

Project Report for BAICE AGM

INTERNATIONALISING EDUCATION RESEARCH CULTURES AND GRADUATE TRAINING: BAICE East of England Partnership

Report on activities to date

Through funding from BAICE, two linked workshops were held in May and June 2009, with the aim of establishing an East of England partnership to bring together staff and graduate students working on educational or education-related research in the Centre for Commonwealth Education and the Centre for Education and International Development in the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge and the Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE)/School of Education and Lifelong Learning & School of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia. Supplementary funding was provided by a grant from the Centre for Commonwealth Education, Cambridge which helped cover the travel, food and other costs of the workshops. All participants were provided with copies of relevant papers, information about BAICE and networking information.

These two workshops provided an opportunity to reflect on the ‘internationalisation of higher education’ in terms of educational research in a cross-cultural context, as well as exploring issues around pedagogy and practice in education faculties. A full report detailing the presentations and discussions at each workshop is currently being finalised by the organising team and will be available shortly on the BAICE website and on each institutions’ website.

First workshop: 18th May 2009, organised by the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge

This one-day workshop on ‘**Educational research: developing cross-cultural perspectives on theory, methodology and practice**’ was attended by 34 participants (3 staff and 14 students from Cambridge, 6 staff and 11 students from UEA). The workshop was planned and facilitated by a team led by Madeleine Arnot (Centre for Education and International Development) and from the Centre for Commonwealth Education (CCE) consisting of Darleen Opfer and Ciaran Sugrue. Sally Roach provided administrative and logistical support for the workshop. The Cambridge team were helped by two graduate facilitators Rabab Tamish and Manzoorul Abedin; notes taken and written up by Antonina Tereschenko.

During the morning session, four presentations were offered and discussed:

- ❖ Professor Christopher Colclough, Director of the Centre for Education and International Development, University of Cambridge on ‘Does International Education Help International Development?’
- ❖ Dr Ciaran Sugrue, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, on ‘A Tale of Two Titles: ‘From Heroes & Heroines to Hermaphrodites: Emancipation or Emasculation of School Leaders and Leadership?’ Or Leadership: Culture, Conjunction, Disjunction?’

- ❖ Dr Esther Priyadharshini, Centre for Applied Research, University of East Anglia on ‘Double-binds on “inter-national” researchers: A critical look at the discourse of internationalism’
- ❖ Professor Madeleine Arnot, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge on ‘Decentring hegemonic gender theory: the implications for educational research and teaching’

In the afternoon session, staff and graduates from UEA and Cambridge participants were allocated into mixed groups to discuss a range of pre-prepared questions. Each group was asked to record its findings and to discuss the main issues raised at a plenary session.

Activity 1 – Research Culture and Context

- (a) Please introduce yourself and highlight the meaning for you personally of going abroad to study.
- (b) What sort of issues are raised for you by the morning talks about the internationalisation of educational thinking?

Activity 2 – Researching in your National Context

- (a) What are the traditions of research in your country? What does it mean to do research in your country?
- (b) Are the traditions in your country different from those identified in your courses, research training?
- (c) What about your experience in the field? What sort of issues are raised in your national context about the purpose and approaches to research?

Activity 3 – Differing Research Traditions: making links

- (a) To what extent are Eurocentric approaches to research are problematic in your national context?
- (b) How do you bring this approach and your national knowledge and traditions together?
- (c) What would you recommend in terms of developing a more international approach to teaching and research in education?

Second workshop: 22nd. June 2009 organised by Centre for Applied Research in Education, University of East Anglia

On June 22nd, the second collaborative workshop focused on the theme ‘**Academic cultures-academic styles: exploring cross-cultural issues in postgraduate teaching and learning**’ and was attended by 34 participants from UEA and Cambridge. The workshop was planned and facilitated by a team of staff and research students from CARE/UEA: Juancho Barron-Pastor, Oscar Holguin-Rodriguez, Kathleen Lane, Yann Lebeau, Anna Magyar, Esther Priyadharshini, and Anna Robinson-Pant. Dawn Corby and Libby Allen provided administrative and logistical support. The UEA team also acted as facilitators for the small group activities (participants were allocated randomly through a ‘lottery’ on arrival, to ensure a mix of staff and students from Norwich and Cambridge in each group).

The first part of the day included the following presentations:

- Interrogating assumptions in research methods courses for international students: Presentation by Kathleen Lane and Yann Lebeau (UEA)
- Can we ever go home again?' Presentation by Darleen Opfer (University of Cambridge)

We then divided into small groups to discuss the issues emerging from the two presentations in relation to three perspectives: disciplinary, geographical and professional perspectives. Each group member was asked to introduce themselves from these three perspectives first:

- ❖ Disciplinary refers to where you locate yourself intellectually and your academic field (e.g. development studies, anthropology, economics, education, health etc.)
- ❖ Geographical refers to the diversity of cultural, social, and physical environments in which research is carried out, including consideration of regional/national epistemologies.
- ❖ Professional refers to where you come from in terms of career/institutional context, as well as where you are going! (e.g. Ministry of Education, school teacher, NGO worker etc)

Each group focused on issues arising directly from the presentations, noting down points on post-it notes. As the basis for the reporting back, the post-it notes were sorted into three categories (according to the three perspectives) and rapporteurs from each group presented on these.

In the afternoon session on 'International research students and their supervisors: transformation for whom?' Anna Magyar, Anna Robinson-Pant and Scholastica Mokake introduced extracts from a film currently being made with PhD students from across UEA about their experiences and expectations of supervision and doing doctoral research. In six groups, we then discussed the issues arising in the video in relation to each of the following three perspectives:

- ❖ Research student perspective
- ❖ Staff perspective
- ❖ Institutional perspective.

The aim was also to draw out the implications of the film for these three 'agents'.

Evaluation and future activities

Participants at each workshop filled in an evaluation sheet. The evaluations of both events were exceptionally positive. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to share ideas about our teaching/learning approaches and doctoral research in the two different institutions (UEA and Cambridge University), as reflected in the participants' comments:

“It has allowed me as an international student to have a forum to express some of the very pressing concerns I have had”

“Very fulfilling. Discussion of lots of pedagogical and theoretical issues of international dimension”

“Great day and discussions. Some presentations put more questions than gave answers – which is very good”

“It raised questions about the implications of doing research within a different context. It was good and created an environment for sharing ideas and experiences”

“An opportunity to express and listen to other international students about our experiences and challenges.”

“I am taking home a deeper connection with students from other developing countries, a strong sense of identification and a renewed sense of commitment to working towards improving the education of developing countries”.

Outcomes:

We are hoping to take forward some ideas proposed in the concluding sessions for future projects, recommendations for improving university teaching of research methods courses and research practice and developing collaborative publications (such as a set of working papers) in our next team meeting.

A number of graduate students have made links across the institution and hope to be able to help plan new events such as a theme event on ‘African Educational Research’ and ‘Researching Education in the South American Context’.

Madeleine Arnot and Anna Robinson-Pant
21/8/09