

Internationalisation and widening participation narratives: synergies and pedagogical implications

Dr. Caroline Burns and Dr. Jane Carnaffan



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

Introduction

- To draw on our research in different contexts: a Russell group and a post 1992 university
- Our research investigates the ‘home’ student experience, (focusing on issues surrounding widening participation and internationalisation)
- We consider the home/international student binary to be unhelpful; we are concerned with identities and transitions of *all* students

Widening participation and internationalisation: the economic, social and political context

- The expansion of UK Higher Education based on income from International students' fees.
- Widening participation and internationalisation have gone hand in hand but they are treated differently.
- A rapidly changing recruitment landscape pre/post-Brexit
- How can English for Academic Purposes (EAP) practitioners support institutions to become more inclusive?

Internationalisation at Home (Crowther et al, 2000)

- IaH aims to correct the dominant focus on mobility and international students by allowing all students particularly the 'non-mobile majority' an international experience mainly through the curriculum (Harrison, 2015)
- Broad and inclusive concept, linked to Equality and Diversity which works to benefit *all* students (Caruana and Ploner, 2010; Jones and Killick, 2012)
- EAP practitioners might benefit by engaging with IaH, by looking beyond the narrow remit of raising the language level of International students

Narrative inquiry (Burns, 2018)

- How do I enable a sense of self-in-the world (Killick, 2013) *for myself* and my students?
- In depth narrative inquiry with a longitudinal dimension into the experience of myself and two of my UG 'home' students in a post 1992 university
- C was a first generation student, entered with HEFC, history of dropping out, difficult family background, financial constraints but motivated to make the most of the whole experience, get a good job, be open to people
- C's motivation to study as a mature student was frustration at being stuck in a dead end job "I can do better than that"

Some findings

- Tension in C's narrative between the desire to go abroad and his need to stay at home, between his 'home' life and his 'new' life at university.
- C does not identify with the mainstream drinking culture. Mature and study-focussed, he finds more in common with some international students.
- His development is facilitated by his openness to others and his approach to university. This enables him to take up opportunities to get out of his comfort zone. Volunteering to be course rep lends a purpose to his intercultural interactions.

- Our critical, supportive dialogue also influenced his development. I was a 'cosmopolitan role model' (Lilley, Barker and Harris, 2015)
- Through collaborative, dialogic research *with not on* my students I also experienced a personal and professional transformation (Burns, 2018)

Transitions to an elite university of local, widening participation students

- Political and policy context
- Mind the geographical attainment gap!
- The academic literature: academic and social transitions of non-elite students to university.

Identity key to social and academic transitions-conflicting class identities and feelings of non-belonging

Staying at home being a barrier to the 'student experience'
(Holdsworth, 2009)

- The findings

The findings: **Academic transitions**

- Initially I found it difficult to adapt to independent study and not be 'spoon fed' the work I needed. Also as university is a lot less structured than school/college so I found managing my time difficult.
- I don't want to go to a lecturer and say I've never wrote an essay before, that's embarrassing.

- I think that when I first started university there was an element of feeling that I wasn't as 'clever' as other people on the course because I got into the university through PARTNERS.
- However as for fitting in PARTNERS may face a challenge because of the reduced grade entry, PARTNERS students may feel like they shouldn't be there and don't belong, may not want to tell other students they got in on a PARTNERS scheme in case they are judged, in a sense they may feel quite unintelligent in comparison to the other students who didn't get in on reduced grade entry.

Social transitions

- Socially, I think a lot of us found it harder being local students as everyone else is experiencing the same thing living in halls. I think that one of the main issues for PARTNERS students is living locally and actually feeling like they don't fit in if they don't live in halls. While all students may find it quite hard making friends on their course, people living in halls are at least making friends with flatmates.

Tentative conclusions

- Widening participation/internationalisation narratives are intertwined at the level of individual experience
- The international/home binary should be questioned and students considered as individuals with diverse identities, needs and positionings
 - Why separate international and UK students on the basis of language and culture?
 - Both could benefit from pre-entry interventions (summer school) and need continued support (extended induction, academic writing courses, study skills courses)

A possible way forward?

- The curriculum should provide a space for more dialogue between staff and students and also break down binaries between 'home' and 'international' students
- EAP practitioners are ideally positioned to input into this process (however we are currently viewed separately)
- The role of the practitioner is key – need for reflexivity

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