Enhancing teaching and learning in the International Classroom: the Groningen experience

Kevin Haines
University of Groningen
The Netherlands
k.b.j.haines@rug.nl
Internationalization at University of Groningen (UoG)

• Research university, 5,000 international students, 25% study abroad
• > 120 nationalities
• 35% ‘international’ academic staff
• 107 Master’s, 21 Bachelor’s, 11 Joint programs in English
International Classroom project at University of Groningen: Why?

European quality label CeQuint (Aerden 2014); evidence of the added value of internationalisation
Attract more international students and international staff (create diversity)
Create greater inclusion of all students and staff
Produce higher quality and more innovative education
Achieve higher employability for all students
(see also Wilkinson 2013 on Maastricht University)
International Classroom project at University of Groningen: How?

Working from a vision on internationalisation
Involving students and staff from diverse backgrounds (in culture, education, experience)
Working effectively with student and staff diversity through purposeful interaction
Including the overall learning environment (formal, informal and hidden curriculum)
Offering appropriate support for staff and students in a multicultural and multilingual environment.
(See also Carroll 2015; Leask 2015)
Do teachers need support in order to cope with English Medium Instruction (EMI)?

Key topics for teacher in-service development programmes in intercultural pedagogy (Scandinavia):

- management of international classrooms
- attending to diverse learning styles through flexible pedagogical approaches
- ensuring the clarity of instructions for, and guidance of, thesis writing are the key topics to be addressed in the teacher in-service development programmes.

Airey et al. (2015)
International Classroom: Lecturer perspectives

Internationalisation as a **catalyst**:

“To the academic staff, internationalisation thus appears as a change process, which may fuel the development of more reflective teaching practices or indeed lead to the formation of ‘new academic identities’”.

Tange 2010: 139, citing Hellstén 2008
International Classroom: Lecturer perspectives

Internationalisation as a catalyst:

“The Chinese learner has been very much considered a ‘passive learner’ who does not contribute during lessons. But now, I know that silence is also very important for learning in some cultures. It is learning for me actually ... now, I learn to be silent sometimes.”

University Teacher (Welikala 2012: 52)
A state of becoming

“Intercultural competence is a state of becoming, rather than a destination. Hence it is particularly important to explore pedagogies that will assist students to enter this state of becoming interculturally competent.”

Leask 2015: 63
Cultures in the international university
Westerholm & Räsänen (2015), adapted from Flowerdew & Miller 1995

• Cultural backgrounds of lecturers and students, values & experiences, etc.

• Discourse conventions, conceptual frameworks & paradigms, hard vs. soft sciences, interdisciplinary sciences, etc.

• Source for exemplification of concepts and terms, local and intercultural communication conventions, etc.

• Teaching styles, beliefs and learner identities, use of humour, academic practices, power distance, unwritten rules, etc.

ETHNIC CULTURE

LOCAL CULTURE

DISCIPLINARY CULTURE

ACADEMIC CULTURE
Enabling purposeful intercultural dialogue and engagement

“I really liked the whole integration of culture along with the really real medical issue. It’s the end of life, how are you supposed to treat people, etcetera. Especially with the discussion later in the coach group meeting with all the different opinions, you really do realize, it’s true I am in a really international group right now.”

Maja, 2nd Year Swedish Medical Bachelor’s student

Haines 2015
International Classroom project: Integrated Activities

1. **Pilot projects** describing existing good practice and defining principles for the international classroom that may guide practice across faculties

2. Development of an over-arching conceptual framework incorporating these principles (for implementation)

3. Development of an institutional language policy: ‘An Inclusive Dual Plus Approach’ to facilitate implementation (University of Groningen 2014)
International Classroom: Pilot Cases 2014

Two parallel perspectives:

1. Medical science groups
   International Bachelor's in Medicine Groningen
   Faculty of Medical Sciences

2. Industrial Product Design groups
   Bachelor’s Industrial Engineering & Management Science
   Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences
International Classroom project at University of Groningen: initial observations

Vision on internationalisation at faculty and programme level can be enhanced

High impact of Dutch culture (local, disciplinary, academic)

Diversity can be used more as a resource

Learning outcomes based on international frameworks but not explicitly global and intercultural

Support required (tailor-made and integrated) for language and intercultural competences

Important role for students (study associations)
Purposefulness through Constructive Alignment

- Teachers need to be clear about what they want their students to learn;
- The performance objectives need to be placed in a hierarchy (which becomes a grading system);
- Students need to be placed in situations that are judged likely to elicit the required learnings;
- Students are required to provide evidence that their learning can match the stated objectives.

Biggs 1996: 360-361
Explain financial conduct and regulation issues, such as conflicts of interest and the Financial Services and Marketing Act, as they arise in the context of relevant transactions...

... to a client accustomed to operating in a different national context

Jones & Killick 2013: 173
Leveraging diversity

“Interaction is planned into courses, projects and assessment as a normal learning tool – and seen as one requiring support.”

Carroll (2015: 116)
Teaching & Learning: What occurs?

Students: read, summarise, discuss in pairs, present, discuss in group, read more, present again, discuss with expert, receive feedback (listen), write draft, etcetera

Content teachers: provide access to expert knowledge, facilitate the group process, act as sounding board (listen), give constructive feedback, assess, etcetera

Observations of learning/teaching activities in two EMI sites at University of Groningen (Medical Science Groups/Product Design Groups) 2014
Purposeful feedback

“To be effective, feedback needs to be clear, purposeful, meaningful, and compatible with students’ **prior knowledge** and to provide logical connections”. Hattie & Timperley 2007: 104
“Writers consistently draw on prior knowledge in order to navigate within the various contexts for writing and learning ... Prior knowledge is a complex construct that can benefit or hinder writing transfer.”

Elon University 2013: 4
“I don’t teach language”

“I cannot say that I test them or train them in English. Of course they can always come and ask me, but I don’t think I take responsibility for training them in English. I don’t correct their work in English”.

Physics lecturer cited in Airey 2012: 75
‘ROAD-MAPPING’ as FRAMEWORK for EMEMUS

Dafouz and Smit (2014) *Applied Linguistics*
“In the International Baccalaureate I had learnt to write essays, to structure essays, to express myself in essays. So since I had done the IB I knew how to write an essay and I knew how to put my ideas down nicely. And I thought there was quite some discrepancy in the quality of the essays.”

Vincent, Lithuanian Medical Bachelor’s graduate
“They expect you to be able to do academic writing, but you have never done it before. There’s also a lot of diversity in what has been done before. It would be the first time for me to do it in Dutch too, although the language would be a lot better.”

Vera, 2nd Year Dutch Medical Bachelor’s student
## Feedback to Vincent
(research training report)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction &amp; research question</td>
<td>Contains good elements but logical structure lacking.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English not fluent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Referencing limited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data processing</td>
<td>Excellent. Only figure legends could have been better.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion and Conclusion</td>
<td>Adequate but without creative new thoughts.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of X types between Y and Z lacking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form and structure, inc. correct use of language</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>Sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work attitude</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final mark</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Purposeful interaction
(Kevin Haines & van den Hende 2014)
Making the familiar strange

I find it difficult to make the familiar strange, for the power of the familiar is overwhelming.

Wisniewski 2000: 19
Enhancing teaching and learning in the International Classroom: the Groningen experience

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

k.b.j.haines@rug.nl
Useful references and resources


http://intluni.eu/uploads/media/

    The_opportunities_and_challenges_of_the_MMLS_Final_report_sept_2015.pdf
Useful references and resources


Elon Statement on Writing Transfer. 29 July 2013.

http://www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/teaching/ers/writing_transfer/statement.xhtml

Haines, Kevin. 2015. Imagining oneself: Narrative evaluations of the professional identities of learners in a transnational higher-educational setting. *Learning & Teaching* 8(1). 30–49.


Useful references and resources


Westerholm, Kirsi & Anne Räsänen. 2015. Sharing and promoting disciplinary competences for university teaching in English: voices from the University of Jyvaskyla language centre’s TACE programme. In J. Jalkanen, E. Jokinen & P. Taalas (Eds), Voices in pedagogical development – Expanding, enhancing and exploring higher education language learning, 131–157. Dublin: Research-publishing.net.
