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Introduction

“In an ideal classroom, both the student and the teacher would be enriched by the other’s cultural experiences.” (Nahal 2005)

International education in Australia has grown by an average of 15% every year since the later 1980s (Marginson 2002). This phenomenon is not unique to Australia. Tertiary education around the world is becoming ‘internationalised’ that is, there is an increasing mix of domestic and international students in classes. Many Western countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and South Africa, as well as Australia, provide education for foreign students. ‘Foreign’ education is big business. The US has the largest number of international students (Mazzarol & Hosie cited in Avirutha et al. 2005). About 1.6 million students study outside their home country and of those over 500,000 studies in the US. Education is the third largest export in Australia. (Marginson 2002). In 2000 there were over 100,000 foreign students studying at Australian universities and it is predicted that this will rise to over 500, 000 over the next twenty years. (IDP 2002). One of the primary advantages of studying abroad is to learn a new culture and adapt to a new learning environment with real life experiences

(Rhee & Naowitz Sagaria 2004, Avirutha et al 2005)

Despite this, and the fact that Australia is itself an extremely culturally diverse community, Australian higher education remains essentially mono-cultural in form and Anglo American in content. (De Cieri & Olekalns 2001) The teaching and learning implications of such a large, very diverse international student population have yet to be addressed at most institutions of higher education. Not only is there an increasing number of international students on business programs around the world but they are coming from an increasingly diverse range of countries. An example of this is the MBA program at the Brisbane Graduate School of Business (BGSB) at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane, Australia. The university has long welcomed students from Asia, but the diversity is increasing to include students from all areas of the world e.g. one class of MBA students had 40 students from 16 different countries as far apart as Mexico, Norway, China, and India. For many of these students, their first language is other than English. Their experience of tertiary education is often significantly different from that which they encounter at QUT. Their experiences are also different from each other. This raises challenges for teachers who are faced with sizeable classes made up of a combination of domestic and diverse international students.

These international students may want to understand the ‘Western’ way of doing things, but may not be familiar or comfortable with, the processes used to facilitate learning. (Pincas 2001) Business classrooms traditionally use a range of Western teaching and learning strategies that focus on critical analysis, oral discussion,

problem solving and the possibility of multiple solutions using case studies and discussion groups that require active participation by the students, which many international students find unfamiliar. Every student comes to the classroom with a set of behaviours and characteristics that makes him or her unique (Jones 2005). But international students also come with their own expectations arising from the educational practices of their communities. Their potential lack of participation in classroom activities puts constraints on classroom interaction and learning. It also means that nothing that they have to teach about their way of doing things is learned.

The potential benefits of diversity are many. (Cox & Blake 1991) Not only do international students bring significant revenue to the university but they provide an opportunity for intercultural learning, for a sharing of knowledge and perspectives that could be so important for success in today's global business environment. (Harding 2004) Yet research suggests that cultural engagement is largely unidirectional – Australian students expect international students to adjust to them, not vice versa. (Cited in Marginson 2002). An important question then arises, what do the facilitators of learning, the teachers, lecturers and tutors expect? What do they see as the benefits or disadvantages of this international diversity in their classrooms? What do they need to know and do to be effective in the classrooms of the 21st century? In classrooms with students from Europe, North and South America, Asia, India, Africa and Australia, the potential for intercultural understanding and skills development is enormous. But it won't happen without assistance. Many international students spend most of their time with other students who speak their language or who come from a similar cultural background. Australians are not different in this respect. Therefore many international students, who come to study in Australia, learn about Australian business practices in the classroom but gain no practical experience of what Australian business, or in fact Australians, are like. The attitudes and skills of teachers are of critical importance to the internationalisation of the classroom. (Anderson 2001) Their attitudes impact on providing effective learning experiences to all students in culturally diverse classrooms.

Attitudes to International Students

Many tertiary institutions include 'internationalisation' as one of their objectives. But it is often unclear what that means. International student recruitment forms one aspect of internationalisation, but will not necessarily increase the internationalisation of the institution as many international students share little about their countries and live together with fellow nationals, so learn little about the country in which they study. The concept of 'Internationalisation at home' supports the view that much about internationalisation can be taught at home. (Coyne 2003, Sandstrom 2003) Attitudes to international students are varied. Many see them simply as a source of revenue, believing that institutions are attracting international students as a means of enhancing the 'bottom-line'. This can cause resentment as student/teacher ratios grow. Others see that as students have chosen to study within our institutions, they must expect to be treated in the same way as all other students. No adjustment need be made either to their learning style or approach to business practice. There are others who recognise that if these students are to learn effectively; strategies need to be adopted that recognise their different backgrounds and learning experience. Very

few appear to have considered that international students are a learning resource that will enable all students to learn how to operate in a multi-cultural world.

These four possible attitudes provide a model for understanding attitudes to international students. They reflect attitudes to those who are culturally different. Roosevelt (1996) developed what he called the Diversity Paradigm that spelled out the possible actions that could be taken when confronted by a diverse workplace. Whilst the workplace and education environments differ, Roosevelt's work in this area provides a framework for exploring possible attitudes to international students in tertiary institutions. These attitudes are paramount if tertiary institutions are to successfully meet the needs and demands of their international student body. Internationalisation requires a shared understanding between the institution and its staff about what particular action options are to be taken and why. An understanding of how staff currently views the situation will allow effective action to be taken.

Roosevelt identified eight options for action:

- **Include/exclude:** this means that 'diversity' groups are excluded – or targets are set to include certain groups, often by way of legislation.
- **Deny.** Deny that any difference exists.
- **Assimilate.** Minimize difference by requiring the minority to conform to the majority norms.
- **Suppress.** Ignore diversity.
- **Isolate.** Separate all activities to do with the 'minority' off to the side.
- **Tolerate.** Address diversity by fostering a room for all attitudes.
- **Build relationships.** Address diversity by fostering quality relationships – characterised by acceptance and understanding.
- **Foster mutual adaptation.** Address diversity by fostering mutual adaptation in which all components change somewhat, for the sake of achieving common objectives.

These eight have been reduced to four by the author to reflect the differences in an educational context and also to reflect the different attitudes that appear in the migration and refugee literature with regard to the settlement and integration of different cultures (Dalglish 1989). The four strategies are:

1. The **exclusion** of those from culturally diverse backgrounds or not acknowledging their existence or difference in any way. This is sometimes expressed

as there being no 'group' difference, only the individual learning differences that might be expected in any student body.

2. An **assimilation** perspective requires foreign students to behave as domestic students do. In the tertiary sector this often takes the form of suggesting that if students meet entry requirements they should be able to cope without special assistance.

3. The '**integration**' approach often uses a deficit model – which foreign students need to acquire a range of skills that they do not have. This is a deficit model that perceives them as a 'problem'. The need for assistance is recognised and responded to. The solutions can be many and varied including building effective relationships.

4. The **mutual adaptation** approach recognises the reality and desirability of multi-culturalism – that is that people of different cultures, including domestic students, have much to offer, as well as much to learn. All students then become a resource in the learning process. This approach recognises that a single goal, learning, can be approached by different routes.

The particular view held by the lecturer or facilitator of learning is critical to internationalising the curriculum as each person will be structuring the teaching and learning process based on a particular belief set. (Cunningham 2005) Few lecturers have been taught how to address the complex multicultural classroom (Clark 2002, Cunningham 2005) there may be a relationship between each of these attitudes and the four strategies extracted from the literature.

Those that see international students simply as a source of revenue, believing that institutions are attracting international students as a means of enhancing the 'bottom-line' may adopt a strategy of exclusion – of denying that there is an issue. The difference remains invisible.

Others argue that as the students have chosen to study within our institutions, they must expect to be treated in the same way as all other students. No adjustment need be made either to their learning style or approach to business practice as they meet the general entry requirements. This leads to assimilation strategies – demanding homogeneity.

Many recognise that if international students are to learn effectively, strategies need to be adopted that acknowledge their different backgrounds and learning experiences. This may lead to an integration approach, where students are helped to develop what are considered relevant competencies, attitudes and behaviours.

Very staff few appear to have considered that international students are a learning resource that will enable all students to learn how to operate in a multi-cultural world. Therefore the mutual adaptation model where difference is acknowledged and the difference forms the basis of mutual understanding – rather than a move to change to one particular perspective, is rarely implemented.

Methodology

In 2002 the author received a QUT Fellowship to explore issues related to international students and develop strategies to improve the support to international

students and the internationalisation of the curriculum throughout the Faculty of Business.

This fellowship aimed to:

1. Develop a better understanding of the issues of teaching and learning in diverse classrooms at QUT from the perspective of both teaching staff.
2. Identify best practice and effective strategies in facilitating positive learning outcomes for international students, at QUT, and around the world.
3. Develop resources that illustrate 'best practice' in teaching post-graduate classes that are a mix of domestic and international students.
4. Disseminate outcomes through publications and workshops.

The data collection approach taken was largely inductive, gathering as much evidence as possible about the topic, with nothing ruled out, using individual interviews and focus groups. Through the inductive process, it is possible to identify issues that have not previously been identified in the existing literature. The interviews with staff started with a general formulation of the potential issues gained from previous experience and the literature, but this was general in nature, and did not start with a theory or an hypothesis. As Miles and Huberman (1984) comments, "any researcher, no matter how unstructured or inductive, comes to fieldwork with some orienting ideas, foci and tools." (Page 27).

Teaching staff were randomly selected from a list of full and part-time lecturers in the Faculty of Business and invited to participate. Staff were very willing to contribute. The fairly relaxed conversational nature of the interviews enabled whatever issues were raised, to be explored. However, the interviews did have some of the characteristics of ethnographic interviews in that the interviewee was informed of the purpose of the interview and the interviewer had control of the interview, asking questions and probing the person's responses. (Potter, page 96).

The purpose was to get an idea of the nature of the issues teachers saw as confronting international students and themselves and the teaching strategies/techniques they have found the most helpful. The staff were asked to identify what they considered to be the critical issues for effective teaching and learning in their classrooms and the strategies they have found most effective in delivering good learning outcomes.

Nature of the respondents

The sample of 15 is small and can therefore offer only indicative results. The staff proved to be very diverse and reflected the diversity of the teaching staff in the Faculty of Business. Twelve of the respondents were full-time, 3 casual. All but 1 taught undergraduate students; 8 also taught post graduate students. One taught post-

graduate only. The length of experience of respondents varied considerably from 1 to 33 years. The range of disciplines taught was also very diverse. Although the numbers are small, they represent about 10% of the staff of the Faculty.

The range of class sizes common in the Faculty was also reflected. Most respondents operated in both the large lecture scenario with classes of 100-500 and the smaller tutorial classes with 20-25 students. Post-graduate classes ranged from 10- 40 students. The percentage of international students in the classes varied from 10% to as much as 75%. Two respondents also taught classes that were exclusively international. Most of the classes appear to have between 25% and 40% international students.

Issues Raised by the Presence of International Students

A range of issues, generated by the presence of international students, was identified by respondents. These issues often reflected the particular perspective taken by the academic to the presence of international students. The respondents were asked to identify how they felt about international students using the 4 stage model outlined above. International students were viewed differently by respondents and aspects of all four elements of the model were present.

International students are recruited as a source of revenue and present problems. One respondent identified that intellectually this is how he perceived international students but in his heart he subscribed to the second way – *International students come here to learn how we do it in Australia and the West and should have the necessary skills to fit in without additional help.* This response moves between the conceptual strategies of exclusion and assimilation and is likely to produce an unwillingness to address issues that are seen to be specifically to do with international students.

Two respondents found themselves torn between this second statement and the 3rd statement that: 'International students have very different backgrounds to domestic students and require assistance if they are to learn effectively at QUT.'

This 3rd response was the view shared by 8 of the respondents and is therefore the predominant view. One respondent was torn between the first statement that they are recruited as a source of money and present problems and the third response that they require assistance. The issues identified are seen from two different perspectives – both largely negative. This first is that the issues raised are an indication of lowering standards, and even the acceptance that international students need support, problematises their existence. Compensatory support is required viewing the international students from a deficit perspective.

Two respondents saw themselves as moving from seeing the students as requiring assistance to the 4th statement '*International students have a great deal to contribute to the learning process and we should facilitate this dialogue.*' One respondent felt that this 4th statement was the most appropriate. For this last group the issues are approached from a different perspective – that is what can the students contribute and

how can we assist them? This response recognizes the reality of diversity (not just among international students) and the need to see this diversity in a positive light whilst recognising the challenges mutual adaptation creates.

Overall these views suggest that the teaching staffing the Faculty of Business at QUT recognize the importance of international students to the university and the need to enable them to be successful learners. There is some indication that there is genuine movement towards the ‘mutual adaptation’ stage and recognition that intercultural understanding is vitally important. However, for most, international students are still a ‘problem’. What is also obvious is that many do not know how to facilitate international students learning and bring about the benefits of mutual adaptation.

Table One – Teacher Attitudes

<i>Attitudes</i>	<i>Conceptual strategies</i>
Recruited as source of Revenue and present problems	Exclusion
Should have necessary skills to fit in without additional help	Assimilation
Require assistance to learn	Integration
Have much to contribute and dialogue should be facilitated.	Mutual adaptation

Issues and Strategies

The different issues raised are not exclusive to one particular perspective but are viewed differently by the different groups. Those adopting an exclusion strategy may well ignore the issue altogether and insist that the only issues that arise are due to individual difference rather than cultural or environmental factors. Those who hold an assimilation view may well insist that international students are given no special treatment; equality rather than equity. For those taking an integration approach the issues are there to be solved – facilities need to be made available for the international students to develop the skills to succeed in the Australian tertiary system. For the last group, mutual adaptation offers many challenges. Many of the issues identified are equally apparent but not problematised. The assumption is that everyone should adapt to provide a more effective learning environment for everyone.

The issues identified by staff include a range of both personal and educational issues.

Personal issues created by the fact that they were far from familiar environments, such a home sickness, culture shock and associated grief and stress created by family expectations.

Language issues, which were very diverse and included such factors as: language barriers, very low English language ability for a minority, the broad range of discipline specific language/concepts that is often difficult to grasp. These language-related issues raised particular challenges for teachers including: the choice of words - particularly the use of colloquial language; pace needs to be slower; and the difficulty of knowing whether the problem is language or ability. The ability to write academic papers is often poor. Contextual issues are also important. Many of the subjects are taught within the Australian context. When a lecturer talks about democracy they mean the way democracy is in Australia.

Teaching and learning issues. These appear to differ a little between undergraduate and post graduate levels – or at least appear more prevalent at undergraduate level. Undergraduates are often very quiet, tend not to listen to/or understand instructions, and need to be checked individually. They need a lot more time than domestic students. Students want ‘templates’ which is seen to be inappropriate particularly at post-graduate level. It can appear that they come to pass exams rather than to learn. International students want face-to-face contact with lecturers rather than electronic/telephone contact and this can be very time consuming.

There appears to be a lack of shared expectations as a result perhaps of cultural difference in past educational experiences. There can be limited interaction/discussion in class. It is important to have integration between international and domestic students but this can be difficult and can lead to a perception of international students ‘free riding’ when in mixed groups with domestic students.

At post graduate level international students are a resource that can be drawn on to add professionally and culturally to the group. This was seen to be important as there is a need to have global business education to develop global business skills. However, providing an international context can be seen to be criticizing other systems – causing offence. Previous experiences of learning for many international students lead them not to challenge the information they are given. They seek the right answer. They are trained as the recipients of learning rather than active learners. Often there is the expectation that the teacher will know the right answer and all they have to do is learn from it. They will accept the teacher’s truth. This is most apparent amongst students from Asian countries – but they are not the only students who exhibit dependent behaviour. Many students appear to be unfamiliar with the expectations of critical analysis, oral presentations, participation and debate.

Many cultures have a high level of respect for teachers. As a result they will not challenge their teachers. Even to ask questions can suggest that the lecturer is not being effective. One Swiss student remarked that all through his undergraduate degree he had very little contact with the academic staff, and when he did it was on a very formal footing. One of the greatest changes for him was the fact that here he was expected to address the lecturers by their first names and had an opportunity to meet them socially. Indian students have shared how difficult they found it to address their lecturers by their first names.

“If a lecturer does not answer a student’s question in class but asks the other students what they think, in my country we would think that the teacher is either poorly qualified or lazy. But in Australia this way of not giving the answer ...it is common in our class, even when the Professor is our teacher.” (3rd year Thai student) (Ballard & Clanchy 1997:1)

“The other students ask many questions and even argue with the professor. I could never do that, because I do not think that is right behaviour. I do not want to become like Australian students. (2nd year Thai undergraduate) (Ballard and Clanchy 1997:15)

Support issues were seen to be important in a number of areas. There is a need for students to support each other to reduce isolation. There is also a need for institutional support for students, both academically and socially. It is important that lecturers have access to information outlining what support services are available for international students.

Professional Development Issues. Lecturers need better education/training with regard to international students. This is essential if the institution is to deliver what it promises.

Group work. The integration of domestic with international students in groups is often difficult because of language difficulties and time pressures. The difficulties with tutorials and group work require lecturing /tutorial staff to have patience, firmness and understanding.

Individual ability. Some international students lack English language and the academic foundation to do well; they are not confident in using English and are not capable of the required academic level. They are not taught the required academic skills; they are expected to have them.

Demands on lecturing/tutorial staff. The respondents identified a number of different demands placed on them when they have international students in their classes.

Lack of contextual knowledge can be a problem in both teaching and assessment, as it can make understanding more difficult. Students need longer for examinations.

The presence of international students can also curb the amount of material that can be covered, the amount of participation and discussion that occurs. It can lead to being less specific in trying to globalise the issues. More repetition and explanation is required and there is a need to be careful with choice of words. It is often difficult to know at what level to pitch the class and this can lead to a tendency to teach to the lowest level of domestic students. International students often appear to be passive learners and there is a need to choose learning resources and activities carefully and consider different types of assessment.

There were a few respondents who identified positive outcomes from the diversity in class but recognised that this did not happen by accident. The most important

benefit identified by respondents was the fact that having international students in the class exposes domestic students to other thoughts and ideas, and facilitates professional and cultural sharing. This requires effort and skill on the part of the lecturer and recognition that international networking could have long term benefits.

Other benefits were seen to be that international students often set good examples by being industrious and show great respect for the lecturer. Their presence slows the process down and requires great clarity that is good for all students. Northern European students have high expectations of feedback that can also raise the standards.

Teaching Strategies

So given what is known about learning and the issues that arise when this level of cultural diversity is present, the respondents were asked to identify what teaching and learning strategies they used to encourage participation and success in their programs? These are the strategies that they and a focus group of teachers who are active in working with international students, identified as being effective in culturally diverse classrooms. These need to be employed from the first class. The first few weeks are critical; as if international students fall behind they are often unable to catch up. Many of these strategies have been identified in the literature as being effective.

Be Aware of Stereotyping. Avoid prejudging others' knowledge or ability, even their language skills, on the basis of presumed difference – someone who looks Chinese may turn out to be third generation Australian. (Sturz & Kleiner 2005) Recently colleagues came into a day classes and commented that the class had divided down the middle with Asian on one side and Australians on the other. From an appearance point of view there was a difference. However, several of the 'Asians' were in fact Australian and most of the 'Australians' were from Europe.

Don't be afraid to ask for help in pronouncing names, in finding out about how things are done in a different place. By asking you are indicating a genuine interest. Students need to belong and feel valued in the classroom (Jones 2005)

Make the Material Relevant. Most international students will use what they learn in their own countries so acknowledge this. Talk about their countries as an integral part of the discourse. Ask them to contribute local information. Draw in class examples from different countries and ask students to identify what, how, it occurs in their homeland. (DomNwachukwu 2005, Ryan 2000)

Provide a Context. When talking about government – clarify whether everyone has a shared understanding? If there is no time to explain the context, produce handouts with a glossary of terms. (This may help some local students as well).

Make Explicit the Benefits of Diversity. In encouraging participation, explain why cross cultural groups are useful for an activity. This is important for both international students and domestic students. Domestic students are often impatient with those who are slow with their English, and the reasons for them to participate should also be clearly spelled out. Be explicit as to why it is important for them to be able to participate. They are learning how it is done in the local culture. Ask them to

share, wherever possible, how it is done in their culture. One lecturer indicated that when he offers an example he will ask students to provide similar examples from at least two other countries. (Jones 2005)

Practice Good Communication in the Classroom. Avoid acronyms, jargon or 'local' jokes. This will help all students. Practice active and genuine listening. Try not to be impatient and give those who try to express themselves an opportunity to complete what they have to say. Prepare written material for them that can help them clarify the instructions. When taking feedback from the groups write the answers, conclusions, ideas on the board so that the students can see how the ideas given by members of the group interrelate. This also gives these answers credibility. There are students who do not recognise the importance/validity of their fellow students' observations.

Process Instructions. Explain very clearly why a participative activity is important, and exactly what the students are to do. Explain the process not just the desired outcome. If the activity is group discussion, give them clear questions to answer. The more specific the requirements, particularly early on, the more self confident the students will become and the more willing to participate.

Recognise Language Difficulties Give people time to answer questions. Don't ask second language students to answer questions without notice. Give them time to work out their answer. Small group work in class appears to work well. Asian students are often very good at working in small groups. They can prepare their feedback so they have time to manage the language. Sometimes the teacher can move around the groups so that they can give the feedback in that smaller environment, before they have to present back to the larger group. Relate the issues being discussed to the specific place in the text, for ease of access to those who are slow at reading English. This request from international students is often because they do not recognise the pronunciation of certain terms, but can identify and understand them in the text.

Clearly Set Out Expectations. Clarify your expectations so that they match with the students' expectations. Use a marking criteria sheet for assignments. This will assist all students to learn from their mistakes. Explain how the assessment works and what the expectations are. It is important to explain and discuss plagiarism. Also ensure they have the necessary data collection skills for the assessment type that you are setting.

Recognising Age and Experience. At post graduate level the difference is often one of work experience and maturity rather than nationality – some lecturers' stream according to work experience others deliberately mix and explain the reason for mixing.

Supplementary Tutorials – these can be on any topic from study skills to understanding statistics. They are open to every one, but are used largely by international students.

Glossary of Terms developed so that students can ensure an understanding of unfamiliar terms. The aural component is also important. Students may understand

what the word means when they read it, but not recognise it when spoken. If such a glossary could be oral as well as written this may assist.

Use of Activities. Discussion groups around important content work well. A ‘getting to know you activity’ can help break the ice and encourage integration between different groups.

Table 2 issues and strategies in the classroom.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Strategies</i>
Personal	Provide a context.
Language	Glossary of terms Recognise language difficulties
Teaching & learning	Clearly set out expectations. Practice good communication in the classroom. Make the material relevant
Support	Make explicit the benefits of diversity
Group work	Process instructions.
Individual ability	Be aware of stereotyping Supplementary tutorials Recognising age and experience
Cultural sharing	Use of Activities

Conclusions

This small study raises a range of issues, but focuses predominantly on teacher attitudes, acknowledging the critical role played by teachers in the internationalisation process and the strategies that are currently being used to address the issues. The views of teachers will determine the extent to which the curriculum is internationalised, and the way it is done. Teachers’ attitudes vary, reflecting the complexity of issues raised. What also became apparent was that institution’s expectations related to internationalisation were unclear. What is the university’s view of what internationalisation of the curriculum means – what support is there for each of the four approaches identified earlier? A clear view from the university policy perspective would provide a framework for the allocation of resources and the professional development of staff.

All of the teaching strategies described are currently being used successfully by individual teachers, and the search for more ideas is a continuous one. Being as inclusive as possible is important – if talking about cities, mention cities from around the world. When discussing theories, provide the cultural context for the theory and then ask students to think about their own context, and express a view. They won't always answer – but the issue is raised in a way that gives importance to their context. Small groups appear to encourage discussion. The importance of inter-cultural communication and activity – the fact that in today's business world every one will have to deal with people from different countries and cultures must be explicit. The classroom provides a safe environment for developing skills in this area.

Although there is much more work to do the results so far have been promising. Lecturers using these strategies appear do have far less difficulty with domestic students complaining about international students in group work activity. When the students form groups for any activity it appears taken for granted that diversity is important. The ability of international students to use acceptable analytical processes appears to be growing.

“You learn from foreigners that there is more than one path to a goal. Effective wealth creation demands that we use all the paths available to us “(Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993:16, cited in Sinclair and Wilson 1999:27)

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