'By nature all men are alike, but by education widely different.'

Intercultural Competence: Maximising the learning of diverse student groups via innovative intercultural awareness training

Helen Higson - 20th November 2009

Overview

▶ Showcase work which addresses issues around maximising learning in an international/multicultural learning community
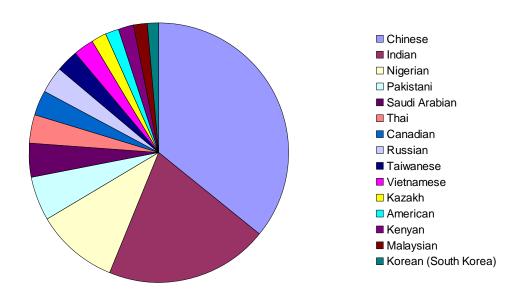
▶ Research-informed

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Aston's student population

▶ 2,150 overseas students from over 100 countries

 ▶ (Top 15 Countries)

▶ 30% of staff from outside the UK

▶ UK students from many different ethnic backgrounds

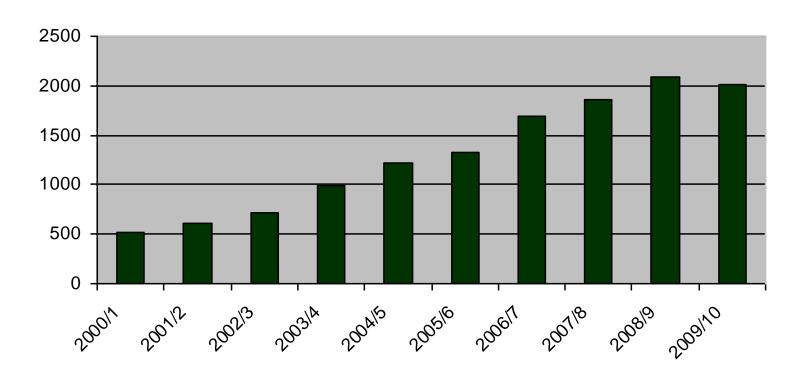▶ Enormous growth in diversity of student population

 ▶ (Student Numbers)

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Aston's student population

Top 15 Countries - (Data from Planning Website September 2009)

- Chinese
- Indian
- Nigerian
- Pakistani
- Saudi Arabian
- Thai
- Canadian
- Russian
- Taiwanese
- Vietnamese
- Kazakh
- American
- Kenyan
- Malaysian
- Korean (South Korea)

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International Enrolments (in attendance) since 2000

Introduce MAP

▶ A consortium of artists led by Chris Higgins and Fiona Lesley

▶ "Pioneering work in the fields of performance, creative development, education and training."
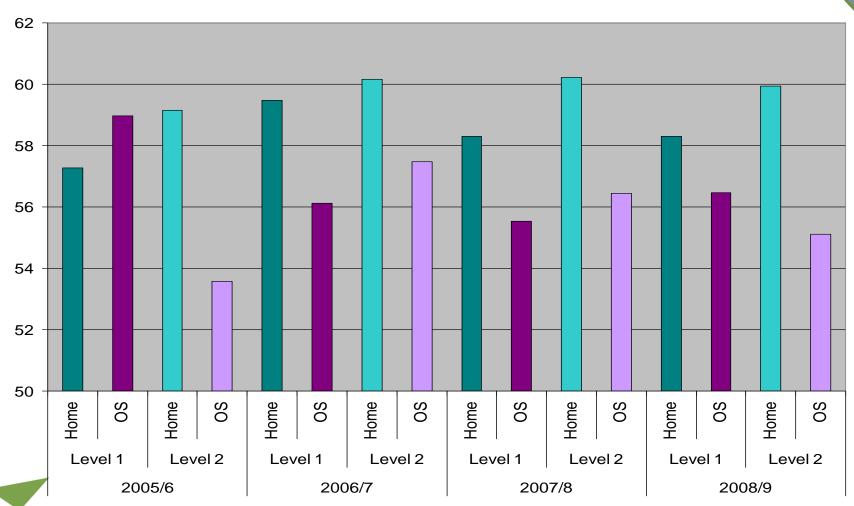
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Where I started

- Growth in overseas students: How can they integrate?

- Introduction of a specific module

- How can we help them perform better after year one?

- Struggles with behaviour in group work, particularly UK students

- Increasingly mixed group of learners

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Average End of Year Performance 2005/6 – 2008/9 by Level and Home/Overseas Status

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Intercultural learning effectiveness framework

Home students	Overseas students	All students
Herzfeldt, 2007 (Developmental learning theories)	Ippolito, 2007 (International communication theories)	Welikala and Watkins, 2008 (Discourse theories)

Intercultural learning effectiveness framework

Home students
Herzfeldt, 2007 *(Developmental learning theories)*
The effectiveness of an individual to work across cultural boundaries increases with the number of their international/intercultural experiences

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Intercultural learning effectiveness framework

Overseas students
Ippolito, 2007 *(International communication theories)*
It is important to challenge the deficit model of intercultural training where the UK approach is seen as the best

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Intercultural learning effectiveness framework

All students
Welikala and Watkins, 2008 (Discourse theories)
Building training on individual stories rather than stereotypes

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Why this approach?

▶ 'Participating in the arts gives adults experiences, contexts and tools to help them re-experience, revise and reconceptualise multicultural diversity in their lives and communities.' (Wesley, 2007, p.13)

▶ Doesn't this approach share features of all good teaching?

▶ Creating conversations, working towards dialogue
▶ Creating reflection

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What have we done with MAP?

- 2007/8: 450 final years

- Jaguar Land Rover Arts and Business Award for the changing cultural within an organisation

- 2008/9: 600 first years, 80 MBA, Postgraduate Certificate, Intercultural Awareness Week

- 2009: 600 plus first years (including a staff session), 90 plus MBA, Postgraduate Certificate

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Findings of my surveys

- These ways of innovative training encourage reflection

- Ways of creating new kinds of social space

- It is more sustainable to train staff rather than students

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