



Faculty of
Humanities, Languages
and Social Sciences

BALEAP

Professional Issues Meeting

Intercultural Communication

February 26 2005

University of the West of England, Bristol

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British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP)
Intercultural Communication Professional Issues Meeting
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ROOMS	2B20	2B25
	MORNING SESSIONS	MORNING PARALLEL SESSIONS
9-10	Arrival and registration	Coffee and Tea in the FOYER
10.00-10.30	WELCOME and PIM business BALEAP business A short introduction to the EU Socrates Comenius Project	PLENARY
10.30-11.10	CODE: (1) Second language Learners' identities: a personal view Cristina Ros I Sole Open University	PLENARY
11.10-11.40	CODE: (4) Developing cultural awareness and intercultural communication on an international foundation programme Nicky Guard and Sarah Hundleby Anglia Polytechnic University	CODE: (2) Raising awareness of international student issues across the university Paul Roberts, University of Hertfordshire
11.40-12.20	CODE: (5+6) A little inspiration goes a long way. Exploring students' intercultural dilemmas through their diaries Monika Foster Napier Univ Business School Edinburgh	CODE: (2 + 7) Extending our experience beyond the EAP department Dave Burnapp and Geraldine Enjelvin University College, Northampton
12.20-13.00	CODE: (3) Cultural representation in management training texts: How is intercultural competence taught? Valerie Ainscough Chaucer College, Canterbury	CODE: (1) Who owns the space? Julia Hathaway and Shuna Neilson Richmond, The American International University, London
1-2	Lunch in THE FOYER followed by	Coffee and Tea in THE FOYER

	AFTERNOON SESSIONS 2B20	AFTERNOON PARALLEL SESSIONS 2B25
2-2.40	CODE: (1) An exploration of the relationship between identity positioning and participation in an intercultural learning community at a university in the UK Sarah Rich University of Exeter	CODE: (6) Insights from a Chinese/British intercultural focus group Ann Smith Nottingham University
2.40-3.20	CODE: (7) Cross-Cultural learning through Computer Mediated Communication John Morley Manchester University	CODE: (2, particularly support staff) Cross cultural training for support staff in universities Victoria Odeniyi, Middx university
3.20-3.40		Coffee and Tea in THE FOYER
3.40-4.20	CODE: Interactive workshop Promoting the creation of safe spaces for intercultural dialogue. Imaging other possible worlds: learning about others, learning about ourselves Vanessa Andreotti Nottingham University DISCUSSION	PLENARY - INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP
4.30-5.00	Announcements AOB	

KEY

There are 7 main strands in this conference, number-coded as follows:

- 1 Identity issues (learners/staff, natives/non-natives) and power issues
- 2 Cross-cultural training for university lecturers and/or support staff
- 3 Intercultural Communication and the business context
- 4 Promoting cultural awareness on university courses/foundation courses
- 5 Practical ways of approaching cultural learning
- 6 + (China-specific)
- 7 Computer-related

Programme and Book of Abstracts

Please note:

Abstracts are given in chronological order, in pairs, so that participants can select from the two parallel options at the same time of day, quickly.

For example:

2.00-2.40

Abstract 1 2B20

CODE: (1)

**An exploration of the relationship
between identity positioning and
participation in an intercultural learning
community at a university in the UK**

Sarah Rich

University of Exeter, UK

Abstract 2 Parallel Session 2B25

CODE: (6)

**Insights from a
Chinese/British
intercultural focus group**

Ann Smith

Nottingham university

KEY

There are 7 main strands in this conference, number-coded above the title as follows:

1. Identity issues (learners/staff, natives/non-natives) and power issues
2. Cross-cultural training for university lecturers and/or support staff
3. Intercultural Communication and the business context
4. Promoting cultural awareness on university courses/foundation courses
5. Practical ways of approaching cultural learning
6. + (China-specific)
7. Computer-related

All **PLENARY** sessions will be held in 2B20, all **PARALLEL** sessions will be held in 2B25. All breaks take place in the foyer outside these rooms.

Time slot: 10.30-11.10 PLENARY
Room: 2B20

Second Language Learners' Identities: a personal view

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Traditional and purportedly apolitical views of language learning have tended to judge linguistic competence from a monolingual point of view (Cook, 1999; Guilherme, 2002). As a result, L2 speakers are too often regarded as failed native speakers who very rarely achieve native speaker or bilingual status (Cook, 1999; Kramsch 1998). Undoubtedly, this is the vantage point of the language teacher, the 'native' or the 'expert'. In this paper I intend to look at language learning from another view point, that of the individual who reaches a personal goal measured by his/her own yardsticks, but one that develops within society. From the early stages of apprenticeship, language learning is a political exercise, where issues of legitimacy and unequal relations of power are crucial. Indeed, more socially oriented views of language learning not only acknowledge that language learners are legitimate owners and users of the second language (Cook, 1999), but they also see it as a socialization and an identity building process (Pavlenko, 2002; 2003). This paper discusses how language learners can construct new linguistic and cultural identities in the second language, and how this is drawn from the baggage they bring with them, i.e. their identity markers (i.e. profession, gender, ethnicity, nationality, etc.); their previous language experience; their image of themselves; their desires for the future; and, as a result of all this, the position they negotiate for themselves in the new environment. Indeed, identity, is not a static concept, rather, it is an entity that is multiple and changeable, which allows the individual to modify it according to the experiences s/he goes through. In the context of language learning, the individual, with its linguistic capacity, will be its principle agent of change. The following research questions will be posed in order to investigate the social and political issues language learners grapple with when creating a new cultural and linguistic identity:

- To what extent, and how, do second language learners acquire the right to speak in the communities of practice?
- What role does the individual's background and desires for the future have on the identity he/she constructs in the new language?

To do this, this paper will report on a qualitative study in which a group of Beginners' Spanish language learners are interviewed about their motivations for learning the language, their experiences of being language learners, their perceptions of their identities across their lives,

and the impact that learning about the target language and culture has had on their identities, self-worth and image of themselves. The analysis adopted draws from contemporary psychological theory and post-structuralist approaches to identity (Norton 2000; Pavlenko 2002). The interview methodology used seeks to distance itself from positivist and objective assumptions and encourages the use of background information and free narrative to address these questions (Norton, 2000; De Fina, 2003). In this way, I seek to unveil how language learning and the opportunities that the L2 socialization processes offer beginner students interact to create a new identity, based on the individual language learning experience rather than on some pre-conceived ideas of 'nativeness'.

References

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Time slot: 11.10-11.40

Room: 2B20

Developing cultural awareness and intercultural communication on an international foundation programme

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The International Foundation Programme at Anglia Polytechnic University is a one-year course of university preparation for students whose academic ability and English language skills are not considered adequate for undergraduate study in the UK. The course has been running in various guises for ten years. During this time, while numbers have increased considerably, cultural diversity has decreased. The course now recruits sixty percent of its students from Chinese speaking countries and twenty percent from Middle Eastern countries, with the remainder coming from a range of other countries. This has led to increasing problems in maintaining diversity within teaching groups and in enabling good intercultural relations among foundation students.

The proposed presentation describes an innovative approach to focussing on the issues arising from cultural diversity, which combines the theory and practice of intercultural studies, through a compulsory module known as 'Crossing Cultures'.

Crossing Cultures introduces and discusses the theories of interculturalism through lectures and seminars, which raise awareness of the diversity of cultures within the IFP and teach the students how to use these theories to describe and analyse cultural difference. The module also attempts to raise issues that may subconsciously be a barrier to students settling quickly into the UK and the higher education learning system by using the concepts of intercultural communication.

The presentation will describe the module and discuss issues and constraints which arise from introducing this intercultural studies module into a foundation programme.

Time slot: 11.10-11.40 Parallel Session
Room: 2B25

Raising awareness of international student issues across the university

Paul Roberts
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In this paper I will briefly describe three aspects of the situation at the University of Hertfordshire with regard to international students:

- a) ELT is seen as a sort of hospital, sanatorium or rehabilitation unit where international students are to be 'cured' of their 'disability', which is the way their not being English is often viewed.
- b) ELT focuses on teaching international students to accommodate linguistically and culturally to the environment around them and not to negotiate common ground, not to use English as a vehicle for their own culture.
- c) Non ELT staff continue regardless and unaware (up to a point). There may be psychological and behavioural accommodation to international students on the part of individuals, but institutionally there is none.

I will go on to describe some training days and training programmes I have organised and run for non-ELT staff across the university. Some of these have been for lecturing and academic staff, others for administrative and 'front-line' staff. I will describe some of the issues I have tried to deal with, such as the question of different varieties of English in use among international students and the question of acculturating international students to the institutional norm, while still respecting their own cultures. I will also give examples of some of the training procedures I have used with particular emphasis on 'hands-on' approaches, putting staff as closely as possible in the position of the international students they normally interact with.

Time slot: 11.40-12.20

Room: 2B20

'A little inspiration goes a long way'.

Exploring students' intercultural dilemmas through their diaries.

Monika Foster

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From the moment international students arrive to study in Britain, they engage in a variety of intercultural experiences. They are expected to embrace the target language home country's culture, the new academic culture and the culture of their new classroom. Little attention may be given to students' own culture and their perceptions of the target language' culture. Students may be struggling to decode various cultural constructs or, what is often the case, pursuing their studies while holding many cultural misunderstandings. One way of helping students to reflect on the new culture and their own culture, as well enabling course providers to understand the students' intercultural dilemmas, is through reflective diaries.

This paper will present the results of an ongoing study of international students, in particular Chinese students', cultural and educational background and its influence on the perceptions of the other culture. The study involves students on the Napier English Foundation Programme (EFP), who are asked to write reflective diaries. The diaries have proved to be a powerful tool for students to discuss their intercultural experiences, especially in the area of intercultural communication, which they find difficult to express verbally during class time. As a result of the issues raised in the diaries some of the EFP modules have been re-shaped or developed further.

The paper will be an opportunity to discuss issues surrounding Chinese students' intercultural experiences and the way the diaries may help them in this process. It will also include a discussion on the ways of providing effective guidance and feedback on the diaries.

Time slot: 11.40-12.20 Parallel Session
Room: 2B25

Extending our Experience Beyond the EAP Department

Dave Burnapp & Geraldine Enjelvin
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It is now accepted throughout the EAP profession that international students need more than a narrowly linguistic competence in order to succeed in their studies, and that their success depends on acquiring wider familiarity with the discourse practices of the academic community. These practices have both cultural and epistemological components which determine, for example, the expected behaviours of students and tutors, and the nature of the texts they use.

The authors of this paper have been involved in an emerging project which first developed an online pre-sessional EAP course which uses Intercultural Training techniques to overtly present students with cultural and epistemological components of discourse practices. Following on from this the authors developed a staff development-training package to familiarise academic staff throughout the institution with the process of acculturation which the students undergo, with the intention of achieving empathy and synergy. Currently they are further developing this as a 'Workshop to Go' online training package for academic staff, funded by LTSN Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics, and Area Studies.

The proposed paper will describe a model of attaining synergy to enhance the integration of international students, via the students acquiring the necessary academic competences and the staff acquiring intercultural mindfulness.

One of the authors is currently completing his doctoral thesis on the use of acculturation techniques in EAP. The other is a Fellow in Learning and Teaching at University College Northampton, and has published articles concerning e-learning.

Time slot: 12.20-13.00

Room: 2B20

Cultural representation in management training texts:
How is intercultural competence taught?

Valerie Ainscough, Chaucer College, Canterbury
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This paper reflects on the ways intercultural competence is taught. Key texts used on MBA programmes are examined which relate to functioning cross- culturally and their relationship to the wider field of cultural studies highlighted. Their usefulness is questioned when considering the degree of generalisation they contain and the problem of transforming descriptive content to functional competence.

Speaking as a seasoned practitioner, though by no means an expert, in working across cultures, I think there is no substitute for experience when working on joint projects or international joint ventures. Yet everyone needs to start somewhere, and although at the end of a four year project we might wish to begin the whole thing again with the benefit of hindsight, this chance is never given.

MBA courses deal with working cross-culturally in a variety of components; Organisational Behaviour and Human Resource Management both contain elements, some modules are specifically international, but it can be argued that all aspects of Business Administration contain elements which are culture specific.

In this session I will look at the way cultural issues are dealt with in some key texts on an MBA course, and question how useful they are in preparing trainees for the real world. Most texts refer to the wider field of cultural studies and more specifically to different working systems and cultures. Often these are described in general terms requiring little interaction from the reader. Occasionally texts, particularly when presented as case studies, contain discussion points for individual consideration or group discussion. To what extent can we describe cultures, and are attempts to do so helpful when it comes to practice?

I will consider alternative ways of training people to be aware of the complexity of working cross culturally drawing on two specific case studies, one from Africa and the other working within a Japanese organisation. The methodology is one designed to engage trainees in considering alternative interpretations of behaviour and in thinking through the consequences of poor decision making through examination of 'critical incidents' in particular cases.

The conclusion is that cultural competence or incompetence is a reality that has to be experienced rather than described.

Lunch 13.00-14.00
in the foyer outside the lecture theatres

Time slot: 12.20-13.00 Parallel Session
Room: 2B25

Who Owns the Space?

Julia Hathaway and Shuna Neilson,
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One of the aims of interactive intercultural communication is to explore other cultural perspectives, gaining insight not only into these, but also into our own culture as a relative construct. However, having more than one hundred nationalities in one institution does not necessarily or automatically entail this type of transformative intercultural communication. Even when specifically encouraged by curriculum, teachers and students, this experience can prove an elusive and complex goal.

In this paper we explore how the inequalities and power structures inherent in any intercultural exchange can be obstacles to significant communication, and how the privileged position of English in itself can be problematic. The communicative space of the multicultural classroom is obviously not equally owned. Our work has led us to explore interdisciplinary scholarship that deals with issues of language and power in order to analyse these inequalities. We draw on the field of critical pedagogy, and in particular Freire and Giroux, as a starting point for challenging and critiquing the power structures inherent in intercultural exchange. At the same time, we draw on our own experience to look at how we, as teachers, can intercede in order to facilitate more significant and conscious communication. By posing the question 'who owns the space?' and exploring the issues from both theoretical and experiential perspectives, we work towards the celebration of the heterogeneous nature.

Lunch 13.00-14.00
in the foyer outside the lecture theatres

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

Time slot: 2.00-2.40

Room: 2B20

An exploration of the relationship between identity positioning and participation in an intercultural learning community at a university in the UK

Sarah Rich
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It is increasingly acknowledged that identity plays a crucial role in orientating an individual to learning opportunities and in impacting on the on-going ways in which he or she participates in a learning community. As such, I argue, it is therefore essential to address issues of identity construction in seeking to develop pedagogic responses to the increasing internationalization of classrooms in higher education. Operating from this perspective, the study described in this paper, sought to explore the ways in which the international students in one higher educational learning community in the UK took up and transformed identity positions through their on-going participation in the community.

The findings show how, from the outset, these learners were strategically engaged in developing agentive responses to enable them to take up positions in the new community and in relinquishing unhelpful dispositions developed in other learning settings. They also show how it was their ability to negotiate new identity positions in their out of class lives as well as their perceptions of the facilitative or constraining nature of the community activities and practices themselves which impact on the extent to which they are able to transform their positions from one of marginal to more legitimate peripheral participant.

I argue that the findings imply that essentialist views of the relationship between culture and the identity, commonplace in the debate concerning a pedagogic response to linguistic and cultural diversity in higher educational circles, are both overly deterministic and simplistic. Rather, they suggest that identity positioning is better seen as resulting from a dynamic and complex interplay of a variety of factors including the constraints and affordances of the community activities themselves. Finally, they suggest that a pedagogy for intercultural learning in higher education needs to move towards a view of pedagogy as co-constructed, emergent and responsive rather than a set of taken-for-granted, rigid, unexamined dictates for 'proper' practice.

Sarah Rich is a lecturer in education at the University of Exeter where she currently directs the Med in TESOL. Her research interests are in communication in a variety of intercultural educational settings.

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

Time slot: 2.00-2.40 Parallel Session
Room: 2B25

Insights from an intercultural focus group

Ann Smith
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One way to gather and exchange intercultural insights is within a focus group. Such an informal focus group, consisting of CELE teachers and Chinese visiting scholars, met over six months to consider the similarities and differences between undergraduate education in China and in Britain.

The group provided an opportunity for real intercultural interaction and discussion of teaching experiences and recent educational issues. The two CELE teachers were seeking insights for planning the undergraduate Year 1 English courses for the new University of Nottingham campus at Ningbo. The five visiting Chinese scholars were “living the differences” between the two cultures and educational systems, and were curious about CELE teaching methods.

The exchange revealed valuable information on day-to-day teaching and learning in Chinese high school and undergraduate classes. It confirmed that change is occurring slowly in some institutions, but, in general, the expectations in China and those in the UK differ appreciably. When considered with the type of approach and assessment used in the undergraduate credit courses to be offered at Ningbo, a significant gap appears.

This session will briefly address the following questions:

- 1) What are the advantages of an intercultural focus group?
- 2) What insights into Chinese education were revealed?
- 3) How might this information be used to help Chinese students make the transition to a British higher education system.

Suggestions and specific examples will be shared, and time will be allocated for questions. The handouts will include a bibliography on teaching Chinese learners.

Time slot: 2.40-3.20
Room: 2B20

Cross-cultural learning through computer-mediated communication

John Morley
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In recent years language teaching in tertiary institutions in Britain has undergone a process of considerable change. Among these changes have been the increasing emphasis and promotion of autonomous learning, the widening role of on-line technologies, the growing acceptance of the need to develop intercultural competence in language learners, and the recognition of the value of reciprocal learning schemes (Tandem learning). A notable feature of these new directions and technologies is that they are not exclusive to one another, but rather have the potential to be implemented in a complementary way. In this paper I will describe a reciprocal language learning scheme at Manchester (Tandem) which uses electronic conferencing software to enable students to participate in an on-line seminar exploring cross-cultural issues. I will discuss the rationale, the implementation and the outcomes of the project."

Time slot: 3.20-3.40
Tea/Coffee in the foyer

Time slot: 2.40-3.20 Parallel Session
Room: 2B25

Cross-cultural Training for Support Staff in Universities

Victoria Odeniyi,
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Middlesex University has for a number of years offered a well-established customer care workshop with the aim of equipping front of office staff with strategies for dealing with students on a daily basis often in highly pressurised environments. After reflection on some critical incidents that had occurred in the University's Learning Resource Centre, it was observed that misunderstandings often arose from the complex linguistic and cultural interaction between staff from one culture/speech community and students from another culture/speech community. It was felt that there was a need for a similar workshop with a cross-cultural element.

This presentation outlines a training session offered to Learning Resources (Library, Language Centre, Audio Visual and Computer Services) staff in a multi-campus university with a culturally and linguistically mixed student body. It describes a cross-cultural training session developed by in-sessional learning support lecturers at Middlesex University which is seen as a session run and developed by peers for peers. The focus will be on the materials and course design developed for a diverse range of staff in front-of-office roles as a means of raising awareness of cross-cultural issues that may cause misunderstandings, resulting in a less effective and sometimes stressful work environment. The presenter will briefly review their own approach to materials and course design in relation to some of the existing approaches to cross-cultural awareness and training such as information giving, cultural sensitisation, attribution training, experiential learning and a skills focus that have helped shape the session. Finally, participants will be invited to comment on the approach adopted and suggest possible future direction.

Time slot: 3.20-3.40
Tea/Coffee in the foyer

Time slot: 3.40-4.20 PLENARY

Interactive Workshop: Plenary Session with discussion

Room: 2B20

Mundi Project

Vanessa Andreotti

Co-ordinator of an educational project hosted by MUNDI and funded by the department for international development (DFID - UK government).

Transnational literacy, a concept coined by Gayatri Spivak, involves "thinking against the grain of what we think we know and don't know; it demands alertness to the changing function of what it means to take certain positions within local and global contexts" (Brydon, 2003:7). In this workshop, I intend to present the conceptual and pedagogical framework of the DFID funded educational project Other Worlds, hosted by Mundi, a development education centre in Nottingham, and developed by a collective of educators and academics from the UK, Brazil, Canada, Singapore and India in 2004. Its overall aim is to foster the creation of 'open spaces' for dialogue in order to encourage critical engagement with issues related to cultural difference and globalisation, building "transnational literacy" and transnational solidarity. The proposed approach is based on a pedagogy of questioning that goes beyond normalisation, coercion and persuasion, and that intends to promote independent thinking and autonomy by focusing on interdependence and dialogue - and also on hybridity, self-reflexivity and 'critical cosmopolitanism'.

The project team has collected and developed learning materials, including introductions, texts, video-interviews and sets of questions to prompt discussions around 13 themes. In the first phase of the project, the materials were piloted with groups of British and international students in Nottingham as well as with community groups.

This workshop will start with a brief explanation of the project background. Participants will then be invited to engage with the introductory unit of project (a discussion about knowledge, perspectives, communication and culture) to experience the methodology. In the third part of the session, the focus will be on a discussion of the research process and the limitations of the project