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Internationalisation of the Curriculum in Higher Education through Study Abroad and Global Learning

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

2008

CERTIFICATION

I, Maureen Elizabeth Bell, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Department of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Maureen Elizabeth Bell

7th June, 2008

Table of Contents

List of figures and Tables ..... **xvi**

List of appendices ..... **xvii**

Abbreviations and acronyms used in the thesis ..... **xviii**

Abstract ..... **xix**

Acknowledgements ..... **xxii**

Publications from the thesis ..... **xxiii**

Chapter 1 Introduction **1**

Definitions **2**

The case studies **3**

Case 1 – Lion Island University 4

Case 2 – Bigcity University 4

Case 3 – Provincial University 4

Background to the study **5**

Internationalisation of the higher education curriculum 7

Overview of the thesis **9**

Chapter 2 Literature review **11**

Introduction **11**

Globalisation and higher education **11**

Globalisation and Australian higher education 18

Globalisation and higher education in the Asia-pacific 21

The Singaporean context 25

Globalisation and the dominance of the English language 26

Education for profit 28

Australian policy and the global trade in international students 30

Internationalisation as a responsive opportunity 34

Towards a definition of Curriculum 39

Internationalisation of the higher education curriculum 40

Internationalising the curriculum - typologies and guidelines 43

International students as a resource for internationalising the curriculum 48

Internationalising the curriculum through study abroad 51

Summer study abroad 53

Global learning 54

The inclusive curriculum and international pedagogy 55

Internationalisation of the science curriculum 56

The teacher's role in internationalising the curriculum 60

Case study research on internationalisation of the curriculum 63

Student outcomes 66

The cosmopolitan student and global optimism as a conceptual framework.....68

Conclusion.....71

Chapter 3 Methodology.....73

Introduction.....73

The research paradigm.....73

The theoretical framework.....75

Qualitative research method.....75

Case study 77

Instrumental case study.....78

Identifying possible cases and recording the data..... 78

Selecting the cases for study 79

The case study sites..... 81

Case Study 1 Lion Island University 81

Case Study 2 – Bigcity University.....82

Case Study 3 – Provincial University 83

Data collection - A multi-method approach.....84

Data collection protocols..... 85

The interviews 88

Opening the interview..... 88

The Interview environment 89

Designing the interview questions 90

Choice of participants for interview 90

Accuracy of interview data 91

Observation 92

Lion Island University field observation 94

Provincial University field observation 96

Bigcity University field observation 99

Questionnaire 99

Document inspection 100

Data analysis 100

The working interpretive document 101

Exploring and coding the data 102

Ethical issues and Human Subjects Protection 106

Voluntarism 107

Special considerations 109

The researcher as human agent 109

Culture and power 110

Gender and power 110

The socially situated researcher 111

Tacit knowing 112

Conclusion 113

Chapter 4 Exploring the cases 114

Quoting from the cases 115

Section 1: Case Study 1 — Lion Island University 116

The program 116

Background 117

A description of the site 118

The participating students 119

The participating staff 120

Case 1 discussion 120

Program conception 120

Curriculum design 122

Supporting the Lion Island University student learning community 123

Supporting the cross-institutional student learning community 124

The lecturers 125

Student characteristics 128

Teaching and learning activities 129

Outcomes 132

Case 1 analysis 133

Program conception and design 133

Supporting the Lion Island University student learning community 135

Supporting the cross-institutional student learning community 136

The lecturers 136

Student characteristics 137

Teaching and learning activities 138

Case 1 summary 139

Section 2: Case Study 2 — Bigcity University 142

The program 142

Background 143

A description of the sites 144

The participating students 145

The participating staff 146

Case 2 discussion 146

Program conception 146

Curriculum design 147

Supporting the Bigcity University student learning community 149

Supporting the international student learning community 151

The lecturers 152

Student characteristics 155

Teaching and learning activities 156

Student Outcomes 161

Case 2 analysis 163

Program conception 163

Curriculum design 164

Supporting the Bigcity University student learning community 166

Supporting the cross-institutional student learning community 168

The lecturers 168

Student characteristics 169

Teaching and learning activities 170

Student Outcomes 172

Case 2 summary 172

Section 3: Case Study 3 — Provincial University 176

The program 176

Background..... 177

A description of the site..... 177

The participating students..... 179

The participating staff..... 179

Case 3 discussion..... 180

Program conception.....180

Curriculum design 183

Supporting the Australian student learning community.....184

Supporting the cross-institutional student learning community.....185

The Teachers 187

Student characteristics.....189

Teaching and learning activities.....191

Student Outcomes.....197

Case 3 analysis 199

Program conception.....201

Curriculum design 203

Supporting the Provincial University student learning community 205

Supporting the cross-institutional student learning community 206

Student characteristics 209

The teachers 209

Teaching and learning activities 211

Student outcomes 216

Case 3 summary 218

Conclusion 220

Chapter 5 Cross-case analysis 221

Introduction 221

Key issues 221

Assertions 223

Cross-case discussion 224

A top-down framework 224

Reactive curriculum development 231

Responsive curriculum development 236

Academic characteristics 239

Student reciprocity 242

Non-alignment of assessment 245

Approaches to teaching 249

Supporting the local student learning community 251

Curtailed international engagement in ‘virtual’ and ‘real’ cross-border pedagogy .. 257

The International teacher and professional development 262

Conclusion 266

Chapter 6 Conclusions and recommendations 267

Broad findings 268

Recommendations for internationalising the curriculum 271

The recommendations in summary 272

The recommendations in detail 273

Further research 286

In summary 287

Bibliography 289

Appendices 324

Appendix A – Interview questions 324

A1. Interview questions – teachers – Bigcity and Lion Island Universities 324

A2. Interview questions – teachers – Provincial University 325

A3. Interview questions – students – Bigcity and Lion Island Universities 326

A4. Interview questions – students – Provincial University 327

A5. Interview questions – academic administrators 328

A6. Interview questions – student adviser and international coordinator – Bigcity University 329

A7. Interview questions – administrative assistant – Lion Island University.. 330

Appendix B – Questionnaires 331

B1. Post course online questionnaire - students – Provincial University 331

B2. Post course online questionnaire - students – USA University 332

B3. Post-course 6 month email questionnaire – Provincial University 333

B4. Pre-course email questionnaire – students – Bigcity University..... 333

B5. Post-course email questionnaire – Bigcity University 333

Appendix C – Schedule of Student Responses in Videoconference..... 334

Appendix D – Application for Approval to Undertake Research ……. 335

List of figures and Tables

Tables

Table 2.1	A comparison of the concepts of globalisation and internationalisation in higher education (compiled from the work of Marginson & Considine, 2000; Reid, 2001; Rizvi, 2002; F. Rizvi & Walsh, 1998; Schapper & Mayson, 2004; Scrase, 1996; Yang, 2003).	38
Table 2.2	Curricular areas within the Best Practice Guidelines for Internationalizing the Curriculum (Whalley, 1997).	44
Table 2.3	Curriculum and program areas within the Best Practice Guidelines for Internationalizing the Curriculum (Whalley, 1997).	46
Table 3.1	Framework of Curricular Areas for Identifying Internationalisation Practices (Whalley, 1997)	80
Table 3.2	Data collection grid	86-7
Table 3.3	Documents inspected from the three cases	100
Table 3.4	Domains, categories, and sub categories of data	104-5
Table 5.1	Elements to consider in relation to internationalising the curriculum	222
Table 6.1	Juxtaposition of the key failures found in the top-down model, with an idealised education-led model for internationalisation of curriculum.	269

Figures

Figure 3.1	The ‘researcher’s tent’ near the lake at the field studies centre	95
Figure 3.2	The outdoor classroom	96
Figure 3.3	Videoconference classroom interaction map	98
Figure 3.4	The 3P Model of Learning and Teaching (Biggs, 2003)	102
Figure 4.1	Working in groups	114
Figure 4.2	Outdoor kitchen	117
Figure 4.3	Back from the field	130
Figure 4.4	Videoconference tutorial	178
Figure 5.1	Provincial University International Science Graduate framework	237

List of appendices

Appendix A – Interview questions

A1. Interview questions – teachers – Bigcity and Lion Island Universities

A2. Interview questions – teachers – Provincial University

A3. Interview questions – students – Bigcity and Lion Island Universities

A4. Interview questions – students – Provincial University

A5. Interview questions – academic administrators

A6. Interview questions – student adviser and international coordinator – Bigcity University

A7. Interview questions – administrative assistant – Lion Island University

Appendix B – Questionnaires

B1. Post course online questionnaire – students – Provincial University

B2. Post course online questionnaire – students – USA University

B3. Post-course 6 month email follow-up – students – Provincial University

B4. Pre-course email questionnaire – students – Bigcity University

B5. Post-course email questionnaire – students – Bigcity University

Appendix C – Schedule of student responses in videoconference

Appendix D – Application for approval to undertake research involving human participants

Abbreviations and acronyms used in the thesis

AEI	Australian Education International
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
AVCC	Australian Voce Chancellors Committee
DEETYA	Department of Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
FSB	Field Studies in Biodiversity
GL	Global Learning
HERDSA	Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia
IAU	International Association of Universities
IELTS	International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
IB	International Baccaulaureat
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
LMS	Learning Management Systems
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SSA	Summer Study Abroad
SWB	Science Without Borders
US	United States
VOIP	Voice Over Internet Protocol

Abstract

Internationalisation of the curriculum is a major issue for academics, administrators and policy makers in an era of market-driven changes affecting the higher education sector. It is a key program strategy within the wider activity of internationalisation of higher education. The latter is increasingly seen by policy makers and university administrators as driven by international student mobility and the need for revenue from international student fees. These are critical issues for universities in the globally competitive market environment.

Despite its importance as a concept, it is not yet clear just what internationalisation of the curriculum means, or how it should be implemented. Thus it attracts a variety of perspectives and understandings. For example, it could be described simultaneously as a systemic reaction to the neo-liberal economic imperatives of marketisation and as an educational response to globalisation. One important outcome of the work described herein is the development of recommendations for internationalisation of the curriculum to assist and empower academics in providing international learning outcomes for their students.

The literature review carried out as part of this study revealed that only a relatively small amount of research, evaluation and guidance on internationalisation of the curriculum has been published. It was also clear that very little is known about the ways in which academics and students experience internationalisation of the curriculum.

The research reported herein was designed to fill this gap by documenting and analysing the staff and student experience. The research is therefore grounded in the interpretive paradigm and utilises case study method. Using the curricular areas

of the *Best Practice Guidelines for Internationalising the Curriculum* (Whalley, 1997) as a framework, two summer study abroad programs and one global learning course at Australian and Singaporean universities were chosen for study. These programs were offered within science faculties however the curriculum for the study abroad programs included languages and commerce subjects. After data gathering the *Presage, Process and Product* structure of the *3P Model of Learning* (Biggs, 2003) was used as an interpretive tool.

The cross-case analysis surfaces common themes and highlights contradictions and tensions that were seen to lead to problems in practice. In particular, the two study abroad programs were found to be top-down and failed to offer students an authentic international learning opportunity. In contrast, the third case, a global learning course, was found to be both top-down and education-led and afforded a level of international engagement for students.

Academic goodwill was found to be the most critical factor for success of internationalisation of the curriculum initiatives. Other factors that were found to have negative impacts include: the absence of theoretical frameworks underpinning internationalisation of the curriculum and curriculum planning; the non-alignment of assessment policy and practice across partner institutions; and the failure to develop student learning communities.

From the themes identified in the cross case analysis a set of recommendations for internationalisation of the curriculum is offered by the author to help academics and administrators develop policy and a disciplinary vision for courses and programs that lead to international outcomes for students. These recommendations refer to the need for: theory-based, education-led models and disciplinary visions

for internationalising the curriculum; equity of student access; student engagement within and across institutions; local and transnational student learning communities; policy-based procedures and professional development and support for academics.

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Publications from the thesis

Some of the material in this thesis was included in an article and conference papers published during my doctoral candidacy as follows.

Bell, M. (in press). Exploring fieldwork for study abroad sojourners. In A. Reid & M. Hellsten (Eds.), *Researching International Pedagogies: sustainable practice for teaching and learning in higher education* (pp. 129-146). Hong Kong: Springer.

Bell, M. (2008). Beyond the supermarket: lost opportunities in summer study abroad for Singapore sojourners in Australia. *International Journal of Asia Pacific Studies.* Vol 3 (1).

Bell, M. (2008). Internationalising the Australian higher education curriculum through global learning. Proceedings of the 30th HERDSA conference, *Engaging Communities*, 1-4 July. Rotorua, New Zealand.

Bell, M. (2006). Internationalising the curriculum for study abroad students from Singapore - a field study in the Australian bush. Proceedings of the 29th HERDSA conference, *Critical Visions: Thinking, Learning and Researching in Higher Education*, Perth, Western Australia, 10-12 July, pp. 17-24.