TURN AND FACE THE STRANGE

FROM EAP TUTOR TO INTERCULTURAL TRAINER

HEATHER MCCLEAN

QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

BIOGRAPHY

- Education & Recognition Adviser at Queen Mary University of London (January 2023-present)

- Head of EAP Programmes at University for the Creative Arts (June 2019-November 2022)

- 25+ years' experience teaching EFL and EAP

https://www.linkedin.com/in/heathermcclean/

https://www.qmul.ac.uk/queenmaryacademy/about/meet-the-team/profiles/heather-mcclean.html

SESSION AIMS & OUTLINE

- Introduce research into academics' intercultural competence and their ability to scaffold knowledge effectively for international students

- Examine the effectiveness of four EAP-led initiatives designed to address identified knowledge and skills gap among academic staff

- Discuss rationale for EAP-led initiatives

- Make recommendations for future developments

CONTEXT

- Research conducted at University for the Creative Arts (UCA) in 2020 as part of the Internationalisation of Curriculum action plan

- Clear knowledge gap among staff (especially regarding language levels and the need for grading/scaffolding language)

- Informally identified through: sitting in on taught sessions; reading assessment briefs; conversations with lecturers regarding students' language ability; regular requests for a Chinese interpreter

- Research aim: to investigate (a) academics' intercultural competence; (b) their ability to convey knowledge effectively to international students; and (c) to see whether there was a correlation between the two

HOW DOES CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE CORRELATE TO ACADEMICS' TEACHING STRATEGIES?

Quantitative Data: questionnaires distributed to academic staff – 50 returned (60% subject lecturers; 40% EAP tutors)

Qualitative Data: in-depth interviews with 10 academic staff (subject lecturers and EAP tutors)

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Framework

Livermore, 2011

CQ Drive (motivation)

The motivation to learn about and respond to different cultures. CQ drive gives the energy to pursue cultural understanding.

CQ Knowledge (cognition)

The knowledge about diverse cultural aspects, similarities and differences between cultures, and their impact.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

CQ Action (behaviour)

The capability to adapt our behaviour appropriately for different cultures. It involves having a flexible repertoire of responses to suit various situations.

CQ Strategy (meta-cognition)

The extent to which we recognise of what's going on in a cross-cultural situation and the ability to use that awareness to manage those situations effectively.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

95% of participants had average (55%) or high (40%) cultural awareness

BUT

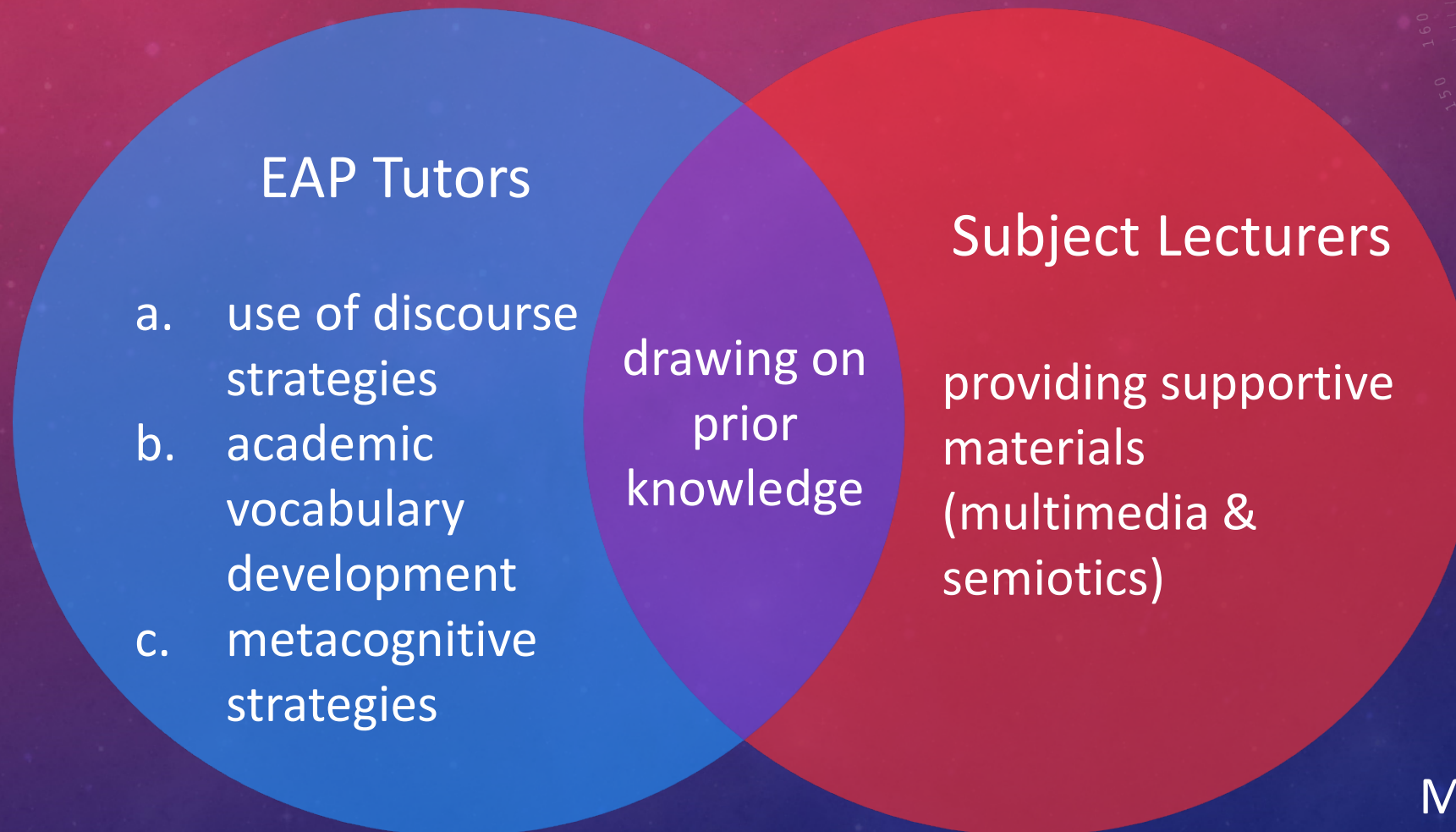Only 30% displayed high competencies in all four CQ elements

Commonalities: worked overseas; speak a second language; 4+ years' experience teaching international students

AND

20% of participants unable to give any examples of adjusting teaching approach

Commonalities: monolingual; less confident in multilingual contexts

RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

- High CQ Drive and Knowledge does not necessarily equate to high CQ Strategy and Action

- Learning another language has a positive impact on CQ Strategy and CQ Action

- Need for knowledge exchange and collaboration between language and the disciplines

- Need for staff development and support to develop best practice in teaching in an internationalised university

Yu, C. and McClean, H. (2022) 'International Student Success in the UK: scaffolding curriculum strategies and cultural intelligence.' Chapter in: *International Environments and Practices of Higher Education.* Bingley: Emerald Publishing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Attitudes towards international students:

   Fallon and Brown (1999)

2. Need for Professional Development for Academics in Internationalised Universities

   Washburn and Hargis (2017)

   Jin and Schneider (2019)

3. Strategies for Teaching International Students – intercultural competence and linguistic adjustments

   Crose (2011)

   Gopal (2011)

   Haan, Gallagher and Varandani (2017) "linguistically-responsive instruction"

4. Scaffolding for International Students

   Mahan (2020)

5. Taking a Transcultural Approach

   Ryan (2011)

RATIONALE FOR EAP-LED APPROACH

- Work across a wide range of courses, so see first-hand how some international students struggle to cope with dense academic texts, academic lectures, or even understanding module handbooks and assessment requirements

- Solid theoretical knowledge of language levels and competencies

- Highly experienced at communicating with students from all linguistic backgrounds and abilities

- Wide-ranging experience of working in language schools with rolling intake – therefore highly skilled at creating good group dynamics

EAP-LED INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT ACADEMICS

1. Staff development workshops:
   - Communicating across Cultures (also for professional services staff)
   - Teaching Students from Diverse Backgrounds: Scaffolding Strategies
   - Teaching Students from Diverse Backgrounds: Group Dynamics
2. Co-teaching/co-creating workshops (EAP & subject lecturers)
3. EAP/subject lecturer peer observation scheme
4. Offering assessment brief readability/review service

1. STAFF DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Communicating across Cultures (also for professional services staff)

- how culture affects communication; strategies to improve spoken and written communication

Teaching Students from Diverse Backgrounds: Scaffolding Strategies

- why scaffolding is necessary and how to scaffold learning

Teaching Students from Diverse Backgrounds: Group Dynamics

- how to build good group dynamics in a multilingual classroom

STAFF DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS: EVALUATION

- Workshops ran via L&D team at 6-week intervals

- Demand was overwhelming: Communicating Across Cultures most popular workshop L&D had run

- 194 staff attended between January and October 2022 with the majority (75%) attending Communicating Across Cultures

- Feedback from participants was 100% positive (post-workshop feedback forms & anecdotal feedback)

- Promotional materials need to show clear distinction between workshops so staff don't assume they all have similar content

STAFF DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS: EVALUATION

Sample Quotes:

"It really helped me to re-evaluate my own communication."

"I liked the practical suggestions of what to do with regards activities in the classroom that will either give good scaffolding or will check learning."

"We got lots of practical tips that I can put into action, as well as things for me to consider in the longer term."

"This should be a compulsory part of new staff induction."

"There were lots of practical tips of things to do with students to get them to mix."

"My teaching has changed because of these workshops!"

2. CO-TEACHING/CO-CREATING WITH LECTURERS

September 2021 – September 2022 five sessions co-created

- How to be a Student: an introduction to UK academic life (a 3-part workshop)
- Engaging with Art Crits: giving constructive feedback*
- Avoiding Plagiarism with Turnitin (a 2-part workshop)*
- Engaging with the Reading List
- Intercultural Group Work*

*also co-taught

CO-TEACHING/CO-CREATION: EVALUATION

Positive feedback from students (anecdotal and post-workshop feedback forms)

Requests from all lecturers for repeat sessions with additional cohorts

Most effective when co-taught, not just co-created

Amount of subject lecturer interaction/input during sessions varied – could be affected by relationship between staff, or confidence of subject lecturer

Need to state roles/responsibilities/expectations clearly at the outset

3. EAP/SUBJECT LECTURER PEER OBSERVATION SCHEME

EAP Tutors

- many opportunities for regular informal observations of subject lecturers, esp. if studio-based

Subject lecturers

- Many on sessional contracts – therefore many time/resource constraints
- Peer observations conducted by those who were already very engaged

Reflections

- Subject lecturers need to see value of peer observation outside their discipline – understand they are observing teaching practice
- Need guided support in place – a guide for observers – what should I look for?
- Provide questions to encourage self-reflection, e.g. How did the tutor check understanding? What did they do to encourage engagement?

4. ASSESSMENT BRIEF READABILITY/REVIEW SERVICE

Completed review and edit of assessment briefs and programme specifications for 12 new BA programmes in July 2021

ASSESSMENT BRIEF READABILITY/REVIEW : EVALUATION

- Extremely labour-intensive!

- Increased visibility with PD and Senior Leadership Team

- Fix-it approach – not developmental for subject lecturers

- Writing Accessible Assessment Briefs workshop – more impactful

MEASURING IMPACT OF INITIATIVES

Short-term:

- Have the staff said they found it helpful?

Medium-term:

- Has teaching changed?

Longer-term:

- Have changes been sustained?

NEXT STEPS

- Offer bespoke staff development workshops for Schools/Departments

- Leading specialist sessions on PGCHE (e.g. teaching in the internationalised classroom)

- Becoming an HEA Fellow and a mentor for the Fellowship Scheme

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

- A supportive line manager

- Experienced EAP team

- Strong links with academic staff/ PDs/Departments who can champion initiatives in their Schools

- Representation on internal boards/committees/working groups

- Cultural capital (Ding, 2019) within the institution

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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

h.mcclean@qmul.ac.uk

https://www.linkedin.com/in/heathermcclean/

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