group main concerns and anxieties emerging from analysis of the questionnaire responses and invite comment and discussion.

Very few, mainly focussed on the issue of not having enough experience in teaching children with EAL,

Or being in a situation that is tricky, not easy to cope with – does this concern fit with you – what kind of things may be unsettling for you?

Reflective Journal/Log

“As part of your personal and professional development as a teacher you are advised to keep a reflective journal/log.” Briefly remind participants of the uses and benefits.

“Please will you do this for your trip – it can be in audio/video/blog/diary form, or a mix. When you return I will be sending you a writing frame to complete [explain], and then we will have another focus group. For both these activities you will be drawing on your journal/log and sharing those aspects of them that you are willing to share.”

Conclusion

Thanks.

Reminder of confidentiality requirement.

Good wishes for the trip.

Appendix 2.9: Post-visit focus group plan

Introduction and Ethical Issues

Remind participants of the expectation of confidentiality and protection from harm.

Outline the aims of the project. *“I am interested in how the experience of an International Study Trip shapes and influences Early Childhood Studies students’ professional identities, with a particular focus on our ability to respond to cultural diversity, which is a key competence for all practitioners working with children and families.”*

“You have all agreed to this session being audio-recorded and so understand that your contribution will not be able to be withdrawn subsequently. Also I am going to ask you to participate in some activities; again, it will not be possible for you to withdraw your contribution in these once made. However, you are free to leave at any time during the session, should you wish.”

Map of your Journey

“You have been on a journey – in more ways than one! What I want you to do now is to consider what were the key experiences and incidents, personally and professionally during the trip? Create some kind of picture/map/diagram illustrating these things.”

Photos

“I asked you to bring some photos – have you selected a few/ If so, what can you tell us about them?”

“Were there some images that you wanted to capture and did not feel that you could?”

Reflective Journal/Log

“As part of your personal and professional development were you advised to keep a reflective journal/log.” Have you completed a report for your PDP – if so, please may I have a copy?

Conclusion

Thanks.

Reminder of confidentiality requirement.

Appendix 2.10: Exemplar of a Writing Frame

It has now been several weeks since your return from your study trip to The Gambia. I am interested in capturing your thoughts about its effects upon you. Please respond with as much detail as you can.

1. Describe an idea, belief or expectation you held prior to going that has changed significantly as a result of the visit. Why? In what ways?

2. Was there an event or a situation that really surprised or shocked you at the time? Thinking about it now, have your views and feelings changed at all? If so, why? In what ways?

3. Looking back, which was the organised activity during the trip which made the greatest impact upon you? Why? In what ways?

4. Will your experience in The Gambia make a difference to your practice in the future?

Why? In what ways?

e.g. in ways that you work with children and families? In your choice of work? In your teaching?

Volunteering?

Please circle the trip that you were part of:

December 2012

February 2013

Completed writing frames are available on request.

Appendix 2.11 Writing frame for data analysis

Prompts	Notes
<p>What am I asking?</p> <p>What was the response?</p> <p>Does that answer the question?</p> <p>What is not being said?</p>	

<p>What am I asking?</p> <p>What was the response?</p> <p>Does that answer the question?</p> <p>What is not being said?</p>	
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Appendix 3.1: Facet methodology

Paper written for the PGR Conference, Plymouth University, 15th June 2013

by Valerie Huggins, Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies (EdD Y4 student)

I am currently in the thesis stage of my doctoral study and my initial focus was upon the development of intercultural capabilities in undergraduate students participating in study visits and placements. I envisaged basing this upon a case study of such visits organised within the School of Education, but as I worked towards an appropriate research design I faced challenges in deciding upon a methodology that suited what I wanted to research and the way I wanted to do it. One challenge was that the patterns and timings of the international study visits were very different and spread over an academic year and offered to students at different stages of their degree programmes. Another was that the pressure of student commitments sometimes meant that they were unwilling, or even unable, to become involved on the study to the degree I thought necessary.

I was at that stage endeavouring to make sense of the lived experiences of students as they engaged in international study visits, considering their reasons for going, their learning during the visit and the way in which these experiences may have shaped their attitudes towards cultural diversity and promoted their intercultural capabilities (Huggins, 2013). Bourdieu's concepts of fields, capitals and, in particular, habitus, were becoming increasingly useful in helping me to understand these processes and relationships. How to capture this complexity in a way that had coherence?

The more I considered, the more multi-dimensional the research became, as these international study visits do not exist in a vacuum. They are contingent upon the involvement of the tutors, their beliefs and pedagogical approaches, which in turn are contingent upon the regimes of truth within the Faculty that inform and shape how University and Faculty policies on Internationalisation and on Teaching and Learning are interpreted and put into use by the different agents involved. Each of these fields prompted a new line of enquiry, leading me to consider the implications of the relationships between them and how they are entwined. At one stage I looked to use Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), considering in turn the different layers of University, Faculty, School, Tutors and Students, but an appropriate research design would require that I investigated how these different fields were connected and entwined and what power the individual agents within each field had to shape the nature and patterns of the international study visits with consequent impacts upon the promotion of intercultural capabilities. As I gathered more and more data to try to resolve the ever-increasing number of puzzles I was

unearthing, I was becoming increasingly confused, as though I was chasing a never-ending unwinding ball of string.

It was at this point that I encountered Facet Methodology (Mason, 2013), ironically when searching for something quite different, as is often the way. It immediately appealed to me; the words which seemed to reflect my research study were:

“Facet methodology assumes that the world - and what we seek to understand about it - is not only lived and experienced, but is multi-dimensional, contingent, relationally implicated and entwined.” (Mason, 2013)

This seemed to fit with Bourdieu’s notion of habitus as a system of durable, transposable dispositions, gained from individual or collective experiences in the past, which produce social practices that are enacted in social fields (Shim, 2012, Sieger *et al.*, 2012).

As a methodology it also matched aspects of the Mosaic approach (Clark & Moss, 2001) widely used in research with young children, which had informed some of my thinking in the earlier stages. What was particularly helpful and reassuring was that it offered a justification for my use of different methods I have used to shape and illuminate my different lines of enquiry – my facets.

Facet Methodology came out of Mason *et al.*’s ESRC research into Family Relationships (Mason *et al.*, 2012). Mason argues that Facet Methodology puts creativity and innovation at the heart of methodological practice, in that the researcher can select from a palette of methods choosing whatever is appropriate to create a facet that will cast a light on an aspect of the overall enquiry that is puzzling. The different facets as a cluster will illuminate the research question. They can be different sizes and shapes and can be held at different angles, in the hope that they will create intense bright shafts of light on the issue under investigation.

Another metaphor that emerges for me is that the research focus can be imagined as a dull, rough-cut diamond, just coming out in to the light of day, and the researcher as the gem-cutter shaping the facets to reveal new understandings and meanings so confirm the research focus as being significant and worthy of further study.

As such, it is not like bricolage as a model for enquiry. As Hammersley (2008) outlines, drawing on the ideas of Lévi-Strauss, bricolage can focus on surface features, on how they appear and the patterns that emerge. It creates a patchwork but the pieces are not necessarily intended to fit together (Nolan *et al.*, 2013). As such it can be open-ended and leave the reader to make their own sense of it, whereas I want to direct you to a particular message through my research. Bricolage’s assemblage of different elements of knowledge involves no requirement for entwinement (Mason,

2012), whereas Facet Methodology is particularly concerned to identify the contingencies and relationships between the different facets as they interlink. Each facet that is created is a mini-study, and they can be different shapes and sizes depending upon which aspect of the research question is being investigated; however, applying the methodology ensures you are considering the facets-in-relation to each other.

So, based on my existing knowledge and experience of international study visits, and my literature review on intercultural capabilities, I have purposefully looked to shape facets that I hope will produce such flashes of insight. For example, in order to investigate the students' perceptions, belief and attitudes (their habitus) towards international study visits, I have used a range of methods, including focus groups, audio recordings of reflections and video diaries while on the visits and reflective writing frames. Each method has refracted the light and given me glimpses that together are revealing. However, I am not presenting each facet as a different part of the research, or presenting them as separate bits. It is not triangulation (Bazely, 2013) or integration of the data, but a different way of engaging in critical looking and listening (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007) which demonstrates the contingent nature of the fields under investigation and the complexities of the relationships between them.

Mason is clear that the facets need to be strategically placed in relation to the specific research concerns so you do not get a random or eclectic set of data, which I was in danger of doing before I had thought through this methodology carefully. I also was reassured that I did not need to get a representative or total set of data, because I was aiming for flashes of insight rather than a maximum coverage.

To give an example of this: I have conducted some focus groups with some students prior to them departing for their international study visits and their responses have provided insights, but I cannot argue that I have captured all possible student responses. However, I have also used discourse analysis of their application letters, and asked open-ended questions on questionnaires that added to the depth of illumination about their motivations and aspirations for the visit. I then constructed another facet that focussed on the tutors' perceptions, using semi-structured interviews and a focus group, and I was able to draw on the first facet to shed light on the subsequent one, and vice versa, as I then revisited the data gathered from the students using the light from the tutors' responses. So, perhaps elements of grounded theory and iteration are apparent as I have looked through each facet in different ways to refract the light so it casts a new angle on data I had previously analysed and these new insights have shaped subsequent methods and framings of questions.

Another advantage is that this methodology is very responsive, in that when I have a 'lightbulb' moment and a new line of investigation appears, I can set out a new facet, with appropriate

methods. For example, asking the same questions to different tutors from different professional backgrounds revealed a diversity of discourses and habitus concerning intercultural capabilities that exposed a rich seam to be explored further – but this is not in the scope of my study. So, I just accept that it casts a particularly illuminating shaft of light on one aspect, and move on. I have had to restrain myself on more than one occasion over the last few months as I have almost gone off on another tangent, following another unfurling ball of string; as Bazely (2013) recommends, keeping a tight focus on the research question is vital throughout every stage of the investigation.

Having come this far, I am now in the process of the final analysis of the data, using the facet-based approach in explaining my findings. This is proving to be another challenge, because unlike more prevalent methodologies that have been frequently used by other researchers, I have no models to follow yet, apart from Mason's.

Mason et al (2012) argue that Facet Methodology is an approach that can trouble existing categories and shift prior assumptions. From the outset I have sought to challenge the assumption that international study visits are unproblematic and will inevitably be transformational for the students. This has led to some ethically tricky situations that I have yet to resolve in writing up the research, so I am not convinced yet that the Facet Methodology will achieve this aspect. I am clearly hoping that my research will challenge or trouble existing assumptions, rather than just give more knowledge. This fits with my desire for my research to be more than just interpretive. It is 'critical' research (Hammersley, 2013) in that I am considering the discourse and the habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) of the groups of people that I am investigating within a global theoretical framework about the promotion of intercultural capabilities (Andreotti, 2011, Perry & Southwell, 2011). They are located within the wider social systems of the Faculty and the University, and their behaviour and responses in particular situations will need to be explained by factors that are beyond their awareness, and as Hegel suggests (Hammersley, 2008) this awareness will have been systematically distorted by social processes. Facet methodology is useful in illuminating these factors, because of the opportunity to use different methods, so that

“what we see or come to know or understand through the facets is thus always a combination of what we are looking at (the thing itself, the ontology), and how we are looking at it (how we use our methods to perceive it, the epistemology)”. (Mason, 2011, p77).

I am now faced with the challenge of presenting the findings from my investigation in a way that convinces you that they are meaningful, genuine and trustworthy. I hope that by following the Facet Methodology approach throughout, I will be able to do this.

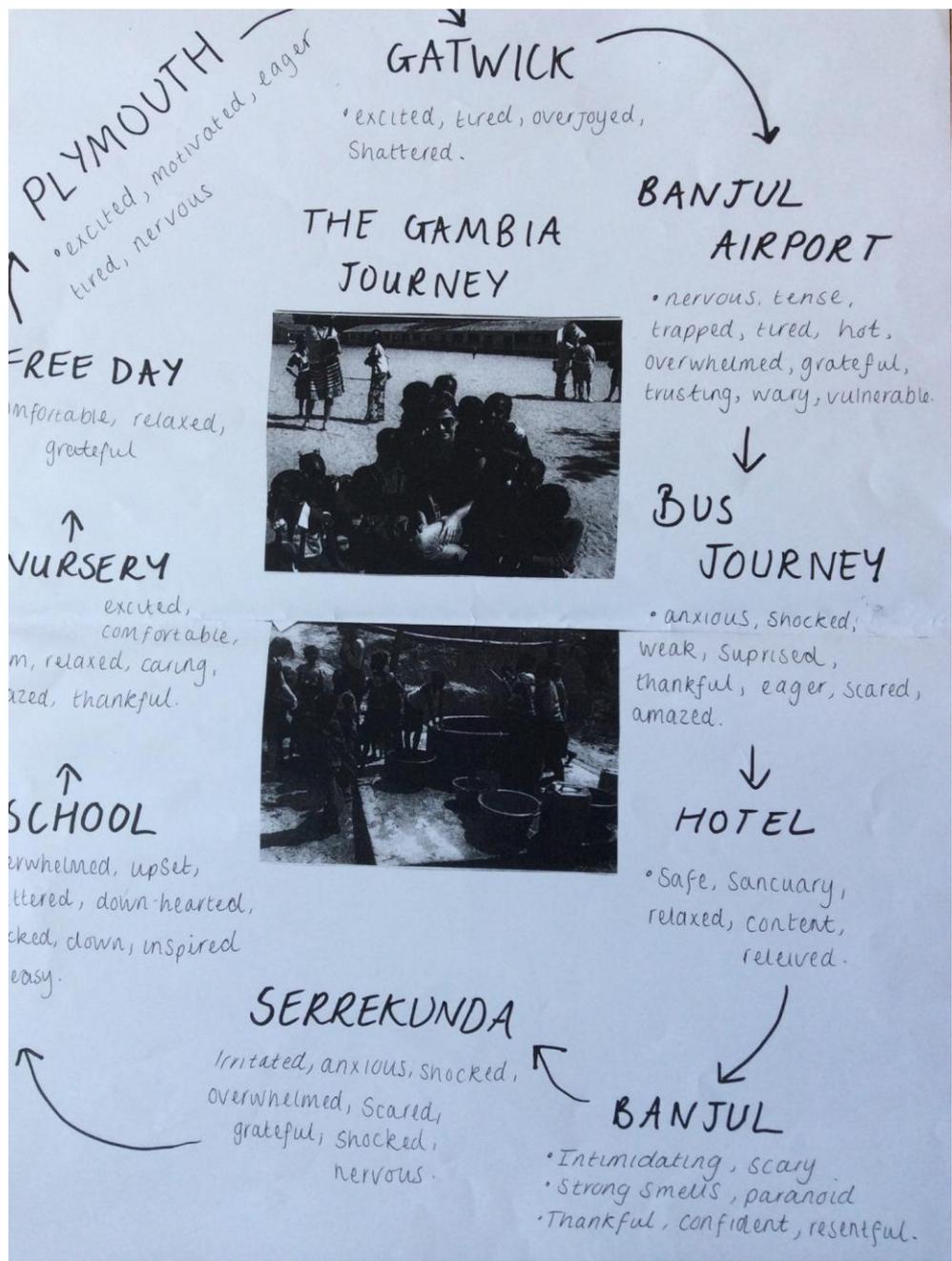
IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, OR WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THIS PAPER WITH ME, PLEASE EMAIL:

valerie.huggins@plymouth.ac.uk

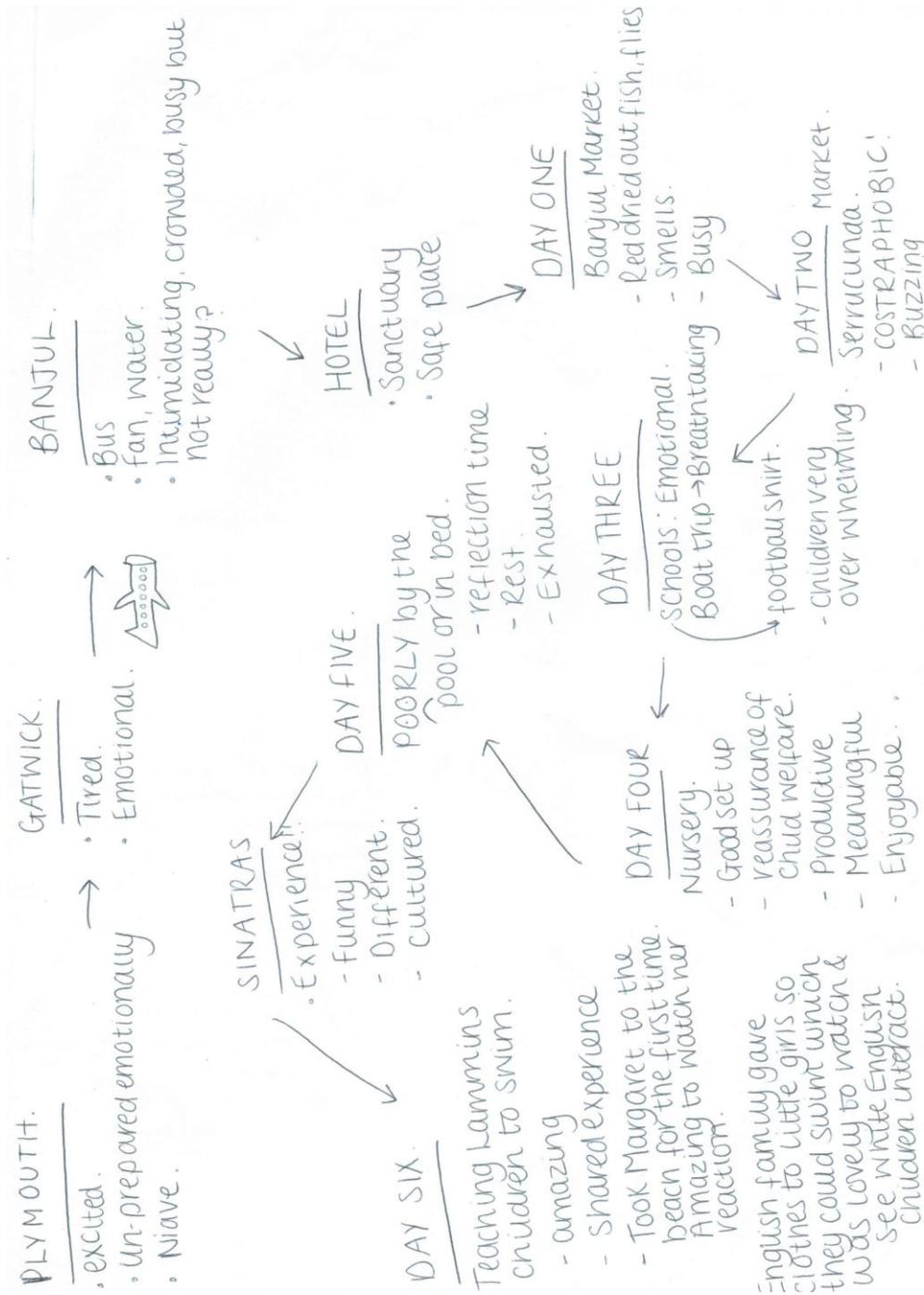
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Appendix 3.2: Photo Elicitation, FG5 Paula



Appendix 3.3: Emotional map of a Gambia trip, FG3 Greta



Appendix 3.4: Photo Elicitation photos



Appendix 3.5: Students' Reflection, Gambia Group 1

This is a transcript of a discussion lasting 20 minutes 53 seconds between 3 students who had been invited to audio record their thoughts and reflections on their experience of the visit as they were travelling home on the plane. February 2013

1. **Jen:** Hang on, let me have a think.
2. **Liz:** Yeah, how do you feel?
3. **Abi:** Umm, that's a weird one actually isn't it? I feel...
4. **Liz:** I have, like, mixed feelings about it all. I think...
5. **Jen:** I feel privileged to have seen it all.
6. **Liz:** Yeah I feel privileged...
7. **Abi:** Yeah.
8. **Liz:**...and humbled. But at the same time slightly confused at ...
9. **Abi:** Certain things...
10. **Liz:**...how they view us...
11. **Abi:**...that happened to us.
12. **Liz:** And also, yeah, and also the things that were said to us that weren't perhaps true.
13. **Abi:** In order to get charity or...
14. **Liz:** Yeah.
15. **Abi:** Whatever, yeah.
16. **Jen:** I just feel like it was a different world out there.
17. **Liz:** Yeah.
18. **Abi:** Over there...
19. **Jen:** It is though, isn't it? Well, yeah, it's just so different, like so many things just cross your mind and people say things to you...
20. **Liz:** Yeah.
21. **Jen:** Or the way people go about things.
22. **Abi:** Yeah. Well, like, I had a...
23. **Jen:** We are going to have a problem in a second, yeah, going to have to keep talking and talking and talking. Ummm....[Steward serving drinks]
24. **Abi:** I had this kind of, you know, we talk about stereotypes, the other day, about how you see it on the TV, and it's to do with a child...
25. **Jen:** Yeah.
26. **Liz:** Yeah.
27. **Abi:** Whereas, you're going out to see it personally. I think I had that about the whole trip. It was, like, I'm going to Gambia and I'm going to do this stuff and see this school and I'm going to see this. But we didn't know anything. We knew we were going to schools but we didn't know any more. But now that I've been there I feel like, I don't know what the word is. Like, it's actually really personal...
28. **Liz:** Umm.
29. **Abi:**...Instead of like, I am going to this African country...
30. **Jen:**...to see like poor children, kind of thing...
31. **Abi:** Having, yeah...
32. **Jen:** Do you know what I mean? Like that's...
33. **Abi:** You see how they teach with all of our, without all of our nice western stuff and all of our money.
34. **Liz:** Yeah.

35. **Abi:** It doesn't feel like that now that we are going.[i.e. leaving]. It's like, I remember things like all those children walking all those miles with us, partly just to be our friends and partly in the hope they would gain something.
36. **Liz:** Yeah.
37. **Abi:** Which, you know, I don't blame them for...
38. **Liz:** And then having to walk all the way back in the heat.
39. **Abi:** And walking all the way back. But it's not the heat ,it's the winter, isn't it? They were like; 'What are you on about ? Its cold'. Like, do you think that they'd been like led on or let down for us or something. Because when we went to see the orphanage thingy, or whatever it was...Umm...
40. **Jen:**...You know, this girl said to me, she came up to me and grabbed my hand and said; 'Will you be my friend?' umm, and I was like 'Yeah' you know, having a little bit of a chat, and then she said; 'You are going to forget me, aren't you?'
41. **Abi:** Oh, they said that to us so many times...
42. **Liz:** Yes, they said that a lot, yeah
43. **Jen:** But do you think that's because...?
44. **Abi:** When I go home I'll cry.
45. **Jen:** But then they came into school...
46. **Liz:** I think they probably...
47. **Jen:**...and she said 'You have already forgotten me!' I was like 'I haven't. I was just looking around'. Like, is it ,are they taught to say that? Like in a way, like, because I saw one mum, like, nudge her child and go: 'two more people'
48. **Abi:** Yeah, Yeah. And then the brother said; 'two more people'
49. **Jen:** Children were sent out to ask for pity and to ask the toubab [*white person*] and they are you know, they are told: 'If you see a white person put your hand out ask for money'. And that goes for the same situation. I think they have such a strong perception over us...
50. **Abi:** Yeah.
51. **Jen:**...Just as we have of them in the media.
52. **Liz:** Yeah and it's trying to get, it's trying to get that balance isn't it? Of...
53. **Abi:** Yeah.
54. **Liz:**...us seeing them as people and them seeing us as people, you know,
55. **Abi:** Yeah, but I don't think a lot of them did.
56. **Liz:** I know to them, I know to them we look so much wealthier than they are. But actually in our lives we are really not wealthy at all.
57. **Abi:** No, but they, they, they haven't left us [*i.e. gone way from us*] with that understanding.
58. **Liz:** No.
59. **Abi:** Because as a generally rule they either gained from us, like the two girls that we gave a bit of money to and you gave your book and that kind of thing. Or if they haven't gained from us, they'll just try the next ones. Whereas, we've gone away with 'oh they are individuals, they've got personality', you know, it's not just...
60. **Jen:** Yeah.
61. **Abi:** And they have got different lives as well, you know, we have to...
62. **Liz:** But then perhaps, if they were to visit us in the UK and see our homes and our families and our lives...
63. **Abi:** Yeah, and they...

64. **Liz:**...then they have a different understanding.
65. **Jen:** So I guess this trip has allowed us just to see right into some of the lives...
66. **Abi:** Yeah
67. **Jen:**..of people and just may be...
68. **Liz:** And how welcoming they were as well.
69. **Jen:**...I understand how, I mean, I know they go on about the smiling, but they are generally very happy, aren't they?
70. **Abi:** Yeah.
71. **Jen:** Very loving people.
72. **Liz:** So happy to see you.
73. **Abi:** Yeah.
74. **Abi:** You can tell that from little things like...
75. **Liz:** Welcoming you into their house...
76. **Abi:**...you know the drumming and all of that kind of thing. Like we have been talking about how we've lost that at home and how, like, children are embarrassed to sing, not when they are little, little, but as they get older, teenagers drop out of...
77. **Jen:** Yeah but it, it stops so early doesn't it?
78. **Abi:**...music things and that kind of thing. Whereas, they [*The Gambians*] are proud of all of that and they are, it seems to be a generally, and like you know, that fact that people talk to each other and it's not just them coming up to us going like; 'Oh, I will take you here and take you there'. Think about all the times that you are walking along with XXXXX[*local guide*], or one of the others, and they are like that 'oh hey' and he knows him and he knows him and he knows him.
79. **Jen:** Yeah. Can you imagine that at home?
80. **Liz:** It shows community spirit, doesn't it? We don't have that.
81. **Jen:** But it just, it just shows it works doesn't it, like, imagine that in Plymouth?
82. **Abi:** No.
83. **Liz:** We don't have that at all in the UK, it's all about individual needs.
84. **Jen:** And I only live in a small town of like twenty thousand people but it's nothing like that.
85. **Abi:** No.
86. **Jen:** It's such a shame.
87. **Abi:** But I think you can sort of get it in a village in the UK. But even then, it's it tends to be more emphasis on, like, gossip rather than....
88. **Liz:** But also that, but also, you tend to find its the older generation that keeps that spirit going...
89. **Jen:** Umm.
90. **Liz:**...the younger people, sorry if I'm stereotyping.
91. **Abi:** They try to get out of it.
92. **Liz:** You know they don't tend to have that community feeling and that, that need for the community. But then they don't need the need for the community. They can drive and they've got independence and, you know, they have got everything. They've got money. They got stuff so that they can go do stuff. They don't, they have got nurseries...
93. **Abi:** Yeah, or they can shut themselves.....
94. **Liz:**...they don't need extended families.

95. **Abi:** Yeah can just shut themselves in their room with a Play Station when they are a teenager, but they have got to go out and meet other girlfriends and.....
96. **Jen:** Well, I think you kind of think, you go out there to see, like, how poor they are, to, like, compare it. But the trip has shown us I think, how happy people can be...
97. **Liz:** Yeah.
98. **Abi:** Yeah.
99. **Jen:** ...with not much,
100. **Liz:** And how....
101. **Jen:** What we perceive as not much...
102. **Liz:** And yeah.
103. **Jen:**...I mean.
104. **Abi:** Yeah, there's poverty money wise and there is poverty in other ways as well.
105. **Liz:** yeah.
106. **Abi:** and I think.
107. **Jen:** They are emotionally stable aren't they?
108. **Abi:** Exactly, yeah, they are not...
109. **Jen:** You know, there is always exceptions but.....
110. **Abi:**...they are not poor, they are not poor in that way, are they, with happiness and community spirit.
111. **Jen:** No, they are not.
112. **Abi:** Yeah.
113. **Liz:** And also I found interesting is they use their skills and their sort of make do and mend attitude, like, you know, there will be, umm, the way they can recycle things into practically anything and...
114. **Abi:** Yeah.
115. **Liz:**...we don't have, we don't really have that in the UK...
116. **Jen:** No, it's gone.
117. **Liz:**...We don't have anyone who passes down their skills to his family.
118. **Abi:** No, we are useless with skills.
119. **Liz:** Like, you know, like you say, so it's all being lost...
120. **Abi:** Yeah.
121. **Liz:**...and that's a really nice traditional part of community isn't it? Having those skills.
122. **Abi:** And that's something that we, we don't have in UK schools or nurseries or anything, like, right from the beginning and with this you know, the nursery in XXXXX, like bring in our UK ideals over into our nursery schools is that right? Because apprenticeships in the UK have, like, petered out, haven't they?
123. **Liz:** Yeah.
124. **Abi:** Whereas, here effectively that's a lot of what they do it's like an apprenticeship.
125. **Liz:** They are trying to get them back, aren't they?
126. **Abi:** No, I know.
127. **Liz:** Yeah.
128. **Abi:** But I mean, like here, we are worrying about bringing our way of education here...
129. **Jen:** Yeah.

130. **Abi:**...Whereas, maybe what's maybe actually considered more important is the life skills...
131. **Jen:** Yeah.
132. **Abi:**...and the craft skills
133. **Liz:** Well, it is important ,isn't it?
134. **Abi:** You know whether or not they can do phonics or maths or whatever, is less relevant and the fact we are bringing over all our stuff to them
135. **Jen:** Yeah.
136. **Abi:** I'm not entirely sure that it will work.
137. **Jen:** Well I heard that you can talk about it when we went so I thought..We are having way too.... we're like pushing it on them I felt.
138. **Abi:** Hmm. You wouldn't when she came [*English patron of an English-based charity that owns and runs several nurseries in The Gambia*] and spoke at the hotel I thought; 'oh what a wonderful job they're doing' and they are, and they are
139. **Jen:** Yeah it's amazing.
140. **Abi:** But is it the right thing to do?
141. **Jen:** But you need to let them use their own methods as well.
142. **Abi:** Exactly.
143. **Jen:** You definitely do.
144. **Abi:** That's what I mean, like, putting our UK ideals onto it.
145. **Liz:** And, like, you are saying, like, they need their skills that they have are essential for their economic wellbeing as a country, you know, they...
146. **Jen:** Yeah.
147. **Liz:**...need those skills and if they are lost like ours...
148. **Jen:** And also....
149. **Liz:**...we seem to be losing.
150. **Abi:** Hmm. And, like you say, the UK are trying to get it back. But surely if the UK is trying to get it back, why should we start to put evidence, emphasis on things away from that when we go and stick our fingers into other countries? It's, like, maybe we should just let them carry on with their apprenticeships. I'm not saying we shouldn't
151. **Jen:** But then it's hard to build a nursery and then not have an influence on it isn't it?
152. **Abi:** Yeah.
153. **Jen:** There is two sides to it...
154. **Liz:** And also....
155. **Jen:**...like if you want to build a nursery you want to see it be successful and what you know is successful...
156. **Liz:** And also.....
157. **Jen:**...is what we see.....
158. **Liz:** Yeah and those teachers that we saw really wanted to learn how we did things.
159. **Jen:** Oh my god yeah.
160. **Liz:** They were so keen and eager.
161. **Abi:** Oh, yeah, and they were brilliant, which they really were.
162. **Liz:** Which I think, we know it, which can only, which can only be a positive thing because if they want to learn from us, it means they also want to learn from other people from other cultures from those that are coming to visit them. You know, so hopefully in the long term it, they'll get the best of both worlds.

163. **Jen:** But them wanting to learn from us, I also think it's so lovely, like, they know were training but they think so highly.
164. **Abi:** Yeah.
165. **Liz:** Yeah.
166. **Abi:** They are qualified within their country.
167. **Jen:** They are well above us and I just think it's so lovely that they can even think...
168. **Liz:** Yeah.
169. **Jen:**...that we can give them ideas.
170. **Abi:** Yeah and compare that to home. Like as a trainee you don't get that kind of...
171. **Jen:** No
172. **Abi:**...what's the word, like respect, almost.
173. **Jen:** Yeah, I just think they just respect each other a lot more...
174. **Abi:** Yeah
175. **Jen:**...or other people, don't they? You see, it comes across like that to me.
176. **Liz:** Yeah.
177. **Abi:** Yeah.
178. **Jen:** I don't know.
179. **Abi:** I have loved it though.
180. **Liz:** I have as well.
181. **Jen:** Me too. I don't want to go home.
182. **Liz:** No, it's gone far too quickly.
183. **Jen:** Yeah, it's mental.
184. **Abi:** I do think I am going home with quite a different view point though. Like you said I really like you said I really did think that; 'Ohh I am going to go and see how like African Countries'...
185. **Jen:** Give them some goodies and.....
186. **Abi:**...Yeah, like ohh, it's really important I take my skipping ropes and I am going to see how African Countries get by, or how do they possibly manage to teach their kids?
187. **Jen:** It's just so much more complicated than that.
188. **Abi:** Now, it's like well, of course they do, like, like the human race has been around long enough and like there's our way and their way.
189. **Liz:** And there is a million other ways as well.
190. **Abi:** Exactly, and now it's like, you know, it's not like the way that I thought about it when I left, it's not.
191. **Jen:** Sorry I am trying to get my tissue. *[sneeze]*.
192. **Abi:** Bless you. I don't know I can't really put it into words.
193. **Liz:** I do yeah, I feel the same. I do have mixed feelings because, because of the things I've explained.
194. **Abi:** Yeah.
195. **Liz:** But it was, it has been an amazing, amazing experience.
196. **Jen:** When we were in that fish restaurant last night this boy came up to me and just looked at me and said 'buy me a football, buy me a football, by me and my friend a football'.
197. **Abi:** Susi *[another student]* told you about her one?
198. **Liz:** 'If you don't give me a pencil I'll beat you'.
199. **Jen:** Really?
200. **Liz:** He was only about fourteen.

201. **Jen:** I just think, 'And who has told you to go up to somebody and say buy me a football?'
202. **Abi:** Well this is it, that is exactly what they are told.
203. **Liz:** And that they see other people doing it. It's like everything, it's that mimicking actions, that they see older people doing it, they see parents and family members doing it.
204. *[long anecdote about visit to an 'orphanage']*
205. **Jen:** No but I think, looking at the question and thinking about the thought of the trip on the way home it has definitely shown me how different cultures really are....
206. **Abi:** Yeah.
207. **Liz:** Yeah.
208. **Jen:** Like, you might say they are different because they live in mud huts, but it really, but if it does.....
209. **Abi:** Yeah that's not the.....
210. **Jen:** If you get down to the nitty gritty...
211. **Abi:** That's not the.....
212. **Jen:**...that's nothing is it, where they lived
213. **Abi:** No.
214. **Jen:**...It's...
215. **Abi:** Yeah.
216. **Jen:**..qualities....
217. **Liz:** It's their values and ways isn't it?
218. **Abi:** Yeah.
219. **Liz:** Umm, obviously the different religions so people automatically got different values there, screaming in your face sort of thing. But the more subtle values like family, community and...
220. **Jen:** I think....
221. **Liz:**...things like that....
222. **Jen:** That the fact that....
223. **Abi:** And we haven't seen the half of it anyway, we only focused on the...
224. **Jen:** Yeah.
225. **Abi:**...children and the family, haven't we? There will be even more than that...
226. **Liz:** Yeah.
227. **Abi:**...that we haven't even seen.
228. **Jen:** I think the fact that you can, you know, wherever your child is, at five years old, eight years old, three weeks old. They are saying people look out for each other. They are not going to be done for being perverted or you know...
229. **Abi:** yep.
230. **Jen:**...they are safe and it is such a lovely feeling for families to feel, feel like that. Whereas, in England it is such a drama and such a, and of course, you have to be careful, you know, the fact these horrible things are happening. It is just a different feel.
231. **Abi:** Yeah.
232. **Liz:** It did feel, it did feel like a safe place, like, there was probably only once or twice where I felt a little bit intimidated. Umm, but as a general rule...
233. **Abi:** Yeah.

234. **Liz:**...walking through the streets, yeah, people would come up to you and want to walk with you and stuff.
235. **Abi:** They wanted to look after you.
236. **Liz:** Yeah.
237. **Abi:** And make cash on the side.
238. **Liz:** but when and if you were firm with them, you know....
239. **Jen:** If you're clear, then there is no hassle.
240. **Liz:** Then there wasn't ever a problem. They didn't get offensive or defensive. They weren't, you know, sort of funny with you, or stropo or anything if you don't want them to walk with you.
241. **Abi:** No
242. **Jen:** You can't blame them though, can you, you know, they just want to develop their country and.....
243. **Liz:** You can't blame them
244. **Jen:** What was your favourite bit of the trip?
245. **Liz:** Our boat [*The students had travelled on a pirogue from Barra to Banjul*]
246. **Abi:** Yeah boat
247. **Jen:** But then again, we are saying that their boat, that was incredible. But that to them is everyday life.
248. **Liz:** Yeah
249. **Abi:** Yeah
250. **Jen:** And that's like getting the bus
251. **Jen:** I was like, when is it going to go? And he was just like; 'oh you never know'.....
252. **Abi:** Yeah 'when it is full'
253. **Jen:** Yeah, he was just a bit blasé about it, 'it doesn't really matter'
254. **Liz:** Yeah, in my own time.
255. **Jen:** Yeah. But to us, we were like 'ohh'
256. **Abi:** Yeah, buses run every ten minutes or every fifteen minutes.
257. **Liz:** But that will be like them coming to us and going on a, you know, bus.
258. **Jen:**They will think there is so many buses and stuff, wouldn't they, because they are actually on time.
259. **Abi:** Ohh I just found another bite.
260. **Liz:** It does make you, it has made me, anyway, feel like, I want to do more to help them.
261. **Jen:** Ohh me too!
262. **Liz:** I want to!
263. **Jen:** Yeah
264. **Abi:** It's also made me want to visit other countries in Africa.
265. **Liz:** Yeah.
266. **Abi:** Not particular...Yeah sort of...
267. **Jen:** More places in the world.
268. **Abi:** Yeah. Sort of to compare and sort of just to go.
269. **Jen:** I was so oblivious to how different life could be. And like we know at the end of the week we are going home to our little
270. **Liz:** Safety net
271. **Abi:** Yeah. Worst case scenario if we really had hated it if we really were scared or whatever...
272. **Jen:** It's fine

273. **Abi:**...we were only there for a week. But as a general rule, we all want to stay or come back which means it must have been positive.

[Original recording available upon request]

Appendix 4.1: Research fieldwork inventory 2012-13

Title/Status	Reference	Pseudonym	Location	Type	Date	Sample	Transcribed	NVivo
International Coordinator School of Education Faculty of Health, Education and Society (FHES)	IC	Ian	Nancy Astor (NA)Plymouth University(PU)	Interview	23/10/12	1/1	√	√
Lecturer in Education	T1	Thomas	NA PU	Interview	6/11/12	1/1	√	√
Lecturer in Education	T2	Tara	NA PU	Interview	6/11/12	1/1	√	√
Lecturer in Education	T3	Teresa	NA PU	Interview	9/11/12	1/1	√	√
Lecturer in Education	T4	Theo	Rolle PU	Interview	13/11/12	1/1	√	√
Lecturer in Health	T5	Colin	Truro Knowledge Spa	Interview	16/11/12	1/1	√	√
Associate Professor in Social Work	T6	Jane	Kirby Place PU	Interview	19/11/12	1/3	√	√
Associate Dean Partnerships FHES	ADP (T7)	Sarah	Rolle PU	Interview	19/11/12	1/1	√	√
Associate Dean Teaching	ADTL (T8)	Mary	Rolle PU	Interview	28/11/12	1/1	√	√

and Learning FHES								
SoE students Dec & Feb Gambia Trips	ALG			Application letters	Nov 2012	24/46	In written form	√
SoE students going on a range of ISV 2012-13	QG, QCZ, QRB, QH		Online	Questionnaires	Dec 2012 – June 2013	44	In written form	√
SoE students Feb Gambia Trip			Rolle PU	Meeting	4/12/12	20/24	In note form	
SoE students Dec Gambia Trip			Rolle PU	Meeting	5/12/12	15/22	In note form	
Practice Learning Manager, School of Social Care	T9	Charlotte	Kirby Place PU	Interview	7/12/12	1/1	√	√
SoE students going on Feb Gambia Trip	FG1 S1,S2,S3	Ginny, Greta, Georgie	Rolle PU	Pre-trip Focus Group	31/01/13	3/22	√	√
Lecturers in Education	FG2 T2,T3,T4	Tara Teresa Theo	Rolle PU	Focus Group	05/02/13	3/4	√	√
SoE/BAMusic students on Feb Gambia visit	DG1 DG2	Jen, Abi, Liz	Gambia	Reflective discussions	08-15/02/13	6/22	Audio files	√(DG1)
SoE students on return from Gambia	FG3 S1,S2,S3	Ginny, Greta, Georgie	Rolle PU	Focus Groups	05/03/13	8/22	√ √	√ √

	FG4 S4,S5,S6 FG5 S7,S8	Debbie, Denise, Della Pam, Paula			06/03/13 12/03/13		√	√
SoE & Music students on return from Gambia			Online	Writing frames	13/03/13	13/22	In written form	√
BEd students Czech placement	FG6 S9,S10,S11,S12	Carrie, Charlotte, Charles, Clare	Rolle PU	Focus group	19/03/13	4/5	√	√
BEd students Czech placement	CZPDP1-5		Online	Pre-trip and post-trip reflections	22/13/13	5/5	Written reflections	√
BAECS students + T4 Hungary study visit			Hungary	Reflections- audio recorded	15-22/03/13	4/6	Audio files	√
BAECS students Hungary study visit	FG 7 S13,S14,S15	Holly, Hettie, Helen	Rolle PU	Focus group	25/03/13	3/8	√	√
Lecturer in Education	T10	Vicky	Rolle PU	Interview	02/04/13	1/1	√	√
BAECS students Hungary study visit	WFH1-2		Rolle PU	Writing frames	24/06/13	2/8		√
Associate Dean International FHES	ADI T11	Adam	Rolle PU	Interview	02/04/13	1/1	√	√

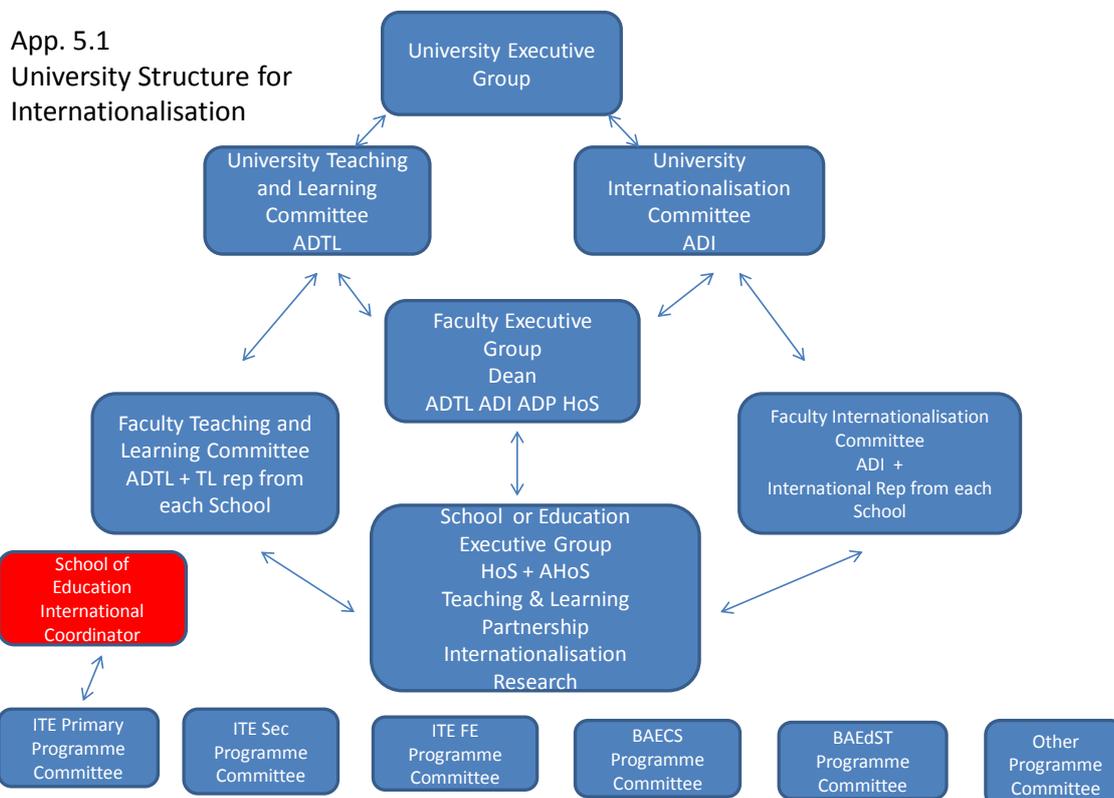
BEd students Redbridge study visit	ALRB1-9		Online	Application Letters	April 2013	9/9	In written form	√
BEd students Redbridge study visit	FG 8 S16,S17	Ruth, Rebecca	Rolle PU	Focus group	24/05/13	2/10	√	√
BEd students Redbridge study visit	WFRB1-3		Online	Writing frames/PDP reflections	11/07/13	3/10	In written form	√

Appendix 4.2: Table of range of methods and participants in the study

Method	Participants	Sample	Transcribed	NVivo
Analysis of University Policies, Strategies	N/A	N/A	x	√
Analysis of Application letters	Students going to The Gambia (Feb + Dec) Students going to Redbridge	24/46 9/9	x	√
Questionnaires	Students going on a range of study visits 2012-13	44/69	x	√
Interviews	5 Lecturers in Education 2 Lecturers in Social Work 1 Lecturer in Health 3 Associate Deans	5/8 ⁶ 2/3 1/1 3/3	√	√
Focus Groups	Students on a range of study visits Lecturers in Education	21/45 3/4	√	√
Writing Frames and Professional Development Reflections	Students on a range of study visits	18/40	x	√
Pre-trip and post trip reflections	Students on the Czech study visit	5/5	x	√
Audio taped reflections during study trips	Students on the study visit to The Gambia (Feb) Students on the study visit to Hungary	13/24 4/6	x	x
My notes from pre-trip meetings	Students going to The Gambia (Feb + Dec)	35/46	x	x

⁶ There were 8 tutors involved in organising and leading study visits during the period of the research.

Appendix 5.1: University Structure for Internationalisation



The Faculty's responses take place in the University's clear structure of action planning and allocated responsibilities for internationalisation (see Appendix:5.1). At the time of writing, there are three posts at Deputy Vice-Chancellor grade with institution-wide responsibility for, respectively, Internationalisation, International Partnerships and Teaching and Learning. However, the responsibility of these post holders and of the related Committees is largely for agreeing and transmitting strategic direction and for the broad monitoring of progress across the institution. Operational matters such as the role and organisation of international study visits are largely devolved to the Faculties, where again there are relevant posts and committees, with lines of responsibility and communication to and from the University structure. A key feature of this structure is the University's Internationalisation Advisory Group. Each Faculty

has an Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning who is a member of the Advisory Group, along with a representative from the International Office. The Group reports back to the Faculty Board and this structure would seem to be potentially influential in driving forward the internationalisation strategy.

Appendix 5.2: International study visits in School of Education 2012-13

Location	Time of study visit	Length of study visit	Degree/Course	No of students
Ireland	September	1 week	BEd Science	20
The Gambia	December	1 week	BEd/PGCE	24
The Gambia	February	1 week	BAECS/BEdECS BAMusic/BEdMusic	22
Czech Republic	March	1 week	PGCE	12
Finland	April	6 – 12 weeks	BEd	12
Denmark	May/June	6 – 12 weeks	BEd	6
Hungary	April/May	8 days	BAECS	8
Czech Republic	June	1 week	BEd Humanities	16
Czech Republic	June	1 week	BEd English	20
Redbridge, UK	June	1 week	BEd	10
Chicago and Fredonia NY	June	3 weeks	BEd	10
Chile	June-Aug	12 – 24 weeks	BEd	7

Appendix 5.3: Overview of study visits in the research study

Patterns of study visits investigated		Data gathered from:
Gambia Study visit	<p>1) December Visit 24 students from BEd Primary 2 lead tutors + 2 other staff members Self-Funded: £850 + £150 approx additional costs 1 week experiential Outings to nearby communities to go to the market, visit small businesses and observe teaching in schools. Stay in a 2* tourist hotel located in a community. Travel by local transport where possible.</p> <p>2) February Visit 24 students from BAEarly Childhood Studies and BA Music 2 lead tutors from each programme Self-funded: £850 + £150 approx additional costs 1 week experiential (as above) but with music workshops and teaching in Nursery settings planned in</p>	<p>Questionnaire Pre-trip focus group Application letters Pre-trip meeting In-trip reflections Post-trip focus groups Post-trip meeting Post-trip writing frames Tutor interviews</p>
Czech Republic Study teaching placement	<p>12 week experience in the Czech republic Erasmus funding available 1 week induction/orientation in Prague and Plzen with a Plymouth Uni tutor 5 weeks teaching placement in a Czech school, assessed against the standards for QTS, supported by a Czech education tutor Final monitoring visit by Plymouth tutor Staying with either a host family or in a shared rented apartment Pre-trip language lessons and meetings with Czech students on Plymouth education courses 6 weeks travel in Europe afterwards (have to be away for 12 weeks to qualify for the Erasmus funding)</p>	<p>Questionnaire Pre-trip and post-trip written reflections Post-trip focus group Tutor interview</p>
Hungary study visit	<p>1 week study visit to Hungary Self-funded – approx. £300 2 BA Early Childhood Studies tutors</p>	<p>Questionnaire In-trip reflections Post-trip writing</p>

	<p>8 BA Early Childhood Studies students</p> <p>Staying in University halls of residence alongside Hungarian students</p> <p>Pre-trip language lessons and meetings with Hungarian students studying on the BA Early Childhood Studies for a term</p> <p>Visits to cultural attractions and Early Years settings</p>	<p>frames</p> <p>Tutor interviews</p>
Redbridge Study visit	<p>5 days study visit to Redbridge in London</p> <p>Self-funded – approx. £200</p> <p>1 tutor (Lecturer in Humanities)</p> <p>10 students from BEd Primary</p> <p>Pre-trip meeting to discuss organisation and travel arrangements</p> <p>Visits to local religious centres and schools to learn about diversity and teaching children with English as a second language</p>	<p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Application letters</p> <p>Post-trip focus group</p> <p>Tutor interview</p>

Appendix 5.4: Faculty of Health, Education & Society Student Statistics 2010-13

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Faculty of Health, Education and Society	1,773	1,443	956	703
School of Health Professions	751	802	876	907
School of Social Science and Social Work	1,025	961	859	770
School of Nursing and Midwifery	1,571	1,521	1,488	1,781
School of Education	3,695	3,339	2,100	1,971
Total	8,815	8,066	6,279	6,132

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Under 18	0	1	5	1
18 to 20	1,602	1,552	1,420	1,447
21 to 24	1,351	1,339	1,222	1,159
25 to 29	1,136	1,109	865	921
30 and above	4,691	4,037	2,764	2,603
Age Unknown	35	28	3	1
Total	8,815	8,066	6,279	6,132

Gender

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Female	7,037 79.8%	6,506 80.7%	5,190 82.7%	5,058 82.5%
Male	1,778 20.2%	1,560 19.3%	1,089 17.3%	1,074 17.5%
Total	8,815 100%	8,066 100%	6,279 100%	6,132 100%

Ethnicity

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Arab	0	0	0	2
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	2	8	8	2
Asian or Asian British - Indian	66	49	39	49
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	9	14	11	24
Black or Black British - African	40	53	58	61
Black or Black British - Caribbean	19	18	14	13
Chinese	16	14	18	21
Information refused	198	225	63	58
Mixed White and Asian	23	28	27	24
Mixed White and Black African	10	8	8	8
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	17	18	18	17
Not known	49	26	1	14
Other Asian background	48	43	40	40
Other Black background	6	4	6	10
Other Ethnic background	24	23	24	23
Other Mixed background	30	25	25	24
Unknown	1	4	1	4
White	8,257	7,506	5,918	5,738
Total	8,815	8,066	6,279	6,132

Appendix 6.1: EdD611: The Early Years Professional Status: a major step forward or a lost opportunity?

Abstract

This paper examines the Early Years Professional Status, considering the intentions of the policy, the actual policy and the policy in use, analysing the underpinning discourses that have influenced the process of implementation. It identifies a number of tensions inherent in the actual policy, many arising from the emphasis upon the EYP as a technician delivering a prescribed curriculum. It argues that an opportunity to extend and enhance the career and pay structures of Early Years workers has been missed, largely because of financial constraints. As the impact of the policy is only just beginning to be felt, it suggests that it is too early to assess whether it is resulting in the hoped-for improvement in the quality of Early Years provision, and identifies the need for qualitative research into the experiences of practitioners who have achieved the EYP status.

Introduction

The landscape of the Early Years sector in the UK has changed dramatically over the past twenty years, shaped by ideas from other European countries (Fisher, 2008; Smidt, 2010), by research into young children's learning (Smidt, 2006) and by rapid social and economic change. This resulted in an avalanche of policy from Government (Pugh, 2006) in the belief that investment in quality provision targeted at young children and their families would prevent later underachievement, ease social dysfunction and support economic growth (Fawcett, 2000). But it became increasingly clear that to achieve some commonality (Pugh, 2001) and to offer quality provision across the board was dependent upon improving the education and qualifications of the Early Years workforce, historically a matter of concern (Abbot & Pugh, 1998).

To achieve this was a huge ask, considering the relatively low level of the workforce's training and qualifications at this time, especially in comparison to some other countries in Europe, and so it was hardly surprising that no coherent strategy was put in place. The pragmatic, short term solution (Abbot & Pugh, 1998), as the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (CGFS) (DfES, 2000) was introduced, was to demand the involvement of a qualified teacher in each non-maintained setting (DfEE, 1997).

The scheme proved fraught with difficulties. Many of the teachers had constructed their personal and professional knowledge in relation to schooling settings, but were now tasked with developing part of the different professional landscape of others (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). The response of the practitioners, particularly in day-care settings and playgroups, was mixed. Some welcomed the

new tales, new perspectives and new ideas for developing their provision; some resented teacher involvement and rejected everything; and some took on board just odd elements which left them confused. Given that changing practice is a sophisticated, complicated and usually long-term process, it was unsurprising that improvements were often few, short-term and focussed largely on the implementing the CGFS (DfES, 2000).

The introduction of the ECM agenda in 2003 (DfES, 2004b) once more hugely increased the expectations upon Early Years settings and so reactivated the call for improved training and qualifications for practitioners. The EYPS policy (CWDC, 2007b; DfES, 2004a), introduced in 2006, proposed to tackle this through offering all parts of the Early Years workforce an improved career structure and enhancing their professionalism. Most importantly, this professional was conceived as an 'agent of change', working within the parade to promote new ways of thinking, and to lead colleagues in new professional directions.

In this paper, I explore the development of EYPS from intended policy through actual policy to policy in practice (Ball & Bowe, 1992) by examining how the network of discourses surrounding Early Years provision came into both engagement with and conflict with each other (Hey & Bradford, 2006). I am helped in this by my involvement in the sector throughout the period in question as a preschool worker, an Early Years teacher, a Local Authority Early Years consultant and a Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies, training both Early Years teachers and Early Years Professionals. Arguably, over the years I have been a member of various 'parades' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998) marching, or stumbling, through this landscape. I have been shaped by them (Burawoy, 1998) and thus have a powerful, personal perspective upon this process of change. But although this gives me familiarity with and some insights into the landscape not necessarily possessed by a researcher operating within a positivistic scientific paradigm (Burawoy, 1998), it also renders me vulnerable to the weaknesses of the reflexive paradigm. I can make use of my situational knowledge to unpick the discourses, but I have to recognise that my knowledge is only partial, and I will need to look at the wider social processes in a critical way which may challenge my own views and beliefs around the professionalisation of the Early Years workforce. As the researcher, I have the power to include different perspectives, or silence them. I have developed my own cognitive map (Burawoy, 1998) around the key issues and may resist or reject elements that do not fit this map.

Intended Policy

The intentions of the EYPS policy initially seemed clear and grounded in evidence-based practice (Gough, 2004; Hey & Bradford, 2006; Pring & Thomas, 2004). The ongoing EPPE research (Sylva et al., 2010; Sylva et al., 2003) was building a picture of the positive impact that a well-informed adult could have on young children's learning in a setting. Reviews of the Early Years services in the

Nordic countries had suggested that they were of higher quality than those in the UK (Oberhuemer, 1998) not least because the majority of their workforces were well qualified and in some cases over half were graduates (Moss, 2006). Research in UK schools had shown that having an effective head teacher could make a difference to the quality of the children's schooling, and their attainment (Rodd, 1994). All this was taken by Government to indicate that to have in place in each setting at least one more highly qualified worker, required to lead the professional development of colleagues, would have positive effects on the quality of the provision. Hence the EYPS initiative policy intentions.

However, as Ball (2008) points out

'national policy making is a inevitably a process of bricolage, a matter of borrowing and copying bits and pieces of ideas from elsewhere, drawing on and amending locally tried-and-tested approaches, cannibalising theories, research, trends and fashions, responding to media panics and not infrequently a flailing around for anything at all that looks as though it might work.' (Ball, 2008, p.30)

Therefore, when considering the intentions of a policy one needs to analyse the discourses that underpin it, as well as to be aware of any pathway dependency (Ball, 2008) – how it is linked to and shaped by other policies. Such closer analysis reveals that the EYPS policy intentions were influenced by a number of conflicting ideologies that were competing for control of the agenda.

Professionalism

One key debate centred around the concept of what constituted an Early Years 'Professional' which Nurse (2007) links to the way that teaching emerged as a profession. There was a clear lack of a shared understanding of what the role of Early Years workers should be, and of the societal value that was placed upon them (Oberhuemer, 2005). This stemmed from the diversity of the organisational systems of care and education that had historically developed in the UK and resulted in a 'fuzzy' professional identity, but one that was grounded in the ethics of care and incorporated all those who worked with young children, even if they came from different professional backgrounds (Nurse, 2007).

The discourse clearly underpinning the Government's initiatives was that Early Years services were currently failing to meet the needs of the children and families, and so needed centralised regulation and control through a standardised agenda (Osgood, 2006), similar to that which had previously been imposed upon the Primary sector, even though this clashed with the existing model of the autonomous Early Years professional (Oberhuemer, 2005), responsible for making decisions about how to meet the needs of the children and families in their local context, The

Government's intended policy would put control of the content and learning outcomes in the hands of the state, within a regulatory framework, and the new Early Years Professionals would be expected to implement these approaches.

Osgood (2006) argues that this was a neo-liberal concept of the professional: rational, individualistic and entrepreneurial linked with an agenda of performativity, accountability, and a standardised approach. It marginalised the emotional labour and ethics of care (Osgood, 2006) that had always underpinned the professional identity of the Early Years workforce. Linking this with a feminist perspective, she also suggests that the Government feared this feminine 'emotional labour' as it was difficult to manage and regulate. Thus through a discourse of derision it portrayed ethics of care as a weakness and the workforce as unprofessional, needing to demonstrate competence through outcomes in a masculine way, presenting 'A normalised and conformist construction of professionalism, with little space for emotion.' (p.9)

EYPS and the issue of Graduate Status

Another area of conflict was that of the graduate status of the new Professional. Early Years experts had been lobbying hard for many years for a graduate Early Years workforce, arguing that working with young children was intellectually challenging and becoming more so as both the demands of Government initiatives and the findings of Early Years research had to be accommodated within Early Years provision. Moreover, neurological and brain research was indicating that early experiences have profound effects upon the long-term development of children (Smidt, 2006) and implying that it was no longer acceptable to have poorly trained and poorly qualified people providing for the age group which was potentially the most responsive to good quality provision and most vulnerable to poor provision. These powerful discourses were reinforced by experiences from abroad, particularly from the Nordic countries, where there was an established qualifications framework (Moss, 2006).

Another influential argument was that in order to expand the Early Years services in the way that the Government was planning (DFES, 2004a) more people would need to be attracted into the sector but that with the rising attainment of girls at school, the number of women traditionally seeking such work was in decline. Only a career framework leading to enhanced status would make a difference in expanding the workforce, attracting a higher calibre of worker, both male and female, as suggested by the Nordic model (Moss, 2006). However, there was a powerful counter-discourse that one does not need qualifications to be caring. The care of young children was seen by many, even within the profession, as an extension of the mothering role, as coming naturally to women and as being grounded in the pedagogy of attachment. This tapped into the long-standing and controversial debate about what Early Years settings were to provide – care, education, or a

combination of both (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007; MacNaughton, 2005; Pugh, 2006). Were they home-like caring situations or a preparation for and transition to 'proper' schooling?

Decisions about the possible graduate status of the EYP were being framed and proposed within a raft of other policies, and although the Government was making a huge investment in Early Childhood services throughout this time, there were inevitably serious financial constraints. Unlike the Nordic systems, where Early Years settings were substantially publicly funded (Moss, 2006), in the UK parents were still bearing the majority of the costs. The idea of employing qualified teachers in all non-maintained settings was too expensive and there were not enough suitably qualified teachers available. Attracting into the sector young people who were already qualified in terms of A-levels or the equivalent was not going to happen while wages in other available areas of employment were potentially much higher. Introducing a career ladder and a status for those already in the workforce was a far cheaper option and could be linked to the introduction of Foundation Degrees, targeted at widening access to HE. The intention was that offering such status would act as a clear 'punctuation mark' in the professional development of Early Years practitioners, and so would be a catalyst for change, without involving the huge costs of more radical proposals.

A further concern about imposing any requirement for graduate qualifications on entry into the profession was that it might well exclude a range of potential Early Years workers and restrict the existing broad range of accessible routes into training. Historically, a good number of mothers had become Early Years practitioners through an initial voluntary involvement in the setting attended by their child and, given the Government's pressure on mothers to return to work, there was no likelihood of a policy being introduced that made this more difficult. Again, it seemed that the scheme would largely be aimed at those already in the workforce.

EYPS and the Focus for Early Years Settings

The discourses around the role and professional nature of the EYP practitioner stemmed from the debate about the underlying purpose of Early Years education and care provision (MacNaughton, 2005). As the EYPS policy was closely related to the implementation of the ECM agenda, its intentions were clearly grounded in the discourse of Early Years provision tackling social disadvantage, making a difference to children's lives and providing equality of opportunity (Ball, 2008). Such an emphasis was again linked to the Nordic model of the role of the Early Years practitioner as a social pedagogue (Boddy, Cameron & Petrie, 2006) who sets out to

“.....address the whole child, the child with body, mind, emotions, creativity, history and social identity. This is not the child only of emotions, the psycho-

therapeutical approach, nor only of the body, the medical approach, nor only of the mind, the traditional teaching approach.” (Moss and Petrie, 2002, p143)

This matched with the key features of Labour’s Third Way discourse (Hey & Bradford, 2006), and fitted with the idea of the holistic development of the child (Boddy, Cameron & Petrie, 2006).

However, the social pedagogue discourse clashed with another regime of truth, one linked to the powerful educational discourse supported by other current policies, e.g. the Educational Action Zones and the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies (Ball, 2008). Throughout the preceding decade, many of the concerns about children had been expressed in terms of ‘underachievement’ and in turn this had been substantially defined in terms of poor educational attainment and low academic standards. The response had been policies which applied external pressure to control the curriculum, to test children and to inspect settings (Ball, 2008), all with a focus upon measurable ‘standards’(Ozga, 2000). This followed an economic model of outputs, based on wanting to produce a workforce to benefit the economy. This pathway dependency (Ball, 2008) may have skewed the EYPS policy towards educational outcomes which were also easier and more acceptable to define, than to establish targets for the wider life-development of children within their families.

The EYP – social pedagogue or leader of practice?

The social pedagogue model is posited on the idea of a mature, trained professional with sufficient experience, expertise and self-confidence to act autonomously on a day-to-day basis in the best interests of the children and their families. In any Early Years setting concerns, dilemmas and emergencies will occur, often without any warning. Given the complexity and scope of these, especially with families in difficult situations, it is necessary for all members of staff in an Early Years setting to be able and confident in responding appropriately, even if the response will frequently be to involve other members of the team with particular areas of expertise. The suggestion that one or two more highly qualified staff in a setting will be able to deal with such demands and pressures is unrealistic (McKimm & Phillips, 2009).

However, the model implicit in many of the specifically educational initiatives seemed closer to that of a technician whose role was to achieve outcomes and targets through delivering a prescribed curriculum, under the guidance of a more knowledgeable and qualified leader, in order to satisfy the expectations of the Government, of society and of parents. The result was to focus the EYPS role on leading the professional development of colleagues in delivering the educational provision in a directed way, rather than considering the more holistic nature of the social pedagogic model.

Actual Policy

The introduction of the EYPS policy in 2006 was a response to the implementation of the ECM agenda in 2004, of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in 2006 (DCSF, 2009) and of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (DCSF, 2008), policies which have shaped the landscape of the Early Years sector and have now become part of the narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). With these major policies introduced or in prospect, the Government set up the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) in 2006 and tasked it with implementing the CAF (DCSF, 2006) and with ensuring that the workforce for all children's services were acquiring a common core of skills and knowledge (CWDC, 2007a) to meet the outcomes of the ECM agenda and to deliver the EYFS (Colloby, 2008). A new graduate role, the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) (Palaiologou, 2008) was introduced and candidates were required to demonstrate through their practice that they could meet the 39 supporting standards.

When the actual policy is compared with the intended policy, there are some interesting spaces, silences and contradictions (Ball & Bowe, 1992).

The 'Professionalism' of the Early Years Professional

The title of the status itself is worth exploring as it includes some interesting assumptions and omissions. The concept of the 'professional' in the actual policy is that of meeting set standards, delivering a set curricula and being accountable - little indication of the passion, and personal ideals that underpin practice. Brock (2006) argues very powerfully that there is more to being a professional than just meeting standards, as it is individuals' values, ideologies and beliefs that will guide the implementation of the policy. Early Years professionals need to be committed, enthusiastic and interested in young children, yet this is not reflected in the list of competences which constitute the standards.

The term 'professional' is also interesting – it implies that those who do not have such status are either non-professional or unprofessional, again heightening division. An experienced Early Years teacher would consider herself/himself to be an Early Years Professional, yet surprisingly cannot gain the status. The Early Years Foundation Stage is a framework that incorporates all settings delivering education and care to children aged 0-5, so by inference one would expect that an Early Years Professional Status, tasked with delivering this framework, would be available to all those eligible. However, practitioners working in the maintained sector were denied access to the training. This reinforced existing divisions between the maintained and non-maintained sectors and created new ones.

EYPS and the issue of Graduate Status

The actual policy accepted that for EYPS candidates did need to have a graduate qualification. However, although EYPS was defined as notionally equivalent to QTS (CWDC, 2007c), entry did not

have to be with an honours degree, as required for teacher education. Neither did an EYP need to have Science GCSE, nor pass QTS skills tests in Maths, English and ICT. The EYPS was also not accompanied by a national pay structure and terms and conditions, as set out for teachers. So, it emerged that the status of the award was to be defined almost entirely in terms of social capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), in that it would provide a new step in a career structure for Early Years workers, but not be accompanied by the economic capital of QTS. This gives the impression that although status was being awarded, the underlying regime of truth about the lesser significance of the Early Years workforce was still dominant.

Whilst potentially aiming to clarify and unify the role of the graduate within the Early Years sector, the policy created a new divide. In the maintained sector, a teacher has QTS and is required to meet the Teacher Development Agency standards, whilst in the non-maintained sector an EYP with supposedly equivalent status will need to meet the 39 EYPS standards – yet both these practitioners are meant to be working within the same EYFS framework and meeting the same outcomes of the ECM agenda. The two roles are deemed equivalent, but are not interchangeable. Huge differentials remain in terms of pay and conditions, so there is a policy mismatch (Pugh, 2006). Again, an EYP is given additional responsibility within the setting, in that the adult: child ratios if the setting employs an EYPS are 1:13, the same as in a maintained nursery class, rather than the 1:8 for a Level 3 practitioner (DfES, 2008) but there is no parity of pay or working hours.

Social Pedagogue or Leader of Educational Practice?

Despite a very strong argument for a social pedagogic model in order to implement the ECM agenda, practical and financial constraints have led to a diluted version. The roles and responsibilities of the EYP, defined by the standards (Palaiologou, 2008) implicitly reflect the wider role of the social pedagogue in terms of addressing the needs of the whole child, working closely within the social context of the family and reflecting on practice. However, there is a much more of an explicit emphasis on leading the professional development of colleagues in these areas, which comes out of the quality discourse, expecting the EYP to be an 'agent of change' (Whalley, 2008). It raises the question as to which of these should have priority, linking again to the discourses around professionalism.

There is also a clear mismatch between the expectations upon an EYP and upon a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) especially in terms of leadership. An NQT enters an induction year, considered to be a novice, and given a mentor to develop his/her own practice, whereas an EYP is expected not only to lead practice in their own setting, but in other settings too. It is possible to have a degree in, say, Engineering and no experience working with young children yet within 15 months to gain EYPS and be leading practice across a range of settings. In contrast, an Early Years advisory teacher would be expected to have demonstrated excellent practice in their own setting, for example to have gained

Advanced Skills status, before being tasked with advising others on their practice. Within the timescale of the training for EYPS this is an unrealistic expectation to place on an EYP, again perhaps stemming from the derisory discourse that working with young children, and hence with the people who work with them, is not that difficult.

Focus of the setting and of EYP work

The educational discourse prevalent in the EYP standards emphasises the role that Early Years settings are expected to tackle underachievement. The policy appears to reinforce the idea of the EY practitioner as a technician, whose role is to achieve outcomes and targets through prescribed curricula (Moss, 2006). Instead of providing a set of standards that all of the members of a multi-agency team could relate to and work within, the balance within the standards is skewed towards developing the educational provision, and therefore marginalises the wider Early Years workforce, such as health and social care practitioners.

Policy in Practice

The CWDC had set targets for 70% of the Early Years workforce to achieve a relevant Level 3 qualification or above by 2010 and for 6200 graduates to achieve EYPS (Palaiologou, 2008). In January 2007 the first cohort of 338 people achieved Early Years Professional Status. The aim is to have 20,000 EYPS candidates in place by 2015 to meet the Government target of at least one in every setting (Colloby, 2008), supported by funding from the Graduate leader fund. In 2009 there were only some 2,400 people in training in 35 higher education institutions (Murray, 2009) so as yet the targets are looking over-ambitious.

Analysing and evaluating the EYPS policy in practice is still at an early stage since it is only 3 years since its introduction (Nurse, 2007). Quantitative research e.g. Murray (2009) has given an initial picture of the take-up of the scheme and of the progression of the candidates, but as yet there has been very little qualitative research to unpick the stories behind the policy in practice. Thus it is only possible at this stage to identify some tendencies and some concerns. As the first major structural change to Early Years staffing for many years it is likely that it is stimulating changes, but it is not yet possible to make definite statements about the impact upon on settings. The increase in uptake of Foundation Degrees is potentially significant as it shows a growing interest in professional development amongst Early Years workers, and it is possible that the Status is providing an incentive to practitioners to engage in further training while the ongoing financial support from the Graduate Leader Fund is helping settings to support this professional development. Few settings have had significant experience as yet of working with an EYP, but the

label is becoming part of the vocabulary of the Early Years, so maybe beginning to establish a habitus.

The take up of the EYPS training pathways was initially very slow, partly due to the fact that few Early Years workers had the qualifications to access them; indeed it will take some practitioners 3-4 years to get to the stage of entering the scheme. The University of Plymouth had just 2 candidates in 2007-08, 4 in 2008-9 and currently there are 11. It is interesting to note that although the University offers the opportunity to achieve EYP status alongside the third year of the BAECs degree, only 11 out of the 74 eligible students opted to do it in 2009-2010.

There are concerns about the Government targets to place an EYP in every day-care setting by 2015 unless recruitment increases significantly. There may be some resistance to the scheme at street bureaucrat level (Lipsky, 1980) with practitioners not wanting to take on the leadership responsibility, or not agreeing with the focus on targets related to the EYFS, or simply not seeing significant financial reward for the additional work involved. It is also interesting to note that some practitioners are using their EYPS as additional leverage into teacher training and so into the better paid maintained sector. There is currently a campaign by ASPECT (2010), the main union representing the Early Years workforce, to address some of the fundamental issues around pay and conditions for those with the EYP status. Without some movement on this the attractions of EYPS as a career step may diminish. However, if the scheme continues to be supported there should come a tipping point when there is an established community of practice within settings to have an Early Years Professional, together with an understanding of the role. New entrants to the workforce will have a career path which will involve developing their professionalism. However, this is dependent upon good recruitment and retention within the scheme.

The introduction of a professional status may be valued by the practitioners as conferring some cultural and social capital upon their work but, as Oberhuemer (2005) suggests, it may also be undermining their professional independence and autonomy. The link to an outcomes-based curriculum imposes more control and accountability. Ball (2008) terms this process as 'controlled decontrol' – giving the professional significant authority yet retaining significant central control.

Another of the concerns emerging is that of having EYPs working to a set of standards skewed towards meeting educational targets may be extending the schooling model into a wider range of Early Years settings. Recent reviews (Alexander, 2010; Rose, 2009) have again ignited the debate about the UK curriculum being too formal too soon for some children and yet this danger will remain while settings are judged by their capacity to meet targets largely linked to educational

achievement. This may in turn restrict the capacity of the settings to develop provision based on their own understandings of developmentally appropriate learning approaches such as play.

The policy does however provide an opportunity for Early Years practitioners to reimagine their professional lives. Such policies are not inevitably imposed upon them; they have the capacity to respond to them, interpret them and even resist them. Oberhuemer (2005) argues that a 'democratic' professional is evolving in response to the increased regulatory control from Government and to counterbalance the managerialist discourse. Here the emphasis is placed upon collaboration, co-operation between professional colleagues and engagement in the local community – all present in the EYPS standards and features of the discourses underpinning the social pedagogue model.

This links with ideas, such as those put forward by Dahlberg and Moss (2006), MacNaughton (2005) and Osgood (2006) about the developing role of the Early Years setting. It is acknowledged that there is an increasing diversity of need in local communities, requiring even more effective links between the families and the settings in order to respond appropriately. This necessitates having 'democratic' professionals working in the sector, willing to question their taken-for-granted ways of doing things, open to 'multiple ways of knowing', and prepared to challenge commonly held assumptions about ways of working with children and families in the interests of working towards social justice.

There are obvious tensions inherent in this approach when the EYP must be actively promoting a prescribed curriculum and working towards external statutory targets in the form of the Early Learning Goals. Moreover, although the standards require the EYP to reflect upon their practice, which is a key element of democratic professionalism, they may well feel constrained to do this within the prescribed framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Furthermore, MacNaughton (2005) argues that there is a clear distinction between being reflective about one's practice, as set out in EYPS Standard 38 (Palaiologou, 2008) and being critically reflective. It is the latter that is needed if Early Years practitioners, whether EYPs or not, are to become truly professional in their approach since it can direct attention away from the taken-for-granted habitus towards the underlying power relationships in the teaching and learning processes, and so enable them to critique dominant educational theories in the pursuit of social justice.

Recommendations for Future Policy

As early signs of possibilities/difficulties are only just beginning to emerge, it is difficult to make recommendations for future policy. In retrospect it is clear that the policy makers may have started

from the wrong place. Arguably they should have established a common core of training for all the children's workforce, in order to encourage and enable the holistic, multi-agency approach required by the ECM agenda. That would also have promoted collaboration between the different sectors involved in Early Years, e.g. the different faculties in the University of Plymouth who are training the EY workforce, but it would have required a major shake up, would have been costly, and would probably have encountered the common resistance to such collaboration from the different sectors and areas. Trainers would have needed to have put courses in place to support this, probably along similar lines as the BEd/PGCE model of campus-based activity combined with placement experience. Again this would have been costly and required a significant change of practice on, for example, the BA (Early Childhood Studies) degree programme. But such development may be required in future.

It will also be imperative that the education and training of Early Years Professionals goes beyond the requirement to demonstrate technical competence in meeting standards (Osgood, 2006). They must also show professional integrity, identity and critically reflective practice (MacNaughton, 2000). They must be aware of the social and political context in which they will be working, have the confidence actively to critique Government policy, balance its demands against their professional priorities and be prepared to engage in what Blaise and Yarrow term as 'risky' practice (2005).

Conclusion

Through examining and analysing some of the conflicting discourses as the EYP policy progressed from intended to actual and then into practice, it is clear that a major opportunity to improve the staffing and pay structures of the EY workforce has been missed. Given the financial constraints, this was inevitable. There is however a growing sense of an emerging career structure in the sector, although it is unlikely to be attractive until something is done about pay.

There is some anecdotal evidence of an improvement in the quality of provision in settings with an EYP, which was the major intention of the Government in introducing the scheme. The sector is only just experiencing the impact of the first wave of EYPs into settings and it is still possible that the initiative may prove to be more effective than first feared. A key element in this will be the degree to which the growing body of EYPs feels a sense of agency and develops its own sense of what constitutes professionalism in the Early Years. The EYP policy initiative is certainly shaping the landscape of the Early Years sector and has clearly now become part of the narrative.

In order to discover more about how the policy is interpreted and implanted into the settings, I plan to undertake an exploration of the stories of the EYPs and about EYPs. The contexts of the

stories will be important and, as Ball and Bowe (1992) indicate, it will be useful to focus this research on the extent and nature of resistance, subterfuge and conformity. My personal practical knowledge will enable me to gain meaningful insights from these stories and the research will continue the development of my own professional knowledge as I became more aware of how policy is socially constructed, framed and implemented.

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Appendix 6.2: EdD612: The professional identities of a group of Early Years student teachers: an exploratory study

Abstract

The focus of this paper is the development of students' identities as teachers before and during a 4 year Bachelor of Education degree course. Initially using a community of practice lens (Lave & Wenger, 1991) it considers how the students' emerging professional identities may be shaped through their engagement in campus-based experiences and placements in a range of settings. It draws upon an exploratory study in which students were asked to pictorially represent how they had seen themselves as teachers at the start of the course, their key experiences during the course and how they wanted others to see them as professionals in two years time. This was followed up by obtaining written reflections on the role of theory in their development. Analysis of the data suggested that the campus-based elements, and in particular the exposure to the theoretical underpinnings of Early Years education, may have been less significant than was presumed by their tutors. Reasons for this are put forward and the paper argues the need for more support for students during their training in understanding and developing robust and coherent teacher identities.

Introduction

This paper focuses on the development of student teacher identity. It was prompted by changes in my own professional identity over the past 4 years as I made the sometimes challenging transition from teacher to teacher educator.

Much of the taken-for-granted thinking about personal and professional identity is 'essentialist' in that it presumes a central core of identity which 'is' the person and so is minimally open to change and development. This has been challenged in recent years by theorists working from a social perspective, amongst them the socio-culturalists Lave and Wenger in the seminal work *Situated Learning* (1991) and Wenger's subsequent *Communities of Practice* (1998). They argue that people construct their identity through participation within a community of practice, moving from peripheral engagement to full participation, undertaking shared activities (Leach, 2009) and developing a sense of who they are and how they fit (Wenger, 1998) through talking about their changing experiences and the social configurations that they make. This identity only has meaning within a chain of relationships (Watson, 2006) and so can never be just something interior.

Moreover, people adopt different stances to the changing tasks and practices they encounter, and so there are shifts in their identity, which is constantly evolving (Kelly, 2006) and potentially full of contradictions and possibilities. This also implies that each individual will develop multiple professional identities, even at an early stage of their professional life.

For instance, I encountered various communities of practice within teacher education with diverse procedures, traditions and beliefs, some familiar to me, such as teaching adults, others quite alien, such as the requirement to be research active. Using the communities of practice lens I would argue that my professional identity has been shifted and shaped by a community where theoretical understanding and critically reflective practice is emphasised and given a higher priority than in my previous professional learning contexts within educational settings.

However, Billett (2007) argues that a weakness of communities of practice theory is that it may overemphasise the shaping impact of a community and underemphasise the power of individual agency in accepting, selecting or rejecting its messages. At first I hung on to my teacher identity as my 'anchor', resisting a research identity, a response McKeon and Harris (2010) found to be quite typical of new teacher educators. Over time I came to develop a research identity as one of the multiple identities required in teacher education, and as I increasingly engage in its different communities of practice so different identities will come to the fore. This trajectory aroused my interest in the development of teachers' professional identity.

ITE and the development of teacher identity

In the past 20 years, research on professional identity has become more common (Swennen, Jones & Volman, 2010) as it is increasingly believed to determine how teachers teach, how they develop as professionals and how they respond to educational change (Nias, 1989). Thus it affects the quality of teaching (Lamote & Engels, 2010). A fuzzy concept (Lamote & Engels, 2010), it is sometimes discussed in terms of concepts of self and of personal identity (Korthagen, 2004) but, as Beijaard et al (2004) argue, it can also be defined in terms of what a teacher should know and be able to do.

Even this is a far from straightforward matter. Most teachers are trained in partnerships between Universities, who provide the academic and theoretical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995), defined by Schon (1987) as knowledge-of-practice, and schools, who offer the professional craft knowledge, the complex, usually tacit, 'knowledge-in- practice' (Schon, 1987). It can easily be assumed that these will be complementary and provide a continuity of learning, as indicated by Fuller's research into apprenticeships (2007), but in practice it may lead to conflict and division.

Within the ITE community of practice during the past three decades there has been a steady redefinition of what constitutes a teacher professional, especially within the Early Years sector. The move has been from the notion of competent, well-organised care-givers providing tried and familiar activities, towards the idea of critically reflective practitioners (Paige-Smith & Craft, 2008) who have a clear theoretical perspective (Stephen, 2010) on effective Early Years education, as a basis for making improvements in the quality of provision advocated by Dahlberg, Moss & Pence (2007) and MacNaughton (2005). But within the communities of practice of educational settings there is often a mistrust of such a model, often held to be proposed by academics who are out-of-touch with the realities of the classroom.

Such mistrust would cause complications even if student teachers simply moved from the period of time in university to their employment. But the reality is far more complex. Over the four years of the BEd course students experience a pattern of intermingled campus-based and school-based activities, which inevitably involve them in varied, and possibly conflicting, communities of practice. Within the Early Childhood Studies (ECS) pathway students will not only have been placed in nursery, reception and Key Stage 1 classes in schools but also perhaps in Children's Centres, and so will have encountered a diversity of professional practice. Between these placements they will have returned to the communities of practice of university and of their peers, some of whose values and expectations may differ from those of the placement.

Furthermore, on campus they will undertake a range of modules, some from an ECS perspective and others more based in the subjects and approaches of the Primary Curriculum, again resulting in potential mismatches. Seeing this all through a community of practice lens, one could argue that students engage with many communities of practice, each of which shapes their professional identities as they follow their different trajectories through the course.

Egan (2009) argues that during an ITE course, student teachers are in the process of learning and relearning the self, constructing and reconstructing an identity. It must be re-emphasised that the student teachers have agency in this process, and if they are faced with conflict or difficult demands, within a placement or on campus, they will construct their own professional identity by selecting what they consider to be important and create a way of talking about themselves as teachers from this perspective. Gewirtz & Cribb (2008) remind us that identity is not what we are or what we want to become, but who we think we are and who we want to be. Pratt and Back (2009) take this further in suggesting that the student teachers will identify themselves with certain practices and therefore as certain types of people and this in turn will be significant in their learning both during the practice and on campus. This is extended by Sfard & Prusak (2005) who equate identity with stories, the ones people choose to tell about themselves or about others to friends, families, colleagues. They argue that these stories are not a window to an entity that stays

unchanged but are potentially an infinite range of identities that need to be taken seriously for what they are as they shape our actions.

So Swennen et al (2010) suggest that as teacher educators we should consider how ITE contributes to the development of professional identity and consider how it evolves through the course, taking into account the multiple communities of practice that the students encounter and the sense that they make of them.

The Study

My first four years as a teacher educator had coincided with a group of 22 students undertaking a BEd with a specialism in ECS; they were now on the threshold of entering the teaching profession. So I was interested to find out what had made a difference to their professional learning over the four years, what they had brought to the course initially and how they wanted to be viewed professionally in the future. I therefore undertook a small scale, exploratory study, following a grounded theory approach (Grieg, Taylor & Mackay, 2007) with a view to generating a list of themes, questions and hypotheses that could be followed up in a wider research project into the development of professional identity and that might suggest improvements in my own practice.

One of their final campus-based sessions was on the topic of 'Transitions' and to illustrate how useful drawings can be as a way of encouraging children to share ideas about their experiences, as suggested by Hall (2010), I invited the students to draw representations of their transitions into, through and out of the course.

Methodology

According to Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop (2004) there is a close relationship between teachers' stories about themselves and their professional identity. I chose to use pictorial representation as a way of capturing the students' stories and experiences since Thomson (2008) argues that visual research offers a good way to elicit experiences, opinions and perspectives. Leitch (2008) also suggests that 'Image making provides an opportunity to represent experience, a tangible process and product, within which stories are inherent, or out of which stories are re-created.'(p.39).

Initially I gave the students three tasks. I asked them to make a representation of:

- The picture of themselves as a teacher they had before embarking on the BEd course and any factors that had influenced this
- The learning journey they had taken during the four years of the course
- How they envisaged themselves as a teacher in two years time, including how they hoped and expected that their colleagues would talk about them.

My initial analysis of these representations suggested that the students might not be seeing as important in their professional development the theoretical understanding of teaching and learning which are a substantial and important element of the BEd course, particularly within the ECS modules. So at the next session with the group I made a short presentation of my analysis, inviting them to comment and discuss, then gave them a fourth task:

- What aspects of theory that you have been required to learn about have been/will be of any practical use in a setting? Comment on any specific ideas you have found useful/interesting/changing of your thinking/practice.

Strengths and limitations of the methodology used

There were many benefits to the approach that I took. As Gauntlett & Holzwarth (2006) suggest, the creative process of drawing gave the students time to reflect and to consider their response, rather than having to provide an answer to a question straight away, as one would in an interview. It also placed them as the 'experts', able to choose what to represent and how to represent it. What was fascinating was the way that the engagement in the drawing activity led to very rich conversations about experiences, shared memories, and emotional responses within each group, which perhaps supports Leitch's (2008) proposal that it drew out embodied knowledge in a way that writing may have not. At that point I realised that it would have been interesting to have captured the talk by recording it with a Dictaphone, but maybe the conversations would not have been so free if I had.

One of the key challenges of using visual data is how to analyse and represent it, allowing the images to 'speak for themselves'. I have to acknowledge that in my analysis I am imposing my own interpretations upon the images the students have created; perhaps I should have asked the students to share with me what their pictures represented, either by using them as a starting point for further discussion, or by encouraging the students to revisit them and provide additional information through annotations. If the project had been a larger one the use of interviews might have been very productive.

But there is also an argument that I bring my expertise as their tutor and as an EY teacher educator into the situation (Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006) and so may well make interpretations that are well-informed, having been part of the learning context in which it was created.

Several factors may have restricted the range of the information that the participants were willing to identify. The activity could have raised sensitive, emotional issues for the students and they may have been careful to avoid recording these. Moreover over the years they would have become aware of my views and enthusiasms and so may have largely recorded what they thought I wanted

to know. Individuals may have been influenced by peer pressure as they were sat in friendships groups.

Ethics

I provided each student with a clear written ethics protocol (Aubrey et al., 2000), and also talked them through the key points (see Appendix 1). I stressed that although they would remain anonymous as individuals, they could not as a group, as the research report would identify them as being Y4ECS students at the University of Plymouth. They were encouraged to use pseudonyms, but some opted not to. As their tutor I had an advantage for the research in that I had built a personal relationship with them, and they were accustomed to engaging in reflective, professional discussions with me within seminar sessions. I am very aware, however, that there was a clear power imbalance within our relationship, and the students may have felt obliged to participate (Grieg, Taylor & Mackay, 2007). They may also have presented me with what they thought I wanted to hear.

Analysis and Discussion

(See Appendices 2,3,4 & 5 for students' responses)

Their Sense of Professional Identity on Entering the BEd Course

The study supported the suggestion that teacher education students are likely already to have a strong (if sometimes limited) sense of professional identity at the start of the course. Children will have had intensive, extensive and in-depth experience of teaching during their own schooling. Smith (2007) notes that during 15 years of what Lamote & Engels (2010) call an apprenticeship of observation they will have formed very powerful images of teaching and teachers and so of the kind of teacher they want to be. This lived experience of participating within a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) as a successful learner means they may well have aligned themselves with its perceived characteristics and values.

My analysis (see Appendix 2) revealed some patterns in the students' prior experiences and influences that are reflected in work by other researchers. Cattley (2007) argues that identity formation is influenced by personal history, social interactions, psychological factors and cultural factors leading to the 'perception teachers have of themselves as teachers' (cited in Lamote & Engels, 2010, p.4). As in her study, a significant number of the students had relatives who were in the teaching profession, which links to Sfard and Prusak's (2005) notion of identity as being a dialectical interaction which flows from one generation to another. They had usually chosen work experience within Early Years and Primary schools and so had already engaged in such communities

of practice. Several of them drew representations of themselves role-playing 'teacher', telling stories about themselves doing the register or lining up their teddies. They also noted how meaningful adults had positioned them as 'a natural' teacher, or being 'good with children'. This tallies with the research by Walkington (2005) and also fits with the proposition by Lamote and Engels (2010) that early childhood experiences, teacher role-models, family and significant others are biographical elements that may well contribute to student teachers' identity formation.

It is important to note that Mayer's research (1999) argues that not only are these beliefs about teaching and teachers well established by the time students begin their training but that they are relatively inflexible and resistant to change. Many students beginning an ITE course may well believe that they are 'born teachers', and so just need classroom experience in how to transmit knowledge and organise children. This is very much an essentialist view and it suggests that the communities of practice model may not take personal views and trajectories sufficiently into account (Billett, 2007). It also suggests that although teacher educators aim to give students a passport of theoretical knowledge to cross the border (Jasman, 2010) into practice, where they will become more expert in the practical craft knowledge of a teacher, the students themselves may not see theory as an important contribution to their professional identity.

Another interesting element of the students' pictorial representations was that some indicated that they had chosen the Early Years specialism because there would be no difficulties with their own limited subject knowledge and/or the children would be easier to manage. This indicates that they were positioning themselves as being either not clever enough or not powerful enough to teach older children. Such a discourse may have interesting consequences, including the beliefs that they are not really capable of understanding 'academic theory', or that theory is not really relevant to the 'lower-level' teaching that they are suited for. Sfard & Prusak (2005) suggest that identity involves not only the character, nature and personality of an individual, but also the way that attitudes, conceptions and beliefs are developed. Thus, preconceptions, ideals and beliefs that students bring with them are key influences on their learning on the course (Mutton, Burn & Hagger, 2008) because these will shape their engagement with the various communities of practice they encounter, both on campus and in settings, and be the basis for which aspects they embrace, ignore or reject.

Key influences during the BEd course

The learning journeys drawn by the students (see Appendix 3) indicated a range of influential factors during their 4 years. Understandably, some were very much to do with the development of their personal identity and growing confidence:

- Moving away from home – standing on their own feet

- Friendships and peer groups
- University life.

Others related more directly to the BEd course and their professional development:

- Influence of individual University tutors, especially the ECS team
- Study trips and overseas placements, such as in Redbridge, London, The Gambia, Finland, USA.

But overwhelmingly the key influence was the range of placements in schools/settings. This is unsurprising since such experiences are key encounters with the realities of their chosen profession and very necessary, given how many said they were naïve at the start of the course.

They acknowledged both pleasant/positive and unpleasant/negative placement experiences as important. Experiences in settings require students to explore and firm up their existing identities and the norms and practices of the setting's cultures and sub-cultures may often be challenging. Students may encounter dilemmas, conflicting expectations, feelings of inadequacy, tensions between their expectations and what they can achieve, the need to do things to fit in, or to compromise between what they see as the role of the teacher and what is dictated to them. This can be a particular issue for ECS students, as the approaches used within the Early Years Foundation Stage are so distinct and may not be appreciated by a teacher with a primary background. All this can lead to a theory-practice gap, or a practice shock (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002) during the school experience.

One source of such issues can be differing conceptualisations of learning and teaching between University and schools. Universities, using constructivist theories of learning still significantly influenced by Piagetian theory, may emphasise that the student learner should come to understand how to teach substantially through reflecting upon and making sense of their classroom experiences, a process importantly informed by educational theory. Schools, as Ellis (2010) argues, may see the knowledge of how to teach as an atheoretical craft knowledge that can be transferred from the experienced teacher to the beginner/novice. In doing so they sometimes devalue both the identity and the developing expertise of the students, requiring that they accept and become acculturated to existing practice, follow routine behaviours and do not question, challenge or innovate. The common model is that students need to engage in what Lave & Wenger call 'legitimate peripheral participation' (1991) as newcomers becoming included in the community through low risk activities, working alongside more experienced colleagues to gain expertise and confidence (McKeon & Harrison, 2010). But this does not take account of those student teachers who feel themselves to be already 'experts' in a variety of aspects, perhaps through prior experience, or because they actively reject the norms and the practices of the

setting, and wish to do things in a different way, such as the Steiner Waldorf student placed in a mainstream Key Stage 1 class. There are also situations where the 'master' in the setting lacks expertise, sometimes because they are less competent as a teacher than the 'novice', sometimes because they have less knowledge of current theory, sometimes because their own trajectory as a teacher has prepared them less well for the current context – some students, for example, found themselves better prepared for the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (DCSF, 2008) than their class teacher who had not had Early Years training. But the students' representations indicated that their own sense of expertise was sometimes not acknowledged during a placement, presenting a challenge to their developing professional identity.

Such experiences can be powerful in helping students to understand the complex role of the teacher, a key to professional identity, as Cattley (2007) argues. Through the changes from one placement to another the students can foster self-descriptions, tell the stories of their teaching and construct a sustainable self as teacher.

Using a Foucauldian perspective (Burr, 2003), one becomes aware of significant power issues here. The increasing transfer of responsibility for supervision and assessment of student teachers to the schools has increased their power to define and enforce the requirements for passing the practice and weakened that of the University tutors. It must also be recognised that the discourses around Government pressure on schools to improve performance and the consequent Standards agenda for trainee teachers add considerable weight to this. When schools are afraid to risk their performance figures by allowing student teachers some scope to experiment, and when providing evidence to meet all the Standards is key to them passing the placement, the pressure to conform is huge. In this context the school and the school's definitions can become the overwhelming influence, with any alternative views being offered by University tutors is unrecognised and this balance of influence appears in the students' representations.

However, the pattern is not a simple, uniform one. Gewirtz & Cribb (2008) suggest that the student still has some agency in actively choosing and negotiating their identity, though these choices are constrained by the discourses available to them. Beijaard et al (2004) also argue that students differ in the way that they respond to the varying influences, depending upon what values they place on them. This will clearly be shaped by their existing professional identities and previous experiences, which will constitute the lens (Mayer, 1999) through which they view their training. Once more the agency of the individual is an important factor. Mayer (1999) also suggests that some students, when encountering situations on placement which conflict with their core beliefs, may choose to put aside their beliefs temporarily in order to fit in with the powerful community of practice, without this resulting in a long-lasting change in their beliefs or identity. Resistance is as strong a factor in the shaping of identity as acceptance; as Britzman states 'a great deal of the

story of learning to teach concerns learning what not to become' (2003, p.19). Other students, however, may see the school's emphasis upon effective classroom organisation and practical competence in achieving laid-down outcomes as being right and proper and will not wish to challenge or debate this.

All this may cast light on a clear gap in the students' representations that surprised and challenged my own ideas about the development of teachers' professional identity. I strive to develop the students' professional learning as Early Years educators through making strong connections between key theoretical ideas about young children's learning and the implications of these for their practice. However, my examination of their learning journeys revealed only two mentions of play. How might this be explained?

One possibility is that all intending teachers must satisfy the requirements of the Teaching Development Agency and meet the standards for the Award of Qualifying Teacher Status (TDA, 2010) to achieve practical competence and laid-down outcomes. The standards make almost no reference to theory and do not require successful students to demonstrate their understanding of links between theory and practice, so making the links may seem irrelevant to the 'real' business of teaching. Another, as Mayer (1999) proposes, is that many student teachers believe that they understand the nature of teaching so do not take on board the ideas from campus-based work. It may be that the University's constructivist perspective on teaching does not fit with the transmissive model of learning that they have acquired as learners themselves. It may even be that that their engagement in the university community of practice does not feel much different from being a pupil in a school, being located within a familiar learner/teacher discourse. Learning about theory may be perceived at some level as a narrowly academic requirement, to be met in order to pass the course but of little relevance to the workplace. By contrast in their placements, as Goodwin (2007) suggests, they have gone from being a child in a school to being an adult in a place of work, and this has had much more impact upon the shaping of their understanding of what it is to be a teacher. But the lack of reference to theory remained a question to be investigated.

It was also interesting to note the powerful emphasis on friendships and relationships that emerged from the students' representations. One explanation could be that the methodology used influenced the data produced, supporting Leitch's ideas (2006) that pictorial representation can elicit more emotion and embodied knowledge. The students were sat in their friendships groups as they drew their pictures and there was a lot of discussion about different experiences they had shared and maybe this prompted them to make a note of their friends. It could also be their way of conveying to the others how important that friendship had been and it is possible that teacher educators underemphasise the importance of the students' relationships in the development of their professional learning.

Aspirations for future professional identity

For the third task, I had asked the students to think ahead two years and consider what they would like others to be saying about them as a professional, because how one is constructed and represented by others is a key element of identity. Korthagen (2004) considers that professional development should not only focus on competencies, beliefs and attitudes, but also take into account the teacher's intentions and mission – what do I want as a teacher? Such a dynamic approach is supported by Kelchterman and Ballet (2002) and Kelchterman (2009), and is also used by Bagnoli (2007), who looks at how possible selves may act as role models for what we might like to be.

This activity again raised some interesting responses (see Appendix 4). The major aspirations emerging were to be approachable, creative, motivational, friendly, organised, and to work well within a team. Positive attributes, but little different from their attitudes and beliefs at the start of the course. Noticeably they are very much about the teacher as a person. There was very little about knowledge of the curriculum and no recognition of theoretical underpinnings, apart from a couple of references to play and having good ideas. It may be that this reflects the powerful influence of their placements where students, as well as the teachers, are not expected to be challenging, provocative, progressive, interested in theory, keen to discuss theoretical implications for practice. Responding effectively to the children and being part of the staff team are seen as priorities. In order for these student teachers to become a catalyst for change (Stephen, 2010), they need to have that possibility in their possible selves.

Reflection on influence of theoretical knowledge on professional identity

As described in the methodology section the lack of reference to theoretical understandings in the students' representations prompted me to provide an additional task specifically exploring this area. Their responses modified the previous impression that they did not consider theoretical understanding important. They were able to identify many of the key theories and theorists that they had encountered during the ECS modules, though there was no mention of theory from other modules, for example around mathematical thinking. Several stated that the ideas had informed their thinking about teaching and learning. There was also evidence of links between their knowledge of theory and their practice. For example one student noted: 'I always think quite a lot about Bronfenbrenner because of the vast range of factors that influence children. I've used this in settings when faced with a child who shows adverse behaviour and thinking about why. I will also use this in future in teaching' (Appendix 4, T14). However, she then went on to say: 'I haven't seen

any theories implemented in schools particularly.’ And another student commented: ‘quite often theories are based on the ‘ideal’ and cannot be implemented in a lot of schools’ (Appendix 4, T8).

This perception is revealing. As a teacher educator on campus I promote and encourage questioning, challenging and experimentation. But the students frequently go into a school community of practice where most teachers are operating within directed curriculum frameworks using a cognitive, transfer model (Kelly, 2006) in order to meet attainment targets governed by league tables. There is little opportunity for the class teacher to engage in dialogue, or to question/challenge/experiment. The discourse is framed and narrowed by the policy context, which reduces the complexity and diversity of learning by imposing strategies and curriculum goals (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). The TDA standards (TDA, 2010) are restricted criteria for professional identity, with only one referring to professional development. Going into such a community of practice, it is hardly surprising that theoretical ideas are not part of the teachers’ stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996) within the professional discussions, but it was reassuring to find that such understanding was not largely lacking amongst the students in the study.

Some implications of the study

Although very limited in scope, this small scale exploratory study does raise several interesting implications for teacher educators. One is that it questions the effectiveness of the theoretical aspects of our courses. Perhaps this is because we largely present the connections between theories and practice to our students, without always enabling them to integrate such understandings into their professional identities. Over a decade ago Mayer (1999) argued that there should be an emphasis on linking the students’ personal ideas about learning and teaching with such public theories, enabling them to deconstruct their notions, identify their origins, and engage in a reflective discourse about how these were shaping their professional identity. Discussions around life history, biography and critical incidents would be helpful in the process, making them mindful of issues around professional identity and affordance. We need to move away from assuming that professional identity is stable (Smith, 2007), towards a more dynamic picture of identity construction as suggested by Britzman (2003), seeing students as becoming teachers, not being them.

Smith (2007) recommends that we should also encourage them to confront their beliefs and feelings about themselves as teachers in a process supported by reflective logs, diaries and career planning. This would enable rehearsals of their trajectories as teachers as they actively engage in the professional learning contexts through the course, and would support them in making connections between their different experiences and in understanding the pressures that arise. One model that could underpin this process is Cattley’s (2007) reflective frame (see Appendix 6).

Research put forward by Day et al (2006) suggests that teachers need a resilient professional identity in order to cope with these pressures. Key to this would be the sense that already as students they have expertise (although limited) to offer and that they (and the setting) would benefit from them having a degree of autonomy in being allowed to exercise creativity, develop their craft and critique existing practice in collaboration with their colleagues in the setting. As Stephen (2010) argues it seems unlikely that this can be done without the teacher acknowledging and having a significant understanding of relevant aspects of education.

This cannot be achieved unilaterally. Lave and Wenger (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) would argue for a distributed and collaborative view of coming to know and knowing-in-practice, so also needed would be a development of the existing partnerships between schools and the University, so that each context values the forms of knowledge available in the other (Burn, 2007). Walkington (2005) argues that the way that Universities encourage student teachers to question, challenge and develop teaching approaches should continue in schools too. A recent small scale TDA funded research project undertaken collaboratively by myself and a group of Y4 BEdECS students while on their final placement investigated how new approaches to observing and assessing young children's learning could be facilitated through the use of digital technologies. In this the students were positioned as experts, coming into an existing community of practice, with new ideas and tools. They engaged in a reflective dialogue with the class teachers, leading to new learning for all the participants, showing how powerful collaborative research projects like this can be for professional development.

Atkinson (2004) considers that students need the tools and strategies of reflective practice, but I would argue that these reflections need to be focussed much more on learning about themselves as teachers rather than just on how to teach. Kelly (2006) argues powerfully for the use of reflective writing to promote identity exploration and change, since this intentional formation of experiences into stories can help students consciously change direction. As I have shown in my methodology, this process does not have to be limited to writing, in that the use of visual images, such as pictures, cartoons, maps and word clouds, can offer a wider diversity of forms of expression and potentially elicit a deeper response. Nelson (2008) suggests that 'this is a process in which our identities are exposed, reconsidered, maybe even questioned, and then affirmed and reinforced in a way that characterizes more closely the teachers we desire to become' (p.208) Shifts in our understanding can occur if we intentionally reflect upon them. This may result in the development of more 'robust reflective, discursive collaborative teacher identities' (Kelly, 2006, p.517). Future research might explore effective ways of supporting Early Years student teachers in building their teacher identity during the course of their degree as they encounter a range of communities of practice.

But it may well be useful to move away from the model of separate university and school communities of practice, and consider a more expansive view. Engestrom (2007), in discussing organisational patterns, uses the metaphor of a swarm of insects. Students may be envisaged as moving outwards into different settings, sometimes in groups, sometimes individually, then coming together again in campus-based sessions but also as social groups. They share experiences, ideas, reflections, particularly on critical incidents, before going out again. This learning is dynamic, with patterns of intense action, observation and periods of withdrawal (Engestrom, 2007). In some ways such activity theory may be more useful than a communities of practice model, in that it considers the individual trajectories of the students, the learning within the group, the spaces in between that learning and the importance of the relationships within the student group, which come across so strongly in their representations, as well as adding an historical context, showing the professional learning happening over time.

We are currently engaged nationally in debates about the purposes of schooling and the role of teachers, particularly for our youngest children. But if as teacher educators our aim is to produce Early Years educators who can engage in 'risky' teaching (Blaise, 2005; Blaise & Yarrow, 2005) and challenge learners' identities (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2008) to promote social justice (MacNaughton, 2005) then we must be equally proactive in promoting the development of such a professional identity and equally innovative and challenging in our own practice. As Lenz Taguchi (2010) argues, acceptance of reductionist approaches such as those embodied in current Government education policies risks shutting out the inclusion and justice we want to achieve.

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Appendix 6.3: EdD621: Rethinking a module on development education: discomforts and challenges

Rethinking a module on development education: discomforts and challenges

Abstract

This paper explores the issues around the introduction of a new module on development education within a BA(Hons) early Childhood Studies programme in a University in the South West of England. It considers the process of design and the first delivery of the module, and uses a key theoretical framework, derived from de Souza and Andreotti (2008b) to analyse and explain the discomforts experienced by the tutors. This analysis is then used to suggest modifications to the module delivery, in order to change students' attitudes and to encourage a focus on social justice in their approach, both to issues in the Majority World and to their practice when working with children and families in the UK.

Word count 6704

Key words: Development Education; Early Years practitioners; Higher Education; social justice; changing attitudes; globalisation

1. Introduction

The intervention discussed and analysed in this paper is the 2010 introduction to the BA Early Childhood Studies programme at a university in the South West of England of a new module, Childhood and Well-being in the Developing World and its subsequent reconceptualisation in preparation for the second delivery in 2011.

2. Context

There were a number of drivers for this particular intervention, connected to the currently powerful discourses around globalisation in the UK education systems. The University itself is pushing for its courses to be given a more pronounced global perspective, seeing this as central to its development, and arguing that:

‘The South West region is less multicultural than many parts of the UK, and the University can and will be a powerful agent in fostering cultural diversity and tolerance.’ (University of Plymouth, 2009, p.3)

The internationalised approach is also emphasised in the University's teaching and Learning Strategy:

‘Modern graduates must be able to act effectively in a global culture, economy and environment. We aim to equip our graduates for this experience, by promoting cross-cultural and multi-cultural understanding...’(University of Plymouth, 2009, p.3)

It is interesting to note that, as Schattle (2005) discusses, these two policy statements reflect two overarching discourses in the notions around global citizenship: firstly a civic republican agenda that emphasises responsibility and cross-cultural empathy and secondly a neo-libertarian one that stresses international mobility, linked to the notion of a knowledge society in increasingly globalised contexts (Andreotti & de Souza, 2008).

At a national policy level, the Department for Education and Skills, now the Department for Education, is stressing the need to develop the global dimension in education as it

‘.....incorporates the key concepts of global citizenship, conflict resolution, diversity, human rights, interdependence, social justice, sustainable development and values and perceptions. It explores the interconnections between the local and the global. It builds knowledge and understanding, as well as developing skills and attitudes.’ (DfES, 2005, p.4).

Alongside this, the Department for International Development is pushing for all schools to make a link with a school in the majority world in order to promote global education through the curriculum (DfID, 2011). Hillier (2006) argues that this can help to develop the children’s sense of social justice as they gain insight into other people’s lives through building up such relationships, though as Andreotti (2006) urges, it needs to be undertaken in an ethically appropriate, critically informed way if this is to be achieved.

Thus it is clear that as a Faculty of Education we need to prepare practitioners to teach global education and citizenship so they can actively engage in programmes such as this. However this challenges us in several ways. There are multiple understandings about these terms and we need to be careful in identifying what it is we are aiming to teach and how. As Andreotti (2007) asks: ‘Whose globe? Whose citizenship? Who benefits?’ (p71). She suggests that until recently development education has focussed more on practice than theory (Andreotti, 2006a), so there is a clear need to develop the skills and understandings of the teacher educators. She argues that there is a need to reconceptualise knowledge, learning and identities in light of post-modern perspectives, seeing them as fluid and open to negotiation (Andreotti, 2010), and that this has implications for the way that development education is taught.

It is also important to note that many students will not have had the opportunity to travel widely and therefore, as Digeorgio Lutz (2010) suggests, their global experience may be largely limited to what we can offer them in the university curriculum, placing a great

responsibility upon teacher educators, whose own experience may also be limited. As part of the internationalisation agenda, tutors in the Faculty of Education do lead several study trips to other countries. One to The Gambia in particular offers an opportunity for students to experience a very different culture. Hutchison and Rea (2010) suggest, from a socio-cultural perspective, that this may have the power to transform the students' values and understandings as they explore and question some of the issues around development in the Majority World, including poverty and aid, but as Digeorgio Lutz (2010) points out, not all students can 'participate in this powerful person-to-person international exchange of cultural values' (p.715). It is a very brief, one-week experience, accessible to only those who can afford it and is neither prepared for nor followed up in taught modules.

Another challenge to the Faculty of Education's work arises from the increasing diversity of children within the educational settings in the South West, as the population demographics shift as a result of immigration and population movement. Baldock (2010), Penn (2005) and Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke (2000) amongst others assert that Early Years practitioners need to become more culturally aware in working with children and their families, not least because, as Andreotti (2006b) suggests, there is a tendency for us to consider our Western approach as universal while the separate traditions, practices and beliefs of other cultures are exoticised and stereotyped.

3. Design and first delivery of the module 'Childhood and Well-being in the Developing World'

All these factors meant that there was clearly a place in the BAECs degree for an intervention to enhance global education within an Early Years context, an area which was not currently covered within the programme. A new module was designed by two Lecturers in the Early Childhood Studies team, one with a Masters degree in International Development and experience of development work and research in Namibia, Ghana and Kenya and the other one, myself, with experience of working in international development in Ethiopia and The Gambia. We both wanted to explore key issues around early childhood and well-being through a global lens, both in order to widen students' awareness of international contexts and to encourage in them a more informed critical perspective when working with the wide range of children and families in the UK. As Clarkson argues, knowledge of 'the social milieu, cultures, customs, political and economic processes of others allows us to put our own systems into context' (2009, p.5).

We had often compared our personal experiences of working in development education in different countries, and these stories were very much part of the shaping of our professional identities as we were making the challenging transition into Higher Education as lecturers (McKeon & Harrison, 2010). We initially took a Deleuzian nomadic approach (Gale, 2010) to sharing ideas for the module, moving into the smooth spaces of creating

new ideas through discussions, and identifying a lot of possibilities and potentialities for challenging students' thinking and for encouraging reflective engagement which would shake up their existing ideas and potentially lead to significant shifts in their attitudes. This process of module development was a powerful and energising experience, rooted, it seemed, in our growing understanding of learning as participatory, being part of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Lave, 2008). However, in retrospect, we did not explicitly identify what our own beliefs and attitudes were on the hugely contested discourses underpinning the module, such as social justice and poverty, as though assuming that because of our shared experiences and positions this could be taken for granted.

The next step was to put together a Definitive Module Record that would pass the University's rigorous validation. It was our first encounter with this process and we found some of our more creative ideas, our nomadic lines of flight, being striated by its demands. For instance, implicit in all our preliminary and planning discussions had been the intention to open up sites of enquiry where assumptions and perceptions of key issues could be challenged and critiqued from a global and social justice perspective (Fielder, 2007) in order to empower students to think more critically about the world that we all live in and are a part of, and about their responsibilities towards others. This was based upon seeing learning as a social process (Lave, 2008) with potential for students to make shifts in the stories they tell about themselves (Sfard & Prusak, 2005) as they actively engage in constructing their professional identities. However, we experienced the requirements of the DMR to specify learning outcomes, schemes of work and assessment criteria as constricting. I would suggest that such demands are very much rooted in the model of knowledge acquisition and concept development that Sfard (2008) describes as the 'acquisition metaphor' (p. 32). Gale (2010) argues that this model implies and emphasises the notions of teacher as 'expert' and student as 'novice'. The tutors as 'experts' are responsible for transmitting the necessary body of knowledge, thereby transforming the students' attitudes and understandings, which can be assessed by a predetermined assignment. This approach may well have been reinforced by another perception – perhaps shared by tutors and validators – that students coming from this geographical area of the UK were likely to have limited prior knowledge of the topics to be covered.

This is very much a linear model of learning, where knowledge 'grows' in a largely predetermined way towards clearly expected outcomes. Taking a poststructuralist approach, Olsson (2009) suggests that such an 'arboreal' model is repressive and stops us thinking. We should view learning as rhizomatic, open to potentialities that force us to think and take new trajectories, and provide opportunities in the environment for this to occur. If one takes a constructivist stance, believing that learning is about meaning making, then observable and assessable outcomes are not the priority – what the students are

thinking about and how they are making sense is. Krippendorff (1991), cited in Olsson (2009), argues that knowledge is located in an essentially circular social practice involving perceiving, thinking and acting beings engaged in the construction of realities. Such active learning as the heart of our delivery of the module certainly became less likely as a result of our experience of the design and validation process.

It must be conceded that such constraining effects are not an inevitable consequence of designing and validating a DMR, as there are examples of University modules with much more open aims and learning objectives. Taking a Foucauldian perspective (MacNaughton, 2005), it is clear that within these constraints we did have some power to dictate which would be the dominant discourses through the module and to give them a high priority, as well as marginalising others. However, the constraints did affect our choices. In retrospect, having to describe the module in four lines of text caused us to narrow our intentions. Even the debate during validation about the wording of the module title resulted in the marginalisation of a key discourse. There are competing ideas around the terminology used to describe different parts of the world. As Smidt (2006) says, 'developing world' is currently a hugely contested term. For some it signifies a hegemonic dichotomy, with the developed world as more powerful, and I prefer the term 'majority world', which conveys a significantly different message. However, in the validation meeting 'developing world' was given approval as it was acknowledged as still being in common use by key agencies such as Unicef, and therefore deemed to be more readily understood by the students.

4. Evaluation of the first delivery of the module

All this strongly influenced our first delivery of the module in Autumn 2010. Partly as a result of the DMR, it followed the traditional lecture/seminar style, with each tutor delivering the sessions that she felt more comfortable with. We selected pre-session readings for the students and built in activities through which they could research issues that we had identified as being the most relevant and important. We invited visiting speakers to contribute to sessions, based upon our personal knowledge of their charity work in Sub-Saharan Africa. Clearly we were shaping very tightly the learning experience.

For me, I experienced growing discomfort with this as the module progressed. For example, in response to the students' apparent lack of knowledge about colonialism and the historical perspectives of globalisation we felt impelled to provide even more input in terms of factual information, without which they would not have been able to fully grasp the rest of the module content in a meaningful way. Research recently undertaken in Australia by Horsley & Bauer (2010) has found that Early Childhood teachers are more likely to have gaps in their background knowledge of globalisation, human rights and social justice than are Primary and Secondary colleagues, who often draw upon their subject disciplines, so

our students' lack of knowledge may not be unusual. But it was uncomfortable for me to acknowledge that this pattern may have been created, or at least exacerbated, by subliminal messages about student ignorance conveyed by the design of the module, the resulting documentation and the chosen style of delivery. The students needed to fully understand the socio-political and historical context, but due to time constraints this was limited in its scope.

As tutors we found ourselves pushed by the students to share our experiences and ideas and so to be seen as experts; I had already become uncomfortable about this role at both personal and professional levels, not least because my doctoral studies had exposed me more to the ideas around learning-as-participation. Inevitably there was very little questioning or challenging of our perspectives by the students. Yet I was increasingly aware that I was putting forward my own regimes of truth (MacNaughton, 2005), subject to the enormous limitations of my own experiences, shaped within communities of practice specific to me and then delivered in my Western academic voice. Indeed, the only Majority World voices that were introduced into the module were through videos produced by various aid agencies or documentary film makers, all clearly with their own agendas and putting forward particular views on the issues to serve their own purposes.

Increasingly too I came to question my initial assumptions that the more knowledge I gave the students the greater would be their understanding of the issues and, even more significantly, that this would lead to attitude change. I began to wonder how far I was expecting them to see things from my predetermined perspective because the stories that I was telling were so powerful to my identity and how I perceived myself. Our zeal as tutors might also have acted as a barrier to the students challenging us, as to do so would have seemed to attack both our personal and professional identities.

Further discomforts emerged for me during the presentations at the end of the module and when marking the assignments. The majority of the students had clearly become more knowledgeable about the key issues we had explored, for example in terms of information about the Millennium Development Goals, or statistics about child health in Sub-Saharan Africa, or the provision of primary education in Ethiopia. They had also gained a significantly greater awareness of the role and diversity of INGO, NGOs and charities. However, in talking or writing about the people of the Majority World some of the students consistently used the terms 'they' or 'them', implying an 'othering' and seeming thereby to position such people as different and possibly inferior. Had I inadvertently encouraged this during my sessions? There was also a strong sense of 'missionary zeal'. Having recognised that there exist huge discrepancies of wealth and opportunity, some of the students seemed to consider that it was therefore their responsibility to do something about it, possibly having constructed a concept of people in the Majority World as helpless victims to be rescued. Indeed, some students' assignments demonstrated a highly emotive

response rather than a critical engagement with the subject matter. Again, what kind of messages had I conveyed as I had shared my narratives?

In discussing the work of charities and NGOs the students rightly identified the need for any intervention to be rooted in knowledge of the local community and to be responsive to the needs of the community. They talked a lot about empowerment, and about building the capacity of a community itself to find the solutions to local issues. However, such ideas were almost always framed within the narrow context of the aid agenda, with little awareness of the wider geopolitical context and of the consequent social justice issues.

It became clear by the end of the module that students were still largely considering the issues in terms of a conventional Western aid and development model, encouraging the position “Now we know even more about the situation we can see how important it is to help these ‘poor people’”. Although the module had been underpinned, from the tutors’ perspectives at least, by a desire to motivate and prepare students to work for social justice within a global context, it seemed doubtful whether the majority had taken on board the wider implications of this concept. Because of this it seemed unlikely that they had made the hoped-for links between the dynamics of achieving greater social justice in the Majority World and the continuing need to work for social justice in aspects of life in their own country. As feared, there were problems over transfer of learning – giving the students knowledge about issues in a developing world country had not automatically led them to apply the resulting insights to their practice here in the UK. We came to see as a common element in redesigning the module the need not only to widen and deepen the students’ knowledge but to enable and support significant change in their attitudes, leading to the motivation and the ability to work for social justice in the developing world.

As one of the tutors, I recognise that this may be controversial. A strong body of opinion within HE would define its major role in undergraduate courses as deepening and strengthening the ability of students to think critically, to review and balance the evidence within a field, to detect and compensate for bias, but not to advocate, much less instil, particular positions and attitudes. It may be argued that the development of an appropriately critical perspective should in itself lead students to adopt desirable attitudes, without these being the required outcome of the educational process. However, there are areas within HE where the promotion of certain attitudes is seen as a requirement. These will often be areas with a vocational element, such as the training of teachers, nurses and social workers, where students are being required to work directly with people in a social context and so substantial moral and ethical issues are involved. I would argue for instance that teacher educators must work to ensure that students see the welfare of their pupils as a prime concern, and that failure to develop such an attitude would be a failure in their teaching. This is supported by the review of literature on ethical and moral dimensions of

teaching undertaken by Bullough (2010), which concluded that teaching is essentially and fundamentally a moral enterprise.

However when a module only indirectly impacts upon people, the situation is less clear cut, even though it may be substantially tackling moral and ethical issues, as is the case with the module under discussion. It may be argued that here the normal HE goal of developing critical perspective with the likelihood of this leading to appropriate attitudes is sufficient since, for example, students will appreciate, if suitably taught, the validity of the emphasis upon social justice in considering global issues. Nevertheless this position is in danger of overestimating the power of rational thinking and underestimating the agency and possible resistances of the individual students. It fails to recognise that students may bring to such a highly-charged and 'emotive' area as global education pre-existing, uncritical, inexperienced, prejudiced (i.e. prejudged) and biased (pre-disposed) attitudes which are highly likely to provide a barrier to proper, balanced, critical understanding. Thus I would argue that the module must offer a challenge to such obstructive attitudes that is more substantial and effective than the simple provision of information.

Presenting simple information will not bring about attitude change, because we all have strongly established adult schemas, which are highly resistant to change (Burr, 2003), and because from a psychoanalytic perspective, as Manning-Morton (2011) suggests, we may have powerful mechanisms of defence against painful experiences leading to the repression of unacceptable material. All this suggests that a learning experience targeted at significant attitude change would have to involve a shaking up and breaking down of such resistances to change and the provision of a supportive environment to allow this to happen without undue distress to the participants.

This in turn suggests that a rethinking of this intervention should be less to do with the structure of module design than with the process of module delivery. An important starting point may well be the suggestion that tutors need to make themselves more aware of the students' prior learning and of their previous experiences, together with the strengths and possible limitations of this, and that the students need to be more aware of the tutors' positionings and limitations if the module is to reconceptualise knowledge, learning and identities in order to promote social justice.

5. Understanding the discomforts: the work of de Souza and Andreotti

Key to the reconceptualisation of the module, following its first delivery, was my encounter with the work of de Souza and Andreotti and their Through Other Eyes Project, an international initiative to support education in development issues (Andreotti & de Souza, 2008b). They suggest that development education has a tendency to be 'soft' rather than 'critical', in that it emphasises the responsibility of the institutions rather than individuals. As Pogge (2002) asserts:

We are familiar, through charity appeals, with the assertion that it lies in our hands to save the lives of many or, by doing nothing, to let these people die. We are less familiar with the assertion examined here of a weightier responsibility: that most of us not merely let people starve but also participate in starving them (p214).

They have set out the key distinctions between soft and critical development education (see Appendix A), and when I use this I sense that this is what happened during our module. In an earlier paper, Andreotti (2006b) argues that 'understanding global issues often requires learners to examine a complex web of cultural and material processes and contexts on local and global levels' (p.40), and that the 'notions of power, voice and difference are central for critical citizenship education' (p.49). If these are not considered, then what may happen is that we end up promoting a 'civilising mission', with the students taking on the burden of saving/educating the world, encouraged to 'make a difference', but projecting 'their beliefs and myths as universal and reproducing power relations and violence similar to those in colonial times' (p 49). This really struck a chord with me, as I reflected not only upon the discomforts previously analysed, but also upon my own beliefs and attitudes.

Andreotti & de Souza draw on the work of Spivak (1988), who takes a feminist deconstructivist approach to issues around colonialism and is very critical of the way that western institutions reproduce knowledge about the Third World (*sic*), classing Western researchers as 'benevolent outsiders', and native informants as 'exotic insiders', and suggesting that we risk exacerbating the very problems that we are trying to address. In order to avoid this, we need to establish an ethical responsibility to the 'other', not for the 'other', by engaging in a persistent critique of the hegemonic discourses and representations that we are engaged in. We need to acknowledge our own complicity in perpetuating the inequalities, as well as unlearning our own privilege, in order to engage ethically with the Third World. Kapoor (2004) had earlier stressed that this involves us in having to 'retrace the itinerary of our prejudices and learning habits..... stopping oneself from always wanting to correct, teach, theorise, develop, colonise, appropriate, use, record, inscribe, enlighten' (p 641-642). These arguments strongly supported my sense that the module needed to be delivered and assessed differently.

De Souza and Andreotti (2008) put forward a clear conceptual framework to support student's learning within development education, stating that we need to engage with the perspectives of others in order to learn and transform our own views, identities and relationships. They argue that such a process must take us through four stages: learning to unlearn, which involves making connections with the socio-historical processes that have shaped our contexts and cultures, and the constructions of our knowledges and identities, so that we can understand that ours is only one perspective amongst many; learning to

listen, which is when we recognise the effects and limitations of our perspectives, and hear other perspectives and voices as being as legitimate, valid and powerful as our own; learning to learn, which occurs when we not only take on board new perspectives, but renegotiate our understandings and engage with new concepts to rearrange our cultural baggage; learning to reach out, which involves learning to reflect on and explore new possible ways of being, of relating to others and being willing to engage in that potentially uncomfortable space where identities, power and ideas are renegotiated, seeing conflict as a productive component of learning.

This will potentially enable our narratives, representations and framings to move from an egocentric stance, through an ethnocentric one (within own social group) and a humancentric one (within other social groups) to arrive at a world centric view (critical considerations of other possible narrative/representations/framings). In this way, de Souza and Andreotti aim in their online TOE project to create 'a space where students are safe to analyse and experiment with other forms of seeing/ thinking and being/relating to one another' (p49), which will enable them to learn from difference and reconstruct their worldview and identities based on 'an ethical relationship to the other' (Andreotti, 2006).

This gave me a lot of food for thought as I considered the implications of these ideas and I began to understand better the sense of discomfort that I had felt at times during the module. It gave me a much clearer understanding of how to get a more critical perspective from the students and as such it is a very helpful, lucid theoretical model to enable an analysis of the stages that a person will need to go through in order to arrive at a understanding which will enable them to adopt a critical perspective and put their learning into practice in their own context.

We do have to be careful in how we use such a stage model as a basis for our teaching, if we are not to fall back entirely on the acquisition metaphor, in which concepts are developed, knowledge is acquired and then applied to different contexts (Sfard, 2008) in a rigid linear pattern. When one considers learning, it seems messier than this, rhizomatic and unpredictable. However it is valid to argue in this case that it would not be possible to learn to listen and consider the ideas within one's own social group if one had not begun to unlearn and challenge one's own taken-for-granted perspectives and become aware of one's own social-historical context. And as earlier discussed, this is a difficult process because of our strongly established schemas and emotional resistances.

In light of this, when reflecting upon the delivery of the module, it became clear that we should have spent more time initially considering what the students were bringing to the module in terms of their experiences, values, beliefs, perceptions. We should also have considered how we could get them to reflect critically on these and acknowledge what motivated them to choose the module. Some would still have been at the 'learning to

unlearn' stage, but many would not. This brings in the essential point that, as Lave (2008) argues, we need to consider the implications of viewing learning as an inherently social process which is part of everyday life. As is always the case, we created a community of practice as we began the module, and certain habits, practices and norms implicitly become part of that learning community. The active participation in the discussions and the sharing of ideas and perceptions that were part of it did shape the learning that took place, and may well have shaken up some students' ideas as they listened to the views of others. However, Sfard (2008) reminds us that, as tutors, we were the preservers of the continuity of learning and so may have prevented some of the dialogue. Because of the perceived need to transmit a lot of knowledge to the students, there was a tendency for us, both white Western academics, to present a range of ideas that we had determined, selected and prioritised. Spivak (2003) would argue that this could be reinforcing existing views, rather than challenging a rethink. Battiste (2004) would also challenge our approach, considering that we were adopting a

pedagogical posture inherited from colonialism, based on the assumption that mainstream (i.e. 'western', 'colonial', 'Eurocentric') culture and knowledges are the global and the universal norm from which indigenous, local knowledges and cultures deviate.' (cited in Andreotti & De Souza, 2008c, p23).

Maybe this was so. We included the voices of the 'Other', those whom Spivak (1988) terms 'subalterns', but mainly through video clips on the websites of NGOs and aid agencies, so they had been 'filtered' by the regime of truth being put forward by an elite global professional class, which Spivak asserts is projecting ethnocentric and developmentalist mythologies onto the Third World subalterns. Reflecting on this was uncomfortable for me. Is it possible in a module to represent the myriad of voices that we need to hear? Even Andreotti and De Souza acknowledge the minefield that this can be in their reflection on the TOE project (2008c). We did make an effort to encourage the students to look at what the developing world says for itself, through exposing them to world literature and cinema, however this was as an aside to the module rather than integrated into it, and some students did not engage fully with this. We also did not capture how this altered their thinking, if at all.

6. Reconceptualising the module, using the de Souza and Andreotti conceptual framework

6.1 Learning to unlearn

At the start of the module, we need to spend time as a group identifying our existing ideas about ourselves, considering the way that our social, historical and cultural contexts have influenced these concepts and drawing attention to the similarities and differences. This could be linked to specific activities around identities and the discourses that shape them (Burr, 2003), how we are positioned and how we position ourselves. In this way we can start to unpick the 'cultural baggage' that we all have.

The next step is to challenge these existing views, through participation in the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) within the module. We are aiming to provoke students into unlearning some deeply held concepts and understandings and we must be aware of the risks. As Cousin (2006) warns, learning is both affective and cognitive. This difficult knowledge leads to intersecting philosophical, pedagogical and methodological dilemmas for tutors. Introducing a range of information in a reasoned, linear way does not on its own present the challenges and confrontations that are necessary to shake up and unsettle deeply-rooted attitudes and beliefs, particularly for those students struggling to unlearn.

Pitt & Britzman (2003), taking a psychoanalytic approach to the issues around difficult knowledge, suggest that we all need to learn from social breakdowns in ways that might open us up to the present ethical obligation, which links with Spivak's ideas. For example, a student may come on to the module with a sense of herself, her identity, as being generous, considerate, with a strong social conscience, someone who gives regularly to charities in Majority World countries. During the module, she is introduced to ideas that are really troublesome and tricky for her, as she realises that giving to charity may be making the situation worse in some communities, due to unintended consequences. This can be traumatic for the student and lead to an uncomfortable identity shift as she acknowledges her own complicity in a situation that prior to the module she was able to distance herself from through her charitable donations. The 'soft' approach to development education would have reinforced her sense of self-righteousness, privilege and uncritical action, whereas by us taking a critical approach, she may now feel 'guilt, internal conflict and paralysis, critical disengagement, a feeling of helplessness' (Andreotti, 2006b, p. 48). Students did communicate through the module evaluation that they now had uncomfortable thoughts about practices such as charitable giving that they had previously accepted as always being unequivocally beneficial to recipient communities.

It is therefore essential that as part of the habitus of the community of practice we establish a clear learning contract so that we provide a safe and secure environment and ethos, clarifying what we can do if and when we feel upset, angry, frustrated. As tutors there needs to be more recognition that discussing difficult and emotive issues, such as child rape, infant mortality, female genital mutilation, for example, will lead to disequilibrium, or even trauma (Pitt & Britzman, 2003). The students will need support from within the learning community to take on board the implications for their developing professional

identity. There is a tendency to avoid these 'tricky' topics particularly in Early Childhood Studies, where our approaches tend to be warm and maternal. I have a sense that maybe that was why there was some glibness in the students' presentations and essays. The subject matter was very tricky and the students were coping with it by considering it at a surface level, e.g. by putting statistics and evidence forward from aid agencies, because to go any deeper would be too challenging emotionally. To begin to consider their own complicity in perpetuating the situation would involve a significant adjustment to their world view, but it may be that this can be done with appropriate support.

6.2 Learning to listen

Learning to listen to other voices is when we become receptive to new understandings, having become aware of the limitations of our own perspectives and accept these other perspectives as being as legitimate, valid and powerful as our own. However, taking on board new perspectives can be unsettling and uncomfortable and we need to support the students in understanding that this is to be expected. It is interesting to note how some of the students' voices became more influential than others during discussions, with others on the periphery. The introduction of a reflective learning journal would help to record some of the shifts in the students' thinking, giving voice to the uncertainties. It also seems imperative for us to consider how we can introduce a wider range of voices into the module in a way that the students will be able to 'hear' them, possibly through case studies derived from real-life experiences, which can be analysed in terms of their social, cultural, historical and geographical context. We also acknowledge the need to provide a range of case studies, including positive stories from the Majority World in order to avoid further perpetuating the stereotype of the Majority World experience as wholly negative.

6.3 Learning to learn

To help this process, the module would benefit from having at least two clear conceptual models as toolkits that students could use to analyse the various topics under consideration. One very good example would be Bourdieu's (1986) notions around different types of capital and how the growth of economic capital may decrease the social/cultural capital, and these could be applied to a range of contexts to illuminate different perspectives. Using a poststructuralist approach, the key ideas about power, regimes of truth and discourses put forward by Foucault (MacNaughton, 2005; Albon, 2011) although criticised by Spivak (Andreotti, 2006), would help to clarify the complexities of colonialism and the dominance of the western worldview, for example in the work of aid agencies and in development education.

It may also be useful to use the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari (Olsson, 2009) to analyse the concept of globalisation, illustrating the way that ideas and practices emerge in different

parts of the world, yet have seemingly the same roots. The metaphor of the rhizome is used by Deleuze and Guattari to explain this and is used effectively by Douglas-Jones and Sariola (2009) to illustrate how ideas travel globally. By making such connections, using a theoretical model, students would be supported in engaging in new concepts to rearrange their cultural baggage.

6.4 Learning to reach out

Given the relatively short timescale of the module, it may be ambitious to expect all the students to reach this stage, but we can provide opportunities for the students to apply their new understandings to their own contexts by providing explicit examples, e.g. case studies and scenarios. Perhaps of more benefit still, as Gale (2010) suggests, is for the tutors to use a Deleuzian framework to consider the students' learning in the way that Olsson (2009) advocates for young children. We need to allow for experimentation and movement in their learning, by enabling them to take their own lines of flight and enquiry into topics that particularly interest them, rather than always providing predetermined activities and tasks. The students would work collaboratively with others to make sense of new ideas, and the outcomes would be unpredictable, but might lead to a renegotiation of understanding of dominant forms of knowledge, involving being in that uncomfortable space where identities, power and ideas are negotiated. The danger is that they may not take on such difficult or risky topics, but stay with what is familiar, so the tutors will need to be aware of this and provide appropriate challenge and encourage experimentation with new ideas, leading to a reconstruction of their world view, based on an 'ethical relation to the other' (Andreotti, 2007).

The professional identity of an Early Years practitioner involves being open to learning from others, for example, from the children themselves, from the parents and from a range of other professionals. It also involves being prepared to take risks and take on conflicts in order to fight for social justice in their work, being advocates for the rights of the children. It is therefore part of our role as teacher educators to support the development of this professional identity, aware that the learning for each individual will be different as identities, power and ideas are negotiated.

7. Conclusion

Undertaking this detailed analysis of our first delivery of the Childhood and Wellbeing in the Developing World module has proved to be a fascinating and worthwhile experience. It has highlighted for me the usefulness of applying theoretical frameworks, such as the one advocated by De Souza and Andreotti (2008b), to analyse one's practice. Engaging in this

has supported and explained the discomforts that previously I had largely felt rather than analysed.

It has certainly given me some clear indicators as to ways of delivering the module in the next academic year. It has also made me more fully aware of the problematics of this area of education, and how fast the thinking is developing around such contested terms as globalisation and social justice. Given this, it is likely that the second delivery of the module will need to be subjected to a similar process of analysis, evaluation and modification. It has also raised awareness of the need to consider more fundamentally the purpose, preparation, content and ethics of the study trips to The Gambia, which would benefit from a similar analysis.

I am now more fully aware of how significant it is for us all to be in position to learn to reach out, to learn from each other, to reflect and explore new ways of being and thinking, whether we are 3, 23 or 53, even when this is challenging and painful. If as I believe we have a responsibility as teacher educators to develop Early Years practitioners who can engage in 'risky' teaching (Blaise & Yarrow, 2005) to promote social justice, as advocated by MacNaughton (2005), then we must be prepared to engage ourselves in 'risky' teaching, and to be innovative and challenging in our own practice.

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Ethical issues

This assignment has been shared with Rebecca, and she has given her permission for me to share it with the tutors on the EdD module.

If it were to be submitted for publication, then ethical approval would need to be sought again from Rebecca and also from the students on the Childhood and Wellbeing in the Developing World module.

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Appendix 6.4: Methodological issues and dilemmas in identifying a research question within the field of Early Years Education in the Majority World

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Abstract

This paper considers some methodological complexities that may arise when undertaking educational research in a Majority World context. If operating within a social constructionist epistemology and an Advocacy/Participatory methodology, involving the local community in Participatory Action Research, there are serious constraints upon the external researcher in terms of identifying in advance an appropriate research question and constructing a research design without first building relationships with the participants and negotiating with them the purpose and pattern of the research project.

Key words: Early Childhood Education (ECE); Majority World; intercultural education; methodology; Participatory Action Research; social constructionism; critical literacy

Introduction

This paper critically analyses the key issues and challenges that I have faced in responding to the requirement, at this point of my doctoral studies, to identify the key stages in the research design for my thesis, starting from an appropriate research question in order to arrive at my methodological approaches. Consulting a range of key texts on educational research (e.g. Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Cresswell, 2009; Mac Naughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2010) gives a clear message that such a process is rooted in the paradigm that frames my research, - chosen on the basis of my beliefs about knowledge and my relationship with it, as well as the practices based upon those beliefs (Hughes, 2010). For researchers with a clear, coherent and stable set of beliefs about the nature of knowledge, this leads smoothly to a research design.

For me, however, this approach has proved extremely problematic because I have been forced to reconsider my ontological, epistemological, axiological and experiential perspectives, which have all been fundamentally shaken up during recent years, and to think about some complex issues in researching my area of interest – Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the Majority World.

So, my starting point has been a critical consideration of my own professional learning journey, and an analysis of how my fascination with this particular research area has its roots in my personal and professional life stories, with their complex temporal, spatial, gendered and cultural dimensions. In turn this has made possible the choice of a paradigm, clarified my chosen methodological stance and shown up issues that may well confront me when designing the research project itself, including whether I should even be considering undertaking it!

Professional journey

Certain parts of my learning journey have significantly shifted my conception of the nature of knowledge and of my professional expertise. For the first fifteen years of my career as an Early Years teacher/adviser my practice was underpinned by the powerful discourses that early intervention made a difference to children's learning and attainment, as 'proved' and 'measured' by EPPE (Sylva et al., 2010; Sylva et al., 2003), amongst others. This seemed supported by scientific evidence from developmental psychology, e.g. Trevarthen and Aitken (2001) and Bronfenbrenner (1979), and neuroscience (Penn, 2008), as well as by Piagetian epistemology (Cunningham, 2006). This gave me confidence that there was a 'right' way to teach young children, as increasingly embodied in English curriculum frameworks (e.g. DfES, 2000; DfES, 2008), and that I was an expert within the community of practice around Early Childhood Education (ECE).

If I had retained that sense of myself and that positivistic, scientific perspective (Penn, 2008), I would have found it easy to identify a research question at this stage of my doctoral studies. For example I might have set myself to observe the practice in private kindergartens in Nekemte, Ethiopia, making judgements about the quality of what the

practitioners were doing and the issues they faced. I would be an expert looking in on them as subjects of my research, drawing on my expertise to put forward recommendations for their future development. It would be easy to follow a standard pattern of research design as advocated by Crotty (1998), Plowright (2011) and others, by first considering the methods appropriate to the question and then identifying their methodological and epistemological underpinnings.

However, I have become increasingly aware of the dangers and limitations of this, and a sense of my 'expert' role has been shifted by a number of experiences. One was my year's secondment from my advisory job to work in development education in an Ethiopian teacher training college. At the time, I experienced huge discomforts as my tacit assumptions of professional superiority were challenged, not only by my Ethiopian colleagues who obviously had a better understanding of the social, cultural and historical context of education in Ethiopia than I did, but also by my own questioning of my role in delivering a Western model of higher education to them. Why was it presumed that a programme devised by UK academics, with minimal research into Ethiopian conditions, would be appropriate? What were the dynamics of power and politics that led to the programme being imposed upon the Ethiopian teacher training colleges and universities by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education? Why was it thought appropriate for the programme to be delivered by inexperienced Europeans, rather than experienced Ethiopians? Not only did this raise doubts about the validity of such 'colonial' impositions of superior expertise, which interestingly the participants themselves are now articulating (Bekele, 2008), but more recently, about the dangers of a researcher adopting a similar stance and in effect imposing a research design upon indigenous subjects, treating them as passive subjects.

Another major influence was my exposure to postmodernist thinking around ECE, such as the work of MacNaughton (2005), Penn (2005), Blaise (2005) and Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2007) which has challenged many of my taken-for-granted ideas about what constitutes 'appropriate' provision and about the role of the adult in ECE. It also destroyed my confidence in the notion of 'truth' identified by positivistic scientific research and made me aware that there are many views of the 'truth' (Penn, 2008). Such theorists argued that the dominant ECE discourses arose from a specifically

Western standpoint, based on positivistic research on mainly white, male children in Europe and America by mainly white, male researchers. Taking a Foucauldian approach and deconstructing these regimes of truth (MacNaughton, 2005) led me to a realisation that one has to consider the social, cultural, political and historical contexts of the communities in which ECE settings are based in order to determine what may be appropriate for the children and their families. So, as someone who had lived all my life in Devon I could no longer see myself as 'the expert' and had to recognise the need not only to listen to these different 'truths' but acknowledge them as being valid as my own.

Continuing this journey of learning, my engagement on the EdD programme further challenged my ideas. My existing cognitive model of teacher education, whereby I gave the students a body of knowledge which they then applied in practice (Kelly, 2006) seemed more and more inadequate. I came to see learning as constructed by individuals within a community of practice, being persuaded by Lave and Wenger (1991) that knowledge is fluid, intersubjective and dialogical and that learning is a trajectory of participation (Penn, 2008). Thus I became much more aware of the significance of what the learners bring to the learning situation and of the way the intersectionalities between one's race, gender, age shape one's engagement. Lave (1991) argues that the only way to understand the dynamics of such a community of practice is to deconstruct what all the participants do and how they do it. This is significantly different from a positivistic, cognitive approach.

This shift impacted upon me in two areas of my work. Firstly, it altered my understanding of my teaching role from seeing myself as the expert transmitting knowledge to realising that when I actively engaged with the learners and tuned in to their current discourses we were co-constructing new understandings. Secondly, it shaped my thinking about approaches to research. I needed to involve myself in the community of practice in order to understand the dynamics and develop new thinking, rather than being an outsider/observer/expert who would define the nature and value of such a process.

A third powerful influence in changing my approaches was my growing sense of the importance of social justice within ECE, whether in the UK or in the Majority World, as

strongly argued for example by Dahlberg & Moss (2005) and MacNaughton (2005), and my recognition that this necessarily involved working for change, both in my own practice and in my dealings with colleagues and student teachers. This linked with my realisation that in these terms there were huge limitations to the postmodern, social constructivist approach. Just 'hearing' the different truths is frequently not enough to change attitudes and actions. As Andreotti and De Souza (2008) argue, there often needs to be some unlearning first to identify existing assumptions, perceptions and where they stem from before being able to take on board ideas from another perspective. For example, as Penn (2008) and Jowallah (2011) contend, in such areas as gender and race, it is important to consider critically what is shaping the construction of these truths and to intervene where appropriate in order to confront and promote change.

I realised as I evaluated work that I had done with students and teachers both on campus and during study trips to The Gambia that simply providing them with knowledge about the key issues about development or even exposing them to intercultural experiences does not automatically lead to new understandings (Gorski, 2008) – indeed it may even reinforce existing stereotypes and prejudices (Martin, 2008). Encountering the postcolonial ideas of Andreotti (2006), when linked to Friere's notions of critical literacy (Jowallah, 2011), gave me an effective theoretical framework to analyse the underlying discourses of colonialism that frames a lot of the Minority World engagement with the Majority World.

Similarly, I now think that research in this area which simply seeks to interpret and explain for the benefit of the researcher and an academic audience is inadequate. The research itself needs to have the potential to encourage and bring about change. However, unless I engage with the research participants I am unlikely to arrive at a question which will fulfil this aim.

All these strands were brought into focus recently when I was stood in a Zero Grade classroom in Nekemte, having been asked, without notice, to lead a workshop with a group of Ethiopian teachers. I was evidently being positioned as an expert by them, because of my experience and perceived 'superiority' as a Minority World Early Years lecturer. Yet I was positioning myself as a novice in ECE in Ethiopia, because of my

new postcolonial perspective. How could I actively engage within their community of practice, hear their ideas and work together on constructing new understandings, when they were expecting me to tell them what to do and how to do it? How could I persuade them that I was not an expert and that the Western ECE model of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (Penn, 2005) was not necessarily the 'right' way to proceed in their own social, political and educational context? What then might constitute an appropriate programme of professional development?

At that moment I recognised that there was a clear need for research into Zero Grade education in Ethiopia prior to undertaking any professional development programme with the teachers and that this research area was of enormous interest to me. However, the idea of unilaterally defining a research question seemed totally inappropriate. I needed first to clarify my epistemology and my theoretical perspective before deciding upon my methodological stance. This in turn would lead to identifying issues which might affect the range of possible research methods, and so the practicability of any particular research question.

Epistemology

It will be clear that I have come to reject a positivistic epistemology which considers there is one view of the truth, based on scientifically established evidence (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Penn, 2008) gained through experimentation and deduction (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). This is because I now consider there are many views of the truth. Constructivists argue that each of us is actively making sense of the world and we all perceive of it differently, as individuals, but I prefer the social constructionist view, drawing on the ideas of Rogoff (2003), Lave and Wenger (1991) and others, that most knowledge does not reside in the individual but is socially constructed as we make sense of our interactions with people, places and things. Thus, though there are many ways of knowing and each way of knowing is potentially equally valid, social constructionism will frequently result in substantial common ground, resulting in what Searle (1995) describes as epistemologically objective statements

Social constructionism does not deny that there is a real world independent of human thought, what Searle (1995) calls 'brute facts', but, as he argues, there are 'social facts'

overlaying these which form the cultural framework of shared meanings, and this will be the focus of my research. I aim to investigate how people have constructed their knowledge and understandings of ECE, considering their views, attitudes and perceptions, and how this is articulated and sustained in social situations and actions.

This social constructionist epistemology is also in opposition to a positivist one in that it challenges the view that knowledge can be based on objective observations of the world. As Burr argues (2003), it recognises that the ways we understand the world are historically and culturally relative and are products of that history and culture, shaped by the political and economic contexts of the time. The knowledge I am investigating is clearly located in an Ethiopian context within the communities of practice in the schools in Nekemte, so it cannot be analysed objectively nor 'externally' just from my point of view. As a researcher, I will need to be involved with the participants in the co-construction of meaning and we will need to use key theoretical lenses to help us make sense and create new understandings. In this way the knowledge created will be what Habermas termed 'emancipatory' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) as it is the community who will decide what counts as acceptable ways of knowing (Mertens, 2007).

Theoretical Perspectives

Rejection of the modernist, positivist paradigm leads me to consider a postmodern stance, where knowledge is considered as partial, context-dependent (Taylor, 2010) and shaped by who is speaking. Such a stance does not privilege one speaker over another (Penn, 2008) and so gives equal value to my expertise and that of the Ethiopian participants. Using this as a theoretical lens will enable me to pay attention to the voices of the teachers to fully appreciate their point of view. There will be clear recognition that any ideas and concepts about ECE are contingent, historically-specific cultural constructions (Lichtman, 2010) and that my Eurocentric approach is no more valid than any other.

As advocated by MacNaughton (2005) and Dahlberg and Moss (2005), a Foucauldian lens will be used to identify and analyse the regimes of truth that underpin the

discourses of the teachers, in order to consider why some are more powerful than others. The relationship between knowledge, truth and power within these discourses will be explored. Finding appropriate ways of revealing the stories of the teachers, who, my experience suggests, may previously have been marginalised, will be a crucial part of the research.

Another key theoretical perspective that will inform the study is postcolonialism, in order to consider how Eurocentric ideas are manifested in the Ethiopian context, to avoid the marginalisation of the Ethiopian perspective and so to privilege the indigenous knowledge and values (Martin, 2010). As an element of this, positioning theory will be used in order to investigate the way that all the participants, including myself, are positioned and position themselves with regard to the knowledge, knowing and meaning-making generated (Burr, 2003). This will reveal the possibilities afforded to the participants by taking particular positions with regard to ECE, but also the limitations, which Davies and Harré (1990) suggest are operating at the same time. The participants are producers of the discourse, but are also manipulated by it, so a consideration of their ways of speaking about ECE will reveal what they consider to be right and appropriate to do professionally.

The over-riding paradigm is therefore critical theory which Cohen et al (2011) state:

‘seeks to uncover the interests at work in particular situations and to interrogate the legitimacy of those interests, identify the extent to which they are legitimate in their service of equality and democracy.’ (p.31)

For me there is a clear moral and ethical dimension to educational research. When working with young children, I would argue that just observing and making sense of their behaviour is not enough. Some of these patterns need to be challenged, e.g. gender-stereotypical play and racist attitudes. It is the responsibility of the practitioner not simply to identify sexist and racist patterns, however deeply they may be rooted in familial and cultural values, but as Blaise (2005) and Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke (2000) advocate, to offer children alternative ways of going on. As a teacher educator, I also see a crucial aspect of my role as ensuring that students critique taken-for-granted practices and also engage in discussions to identify other approaches, for example

during study trips to The Gambia as part of the decolonizing of intercultural education (Gorski, 2008).

The same applies to this research project. The intent is not just to find out about the teachers' understandings about Zero Grade education but to use that knowledge to question, challenge and transform the existing provision, and shape the new.

Methodology

The clarification of these theoretical debates leads me to opt for what Cresswell (2009) calls an advocacy and participatory world view, which advocates a research agenda that aims for improvement through collaboration. This indicates that a Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology will be the most appropriate for this project because as Mertens (2007) argues, it is a necessary element of a transformative paradigm. As Cohen et al (2011) point out, PAR involves research with people, rather than on them, and the emphasis is on research for practical change. The participants are active and powerful in the process and indigenous knowledge is respected (Martin, 2010). Explicit in the agenda of PAR is the removal of the power and superiority from myself as the researcher and giving it to the participants within the community of practice being researched, with the aim of enabling them to generate knowledge that will be of benefit to them. This clearly links with aspects of my own journey as 'expert'.

However, Beazley & Ennew (2006) further argue for PAR to be conducted within a rights-based agenda in order to avoid some of the issues so often encountered in development research, when being involved in a participatory project just raises participants' expectations but does not bring about any change. So PAR aligns clearly with the aims of my research and its transformative vision (Taylor, 2010). It also fits in that, as MacNaughton (2005) argues, the approach is suitable for disrupting oppressive structures, like powerful regimes of truth, which is relevant when wishing to work towards social justice.

The issues and questions about Zero Grade education in the schools in Nekemte have originated from within that community, and I am interested in working with the teachers to identify ways of making changes to the current provision to benefit the children and their families, rather than imposing my interpretation and my vision of what is appropriate in ECE. It is also hoped that the knowledge generated may be useful to the teachers themselves, as well as teacher educators within the local teacher training college and the VSOs working in the community. However, within this research paradigm it must be acknowledged that such generaliseability is very limited (Butler-Kisber, 2010) and so the value of the research will not be to provide 'answers' but to encourage similar research and discussion of Zero Grade education elsewhere.

Implications: Issues arising from this methodological stance

My unwillingness to identify a precise research question at this point has partly been because undertaking research of this kind at a distance and in a 'foreign' context will be subject to a range of practical and resource constraints that will inevitably shape the final question. Partly it is because my chosen methodological stance throws up several powerful issues which, as Grieshaber (2010) argues, need to be clarified and resolved if the research design is to be guided by the principles of equity.

Power relationships

Where power lies is a critical element in the design and implementation of any research project (Brydon, 2006), and it is vital for the researcher to consider where and how it operates in order not only to understand how it may affect the research, but, as MacNaughton and Davis (2001) contend, to modify any negative effects. Such issues are frequently compounded in development research when there are racial differences within the project team and especially when 'white' Minority World researchers are studying 'black' Majority World subjects. Indeed, Grieshaber (2010) goes so far as to argue that research is a cultural invention of the white Western academic world, with approaches based on Eurocentric scientific rationality and she therefore suggests that this frequently leads to research being done on black people, seeing them as objects. This matches Martin's (2010) powerful account of the nature of Aboriginal research since the 18th Century, in which she suggest that research has been a tool of

colonialism. Just being aware of how power is racialized and resides with the white researcher is not enough to avoid this problem (MacNaughton, 2005). I need to take an active postcolonial stance to avoid perpetuating the power differentials and to ensure that the perspectives of the teachers in Nekemte are foregrounded. But there is an even more fundamental step to be taken. As Bishop (2005) states:

When indigenous cultural ways of knowing and aspirations.....are central to the creation of the research context, then the situation goes beyond empowerment to one in which sense making, decision making and theorizing take place in situations that are 'normal' to the research participants rather than constructed by the researcher'. (cited in Martin, 2010, p.95)

From the outset, I have to reconsider my own role as a researcher. Within the Eurocentric tradition of research, I would determine the question, the methods the sample, etc. However, in undertaking participatory research within a Minority World context, I will first have to identify and negotiate power relationships, through using the more collaborative approaches identified in critical, post-structural and social identity theories.

But this goes to the heart of my key dilemma. Plowright (2011) argues that the research design should start with the research question. However, if I am genuinely going to engage in a participatory approach, then at this stage of the process I cannot specify a clear research question. I have an area of interest, which I have outlined, which is clearly rooted in my ontology and epistemology, but a truly participatory approach must involve me in sharing these views with the research participants and consulting with them about the questions, design, ethics, analysis and reporting, as advocated by Atkinson-Lopez (2010) and based on human rights principles (Beazley & Ennew, 2006). Apart from any other difficulties, this has very considerable practical and resource implications.

I define myself as 'researcher-as-learner', coming from a position of relative ignorance rather than expertise, as suggested by Gallacher and Gallacher (2008), since I am an outsider to the Ethiopian schools. However, as postcolonial theory suggests, the legacy of colonialism, together with the cultural expectations generated by the history

of 'aid to the developing world' may encourage Ethiopian colleagues to position me as an 'expert'. I have encountered this tendency both in The Gambia and in Ethiopia. For example, several of the students that I met in the new Wollega University in Nekemte, who clearly considered their education system lacking in many ways, wanted my suggestions as to how education in Ethiopia could be improved. Even if I take such care, I may find it hard to avoid being pushed into a position of power and authority within the research project. I need to be aware of this and be proactive in counteracting it. The research will centre on the relationships between myself and the participants. As Grieshaber (2010) warns I also have to be conscious throughout that I am not homogenising the participants, even using the phrase 'Ethiopian teachers' does this. I need to take into account the diversity of the participants throughout.

Developmentally appropriate practice' and the creation of deficit models

The notion of 'developmentally appropriate practice' has underpinned much of the American and UK approach to ECE (Pence & Nsamenang, 2008). As Penn (2011) argues, it is based mainly upon white, middle class norms and underpinned by positivist research within developmental psychology and economics. It has therefore promoted the belief that some educational, social and cultural practices (around child-rearing, for example) are superior and so preferable to others (MacNaughton, 2005). This approach has been used to define social problems, targeting the individual child and family, seeing them as deficient against the 'norm' and so creating deficit models of social behaviour, parenting etc. Both my professional journey and my chosen methodology alert me to the enormous dangers of applying this Eurocentric approach as the basis for researching Zero Grade provision in Nekemte, which as Pence & Nsamenang (2008) contend, may result in valid and appropriate educational, social and cultural patterns being seen locally as 'deficit'. This may well apply to the teachers' educational practice as well as to local child-rearing patterns. It is essential that I consistently position the participants as experts and put in place strategies that will enable them to also see themselves as experts, with legitimate truths to contribute, based on their lived experiences within their social, cultural and historical context. As such this research will require from me a high level of self-reflexivity at every stage.

Being self reflective at every stage of this process is important or the bias will be inherent from the outset. Even in identifying the research area, I found that I was challenged in many ways. Initially my phrasing homogenised the Zero Grade teachers and cast them in a deficit model. I have to ensure that I do not 'other' the research participants as has often happened to indigenous knowledge (MacNaughton, 2005).

As part of the research I have to unpick and challenge the essentialist understandings around key concepts within Early Education, for example, 'education', 'care', 'play', 'schooling', and 'quality', in order to appreciate the heterogeneity of the participants, to be sensitive to their diversity (Pence & Nsamenang, 2008) and to include these differences and contradictions, which may be messy.

Approaches to inquiry: quantitative, qualitative or a mixed methodology?

A rejection of a positivist research paradigm does not necessarily lead to a rejection of the quantitative methods usually associated with this paradigm. Indeed, Plowright (2011) would argue that there should be no distinction between them in these terms, and one should be willing to adopt a mixed methods approach in research design, employing whatever methods suit what kind of knowledge one is trying to find out. He also notes that quantitative data can be analysed narratively and quantitative numerically, so there is a false dichotomy between these methodologies.

However, in seeking the kind of knowledge that I am in this research project, the revealing of 'social facts' (Searle, 1995), I consider qualitative approaches will yield richer and more relevant data, so these will be the main strategies employed. As Hughes argues 'a qualitative researcher doesn't seek to learn more about the topic itself, but rather about how people understand and make sense of the topic' (2010, p.59) and as such is an inductive rather than a deductive approach.

The project will be a case study in that it will explore in depth (Cresswell, 2009) the introduction of Zero Grade education in one community in Ethiopia over a period of time. It will use narrative inquiry to combine the views of the participants with mine in a collaborative way, following the models set out to such good effect by Clandinin over

many years (e.g. Clandinin, 2008; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin et al., 2009) and recently by Trahar (2011). It fits with the PAR approach in that

‘Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst of telling, reliving and retelling the stories of experiences that make up people’s lives, both individual and social.’ (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.20)

The teachers’ stories and narratives that emerge during focus groups, conversations and discussions will be considered to find out their ideas, motivations, feelings, perceptions and attitudes. This however will be within a participatory approach, and together we will use discourse analysis and critical analysis to consider the context that have shaped those stories, with especial consideration given to power and structures.

Validity/authenticity/trustworthiness

If I want the theories and the ideas generated by this research study to inform and change practice then I need to articulate the methodological and philosophical principles that it is based upon, in order to authenticate it (McGregor & Murnane, 2010) and to persuade the audience of the rigor of the study (Butler-Kisber, 2010). I need to be transparent throughout the research study, demonstrating how the participants have had ownership as the authenticity of the project depends upon their voices articulating the local knowledge that I am seeking (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Edwards, 2010). I will be seeking reciprocal reflexivity throughout as advocated by Dowling (2008) as part of my advocacy/participatory methodology as well as using reflective memos to dialogue with myself to make any tacit assumptions that I may have clear to the participants. As with Atkinson-Lopez (2010) the validity of the work will also depend upon how well it informs the reconceptualisation of Zero Grade education in the community.

Two clear issues arise as a result of this approach. The first is that in order to capture the range of participants’ voices that will be needed to authenticate the study I will have to consider using an interpreter, as the discussions will need to be in Oromifa, rather than in English. This clearly adds a layer of interpretation and possible distortion

that will need to be recognised. The second issue is that I will need to be clear about the political and professional context that the teachers are operating in and that may constrain their ability and willingness to be open when contributing to discussions.

Methods

Using an advocacy/participatory methodology (Cresswell, 2009) means that the methods to be used during the project have to be negotiated by the participants as part of the collaborative approach, hence once again my difficulty in establishing a precise research question. But they are likely to include focus groups, interviews, personal narratives and reflections in order to provide the opportunities for the participants to give voice to their understandings, ambitions and intentions of Zero Grade education, and also to reveal the underlying discourses that are shaping those meanings.

An important implication of this is that a further preparatory visit to Nekemte will be crucial in order to establish an agreed research question, which will then need to be analysed and checked along the pattern proposed for this assignment.

Conclusion

Given all of these issues and potential problems, I have seriously contemplated whether I, as a white, Western academic, should even be considering this area of research. As Unwin (2006) argues, in light of postcolonial critiques of development the idea of undertaking research in another place and on other people is rightly and increasingly being questioned. There may even be doubts whether the identified range of methodological issues can be resolved. However, Seale (1990, p. 475) suggests that 'intense methodological awareness, if engaged too seriously, can create anxieties that hinder practice.' (cited in Hammersley, 2008, p.182). Certainly, it is a question that I need to answer before continuing.

My justification at this stage of the research design is that I hope to be able to give voice to multiple perspectives within the community in Nekemte that may not otherwise be heard as Zero Grade education is introduced there and across Ethiopia. I also hope to be a conduit between the teachers in the schools in Nekemte and those in the Global Link schools in Exeter. I do have an unusual combination of experiences in

ECE, teacher education, development education and academic research that I can usefully bring to the project. I at least have had some experience of being in places where I was forced to confront my whiteness through being the visible Other (Mazzei, 2008) and have some understanding of the power I represent in terms of economic, social and cultural capital (McGillivray, 2009). My work is grounded in promoting positive change and equity, and my approaches can reasonably be expected to lead the participants to envisioning alternatives, and to realising that the currently dominant discourses are a choice, not a reality. I am hopeful that the outcomes of the project will inform future professional development for the teachers in Nekemte and Exeter, for the student teachers in the University of Plymouth, and for tutors planning workshops in Majority World contexts. But it is important that if my work is going to make a difference in practice, then it is not just published in academic journals. As Unwin points out: 'it is increasingly being accepted that the problems faced by developing countries have more to do with the policies and practices of people living in the richer countries of the world than they have to do with conditions prevailing in the developing world themselves (sic)' (2006, p.105) and so I see it as vital that students and teachers, wherever they may live and work, develop these understandings.

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Appendix 7: Recommendations for the Faculty Teaching & Learning Committee

Enhancing the potential of international study visits for delivering the University's Internationalisation Strategy

Paper to be tabled at the Teaching and Learning Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities

**Prepared by Valerie Huggins, Associate Head: Partnerships, Plymouth Institute of Education
August 2014**

It is an important part of the University's 2020 strategy (Plymouth University, 2013a) to develop all of our students as global citizens, and to ensure they are prepared to meet the demands of working in diverse cultural environments. In the Plymouth Institute of Education we are also tasked with ensuring that our student teachers are prepared to meet the diverse needs of the children they will encounter in their teaching career and to be able to promote these children's intercultural capabilities. One of the ways specifically referred to in which we expose student to such cultural diversity is through international study visits and placements, and I recently conducted a doctoral study into visits organised by the Plymouth Institute of Education and their role in promoting the intercultural capabilities of the participating students. I found that the visits provided enjoyable learning opportunities for the small number of students who were able to access them, but they were not conceived, organised or planned in ways that would consciously promote the participants' intercultural capabilities, nor did they offer the widening access that is a central part of the University's 2020 Strategy (Plymouth University, 2013a).

I have therefore put together this paper to set out the recommendations I have come to. I will discuss in turn:

1. Deciding upon the nature of international study visits
2. Organisation and pedagogy of international study visits
3. Tutor training
4. The positive management of disequilibrium

5. Making a clear contract with students volunteering for international study visits
6. Integrating international study visits into Faculty programmes of teaching and learning
7. Widening the impact of international experiences
8. Establishing the role of the Institute of Education in promoting Internationalisation
9. Longer-term changes within the University

1) **Deciding upon the nature of international study visits**

There needs to be a fundamental decision within the Plymouth Institute of Education and the wider Faculty of Arts and Humanities as to whether international study visits should be seen simply as optional 'enrichment activities', available as part of University life for those able and willing to undertake them, or whether they should be seen as making a significant planned contribution to programmes of study and the implementation of the University's policies on Internationalisation and Teaching & Learning. If the former, then the current pattern, which successfully offers enrichment opportunities to a small but significant proportion of Education students, is arguably not in need of any substantial modification. However, if the latter, then it is hard to resist the argument that the pattern should undergo changes to increase their effectiveness in enhancing the learning of the participants.

2) **Organisation and pedagogy of international study visits**

Research agrees substantially that the effective promotion of intercultural capabilities requires careful organisation and support before, during and after any study visit (Walters et al 2009; Perry & Southwell 2011; Martin & Griffiths, 2013); At present, this appears to be confined to practicalities of travel arrangements, Health & Safety issues and information about money, accommodation and so on. Any problematic issues or concerns seem to be largely raised by the students themselves, and if not, they are not discussed. It is recommended that a series of pre-trip, in-trip and post-trip sessions need to be arranged and interventions carefully planned, based upon a pedagogy

drawn from current research in this area, such as the work of Mezirow (1990) on critical reflection and McMullen and Penn (2011) on short-term study abroad. In addition to this, I consider that we need to make sure that the reflective process is targeted by using critical incidents as starting points (Bruster & Peterson, 2012) using models of learning advocated by Andreotti (Andreotti & Warwick, 2006). This process needs to start from the students' own interests and current understandings, and, with support of the staff, they need to identify their own learning goals for the international study visit (Berg, 2009) but the achievement of such goals needs to be set, supported and evaluated within the context of developing their intercultural capabilities. I recommend that, wherever possible, we facilitate contact between the students and their hosts prior to the trip, possibly offering some basic language learning, and sensitise students to the inevitable culture shock (McMullen & Penn, 2011). In all ways we need to prepare and support students better to learn from their experiences.

3) **Tutor training**

Such a pedagogy and organisation requires that the study visit leaders have at least some degree of appropriate understanding and expertise in developing intercultural capabilities and are not merely selected on the grounds of their interest and willingness to be involved, which tends to happen in Plymouth, as in other HE institutions (Warwick & Moogan, 2013). As Gopal (2011) makes clear, if the University and Faculty are serious about the contributions of international study visits and placements, they need to provide more precise and more active support for developing tutors' awareness and understanding of intercultural capabilities, which the findings of the study suggest are not currently prominent in their consideration of the purposes and benefits of international study visits.

It is vital too that the training focuses upon the attitude change needed for tutors to engage positively in this way of teaching. This is likely to involve some deconstruction and reconstruction of their own attitudes, values and beliefs, but this process is essential if they are to be prepared to effectively teach cross-culturally and have a coherent strategy (Sawir, 2011). This is not only of importance for the tutor's organisation and leadership of study visits and placements but is also significant in preparing them better to teach the increasing number of overseas students that the

University is actively recruiting, a preparation which Gopal (2011)'s study and Trahar (2011) experience demonstrates is vital.

4) **The positive management of disequilibrium**

A related element in such training may well be work on the deliberate management of students' disequilibrium to promote learning. Evidence from research findings, including this study, make clear that an important feature of international study visits and placements in preparing students to respond positively to cultural difference and diversity is that they may provide experiences which challenge and shake up existing ideas, preconceptions and beliefs (Brock & Wallace, 2006). In her significant contribution to this field, Andreotti (Andreotti & Warwick, 2006; de Souza & Andreotti, 2007; Andreotti, 2010; Andreotti, 2011) sees this as an essential element in her first stage of developing intercultural capabilities – Learning to Unlearn - and one which can be used very productively by tutors. However, the consequent disequilibrium is often disturbing and discomfiting. If this is not to result in the rejection of the new idea, and even cause the reinforcement of existing stereotypes and prejudices, a danger noted by Martin and Griffiths (2011) and Jackson (2010) amongst others, such disequilibrium needs to be contained and supported in order to permit the students to come to terms with it and learn from it. The work of Meyer and Land (2005) and Britzman (2003) is helpful here, as well as the ideas of Leibowitz et al. (2010) and Boler and Zembylas (2003) on a pedagogy of discomfort, Lanas and Kiilakoski (2013) on transformative learning and of course Andreotti's stages of learning. Once again, understanding of such situations and training in strategies to manage them may well also help tutors to respond appropriately to the international students on our courses who are frequently experiencing similar discomfort in adapting to aspects of British culture and university experience.

5) **Making a clear contract with students volunteering for international study visits**

If students on an international study visits are to benefit substantially, full participation in the planned programme by all students should be made a requirement. Currently, this can be tricky to demand as the students volunteer to go, are paying for the visit themselves and are not sufficiently alerted in advance to the implications of it being an

important learning experience, or to the possible discomfits that may arise. Such matters as full engagement in pre-trip meetings and preparatory activities, participation in all organised activities and the undertaking of in-trip and post-trip critical reflection and evaluation should be defined as expectations, not options. At present the 'contract' is unclear, allowing a variety of forms of opting out and reducing the authority of tutor interventions and interactions, leading to a diminution of the learning possibilities. The potential for the development of their intercultural capabilities needs to be made explicit to the students and clear links made to the benefits for their professional practice in teaching in diverse classrooms. I am not persuaded, however, by Gopal (2011)'s argument that we should follow a model, such as posited by Deardorff (2009), to measure and assess the students' intercultural capabilities. As Tochon and Karaman (2009) reason, this kind of instrumentalist approach is not appropriate for something as fluid, contested and contextual as intercultural capabilities.

6) **Integrating international study visits into Faculty programmes of teaching and learning**

Acceptance of the importance of international study visits would suggest that they should be brought within the structures and procedures that cover other parts of programmes of teaching and learning. This should include developing and agreeing guidelines for international study visits that take account of the issues of learning outcomes and that offer guidance on appropriate pedagogy. It would also involve compiling a formal statement for each study visit, possibly equivalent to a DMR, which, amongst other things, identifies the intended learning outcomes. Even if the experiential approach remains dominant for certain visits, there still needs to be the expectation of critical components of introduction and debriefing, and, even more crucially, an identification of how we recognize learning and what counts as learning (Zink & Dyson, 2009) from the visit, for which consideration of threshold concepts (Barradell, 2013; Meyer & Land, 2005) is vital. I also recommend that there should be a requirement for a substantial evaluation of this learning by tutors and students participating in each trip, with the findings reported and the implications for future trips registered, as is the norm for modules and other learning components. This

would all imply a development of the Plymouth Institute of Education International Coordinator's current role, and I therefore suggest that a clear job description should be provided, defining the roles, responsibilities and the accountability within the Faculty and University structure and an increased allocation of hours made.

Establishment of such a system would need to be based upon more fundamental discussions within the Faculty and the Institute of the ways in which international study visits and placements should contribute to the broader internationalisation of teaching and learning within programmes of study. In particular, agreement should be reached whether the achievement of 'selfish' benefits to the institution and its personnel is a sufficient justification for undertaking them, or whether they need to encompass a wider, more 'altruistic' dimension. Such a debate would require the familiarisation of tutors with the arguments for and against the development of intercultural capabilities as a necessary preparation of students for working in an increasingly global and culturally diverse context. As Edwards (2011) and Cushner (2011) remind us, this also indicates that as a Faculty, we need to identify what skills, qualities and attributes does a 'globally competent' professional need and to have a shared understanding with the students as to what constitutes culturally relevant teaching, with an accompanying pedagogy.

Meaningful, rigorous intercultural experiences, though not necessarily international ones, as Taylor (2007) demonstrates, must be integrated into the course, and global perspectives made relevant to all students (Blum & Bourn, 2013). Teacher educators in particular must take cultural diversity seriously, abandon the 'soft' approach to multicultural education (Ukpokodu, 2011) evidenced in aspects of the Redbridge trip, and use a pedagogy based on hard, critical literacy (Andreotti, 2006), deliberately introducing discussions on race, poverty, privilege and power (Edwards, 2011). In turn, all the above recommendations would suggest the need for a training programme for tutors involved with the study visits and placements, and with the modules to which they would be seen as contributing.

7) **Widening the impact of international experiences**

An obvious limitation of the present pattern is that it makes possible international experience for only a certain small proportion of students within the Plymouth Institute of Education, which could be considered as disadvantaging those already likely to be at a disadvantage in terms of economic and cultural capital (Allen et al., 2012). In the current climate, and without the offer of financial support, it is not realistic to expect significant change in this respect. Nevertheless, it is arguable that non-participating students are equally in need of the learning that may result; indeed Bleszynska (2008) asserts that it should be an essential element to training as a teacher as it is a foundation of our work. Therefore, effort should be made to implement the University's existing policy requirement of introducing an international dimension into all modules, unless clearly inappropriate. Moreover, tutors should give further thought to possible ways of disseminating significant learning from the international study visits as part of their responsibility to provide an international dimension to the modules they plan and teach. Student presentations, mini-conferences and the use of ICT, e.g. Moodle, should all be considered, as suggested by Goodwin (2010). In addition, the excellent work of the International Coordinator in extending the range of international study visits and placements should be supported, with the aim of encouraging more tutors to incorporate this dimension into their teaching. In turn, as discussed below, opportunities should be offered for tutors themselves to participate in international study visits, not just to gain leadership experience, but for wider professional development. As I have discovered, the academic staff's personal and professional experiences impact powerfully upon their intercultural capabilities and subsequent practice, and I concur with Bloomfield et al. (2007) that there are huge advantages of teacher educators going on international study visits to find out their potential for developing the students' curriculum subject knowledge so they can integrate global dimensions into their subject specialism.

8) **Establishing the role of the Institute of Education in promoting Internationalisation**

The study has been completed at a significant time for the development of the Faculty and its approaches. In August 2013, the School of Education became the Plymouth Institute of Education in a newly formed Faculty of Arts and Humanities, with new

leadership at several levels, and so it has the opportunity to develop a new identity, new priorities and new approaches. This will take place alongside the introduction of new integrated policies on Internationalisation and Teaching and Learning (Plymouth University, 2013a; Plymouth University, 2013b) together with a University-wide Curriculum Enrichment Project to be introduced in 2014 (Kneale & Driscoll, 2013). However, as Buczynski et al. (2010) discovered, such internationalisation of the curriculum is very complex and requires considerable dialogue to come to a shared agreement among the staff team as to what it means in practice. The necessary discussion will offer excellent opportunities for a reconsideration of approaches to providing experience of cultural diversity, including international study visits, as well as for the professional development of the tutors.

Of particular importance for the Plymouth Institute of Education in relation to its programmes of teacher education will be overcoming the tendency, often implicit or even subconscious, to see such programmes as preparing teachers to work in the UK system, and even, for some students, to teach locally in the South West. Rather, in the context of globalisation and international employment we need to open a dialogue about what constitutes a 'globally competent teacher', what might be their role in the promotion of social justice and what might be the place of intercultural capabilities in this. Furthermore, the challenge will be in ensuring that the students not only have such a conceptual framework about culture learning, and an understanding of the theories about diversity, globalisation and intercultural sensitivity, but can link these to educational processes. As Walters *et al* (2009) concede, even more tricky will be ensuring such aspects are given at least equal weight with lesson planning, classroom organisation and behaviour management during their School Experience placements, especially with the current Government and Ofsted stress upon meeting Standards couched in these more limited terms. A further complication for teacher educators, as Schoorman and Bogotch (2010) note, is that there can easily be a disconnection between University practices and those of the educational settings where our students are placed for work experience. Thus, I recommend that the dialogue about what constitutes a 'globally competent teacher' and the place of intercultural capabilities in this also involves our partnership settings. It will be crucial for our student teachers to have a clear appreciation of the way that their personal and professional growth

during an international study visit links with their teaching in the diverse classrooms that they will encounter in their future careers.

9. Longer-term changes within the University

Carrying out this study has made me even more aware of the (perhaps inevitable) gap between an institution's statements of policies and its practices, and leads me to recommend a major reconsideration of its ways of implementing its strategies (Warwick & Moogan, 2013), as well as some rewording of the policies themselves. For instance, the newly issued policies (PlymouthUniversity, 2013a) are more specific than before about intercultural issues, stating that the University should:

seek to provide opportunities for students to develop their inter-cultural awareness and celebrate international perspectives in their learning (p2)

However, using the term inter-cultural 'awareness', rather than capabilities, competences or even sensitivities, is far too woolly. We can be interculturally aware without being able or willing to act in an ethical, sensitive and well-informed way in our intercultural encounters. We need to be more strongly encouraged and enabled to respond and act positively in culturally diverse contexts.

I am also concerned to note the way that the policy appears to talk about global citizenship mostly in the context of employability, with a strong emphasis on enhanced digital literacy skills, whereas I would argue it is much wider than this. However, I am considerably heartened by the commitment to:

provide inter-cultural opportunities for all students through cultural competency workshops, cross-cultural events on all campuses, international exchange programmes, research and international experiences (PlymouthUniversity, 2013a) p4

Previous policies implied permission for Faculties and Schools to develop the international dimension, but they neither clearly required this nor gave guidance as to what such development should involve. The authors of the new strategy assert that its implementation will be monitored and evaluated at all levels through a system of action planning and reporting, but again with Plymouth Institute of Education we will need to make this more specific in order to elicit more than quantitative data. Just

counting how many of our students access an international placement or how many students are learning another language will not be sufficient. There will need to be specific consideration of how approaches might need to change in order to prepare staff and students to study and work in the global context of cultural diversity. The relevance of intercultural capabilities should be made explicit in policy and marketing statements and materials and in programmes of study.

At a deeper level I recommend setting in train a more fundamental consideration by tutors and students throughout the University of the theoretical underpinnings of responses to cultural diversity, for instance, that we promote students' critical engagement with identity and difference, through the creation of postcolonial sites of enquiry (Fiedler, 2007), with analysis of whiteness and racial identities. As Giroux (2011) acknowledges, this can lead to difficulties when white students think critically about racism and colonialism, and may lead to guilt, anger, withdrawal, even despair, but we need a pedagogy of whiteness to move us beyond this. The work of de Souza and Andreotti (2007) is very helpful for this. We have to break the current silences (Mazzei, 2008) and have these tricky conversations if we are truly to promote the intercultural capabilities of the students and the tutors. This critical literacy pedagogy will support students' understandings that others are competent and knowledgeable about their own lives and will encourage respect for difference. It will move them away from the current 'civilizing' agenda (Cook, 2008) so common in the Minority World, and away from their perception that they have the right to enter other cultures and intervene under the guise of 'helping' (Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012), a stance which emerged so clearly in the research. It will also foster the critical engagement of us as tutors in examining our personal constructions and deconstructions of our own identities (Trahar, 2011).

As Gorski (2008) argues so powerfully, there are other implications for tutors in pursuing this approach. We may make ourselves unpopular by taking such a postcolonial stance and disrupting the dominant discourses about international study visits. For instance, as a result of this study I have come to query whether it is moral and ethical to go to The Gambia at all, but expressing this view is controversial. However I now have the theoretical underpinnings to be able to justify and put

forward strategies we could adopt to make such visits more beneficial for the students and their hosts by conducting them in a responsible way. I now concur with Jakubiak (2012) that such international experiences should continue, but I am definite that they should be seen as critical sites for enquiry about globalisation and colonialism (Martin et al., 2011). However, if I and colleagues are to be able and willing to initiate and engage in such a debate, which may make us unpopular with some, we need the confirmation that such a debate, whatever the outcome, is an important element of the academic health of the Institution.

Another of my recommendations turns out to receive support in the latest University policy statements. It is widely acknowledged that an inhibiting factor for many British students in developing intercultural capabilities is the limited take-up, at school and subsequently, of opportunities to learn and in particular to speak languages other than English. A major importance of such language learning is not its narrow utility in enabling conversation with other speakers of the particular language learned but its deeper effects in countering insularity and in widening awareness of and respect for cultural diversity. Thus, I welcome the University's stated encouragement and opportunity for students to learn another language as part of their degree (Kneale & Driscoll, 2013), though I am concerned about the current narrow emphasis upon this in terms of employability, and about suggestions that this should remain optional. I recommend that learning a language should become an expectation for our teacher education students, not an option, and it that should be offered embedded in related events and information about culture, history and social context in order to promote intercultural capabilities.

I also welcome the principle expressed within the new strategy (Plymouth University, 2013a) that wherever possible students should experience appropriate study visits, placements and contacts with areas of cultural diversity and difference as part of their courses, as advocated by Perry and Southwell (2011), though what is not emphasised is that these should include planned opportunities to promote intercultural capabilities, which I recommend. International visits and placements would continue to be a significant element in this, of course, but I would stress that in many cases intercultural contact would not need to involve visiting other countries, since most

aspects of cultural diversity can be appreciated through contact with groups and areas in the UK, as was made clear by the Redbridge placement students, whose responses formed an element of my study. This would result in significant logistical and financial savings. As previously advocated, all such study visits and placements should be defined, planned and monitored as integral part of the teaching and learning programmes; should specify learning outcomes and an appropriate pedagogy; and should be evaluated in these terms.

A further element in the new strategies, that tutors themselves should be encouraged to do six-month international placements and exchanges, is also very welcome, giving a clear indication of the importance of such experiences for personal and professional development. I hope this may lead to the University recognising the need for all tutors to have training in intercultural capabilities in the same way that it came to recognise the need for training in teaching and learning for all lecturers and implemented the Learning and Teaching in Higher Education programme for all lecturers without QTS or an equivalent.

The implementation of the full range of these recommendations would make enormous demands throughout the University, including:

- Some fundamental attitude change
- Major staff training
- Shifts in balances of resourcing
- Major extension and review of programmes/modules to incorporate more fully an international dimension.

It is therefore highly unlikely that they will be rapidly implemented in the current climate. However, given the increasing pressure for Universities to engage more fully in niche-marketing based upon a clear and distinctive identity, it is by no means impossible that a more powerful and systematic internationalised programme, including language learning and study visits designed to prepare its students more fully for the increasingly globalised employment context, would have considerable appeal, especially in a part of the world not noted for its responsiveness to cultural diversity. However, even without such major development, the University needs to recognise that it cannot claim to be serious in its commitment to internationalisation unless it

recognises the significance of the research into intercultural capabilities and does more to implement in practice its clear statements of policy, including their application to international study visits.

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