



Promoting Integration on Campus: Principles, Practice and Issues for Further Exploration

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Commissioned by **UKCISA**

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Foreword



For those working in the international sphere, much of the focus since the introduction of the Points Based System has been on ensuring that international students are, practically speaking, able to enter the country and continue their studies here. With so much change, other aspects of the international student experience may have been given less priority. Repeated surveys, however, have shown that one of the major aspects of concern for international students is the ability to make UK friends and integrate well in their local communities.

I am therefore delighted to introduce ***Promoting Integration on Campus: Principle, Practice & Issues for Further Exploration***, written and collated by the University of Warwick on behalf of UKCISA. This publication draws together current thinking on the topic, alongside a range of case studies from across the sector and provides a context and framework for future developments to ensure that the UK remains at the forefront of work to support the integration of international and domestic students. We are confident it will inspire and develop future good practice.

It is published alongside the third annual Integration Summit at the University of Warwick which will bring together experts in the field to debate and discuss this key aspect of the international student experience.

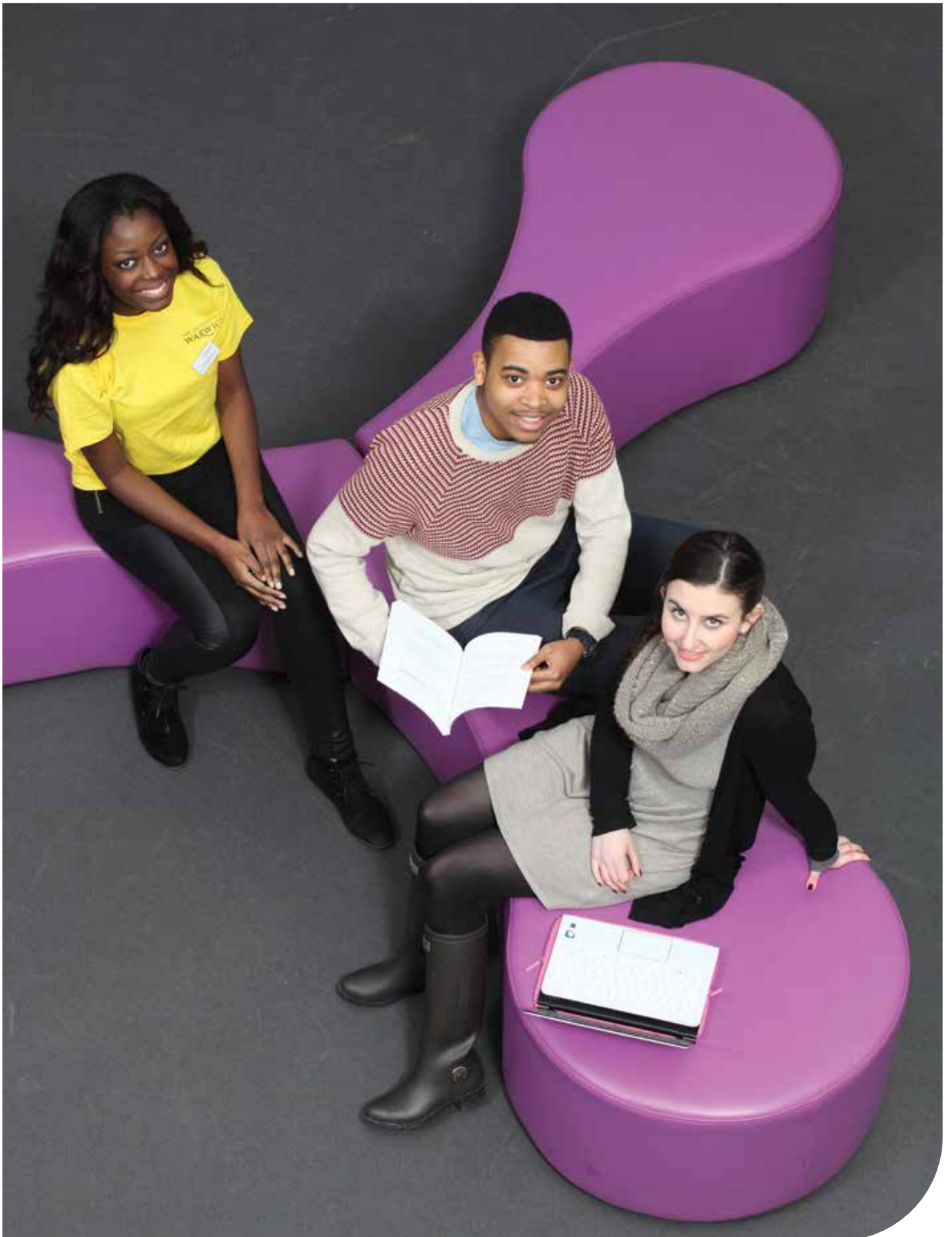
With thanks to Helen Spencer-Oatey, Stephen Williams and Claire O'Leary at Warwick for their significant contribution to the project and to colleagues in institutions for their excellent case studies.

Dominic Scott

Chief Executive

UK Council for International Student Affairs







Introduction

In March 2012, The University of Warwick and Warwick Students' Union organised a two-day Integration Summit with the aim of bringing universities and their students' unions together around a common theme. The choice of theme – how best to encourage integration between international and domestic students – was triggered by the latest student survey data which showed 31% of international students at 44 UK institutions agreed with the statement "I feel isolated from the university community" and over a quarter were dissatisfied with making friends with local students¹. These represented some of the lowest satisfaction scores across the whole student experience for international students studying in the UK in 2011.

Delegates from 78 different UK universities and students' unions, representing England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, attended the first Warwick Integration Summit to address this concern. A number of key issues hindering institutions from increasing integration between international and domestic students quickly emerged:

- Whilst there is a significant body of research published on the topic of integration stretching back over 30 years, many practitioners working on the enhancement of the student experience in higher and further education are largely unaware of the key findings. Therefore, those with responsibility for increasing integration on our campuses are very often "reinventing the wheel" rather than benefitting from the insights offered by this significant body of research;
- Despite the large volume of student satisfaction data available to institutions, such as i-graduate's Student Barometer, analysis and correlation of this data is often limited, meaning insights are not as meaningful as they could be;
- Whilst the motivation to engage in intercultural contact has to come from within the individual student, institutions and students' unions do have a role to play in creating the social conditions to facilitate that intercultural contact. However, rather than taking a research-led approach to integration by focusing on the "collaborative triangle" of students, researchers and administrators, the reality at many institutions is that Students' Unions, Academic Departments and Administrative Services are all pursuing separate strategies for integrating the same body of students;
- Activities that encourage intercultural mixing are vital, but not enough in themselves unless they relate to institutional policy and are embedded in an institutional culture that genuinely values cultural diversity. All too often this link is not made, meaning students do not see their institution placing value on intercultural interaction and growth which can stymie the motivation to integrate;
- Integration in the further and higher education context has often been seen as something to be "done" to international students to help them fit into the host culture. However, Berry's structural model of "mutual adjustment" (see page 18) shows that integration is a process of mutual accommodation where the students and staff from the host culture have to be as open to engaging with difference and ultimately to change as the international students at that institution. If both international and domestic students are equally committed to increasing their intercultural competence and the institution is seen to fully endorse this transformation, we will be much better placed to promote meaningful and sustained dialogue between all nationalities on our campuses, leading to personal development and growth;



'Activities that encourage intercultural mixing are vital, but not enough in themselves unless they relate to institutional policy and are embedded in an institutional culture that genuinely values cultural diversity.'

¹ Source: International Student Barometer Summer Wave 2011, run by the independent research company i-graduate.

'The aim of this publication is to provide a platform for understanding and evaluating what works in the context of higher and further education in order to move the integration debate forward.'



- Activities designed to encourage integration are often not evaluated, therefore it is difficult to assess what works and what doesn't work. When evaluation does take place it is often superficial and success is "measured" by the number of participants of different backgrounds rather than intercultural competence as a learning outcome. Indeed, even once institutions have developed their strategies and devised approaches for encouraging integration, measuring both integration and students' intercultural competence is hugely challenging. As a result, it is difficult to identify which institutions are developing examples of best practice from which others could learn and benefit;
- If we are uncertain of what works, it is difficult to know what the next steps are: what are the questions we should be asking? How can we move forward in improving the situation for both international and domestic students? How will we know when we've succeeded?

The aim of this publication is to provide a platform for understanding and evaluating what works in the context of higher and further education in order to move the integration debate forward.

Section one presents the academic voice and seeks to address the question "where have we come from?" through an introduction to the key concepts relating to integration as outlined in over thirty years of academic literature. It includes a series of questions for reflection to challenge readers to apply the research insights provided by different theoretical models to their own institutional context. It is hoped this will help institutions move any integration interventions that are currently assumption-based to being evidence-based.

Section two examines the student voice and attempts to answer the question "where are we now?" through an analysis of the latest Student Barometer data. By exploring a series of interesting correlations, it is possible to derive a number of key findings that begin to describe the current levels of integration between international and domestic students in the UK.

Section three considers the institutional/students' union voice by presenting a diverse range of case studies relating to the different domains of student life. Different institutions will be at different points along the journey of addressing the issue of integration, but we hope these case studies will provide useful snapshots of strategies and activities that have proved successful.

Finally, section four offers a number of actions for consideration and questions for further exploration, designed to form the basis for further research. It is hoped that the 2014 Warwick Integration Summit, organised in collaboration with UKCISA and the NUS, will establish a number of communities of practice that will work together over the coming years to address these questions in order to increase integration and improve the experience of all our students.



Section 1: Integration – Key Concepts and Issues



'Integration takes place at different levels:

- *Community*
- *Individual*
- *Institutional'*

What do we mean by 'Integration'?

If we look up the word 'integration' in a dictionary, we find a range of nuances of meaning, including the following²:

- the process of getting people of different races to live and work together instead of separately;
- spending time with members of other groups and developing habits like theirs;
- the combining of two or more things so that they work together effectively;
- when people become part of a group or society and are accepted by them.

Interestingly, three of these definitions emphasise the process aspect of integration – that it occurs over time. Each of them also draws attention to a different feature: that integration entails intermixing; personal adaptation; synthesising, mutual adjustment and change; and a sense of belonging. All of these elements are important considerations as we explore the concept of integration as it applies to higher and further education.

It is also important to bear in mind that integration needs to take place at different levels:

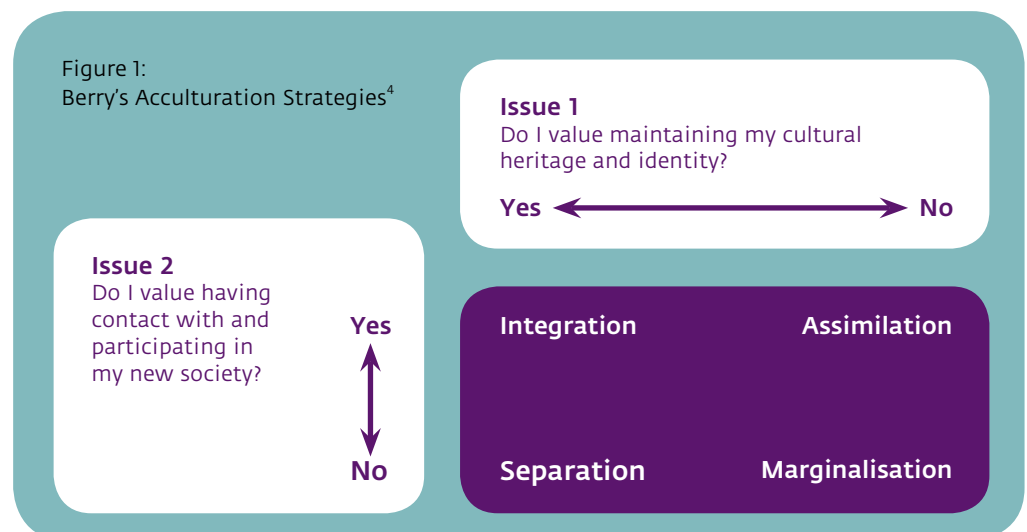
- Community level – social integration
- Individual level – personal integration
- Institutional level – structural integration

Specialists have researched integration at each of these levels, and two of them are particularly well known and important. Berry's acculturation model and Bennett's intercultural sensitivity model both incorporate the use of the concept of integration, but they each interpret it differently.

Berry's Concept of Integration: A Community-level Perspective³

Berry's model was first developed in the 1970s and has been a major source of inspiration for numerous researchers since then. He developed it with respect to immigration and was focusing primarily on the community level, with a concern for social integration. He argued that immigrants face two fundamental questions: how much they want to maintain their heritage culture and identity, and how much they want to have contact with other ethnocultural groups and participate in the broader society. He proposed that immigrants thus have four fundamental options, depending on their preferences with respect to these fundamental questions: Integration, Separation, Assimilation, and Marginalisation. These are shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1:
Berry's Acculturation Strategies⁴



² The definitions are taken from the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Online) and the Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture.

³ E.g. Berry, J.W. (2005) Acculturation. Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29, 697–712.

⁴ Figure 1 is adapted from Figure 3.3 in Berry, J.W. & Sam D. (1997). Acculturation and Adaptation. In J.W. Berry (et al) (Eds), *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Vol. 3, (pp. 291–326). Boston: Allyn & Bacon, p.296.



As can be seen from Figure 1, integration in Berry's model means that individuals or groups of individuals are interested in both maintaining their heritage culture AND having contact with people from other groups and participating actively in the broader community. It is contrasted with assimilation where people again want to participate actively in the broader community but are not interested in maintaining their heritage culture and identity, and with separation where the reverse is the case. Berry also argues that people who have a preference for integration are better adapted than those who choose other strategies⁵.

The choices depicted in Figure 1 reflect those that newcomers (immigrants, in Berry's original research) face. Berry also emphasised the important role of the host community, and we consider this towards the end of Section 1, as this is an important consideration for senior managers of educational institutions.

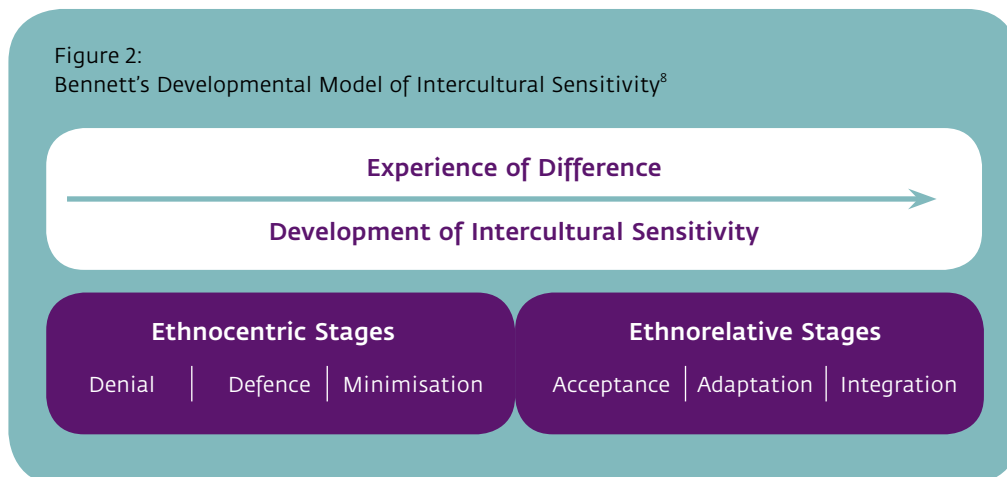
Bennett's Concept of Integration: An Individual-level Perspective⁶

Milton Bennett, a specialist in intercultural communication, put forward his Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) in the mid 1980s and this model is now extremely well-known in the intercultural field. Bennett maintains that the key component that influences people's level of intercultural sensitivity is their attitude towards differences. He maintains that people move through different phases as they become more interculturally sensitive, and that there are two broad stages: ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism (see Figure 2). By ethnocentrism he means that people interpret differences from an egocentric perspective; by ethnorelativism he means that people's judgements and interpretations are more relative and contextual. Each broad stage has several component stages, and Bennett maintains that integration is the epitome of intercultural sensitivity, the highest stage that one can reach. The intercultural educator, Joseph Shaules, explains Bennett's concept of integration as follows:

Bennett's model provides an explicit description of the desired goal of intercultural learning. In his view, the highest stage of intercultural sensitivity is a person described by Adler (1977) as a 'multicultural man', someone whose 'essential identity is inclusive of life patterns different from his own and who has psychologically and socially come to grips with a multiplicity of realities' (p.25). The person in this state, which Bennett refers to as integration, creates a self in the process of shifting between different cultural perspectives⁷.

'People's level of intercultural sensitivity is influenced by their attitude towards differences.'
(Bennett)

Figure 2:
Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity⁸



In the following sections, we consider key features from these two models that are particularly valuable for: (a) gaining a deeper understanding of integration in higher and further education contexts, and that (b) raise a number of issues that are important for us to consider.

⁵ Interestingly, recent research by Colleen Ward, 2013, has shown that the (political) beliefs and attitudes of the host community have a major impact on whether or not integration is the 'best' option.

⁶ Bennett, M. J. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10, 179–186.

⁷ Shaules, J. (2007). *Deep Culture. The Hidden Challenges of Global Living*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters. p.92.

⁸ Figure 2 is a re-drawn version of Figure 1 in Bennett 1986: 182.

'Having a diverse population does not in itself ensure that people will interact meaningfully.'

Integration through Contact and Participation

Judging from the internationalisation strategies of various UK universities, many UK educational institutions seem to assume that one of the key features of internationalisation is attracting a diverse body of students and staff. For example, the University of Bristol refers to having *"a diverse student body from multiple cultures and societies, which enriches our intellectual environment"* and similarly, the University of Glasgow identifies one of its aims as to: *"enhance the student experience at Glasgow by offering a culturally diverse learning environment that prepares students for global employment and citizenship."*

Each of these aspirations points to the benefits of having a diverse educational community, yet despite the numerous reports that have regularly identified low levels of intermixing in further and higher education communities⁹, few university vision statements mention any specific strategies for facilitating this. Yet while having a diverse population is an important prerequisite for reaping benefits, it does not in itself ensure that people will interact meaningfully with each other, as illustrated by Research Insight 1.

Research Insight 1: Does diversity aid intercultural interaction?

Groeppel-Klein, Germelmann and Glaum¹⁰ carried out a longitudinal study at a 'border university' near the German-Polish border. They explain that border universities attract students from two or more neighbouring countries and have typically been established to promote intercultural understanding between the peoples of these neighbouring nations. The authors conducted a 7-year longitudinal study among the German and Polish students of their selected border university, and found that contrary to the establishment aims, interaction between members of the two groups did not increase over the period. They also found that the key to levels of interaction was not nationality but 'cultural openness': "Students with a high level of individual cultural openness reported significantly higher levels of interaction than students with a low level of cultural openness." This raises a challenging question: can we promote 'cultural openness' and if so, how?

⁹ E.g. NUS: "Building an Internationalised Students' Union" Available at www.nusconnect.org.uk/internationalisation/resources/; ECU: "Internationalising Equality, equalising internationalisation" Available at www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/internationalising-equality-equalising/?searchterm=integration

¹⁰ Groeppel-Klein, A., Germelmann, C.C. and Glaum, M. (2010) Intercultural interaction needs more than mere exposure: Searching for drivers of student interaction at border universities. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34, 263–267.

¹¹ Allport, G. W. (1954). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

We have already noted above that, according to Berry's acculturation model, contact and participation are a key component of integration, but that diversity in itself does not necessarily lead to interaction. It could be useful, therefore, to consider what conditions can facilitate or hamper helpful interaction and for this, **Contact Theory** may offer us some insights.

Contact theory was first put forward by the social psychologist, Gordon Allport¹¹, in the 1950s, and since then it has generated a massive amount of ongoing research. The theory attempts to describe and explain what happens when members of different cultural groups come into contact. It argues that generally speaking, contact has a positive effect, especially in terms of reducing prejudice. However, it also argues that different contact conditions can affect the impact of contact. Some conditions are particularly effective in promoting positive outcomes, while others have the opposite effects. Research Insight 2 illustrates the importance of one such condition: the quality of interaction.



Research Insight 2: Does diversity in class necessarily promote positive relations among different ethnocultural groups?

A Belgian study by Dejaeghere, Hooghe and Claes¹² investigated whether diversity in class had an impact on students' ethnocentrism. The researchers conducted a two-year study with nearly 3000 late-adolescent students at schools across Belgium, comparing classes with high diversity of pupils with those with low diversity. They found that level of diversity did not predict intercultural understanding – the key factor was quality of relations. They therefore drew the following conclusion: "Schools where there is a high level of diversity offer good opportunities to counter ethnocentrism according to our analysis, but this has to be framed within a positive intergroup climate. If schools or education systems want to develop a policy aimed at reducing ethnic prejudice, it is crucial therefore to try to influence the quality of the interaction between the various ethnic and cultural groups at school."

The Belgian researchers (see Research Insight 2) used perceptions of racial tension as their measure of quality of interaction. What factors, then, might reduce tensions and improve quality? Allport argued that the following conditions are particularly effective in reducing prejudice:

- equal status
- common goals
- institutional support
- perception of similarity between the two groups.

Research Insight 3: What 'threats' may home students perceive from international students?

Harrison and Peacock¹³ interviewed a sample of home students about their interaction experiences with international students and analysed their responses from a threat perspective. Students reported feeling a wide range of threats, including the following:

- Perceived threats to their learning experiences and their marks when international students' English level or performance is weak;
- Perceived threats to their self-esteem through fear that international students look down on them because of some of their behaviour (e.g. drinking);
- Perceived threats to their comfort levels when they have to make an effort to communicate with those whose English is weak or who lack the culture-specific knowledge to follow conversations (e.g. when discussing TV soaps);
- Perceived threats to their social competence when they fear initiating conversations with international students who stay in groups;
- Perceived threats to their identities when they fear peer pressure censure for crossing cultural boundaries.

'Level of diversity did not predict intercultural understanding – the key factor was quality of relations.'

¹² Dejaeghere, Y., Hooghe, M. and Claes, E. (2012) Do ethnically diverse schools reduce ethnocentrism? A two-year panel study among majority group late adolescents in Belgian schools. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 36, 108–117.

¹³ Harrison, N. and Peacock, N. (2010) Cultural distance, mindfulness and passive xenophobia: using Integrated Threat Theory to explore home higher education students' perspectives on 'internationalisation at home', *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(6), 877–902.

'Developing empathy towards other people is more important than learning information about them.'

More recent research has identified that affective (emotional) factors are more important than cognitive (knowledge) factors. In other words, developing empathy towards other people is more important than learning information about them. This also means that feelings of anxiety or uncertainty about members of other groups, and any sense of threat from them, can be particularly damaging. Some recent research (see Research Insight 3) throws some light on the latter.

We explore these issues in more detail in the next section, but first it is important to reflect on some issues – see Questions for Reflection 1.

Questions for Reflection 1

- a. **Perceptions of equality:** What factors may lead some students to look down on others, and foster perceptions of inequality? How could this be addressed?
- b. **Common goals:** What different types of common goals could some students have? How could such common goals be fostered?
- c. **Feelings of anxiety or uncertainty:** What factors may lead some students to feel anxious or uncertain when meeting people from other cultural groups? How could this be addressed?
- d. **Perceptions of threat:** What factors may lead some students to feel a sense of threat from members of other cultural groups? How could this be addressed?

Integration and Personal Resilience

As mentioned earlier, integration needs to be considered at multiple levels, and so far we have mainly taken a community perspective. We now turn to the individual level and in this section we focus on a personal resilience approach. If people are to engage with unfamiliar others, they need to have the personal strength and motivation to do so. Unfortunately negative experiences can hamper their capacity in these respects.

Resilience and Protective Factors

In resilience theory, experiences or issues that can impact negatively on people's well-being are known as risk factors. They can include problems such as financial hardship, language difficulties, academic uncertainties, and discrimination experiences. These problems can be buffered or mitigated by protective factors. Friendship is a well-documented protective factor, but recent research suggests that there are two other potentially important ones: meaning-in-life and sense of belonging (see Research Insights 4 and 5).

Research Insight 4: Can 'meaning-in-life' affect psychological well-being?

Pan, Wang, Chan and Joubert¹⁴ investigated whether 'meaning-in-life' could have a positive impact on psychological well-being. They interpreted 'meaning -in-life' as (a) having various sources in people's lives such as relationships, leisure activities, religious beliefs and personal growth, and (b) giving people a sense of coherence and purpose in life, which leads to the pursuit and attainment of worthwhile goals, and provides an accompanying sense of fulfilment. They conducted a survey with over 600 Chinese students studying in Hong Kong and Australia and obtained the following results:

- **A strong sense of meaning-in-life contributed directly to a positive sense of well-being;**
- **A strong sense of meaning-in-life reduced the negative impact of stress-inducing risk factors.**

¹⁴ Pan, J.-Y., Wong, D. F. K., Chan, C. L. W., & Joubert, L. (2008). Meaning of life as a protective factor of positive affect in acculturation: A resilience framework and a cross-cultural comparison. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(6), 505–514.



Research Insight 5: Can 'Sense of belonging' affect intercultural interaction and academic success?

Glass and Westmont¹⁵ were interested in finding out whether a sense of belonging could increase students' levels of intercultural interaction and academic achievement. They defined sense of belonging as a sense of connection with one's university, along with a strong support network and a balance of academic challenge and support. They administered the Global Perspective Inventory (GPI – see <https://gpi.central.edu/index.cfm>) to over 18,500 students at campuses across the USA and obtained the following results:

- A high sense of belonging had a strong positive effect on levels of intercultural interaction;
- A high sense of belonging had a strong positive effect on academic success;
- These effects occurred for both international and home students, but were particularly strong for international students.

'A high sense of belonging had a strong positive effect on levels of intercultural interaction.'

Resilience and Promotive Factors

Glass and Westmont argue that in terms of resilience, it is helpful not only to consider protective factors, but also 'promotive factors'. They define these as factors that can exert a direct effect on positive outcomes as well as fortify the protective factors. In their recent study, they explored the impact of two possibilities: engagement in 'inclusive curricula' and 'extra-curricular activities' (see Research Insight 6).

Research Insight 6: Can curricula affect intercultural interaction and sense of belonging?

Glass and Westmont were interested in finding out whether engagement in 'inclusive curricula' and 'extra-curricular activities' could increase students' levels of intercultural interaction and sense of belonging. They defined 'inclusive curricula' as courses that involve 'multicultural content or discussion among students with different backgrounds and beliefs' about issues such as race and gender. They administered the Global Perspective Inventory (GPI – see <https://gpi.central.edu/index.cfm>) to over 18,500 students at campuses across the USA and obtained the following results through structural equation modelling:

- Engagement in inclusive curricula had a strong positive effect on levels of intercultural interaction;
- Engagement in extra-curricular activities had a strong positive effect on sense of belonging and through this indirectly affected academic success;
- These effects occurred for both international and home students.

This research into resilience, risk factors, protective factors and promotive factors raise a number of important questions for us to reflect on.

¹⁵ Glass, C.R & Westmont, C.M. (2014) Comparative effects of belongingness on the academic success and cross-cultural interactions of domestic and international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 38, 106–119.

'Sense of belonging
– how can we
foster this?'

Questions for Reflection 2

- e. **Risk factors:** In your work setting, what factors are particularly high risk for international students in terms of their well-being? How are they handled and how could this be improved?
- f. **Protective factors:** In your work setting, what factors are particularly helpful for reducing or buffering the negative impact of risk factors? How are they fostered and how could this be improved?
- g. **Sense of belonging:** In your work setting, how do you try to foster a sense of belonging? What other strategies could you try?
- h. **Sense of meaning-in-life:** Is this a factor that universities could or should try to influence? Why/why not? If yes, how could this be done?
- i. **Inclusive curricula:** What opportunities do students at your institution have for engaging with intercultural issues either in their degree programmes or as supplementary courses? How could this be enhanced?

Integration and Intercultural Growth

Most of what we have considered so far in this paper has been associated in some way with well-being and personal achievement, such as fitting in well with a community, minimising levels of psychological stress, and maximising a sense of personal achievement and well-being. In this section, we turn to a very different perspective – integration as a reflection of intercultural growth. This is a goal that is increasingly being mentioned by educational institutions, especially in relation to employment. Several recent reports¹⁶ have pointed to the need for graduates to have 'global skills' and several universities mention this in their internationalisation strategies. For example, the Universities of Nottingham and Sheffield state respectively that they aim to "produce graduates who are empowered to excel in a global environment" and to "develop graduates' capacities to enter global labour markets, equipped with necessary skills and competencies, and with the adaptability to work in a variety of national and cultural settings."

There is much debate as to what this means in practical terms, but from an integration perspective, one interpretation is provided by Milton Bennett. As explained above, according to Bennett, a key criterion of intercultural sensitivity is attitude to difference. He identifies six different 'levels' of intercultural sensitivity in terms of attitude to difference, and these are defined and illustrated in Figure 3 (see also Figure 2). In his terms, integration is the culmination of intercultural sensitivity. It entails a bicultural/multicultural attitude and is reached when people have moved beyond both acceptance of difference and adaptation to difference.

¹⁶ agr, CIHE, CFE (2012) *Global Graduates into Global Leaders*; The British Council (2013) *Culture at Work*; CBI (2012) *Education and Skills Survey*; Economist Intelligence Unit (2013) *Competing across Borders. How Culture and Communication Barriers affect Business*.



	Stage	Summary Description	Illustrative Viewpoints
Ethnorelative Stages	1. Denial of difference	The inability to construe cultural difference, indicated by benign stereotyping (well-meant but ignorant or naïve observations) and superficial statements of tolerance. May sometimes be accompanied by attribution of deficiency of intelligence or personality.	"All big cities are the same – lots of buildings, too many cars, McDonalds." "I never experience culture shock." "With my experience, I can be successful in any culture without any special effort."
	2. Defense against difference	Recognition of cultural difference coupled with negative evaluation of most variations from native culture – the greater the difference, the more negative the evaluation. Characterised by dualistic us/them thinking and frequently accompanied by overt negative stereotyping.	"I wish these people would just talk the way I do." "When you go to other cultures, it makes you realize how much better the US is." "What a sexist society!" "Boy, could we teach these people a lot of stuff!"
	3. Minimization of difference	Recognition and acceptance of superficial cultural differences such as eating customs, etc., while holding that all human beings are essentially the same. Emphasis on the similarity of people and commonality of basic values.	"The key to getting along in any culture is just to be yourself – authentic and honest!" "Customs differ, of course, but when you really get to know them they're pretty much like us."
Ethnocentric Stages	4. Acceptance of difference	Recognition and appreciation of cultural differences in behaviour and values. Acceptance of cultural differences as viable alternative solutions to the organization of human existence. Cultural relativity.	"The more difference the better – more difference equals more creative ideas!" "Sometimes it's confusing, knowing that values are different in various cultures and wanting to be respectful, but still wanting to maintain my own core values."
	5. Adaptation of difference	The development of communication skills that enable intercultural communication. Effective use of empathy, or frame of reference shifting, to understand and be understood across cultural boundaries.	"To solve this dispute, I need to change my behaviour to account for the difference in status between me and my counterpart from the other culture." "I can maintain my values and also behave in culturally appropriate ways."
	6. Integration of difference	The internalization of bicultural or multicultural frames of reference. Maintaining a definition of identity that is 'marginal' to any particular culture. Seeing one's self as 'in process'.	"I feel most comfortable when I'm bridging differences between the cultures I know." "Whatever the situation, I can usually look at it from a variety of cultural points of view."

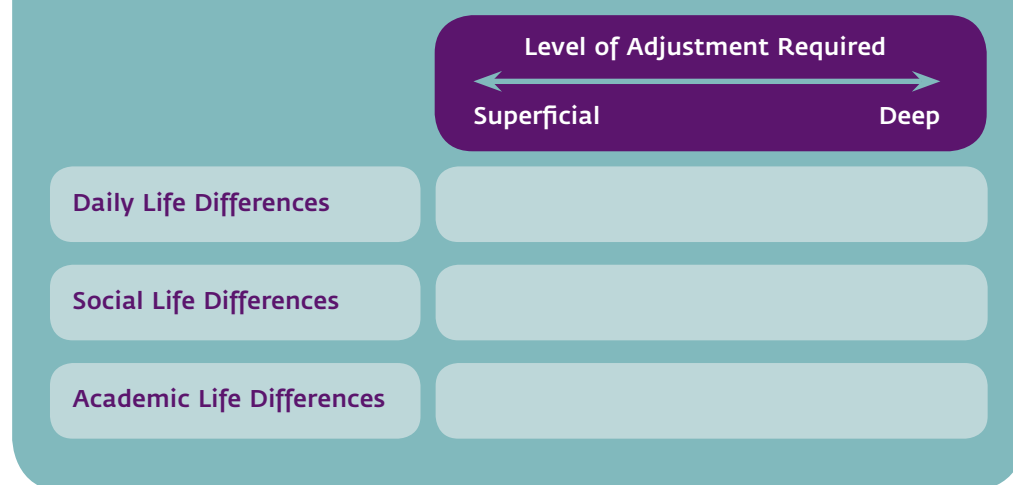
Figure 3: Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin¹⁷, based on Bennett, no date given.)

What, though, does this mean in practical terms? Is it realistic, or even desirable, for students and/or staff to accept and adapt to every type of difference they encounter, let alone become bicultural/multicultural with respect to all such differences? Joseph Shaules¹⁸ makes an important point with regard to this – that some differences only require a superficial adjustment, while others challenge us more deeply. In other words, our levels of intercultural sensitivity are unlikely to be uniform across all the differences we encounter, but rather will vary from issue to issue. Some differences we may feel able to adapt to easily, others we may feel less comfortable with, and yet others we may strongly disagree with.

'What level of difference do we encounter in the different domains of life?'

So in considering personal growth and people's adjustment trajectories, it is useful to consider the different domains of life, daily life, social life and academic life, as illustrated in Figure 4, and what level of difference we are encountering in each of them.

Figure 4: Multilevel Matrix of Differences



Once again, these considerations raise a number of questions for reflection.

Questions for Reflection 3

- j. Consider Figure 4. What types of differences are students and staff likely to encounter in each of the different domains (daily life, social life, academic life)? Which differences are likely to require just a superficial adjustment and which are likely to require a deeper adjustment?
- k. To what extent do you think students make adjustments at a deeper level, rather than superficially? How can we know?
- l. If universities are to produce 'global graduates', should we expect a minimum level of intercultural sensitivity? If so, what should that level be, in terms of Bennett's developmental stages?
- m. Should the development of intercultural sensitivity be a goal for all students or just an option for those who are interested? Justify your viewpoint.

¹⁷ Spencer-Oatey, H. & Franklin, P. (2009) *Intercultural Interaction. A Multicultural Perspective on Intercultural Communication*. Basingstoke: Palgrave. pp.158–9.

¹⁸ Shaules, J. (2007). *Deep Culture. The Hidden Challenges of Global Living*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.



Integration and Mutual Adjustment

At the beginning of Section 1, we mentioned that integration can be considered at an organisational level, as well as at community and individual levels, and that diversity in any institution may require some degree of organisational change. In other words, there may need to be structural integration.

John Berry¹⁹ explains it as follows, with respect to diverse societies:

Integration can only be “freely” chosen and successfully pursued by nondominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity (when there is widespread acceptance of multi-cultural ideology). Thus a *mutual accommodation* is required for Integration to be attained [...]. This strategy requires non-dominant groups to adopt the basic values of the larger society, while at the same time the dominant group must be prepared to adapt national institutions (e.g. education, health, labor) to better meet the needs of all groups now living together in the plural society.

It is important to consider, therefore, what this might mean for educational institutions. International students often come to study in the UK because they want a 'British educational experience'. So this raises some fundamental questions about how much, if at all, institutions should change their structures.

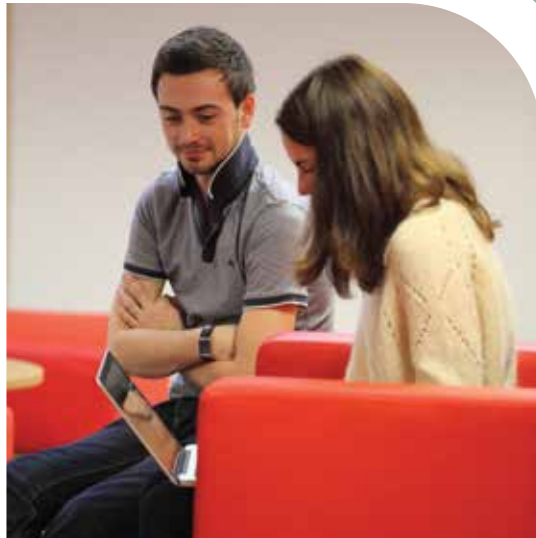
'Mutual accommodation is required for integration to be attained.'

Questions for Reflection 4

- n. According to Berry's framework (see Figure 1), integration entails maintaining one's heritage culture while mixing across different cultural groups. In your experience, what aspects of cultural heritage are particularly important for students to maintain? How does your institution address those needs? What aspects (if any) could be improved?**
- o. It could be argued that the more institutions make adjustments, the less opportunity students have to grow in intercultural sensitivity because there are fewer aspects that they need to adjust to. To what extent do you agree with that argument and why?**

¹⁹ Berry, J. (2010) Mobility and acculturation. In S. Carr (ed.), *The Psychology of Mobility in a Global Era*. (pp. 193-210). New York: Springer. p.201.

Section 2: Insights from UK Survey Data





Integration in UK Higher and Further Education

An investigation of the current integration situation in UK higher and further education raises a number of interesting research questions:

- Do students from English-speaking countries feel more integrated than those from non-English speaking countries?
- Do students from European countries feel more integrated than those from outside Europe due to geographical and possibly cultural "proximity"? Beyond Europe, does historical, cultural and linguistic "proximity" to the UK have a positive impact on integration for certain nationality groups?
- Do students from the larger nationality groups at UK universities feel more integrated than students from smaller nationality groups or is there a "tipping point" at which a nationality group becomes so large it hinders integration?
- What impact do activities organised by institutions and students' unions have upon integration in the different domains of student life:
 - Daily life (e.g. institutional accommodation allocation policies)
 - Social Life (e.g. how institutions and students' unions organise social and sporting activities)
 - Academic life (e.g. how group work is organised in seminars)
 - Language and communication (e.g. the role of language support in helping integration)

This section seeks to address some of these questions at the national level through insights from the latest student survey data provided by i-graduate's Student Barometer.

The Survey Items

Twice every year, in the autumn and in the summer, *i-graduate* conducts the Student Barometer survey across a wide range of universities worldwide, including many from the UK. In this section we report analyses of the aggregate data for UK universities from the Student Barometer Autumn Wave 2013²⁰. We have focused on the following survey items, which are particularly pertinent to integration:

Arrival Satisfaction

How satisfied were you with your arrival experiences of:

- Making friends from my home country [Compatriot friends – arrival]
- Making friends from other countries [Other friends – arrival]
- Making friends from this country [Host friends – arrival]
- Social activities – organised events [Social activities – arrival]

Living Satisfaction

How satisfied are you at this stage of the year with your experiences of:

- Making friends from my home country [Compatriot friends]
- Making friends from other countries [Other friends]
- Making friends from this country [Host friends]
- Making good contacts for the future [Good contacts]
- Social activities – organised events [Social activities]
- Opportunities to experience the culture of this country [Host culture]

To what extent do you agree/disagree:

- I feel isolated from the university/institution community [Isolation]

*'Insights from
i-graduate's
Student
Barometer.'*

²⁰ It would have been preferable to use the full raw dataset, but unfortunately this was not available.

'The stronger students' compatriot friendships on arrival, the weaker their friendships with those of other nationalities.'

Learning Satisfaction

How satisfied are you at this stage of the year with your experiences of:

- Studying with people from other cultures [Multicultural]
- Help to improve my English language skills [Language support]

For all of the above items, over 60% of respondents reported high levels of satisfaction. Interestingly, the highest levels of satisfaction were expressed for studying with people from different cultures (92%) and the lowest for making compatriot and host country friends on arrival (74%).

Even though there are high reported levels of satisfaction, we can gain valuable insights by looking at the correlations between items²¹, i.e. the connections between different items.

Correlations

Arrival satisfaction and friendships

As can be seen, there is a strong (statistically significant) negative correlation between satisfaction with making compatriot friends and satisfaction with making friends of other nationalities, including host friends (see blue shaded cells of Table 1). In other words, the stronger students' compatriot friendships on arrival, the weaker their friendships with those of other nationalities.

On the other hand, there is a strong (statistically significant) positive correlation between satisfaction with making friends from other countries and satisfaction with making host country friends and with the social activities organised by the institution (see green lettering of Table 1). In other words, the stronger people's friendships on arrival with those from other overseas countries, the greater their satisfaction with host country friends and the social activities organised by the institution.

Table 1: Correlation of items probing arrival experience/satisfaction (n between 108 and 116)

	Compatriot friends (arrival)	Other friends (arrival)	Social activities (arrival)
Other friends (arrival)	-0.360** 0.000	- -	- -
Social Activities (arrival)	-0.075 0.439	0.222* 0.018	- -
Host friends (arrival)	-0.246* 0.01	0.382** 0.000	0.117 0.216

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Living satisfaction, friendships and social/cultural engagement

Almost identical results with regard to friendships and activities are found for students' experiences at later stages of their studies (see grey lettering of Table 2). In addition, other interesting correlations emerge. There are strong (statistically significant) positive correlations between opportunities to experience the host culture and satisfaction with several variables: organised social activities, host friends, and friends of other nationalities (see green lettering of Table 2). In other words, those who have high levels of satisfaction with their opportunities to experience the host culture are also active participants of social activities organised by the institution and have strong friendships with people from countries other than their own.

²¹ These are based on centred data, i.e. the different use of the response scale was controlled for, and since the raw dataset was not available, all analyses were conducted using country aggregates.



There are also strong (statistically significant) positive correlations between high levels of satisfaction with contacts made for the future and the following: satisfaction with organised social activities, friendships with people from other countries, and opportunities to experience the host culture.

Table 2: Correlation of items probing living experience/satisfaction (n between 108 and 116)

	Good contacts	Social activities	Host cultures	Host friends	Other friends
Social activities	0.292** 0.001	- -	- -	- -	- -
Host culture	0.326** 0.000	0.285** 0.001	- -	- -	- -
Host friends	0.154 0.079	0.189* 0.032	0.458** 0.000	-	-
Other friends	0.256** 0.003	0.320** 0.000	0.490** 0.000	0.273** 0.002	- -
Home friends	0.006 0.95	-0.048 0.595	-0.106 0.245	-0.212* 0.019	-0.158 0.0820

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

'Non-compatriot friendships are associated with greater engagement in social activities and with greater satisfaction in building good contacts for the future.'

All of this points to the importance of non-compatriot friendships: that these are associated with greater engagement in social activities, greater satisfaction with opportunities to experience the host culture, and greater satisfaction with building good contacts for the future.

Key Factors

The impact of arrival experiences

If we then examine the links between these various variables on arrival and later during the year (Table 3), it is clear that the arrival experience has a very significant impact on students' experiences in later stages of their studies.

- Positive arrival experiences with regard to making friends are associated with positive experiences in later stages of students' study;
- Negative arrival experiences are associated with negative experiences in later stages of students' study.

'Friendships made at the beginning tend to last and shape students' overall experiences.'

Table 3: Relationship of arrival satisfaction and satisfaction at the time of data collection with respect to making friends (n between 107 and 115)

	Compatriot friends (arrival)	Host friends (arrival)	Other friends (arrival)	Social activities (arrival)
Compatriot friends	0.922** 0.000	-0.119 0.208	-0.218* 0.020	-0.044 0.645
Host friends	-0.243* 0.011	0.871** 0.000	0.517** 0.000	0.310** 0.001
Other friends	-0.220* 0.022	0.559** 0.000	0.850** 0.000	0.346** 0.000
Social activities	-0.117 0.229	0.395** 0.000	0.420** 0.000	0.785** 0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

These findings clearly highlight the importance of arrival experiences, because the overall student experience appears prone to change little over time. Friendships made at the beginning tend to last and shape students' overall experiences.

If we combine the results from Tables 1 and 3, it is clear that if students do not have the opportunity to make host friends in the early stages of their study, this is unlikely to change over the course of their studies and their level of satisfaction is likely to remain low throughout. Thus, institutions and students' unions need to pay particular attention to the arrival experience.

The importance of language support

As shown in Table 4, there is a strong (statistically significant) positive correlation between satisfaction with English language support and satisfaction with studying with people from other cultures. In other words, lack of fluency in English adversely affects students' learning experience.

Table 4: Relationship of language support and satisfaction with working in intercultural student groups (n=199)

	Multicultural
Language support	0.545** 0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Academic units that offer English language support are therefore crucial in the development of a positive student study experience. Moreover, given that students' arrival experience are crucial, pre-sessional English Language Courses/Support clearly play a vital foundational role in helping set students off on a positive trajectory.



Feelings of Isolation

As can be seen from Table 5 (see the blue lettering), there are strong (statistically significant) negative correlations between sense of isolation and level of satisfaction with the following variables: host and other friends on arrival, host and other friends in later stages of study, good contacts for the future, language support, engagement in organised social activities, and opportunities to engage with the host culture. In other words, all of these variables have a positive impact on developing a sense of community.

The main variable that is positively correlated with a sense of isolation is satisfaction with compatriot friendships (see the green lettering). In other words, having a strong friendship with people from your home country increases one's sense of isolation.

Table 5: Relationship of feelings of solitude with other items (n=76)

	I feel isolated
Compatriot friends (arrival)	0.173 0.136
Other friends (arrival)	-0.330** 0.004
Social Activities (arrival)	-0.178 0.124
Host friends (arrival)	-0.749** 0.000
Multicultural	-0.081 0.485
Language support	-0.294* 0.011
Good contacts	-0.272* 0.017
Social activities	-0.416** 0.000
Host culture	-0.478** 0.000
Host friends	-0.701** 0.000
Other friends	-0.318** 0.005
Compatriot friends	0.240* 0.037

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

*'Strong compatriot
friendship
increases people's
sense of isolation.'*

Group Comparisons of Experiences

Experiences of EU students vs. non-EU students (group comparison)

Tests were also carried out on all the variables listed at the beginning of this section to explore whether there are any significant differences between EU and non-EU students' experiences.

Although both groups reported high levels of satisfaction, EU students were significantly more satisfied in almost every area, including making friends with host students. This might be due to greater proficiency in English language or perhaps cultural proximity.

Experiences of different nationality groups in making friends with UK students

In our Introduction, we suggested that one of the triggers for the first Warwick Integration Summit, and as a consequence this publication, was the finding that over a quarter of international students studying in the UK in Summer 2011 were dissatisfied with their experience of making friends with students from the host country. The Student Barometer Autumn Wave 2013 indicates that this situation has not improved over the last two years, with satisfaction levels remaining at 74%. This finding prompted us to ask whether the Student Barometer Autumn Wave 2013 data could provide any insights into whether students from certain countries were more successful than others in making friends with UK students. Table 6 below compares the nationalities of those students most satisfied with making friends from the UK ("host friends") with those who are least satisfied. Satisfaction with making friends from other countries ("other friends" i.e. not UK and not compatriot friends) has been included for comparison in order to understand whether those nationalities that struggle to make UK friends find it easier to make friends from other countries or simply struggle to make friendships with non-compatriots per se.

Table 6: Comparison by nationality of making friends with UK students

Nationalities most satisfied with making UK friends					Nationalities least satisfied with making UK friends				
		Host Friends	Other Friends	Difference			Host Friends	Other Friends	Difference
1st	UK	95%	88%	+7%	1st	Iraq	52%	83%	-31%
2nd	Ireland	92%	91%	+1%	2nd	Oman	55%	87%	-32%
3rd	Australia	90%	94%	-4%	=2nd	Saudi Arabia	55%	85%	-30%
4th	S. Africa	88%	93%	-5%	4th	Chile	56%	90%	-34%
=5th	Netherlands	88%	94%	-6%	=5th	Colombia	59%	93%	-34%
=5th	Sweden	87%	94%	-7%	=5th	Brazil	59%	82%	-23%
=7th	Zimbabwe	87%	95%	-8%	=5th	S. Korea	59%	83%	-24%
=7th	Latvia	87%	97%	-10%	8th	Japan	60%	85%	-25%
=9th	Slovakia	86%	94%	-8%	9th	Taiwan	61%	83%	-22%
=9th	New Zealand	86%	95%	-9%	=10th	Turkey	62%	91%	-29%
=9th	Brunei	86%	97%	-11%	=10th	Iran	62%	88%	-26%
=12th	USA	85%	92%	-7%	=12th	Libyan Arab Jamhuriya	63%	90%	-27%
=12th	Canada	85%	92%	-7%	=12th	Jordan	63%	88%	-25%
=12th	Norway	85%	94%	-9%	=12th	China	63%	78%	-15%



The shading applied to Table 6 is designed to help draw out a number of interesting conclusions:

- The only two nationalities who expressed higher satisfaction with making friends from the UK than making friends from other nationalities were students from the UK and Ireland;
- It would appear that historical, cultural and linguistic proximity play a role in helping certain nationality groups to make friends with UK students (Australia, New Zealand, USA and Canada; South Africa and Zimbabwe). This might also suggest why students from northern and eastern European countries are more satisfied with making UK friends than those from southern European countries (e.g. Spain (73%), Greece (74%), Italy (76%));
- It would also appear that historical, cultural and linguistic distance impact upon students' satisfaction with making friends with UK students, with students from the Middle East, Latin America and East Asia amongst the least satisfied.
- The nationality that was least satisfied with making friends from other countries (78%) was by contrast the nationality most satisfied of all nationalities with making compatriot friends (95%): China. This is perhaps unsurprising given that China represents the largest group of international students in the UK²² and suggests there may be a "tipping point" at which friendships with non-compatriots become more difficult when surrounded by large numbers of compatriot students.

Qualitative data

As well as the quantitative data presented above in Table 6, the Student Barometer also collects thousands of qualitative "open comments" from students that provide a deeper insight into some of the issues around friendships and integration. The following student comments are a small selection chosen to illustrate a range of different viewpoints.

Some students will be at Bennett's "denial of difference" stage, meaning integration is not a relevant issue to them:

"It is not a deliberate choice, you just make friends with people you get along with; nationality is not an issue."

Postgraduate (Research) Sociology student, Chile

"Most people I meet through orchestras or the folk society, neither of which are based at all on race/nationality. Someone's nationality has no bearing (good or bad) or whether I will befriend them."

Postgraduate (Taught) Mathematics student, UK

The nationality mix on courses can have both a positive and negative impact on integration:

"In postgraduate level engineering there are not British people, I wanted to come here to meet your culture, additionally many of the people I have met I don't think are very friendly, In fact I think they smile but are not sincere and undervalue you because your foreigner, and that is sad because also happens with staff from the university."

Postgraduate (Taught) Engineering student, Colombia

"i spend the very hard time in UK, just because i was very lonely. unlike the other students, i got no one from my home country. i believe that i cant exploit the best in me."

Postgraduate (Taught) Economics student, Ethiopia

"Most of my friends are coursemates, and my course is very international."

Postgraduate (Taught) Law student, UK

"Working in groups with people from other countries gives you more of a global perspective, which is very useful considering how multi-cultural the UK is. I tend to find it interesting to hear what other cultures think about certain issues."

Undergraduate Law student, UK

"I think multicultural group work should be encouraged as I strongly believe that a large part of being in a university is becoming an international citizen and working with people from different countries gives you the opportunity to connect and understand with them more."

Undergraduate Engineering student, Belgium

'EU students were significantly more satisfied than non-EU students in almost every area.'

²² HESA (2013) data indicates 78,715 students from China were studying in the UK in 2011-12, which was roughly equal to the next four nationality groups put together (India (29,900), Nigeria (17,620), USA (16,335), Germany (15,985)).

'Language support seems to have a very strong impact on arrival and living experiences.'

Accommodation allocation policies can have a positive and negative impact on integration:

"International students locked themselves away in their rooms in first year; I only know and keep contact with those who will respond when I introduce myself!"

Undergraduate Computer Science student, UK

"My flat is predominantly made up of English people or people from other countries who have lived in England. Those from other countries tend to be friends with others of their own nationality."

Undergraduate English Literature student, UK

"In my accommodation we have 12 people of 12 different countries - we all get on well, very well!"

Undergraduate History student, UK

"Most of my closest friends I have met through either my accommodation or my sports team (rugby league). There are many different nationalities in both these groups."

Undergraduate Engineering student, UK

The way social events are organised can have a positive and negative impact on integration:

"I enjoy the company of individuals with similar interests in life."

Postgraduate (Taught) Medical student, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

"Other nationalities seem to keep to themselves. I rarely see any of them at societies/sports clubs."

Undergraduate Law student, UK

"I have a mix of people I hang out with; my closest friends are British, Taiwanese, Singaporean... It may be because I am in a course that does not have many people from my country or even my region, which forced me to make friends with others; also I believe it is more down to the societies I joined, not the ethnicities. Although I do find common ground more easily with people from my country, once I bond with people it does not really affect me where they're from. Unlike some other international students, I am also fluent in English, which makes it easier to bond with other people from different nationalities."

Undergraduate History student, Malaysia

Key Findings

A number of key findings emerge from these statistical analyses:

- On the whole, students are satisfied with their arrival, living and learning experiences. Nevertheless, there are differences across students and student groups, and these can be significant;
- Friendship-making experiences upon arrival are strongly positively related to friendship-making experiences in later stages of students' studies. This points to the importance of facilitating good domestic and international student interaction opportunities upon arrival and during the following few weeks;
- Language support seems to have a very strong impact on arrival and living experiences;
- If students have a large proportion of compatriot friends, this seems to hinder the formation of wider friendships and later leads to a stronger sense of isolation;
- There is a significant difference between EU and non-EU students in their levels of satisfaction. The latter tend to be less satisfied with their experiences.

Limitations

The findings above should be regarded as more indicative than conclusive, owing to the limitations of the data sample. For more conclusive findings, in addition to access to the full UK raw data set, the following is needed:

- Questions worded in the same way across different (International) Student Barometer waves, so that data from the different waves can be combined and compared;
- Insertion of some additional questions to help probe the issues and concerns identified through background research (see Section 1 of this publication).



Section 3: Case Studies



This section presents a number of case studies from a diverse range of UK institutions and students' unions as a snapshot of strategies and activities that have proved successful in encouraging integration between international and domestic students. By recognising that each institution and students' union is different, we hope to avoid falling into the trap of trying to provide ready-made solutions that simply may not be relevant to your demographic or financial context and institutional goals. The case studies have been selected to provide examples of promising practice in the different domains of student life.



'Ratings for overall satisfaction, value for money and attendance at Hall Exec events have risen compared to before Ellerslie became a Global Residence.'

Daily Life: Accommodation and Orientation Initiatives

Ellerslie Global Residence

In 2012 the International Student Office worked with the Accommodation Service at the University of Leeds to turn a small on-campus hall into a Global residence for undergraduates interested in an intercultural residential experience, which would support positive interaction between UK and international students and contribute to internationalising the student experience on campus.

Ellerslie Global Residence houses around 100 students in a main building and several annexes; offers en-suite and shared bathrooms; has three common rooms; and is catered via the nearby refectory. These facilities enable it to cater for a diverse range of students with different cost and lifestyle preferences, and to support community through communal eating and socialising.

50% UK and 50% international students (with no preponderance of any one nationality outside the UK) are allocated places. Prospective residents are asked to apply explaining why they want to live there and how they could help make it a successful intercultural community. Any remaining UK spaces are filled with students on relevant courses such as Languages or International Development.

The International Student Office promotes the residence alongside other Global Community activity on www.globalcommunity.leeds.ac.uk/ellerslie and organises an intercultural welcome programme and intercultural activities during the year. These are designed to complement the mainstream activity organised by the student reps (Hall Exec) and provide a distinctive Freshers' experience.

The main aims of the week-long intercultural welcome programme are to support interaction and friendships between all residents; create a home and a community; connect people with similar interests; model alternatives to alcohol-heavy socialising; and run activity that doesn't disadvantage speakers of English as a second language.

To achieve these aims we run the following types of activities:

- to encourage community spirit: e.g. Global Cabaret, City Chase;
- to facilitate common room usage: e.g. events venue, meeting point, at-home-style socialising;
- to promote going out as a group: e.g. Meet to Eat;
- to help with mixing and name familiarisation: e.g. Human Bingo;
- to add cultural interest: e.g. Bollywood dance workshop with lassi and kulfi served, and small-scale activities like origami.

Meet to Eat restaurant visits, Global Cabaret and City Chase have been particularly popular. Events during the year have included a Lunar New Year Celebration and Tastes of Asia dinner party. All events have been attended by a good mix of international and UK students. One common room is now being turned into a kitchen for cookery demonstrations and dining events.

The results have been very positive. Ratings for overall satisfaction, value for money and attendance at Hall Exec events have risen compared to before Ellerslie became a Global Residence. There has been much more intercultural mixing; significantly improved social responsibility; very high common room usage; and a family atmosphere where everyone knows most other residents. (Last year two large groups went on to move out together including one of 13).

Our main challenge so far has been finding enough UK undergraduates who want an intercultural experience.

Important factors in the success of this initiative are the size of the residence; availability of common areas; promoting it as a special experience residents need to commit to contributing to; allocating with care; and initial intensive facilitation of intercultural mixing.

Katy Manns

University of Leeds

An Integrated Approach to Orientation

Bournemouth University (BU) has approximately 17,000 students of whom roughly 10% are international. Unlike many institutions, our international students arrive at the same time as our new UK students in September and all of them take part in a two-week induction ('Arrivals Fortnight') which includes their academic course induction in addition to a wide variety of extra-curricular and social events.

In recent years we have been experimenting with a more integrated approach to Arrivals Fortnight with the aim of encouraging international students to engage with a wider variety of activities and, in doing so, to mix more with UK students. This also brings added benefits to the UK students, not only in terms of internationalisation, but also because we have opened up a variety of events to them which were previously exclusively for international students (as part of the international orientation programme).

BU and Students' Union at Bournemouth University (SUBU) collaborate to produce the Arrivals Events Guide; a printed programme of all non-course related activities for the Arrivals Fortnight; approximately 200 events in total. The ethos is that students don't need to know who has organised an event, they just need to have a single programme which includes everything. Recognising that not all events appeal to all types of student, we developed a key code to help students identify which events they were interested in. It includes the following themes: Making Friends, Exploration, Party, Living, Sport, Relax, Education, Food, Parent friendly and ISOP (International Students' Orientation Programme).

Almost all social activities are open to everyone. The University and SUBU aim to provide an alternative (low/non-alcohol) event every evening during the first fortnight. Our Chaplaincy team help by offering several events including a Fish and Chips Quiz night and a Board Games evening. These events tend to be much more popular with international students, but the British who do attend are often quieter students who prefer not to drink alcohol and/or who struggle to fit in at the big parties. These students perhaps have more in common with many of our international students than with their UK peers and so these events seem to work well in terms of integration.

We use one team of 'Welcome Crew' (both UK and international students) to help with Arrivals Fortnight. Their training has a strong focus on diversity, the differing needs of individual students, and how it might feel to be a new international student arriving in the UK for the first time.

In October, BU and SUBU send a joint survey to all new students. We are lucky to have a very active network of student reps, managed by SUBU, who help to promote the survey to students on their courses. In October 2013, 18% of the new student cohort completed the survey. All responses can be filtered so that we can note any significant differences in the experiences of UK and international students. The survey has helped us to demonstrate a marked improvement in satisfaction amongst non-EU students regarding the range of events on offer during Arrivals Fortnight.

Inevitably, there have been some challenges. Attendance at international only events is significantly less than before (in some cases 50%) and sometimes the important activities can get missed amongst the huge programme of events. There is also a huge pressure on room bookings during that fortnight which sometimes makes it difficult to find suitable venues.

There is still plenty of scope for improvement. We intend to pursue an integrated approach, whilst still striving to highlight to international students some of the specific lectures and workshops that many of them need. There are plans to increase the number of low/no-alcohol evening events next year and we are working with SUBU and a local tour operator to provide a bigger range of excursions which will hopefully attract a broader mix of students.

Central to any small 'wins' we have achieved are two things: the principle of one all-encompassing events programme for all students and a truly collaborative working relationship with the Students' Union.

Caroline Earth

Bournemouth University (BU)



'We intend to pursue an integrated approach, whilst still striving to highlight to international students some of the specific lectures and workshops that many of them need.'



'Go Connect runs 35 events a year that provide a mix of networking, cultural exchange and learning opportunities.'

Social Life: Promoting Social Integration within and beyond the Campus

Go Connect

Go Connect is the largest Student Network in the University of Hull with over 15% of the student population (1 in every 16) registered as a member. There are currently 2,236 students registered with the Network.

The Network sets out to achieve 2 key aims:

- Primary Aim – To promote and encourage internationalisation within the University of Hull by arranging activities and settings for students to interact with one another, in order to encourage interaction and create an 'International Campus' that supports Global Learning.
- Secondary Aim – To develop the skills of participants, with a focus on employability, by offering support mechanisms that can help each student to develop into a 'Distinctive Hull Graduate'. Building on these foundations, our goal is for the scheme to become an effective mechanism for encouraging a Global Perspective.

International students make up 69% of Go Connect members and their sentiments are nicely summed up by Jakub Samoraj:

"The good thing about Go Connect activities was that they were able to engage wider public and that some of them were operating in the city centre. It is very noble of the university to engage in all sorts of activities that aim at improvement of cultural life in the city, address social decline, promote higher education to children, encourage the spirit of community life, empower individuals and create more job opportunities. Thanks to Go Connect, I have gained some of the most crucial transferable skills necessary for modern labour market. I have gained friends from different cultures and learned to appreciate different points of view. I hope that I have contributed to the team and that Go Connect will work successfully in the next academic year."

However, as Sam discovered, Go Connect isn't just about international students.

"The best thing about the extra activities is the number of them! Go Connect provides lots of opportunities to do a wide variety of things and introduces you to new people from a wide variety of backgrounds to do them with. With the various activities that Go Connect provides, as a fairly local student it's great to highlight and appreciate the city and surrounding areas from an international point of view."

I feel I've learnt a lot about my own culture as it made me question traditions such as bonfire night through having to explain them. I've also learnt a lot about other cultures through talking to people from all over the world which is great to have the opportunity!"

Sam Kitchen, UK

Go Connect runs 35 events a year that provide a mix of networking, cultural exchange and learning opportunities. There are large scale events like our Chinese New Year event, Garden Parties and Culture Fairs that attract at least 300 people to each event! In addition, there are smaller, more intimate events such as our Language Bite Sessions where students can learn a new language or attend our exclusive Orchestra events featuring high profile, internationally acclaimed musicians through our free ticket system. So, it is not hard to see why Go Connect has been growing at an average of 71% a year since its formation in 2009. And it's of no surprise that Jakub and Sam aren't alone in their opinions with 97% of students agreed that joining Go Connect enhanced their experience at university and 97% also said they would recommend it to their friends.

Joseph Bishop
University of Hull

eVOLve Project

The eVOLve project aims to provide support for the community, create weekly volunteering opportunities for students, and provide a chance for visiting students to get to know the charities within the city. We believe that this project is important for integration purposes and strengthening community bonds.

eVOLve is supported by the Volunteering Department within the Edinburgh University Students' Association. It collaborates on a weekly basis with different charities around Edinburgh. Every Wednesday, a team of volunteers head to a different charity in the city to provide a helping hand. eVOLve has been involved in a variety of activities including but not limited to, conservation work, tree planting, painting, beach clean-ups, befriending and supporting local heritage and culture projects.

What makes eVOLve different is that it provides an opportunity for students to try different and new things. It is flexible, allowing volunteers to come along on the weeks that suit them, as well as bring friends and flatmates. We see more new faces every week; many students are attracted to the team's friendly and welcoming attitude.

The volunteer participants at eVOLve are always a mix of students. The project hosts home students, international students living in the city as well as visiting students on exchange. The group provides a good opportunity to develop social and language skills, and creates a strong social environment by hosting monthly socials for the volunteers.

eVOLve definitely meets its goal of connecting to the community and reaching out to students from different backgrounds. The volunteering group has an evaluation scheme in place to get a good grasp of the city areas that are benefitting from the projects and demographic information about the students getting involved.

In terms of challenges, eVOLve is a fairly new group that has only been around for three years. The main challenge presented was when we needed to trailblaze in setting up structures. eVOLve has a strong student-led organisational committee and is well supported by the volunteering department. Due to these robust bonds, the team was able to smoothly sail through the difficulties, improving further with each year that passes.

Based on our experience, we would highly recommend setting up a volunteering group like eVOLve. Due to visa regulations, many students would not be able to engage with community charities on a regular basis, so the provision of one-off opportunities becomes vital to their involvement. We would also recommend engaging with the group online, as that has proved to be successful for us. eVOLve has an active Facebook presence that is enhanced by sharing pictures of each activity and connecting with charities through different social mediums.

Noor Maraghi and Johanna Holtan

Edinburgh University Students' Association



'What makes eVOLve different is that it provides an opportunity for students to try different and new things.'



'As expected, the greatest challenge has been attracting home students, but early indications are encouraging.'

Global Campus

Research suggested that the University of Sheffield was underperforming in the area of encouraging friendships between home and international students. To address this we looked to develop a flexible programme of integration activities that was sustainable and, wherever possible, peer-led. In order to maximize resources the project was set up as a collaboration with the Students' Union which was simultaneously developing its "One World" initiative to promote student integration.

We felt it was important to have an over-arching concept that should appeal both to home and international students. "Global Campus" was chosen to reflect our aim of creating a more integrated campus community.

The first stage was to develop a social media strategy. Our Global Campus Facebook presence was launched in November 2012 to engage with students both before and after arrival in Sheffield. This would also allow us to start 'promoting the brand' so that there was already some recognition before new initiatives were launched. The first of these was "One World Cafe" a weekly two-hour event held in the Students' Union. We wanted to provide a big enough time slot so that students could come and go according to their own timetable rather than feeling they had to commit to a fixed event. The choice of venue was part of the strategy to encourage international students to engage more with the Students' Union.

Next to be launched were "Finding Your Feet" and "Culture Compass". FYF is a series of six weekly one-hour drop-in sessions in the first half of the semester in which international students who are experiencing difficulties can discuss things with their peers in an environment that is facilitated, rather than directed, by staff. Compass is a regular student-led forum for discussing cultural difference and the challenges of fitting into a new culture aimed at both international and home students. The activity counts towards students' HEAR at both 'participant' and 'leader' level, the latter involving students choosing the topic and leading discussion with a short presentation.

Finally, "Global Connections" is an online forum where students and staff can suggest and take part in social activities with the implicit aim of facilitating cultural exchange.

At the time of writing, the Facebook group has almost 3,000 likes and the Cafe now attracts between 20 and 50 participants each week. Most pleasing is the fact that the different components of Global Campus are feeding into each other so for example, a Culture Compass participant one week may turn up at the Cafe the next. As expected, the greatest challenge has been attracting home students, but early indications are encouraging. A holistic evaluation will be carried out at the end of the Spring semester.

We feel sure that an important part of the success of this project has been in enabling students to take ownership of initiatives rather than be 'directed' by staff. We think the best way to achieve this is through a combination of flexible social activities, regular support sessions and imaginative use of social media.

Mark Collier, Tim Cooper, Olivia Johnstone
University of Sheffield

International Family Link Scheme

The primary goal of the International Family Link Scheme is to facilitate cultural exchanges between international students and local residents. We aim to help international students (and their families) gain a more authentic impression of Nottingham by getting to know local people; experiencing British life and culture beyond the student bubble; and meeting new people and getting involved in their adopted community. We also aim to offer, to those local residents who would find it interesting, the chance to engage with people from a variety of different cultures by inviting an international student into their home; exploring the local area together; and sharing in common interests/activities.

Crucial to the success of this scheme has been the development of collaborative relationships with internal and external agencies. Local magazines and community care groups (e.g. Soroptimists) were particularly helpful. Alumni Relations, Community Partnerships, Marketing, Communications and Recruitment, and Off Campus Affairs all contributed to the collective recruitment effort.

The strategy was orientated towards 'match-making' between international students and local residents to facilitate cultural exchange. This prompted the following activities:

- canvassing previous hosts regarding interest in this cycle
- advertising internally (message boards/email/posters)
- advertising externally (local magazines/approaching local community groups)
- disseminating targeted invitations to alumni living locally
- developing a contacts database
- cross-referencing students with residents based on hobbies/interests/cultures
- auditing the results to maximise positive cross over and minimise potential anxieties

We hold an introductory evening, which is informal and flexible, allowing 'matches' to meet for the first time. Student contact details are then distributed to hosts with a view to the host organising future meetings.

The goal of facilitating cultural exchanges between international students and local residents has been achieved. The number of local residents participating as volunteer hosts has quadrupled relative to last year's scheme. These levels in future years could be maintained/expanded through the establishment of new recruitment pools and the enthusiasm of the parties involved. The challenge in this is to continue growth in the scheme without losing value to the individuals who participate.

The goal of international students gaining a more authentic impression of Nottingham has also been met and evaluated through contributions to the Off Campus Blog <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/offcampus/tag/international-family-link/>. These real life stories demonstrate a variety of activities that have enriched the students' cultural experiences of their time in Nottingham. A key challenge in this has been meeting a range of student expectations.

The goal of providing local residents the chance to engage with people from a variety of different cultures has also been met. Feedback was sought from hosts subsequent to the introductory event and it confirmed the value of the activity to them personally. The major challenge is with the logistics of the introductory event itself: introducing 250 participants to their matches is far from straight forward and we expect it to be more structured in the future, while retaining informality.

Some examples of intercultural growth that participation in the scheme has achieved include gaining new insights into familiar places and feeling proud of the local area, learning about new topics as well as promoting discussions about different (and also similar) lifestyles and customs.

Our experience in this year's scheme has led to the following recommendations: utilise social media; publicise success stories; make facilitation of introductions the focus of the introductory event. Reflecting upon the insights and successes from this year, we expect the focus of forthcoming iterations to be on the promotion of the scheme, along with further investigations into how to integrate and partner with complementary schemes (within and external to the University). Ideally the friendships fostered as part of the scheme will continue past the duration of the project, potentially leading to long-lasting, reciprocal friendships. Imagine a corresponding 'board games night' in a couple of years' time overseas!

Melanie Bentham-Hill
University of Nottingham



'The goal of providing local residents the chance to engage with people from a variety of different cultures has also been met.'



'The Music Centre at Warwick University acts as a service for all students, staff, and members of the local community regardless of their degree or background.'



Musical Internationalisation

The Music Centre at the University of Warwick acts as a service for all students, staff and the local community regardless of their degree or background. This makes it different to other music faculties in the UK, in that facilities and performance opportunities are available to everyone on an equal basis. For the last two years, the Music Centre has embarked upon a programme of musical internationalisation to make it more inclusive of international students.

What makes this programme special is that rather than simply encouraging international students to take part in pre-existing conventional ensembles, we have set up new music ensembles which reflect diverse musical and cultural backgrounds. This creates a platform for home and international students to collaborate around a common goal, learn from each other, and truly feel they are actively improving the musical culture at Warwick.

The Music Centre's internationalisation programme is an all-year-round project with *Warwick Fused* as its culmination and most powerful manifestation. At *Warwick Fused*, all of the World Music ensembles perform on the Warwick Arts Centre main stage in front of 1500 spectators with the University's Symphony Orchestra and Chorus (150 singers including members of the local community) acting as the 'backing bands'. Whilst the concert gives a platform for each ensemble to play their own music, there are many points at which more than one ensemble plays together. The preparation for this necessarily involves a meaningful intercultural exchange whereby people have to learn music of a completely different tradition, directly from the people who perform it.

Whilst the number of international students engaging with the Music Centre has dramatically increased over the two years of this programme, we have also managed to reach out to home students and the local community in a way which champions the idea of integration as a two-way process. Due to the success of *Warwick Fused II*, the Lord Mayor of Coventry made *Warwick Fused III* his official Charity of the Year event, extending the remit of our project to a much wider audience across Coventry.

Ruairi Edwards and **Paul McGrath**

Music Centre
University of Warwick



Academic Life: Initiatives in and for the Classroom

Building a Global Outlook into Course Curricula

A fundamental site of intercultural engagement for students is in their subject learning activities and associated assessments. To embed inclusive behaviours and global perspectives within the core work of subject study we introduced the graduate attribute of 'having a global outlook' – one of three attributes introduced as part of an extensive institution-wide undergraduate curriculum re-focus exercise. We believed that through the process of creating subject learning outcomes which made explicit reference to relevant aspects of the global outlook attribute, course teams would take ownership and ensure that students were able to see how this related to their disciplinary context and their personal and professional lives.

The framing of the global outlook attribute was taken forward through a working group of university Teacher Fellows from a range of disciplines, co-ordinated by an academic from our Centre for Learning and Teaching. This included creating examples of modified learning outcomes which embedded aspects of the attribute within discipline-specific learning outcomes. Individual course teams were responsible for interpreting the attribute for their own contexts, and for creating learning outcomes across all levels of the course. Global reviewers in our Centre for Learning and Teaching looked at the embedding of each of our graduate attributes across all courses/modules, and where appropriate provide feedback and guidance to course teams.

In terms of enhancing intercultural working specifically, the global outlook attribute was split into two dimensions – 'global relevance' and 'inclusivity'. Global Relevance includes, for example, considerations such as, 'How do activities associated with this discipline impact upon others in diverse global contexts?', and 'How do diverse people perceive this particular disciplinary issue?' Inclusivity includes, for example, 'Being willing to see our own values and behaviours as cultural habits which may be as strange to others as theirs are to us' and 'Being able to modify our language and/or behaviour to help the flow of communication with others'. Embedding these (and others) in subject learning outcomes should add significant value to how students envisage working collaboratively with diverse others, and through the constructive alignment process should shape learning activities and assessment tasks which support, guide, and evaluate this work.

Through the global review process we were able to ensure that the global outlook attribute was embedded in course and module learning outcomes, and represented in assessment tasks across levels of study. We are currently developing further guidance, again with the support of university Teacher Fellows, on enhancing course and module information, induction activities, learning activities, and assessment criteria to better enable our students to recognise the value of our attributes and to be able to articulate this value, for example to future employers. An external consultant has been engaged to run student focus groups around their understanding and valuing of the attributes.

Particular strengths of this project (to date) have been:

- the involvement of Teacher fellows from a range of disciplines in shaping the global outlook attribute
- the creation of guidelines for course review teams which included specific examples of modified learning outcomes
- the opportunity for course teams to take ownership and embed the attribute within their own disciplinary contexts.

David Killick

Leeds Metropolitan University



'A fundamental site of intercultural engagement for students is in their subject learning activities and associated assessments.'



'Students who reported that they had been doing most of the talking often attributed this to a lack of motivation in teammates.'

Promoting Integration in Multicultural Groupwork

Even when students who are studying in multicultural classes have a desire to work well together, they often have difficulty working effectively in groups. This classroom initiative aims to bring to the surface, and get students to understand more objectively through observation, analysis and reflection, some integration issues that commonly occur in groupwork with counterparts from different cultural backgrounds. These are essentially communication-related issues that tend to be over-attributed to language proficiency level or motivation and under-attributed to cultural difference. When the degree that students have chosen is in intercultural communication itself, integration is still compromised because in practice it is very hard to apply to their own immediate circumstances what they learn academically about cultural differences in communication patterns.

Establishing shared ground

To establish a context we firstly elicited, via confidential online messaging, each student's personal reaction to a story about a dysfunctional student team (adapted from Oakley¹⁸). It revealed that nearly all this postgraduate cohort had prior experience of teammates participating unequally in groupwork, either when undergraduates or during the previous term.

A vehicle for the activity and what it entailed

We then set a creative project for students to carry out over several weeks in culturally diverse teams of five. They were asked to record one or more team meetings and at the end of term to submit an individual paper containing firstly an overview of the way their team communicated and secondly a closer analysis of one or two minutes of actual talk. We asked them to pay attention to features of the interaction they thought were significant in how, for example, ideas were volunteered, decisions were made, and leaders emerged.

Insights and outcomes

One key feature that emerged from students' *observation* and *analysis* of their team meetings related to who tended to interrupt, overlap, or alternatively first wait for silence to speak, and different ways people showed their support of what others had said. Another was the frequency of asking questions. When students came to *reflect* on what they had discovered from listening again more closely to the way the team communicated in a meeting, they were able to demonstrate some acute insights on their own participation and how it might be perceived by others, and in turn influence the way others participated.

Students who reported that they had been doing most of the talking often attributed this to a lack of motivation in teammates. However, when in frustration two such students 'went on strike', they discovered their teammates did have ideas and were willing to contribute them, if enough space was allowed. Conversely, some students reflected that their own reluctance to interrupt was inadvertently facilitating the dominance of others in discussions. Someone whose intention was to be facilitative – setting out to support rather than to lead – was able to identify through this activity that asking others for their opinions was what had established her as a leader: consequently, she re-evaluated the effect of asking questions.

In subsequent evaluations of the activity students commented very positively that it was realistic, relevant and useful for the future in giving them a better understanding of their own effect on intercultural interaction in teams. These outcomes strongly indicate the value of creating opportunities to observe, analyse and reflect on one's own communication in a group situation and understand how it can inadvertently block, compromise or promote integration. Without such opportunities, students may be hampered in developing effective intercultural communication skills, despite studying with people from a range of backgrounds.

Sophie Reissner-Roubicek

University of Warwick

¹⁸ Oakley, B., Felder, R. M., Brent, R., & Elhajj, I. (2004). Turning student groups into effective teams. *Journal of Student Centered Learning*, 2 (1), 9–34.

BizPALS (Peer-assisted Learning Scheme)

BizPALS (peer-assisted learning scheme) was initiated to support the adaptation of first-year students at the University of Edinburgh (UoE) Business School to study in the UK, and also to provide more experienced students the opportunity to improve their interpersonal skills, and create a sense of community and identity within the school.

The Business School has a large proportion of international students, many of whom struggle to integrate into the home community and have difficulty with spoken English and there were concerns that this struggle was having a negative impact on the students' ability to get the most out of their learning experience.

It was organised and delivered in collaboration with the Peer Support Project, Edinburgh University Students' Association (a partnership project with University of Edinburgh) and with the University of Edinburgh Business School.

Thirty-one second to fourth-year students completed PALS student leader (SL) training in September/October 2013, before undertaking observations of tutorials for the zero-credit first-year course Study Skills for Business (SSB) throughout semester 1. They put their training into practice by helping facilitate small group discussions and activities with the first year students. In semester 2, the SLs planned and delivered three workshops to be run alongside the coursework-only section of SSB, on topics chosen by them. They split into groups to plan the workshops, and ran all 3 sessions in pairs for groups of around 10 first-years.

BizPALS was coordinated locally by a student support officer, and a teaching fellow at the Business School. Development and ongoing support and supervision of the project, as well as leader training, was provided by the Peer Support Team.

There were initially some concerns about the language competency of the volunteers, which emerged after the application process, during the highly participative training sessions. However, the SLs were allowed to gain confidence during semester 1, observing tutorials.

The pilot project has clearly been a success, and planning is commencing to develop the scheme further for next year. Regular debriefs were held throughout first semester, to reflect on how the student leaders were fitting into the tutorials, applying their skills and to develop the plan for their independent sessions. Student discussions, constructive criticism and reflections were encouraged, and verbal feedback recorded from these meetings.

International and home students worked well together when collaboratively planning sessions, and many students' comments suggested that the barrier that usually exists between students and tutors, and the different year groups was being challenged in a positive way.

The student leaders provided the following feedback on how they felt the project had worked and what it had achieved:

"I like seeing the students improve across the sessions. Many more have confidence in speaking out and gaining teamworking skills."

"[It was] good meeting others, and I feel like I have more responsibility and have improved my own interpersonal skills."

Further evaluation of the impact on first year students will be gathered as the SSB course continues this semester.

Should other institutions consider trying a similar project, the key factor for success was the strong staff support from the Business School, in terms of the administration and organisation of the project, but also their work with the student leaders, supporting and inspiring them to take ownership of a section of their degree programme.

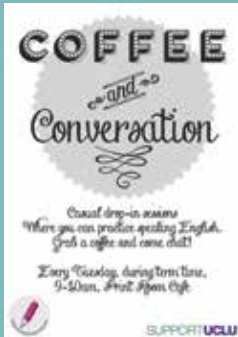
I would also suggest that allowing the volunteers to move gradually into their student leader roles in the first semester allowed them to gain the necessary confidence to deal with concerns before they had fully assumed their positions of responsibility.

Mimi Watts and Johanna Holtan

Edinburgh University Students' Association



'International and home students worked well together when collaboratively planning sessions.'



'Our Peer Tutors are native English speakers who have an interest in language and/or have experience teaching English as a Second Language.'

Language and Communication Initiatives

Writing and Language Support (WALS)

With English language support available at University College London (UCL) for an additional cost, University College London Union (UCLU) wanted to offer a free peer-to-peer service for international students. We felt students would be more comfortable practising their English with their peers in a less formal setting and it would boost their confidence to speak in class and make UK friends.

Before launching the programme we researched existing schemes. Of particular interest to us were services offered by the University of Birmingham. The English for International Students Unit (EISU) provides services to international students including one-to-one tutorials on a piece of writing, an oral presentation or general pronunciation. We were also interested in Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) Peer Proofreading scheme. EUSA recruits student volunteers, who proofread the work of non-native English speakers. Volunteers provide electronic comments (tracked changes), commenting only on grammar, vocabulary and general clarity of English. Finally, we were interested in the UCLA American Culture and Conversation programme. This is an eight-week course led by volunteers and offered to international students and scholars to learn more about American culture while practicing conversation skills.

For the initial proposal, UCLU consulted with various internal departments, senior UCL staff and students. We then hired two peer tutors and began offering one-to-one sessions to non-native English speaking students.

Students are offered 20-minute sessions and can upload work of up to 1,000 words on Moodle. The writing must be submitted in advance. Alternately, students can rehearse an oral presentation, which is recorded and played back with them to discuss pronunciation points. We also run a series of grammar and 'British Culture and Conversation' workshops.

In our first pilot year, we served students from 21 nationalities from a range of UCL departments. The service was overwhelmingly used by Chinese students and Postgraduates. We had around 60 one-to-one appointments and ran 9 workshops with a cumulative attendance of 97 students.

Our Peer Tutors are native English speakers who have an interest in language and/or have experience teaching English as a Second Language.

The programme's first year was a success, judging by the feedback forms we received from all attendees: 100% of attendees found the sessions useful and would recommend it. Specific feedback included: "...the session was very reassuring and important for gaining confidence with my essay writing"; "I practised oral presentation with the tutor effectively...I have more confidence for my real presentation day. Very helpful for me! Thank you so much UCLU."

Feedback from students on workshops was also very positive and comments included: "The workshop today is brilliant. I thought it would be boring on the topic of politics, but the presentation and the activities gave me very deep impressions. It makes me clearer about the political system and more familiar with the politicians in the UK and it also answered many questions in my mind for a long time. Many thanks for organising this."

We have struggled with utilising an effective booking system and ensuring that all students who book appointments attend the sessions. We have also encountered some difficulty with students contacting peer tutors outside of their appointments. Nevertheless, we would recommend that other Universities and Students' Unions offer a peer-to-peer writing and speaking support programme. Start it out as a small pilot project, then evaluate and expand the programme, as we've done. Definitely liaise with the University and ensure you have guidelines in place to prevent any abuse.

Diana Hawk and **Katie Kokkinou**
University College London Union (UCLU)



The Shared Reading Project

The Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) is a distinctive learning and teaching environment in which musical creativity and professional training flourish in complete synergy. Of the 775 students who study at the college, a significant number of the student population comes from outside the UK. Although these students work alongside each other in orchestras, ensembles and academic learning contexts, it is often the case that students from the Far East experience difficulty when making the transition to a Western culture. Despite having studied the Western repertoire in their own country, they have little understanding of its cultural context, past and present. Moreover, language fluency problems often hinder an accurate interpretation of the culture in which they are now living. Equally problematic is the fact that home students have little awareness of the difficulties their international colleagues are experiencing, as cross-cultural social engagements rarely take place.

Previous research carried out at the RNCM revealed that international students wanted the opportunity to meet home students but did not have the confidence to forge friendship links. Similarly, many home students expressed a wish to 'get to know' international students but did not seem to be able to find an opportunity or the occasion to do so.

The Shared Reading Project we devised develops intercultural competence through the use of graded reading books (published by Oxford/Penguin) purchased by the college. The project involved exploring the literature of different countries with the aim of building an awareness of the cultural values of other people.

The use of graded readers encourages language development outside the classroom and provides a platform for further discussion. The range of books includes fiction and non-fiction titles covering a wide range of topic areas which provide insights into cultural and cross-curricular studies. Although originally written and devised for international students, the readers can be enjoyed by native speakers of English as many of the texts are unabridged.

Conservatoire students from the Far East who had little understanding of Western culture were paired with home students from the same institution. The project provided a basis for discussion from which international students and home students could become more effective in the way they interacted and communicated with each other. By using cultural differences as an opportunity rather than an impediment, the Shared Reading Project had a positive impact on learning and teaching at the RNCM. It provided a common ground for students to share and exchange ideas about a mutually accepted topic while promoting inclusion and integration through direct interaction and communication.

The project began in October 2012 and involved around thirty students. Students were paired together during an initial meeting when the project was explained. The students then chose a book from the Oxford/Penguin Graded Readers series held in the RNCM library and arranged to meet on a regular basis to discuss what they had read. The dates and times of the meetings were given to the English language tutor at the college so that the progress of the project could be monitored.

Our Shared Reading Project has been very well received by RNCM students. It was clear from the start that the project provided a reason for meeting and talking to those from different cultural groups. The use of a reader established a framework for the meetings which otherwise might have lacked a sense of direction. Moreover the discussion of the content of the reader gave each meeting well-defined aims and objectives and stimulated interest in planning the next. The readers also facilitated a cross-cultural exchange based on the context of a chosen book which contains themes of interest to both parties. This led to the meaningful development of language skills through which friendships with those from different cultural groups could be established.

The project was evaluated by questionnaire and by attendance at an evaluation meeting which all the participants attended. The international students reported that their language skills had improved and they had more confidence when speaking English to other nationalities. They also said that the meetings enabled them to discuss language points and unfamiliar vocabulary with native speakers of English. Home students reported that they had enjoyed the experience of working with international students, in many cases for the first time, and had found the process very rewarding.



'The project involved exploring the literature of different countries with the aim of building an awareness of the cultural values of other people.'



'Home and international students felt they had built an understanding of the cultural values of the students with whom they had collaborated.'

Other home students said that it had given them greater insights into the difficulties which international students face when living and studying in a foreign country. One home student commented *"I now understand more about the student's background and have learned some words of their language."* Home and international students felt they had built an understanding of the cultural values of the students with whom they had collaborated. They felt that the outcomes were of lasting value to them; friendship links had been made, knowledge shared and intercultural competence acquired. These are essential skills for all students but especially for those who will become artists working in international orchestras on the world stage.

Other forms of evaluation included observing student behaviour in informal and social situations in the college refectory. Before the project it was often the case that students from the Far East sat in their ethnic groups and did not speak to home students unless necessary. After the project it was observed that those who had participated in the project were often seen chatting to home students in new friendship groups. This indicated to us that the shared reading project had led to greater integration between our home and international students.

The merits and value of the scheme and its outcomes was subsequently recognised by two awards; one from the RNCM and the other from The Higher Education Academy (HEA) working in partnership with the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) funding projects around internationalisation. Dissemination took place at a HEA event in London and at Conservatoires UK (CUK) in 2013.

In our opinion the continued success of projects such as this requires careful management. Advertising the project at the beginning of the year, for instance, during induction week and Students' Union events informs home and international students that their social integration is part of the ethos of the institution. Careful monitoring of the project to ensure that the meetings take place on a regular basis is also necessary. Finally, evaluation meetings and observations of student interaction will help organisers to build on the success of the project and determine the overall effectiveness of a particular integration strategy.

Jean Ammar and **Tatyana Yekimova**
Royal Northern College of Music





Section 4: Actions for Consideration and Questions for Further Exploration

Five Actions for Consideration

1 COMMUNICATE the value of every student, regardless of nationality, being an "international student" to the whole community before, during and after the study experience. Institutional support for developing intercultural competence and a global outlook can facilitate integration and improve transition, participation and employability. It can be demonstrated to prospective students, alumni and employers as well as current students and staff through:

- An institutional strategy and policies that value global citizenship, language learning, international mobility and an internationalised curriculum where intercultural competence is measured as a learning outcome
- Messages in the prospectus, pre-arrival literature and on arrival (e.g. induction/welcome events) on the challenges of intercultural contact and benefits of developing intercultural skills
- Assessing and rewarding students who develop their intercultural competence

2 DEVELOP a deeper understanding of your own institutional context by:

- Conducting your own research on student attitudes to integration – not all institutions are the same
- Making your interventions evidence-based rather than assumption-based
- Deciding how you will evaluate your activities and measure success
- Listening to both the "student voice" and the "staff voice"

3 ADOPT a "joined-up" approach to integration by encouraging collaboration between researchers, administrators and students. Sharing resources (e.g. research findings; survey data), knowledge and expertise helps avoid duplication and survey fatigue. A mixed economy of top-down (institutional policy) and bottom-up (student-led activities) can be an effective approach to engaging students and increasing integration, in particular the use of facilitated peer-to-peer support.

4 MAP the integration interventions made by your academic departments, administrative departments and students' union across the student lifecycle as this will help to identify gaps in provision, points of "information overload" and opportunities to add value. This mapping exercise can then form the basis of a larger review of integration activities which can in turn be mapped onto the four domains of student life (daily/social/academic/language & communication) to ensure all areas of the student experience are being addressed across the full student lifecycle. Areas for consideration might include:

- Mentoring/buddy schemes pre-arrival, including the use of social media
- Accommodation allocation policies with a view to intercultural mixing
- The integration of domestic and international students during Orientation/Induction programmes
- Access to sports and social provision and worship facilities for a culturally diverse student body
- A diverse food and drink offering that balances alcohol and non-alcohol spaces and events

5 INCREASE structured opportunities for reflection and meaningful dialogue (rather than just mixing activities) in the different domains of student life as this promotes positive relations more than diversity. This can be achieved by:

- Identifying potential events/activities (e.g. residential life, volunteering and seminars)
- Identifying techniques for promoting effective communication in intercultural groups
- Running courses to train students and staff in use of these techniques and their benefits

Five Questions for Further Exploration

1 How can we organise the arrival period so that its impact can be maximised for integration purposes, thinking especially across the different domains:

- Daily life
- Social life
- Academic life
- Language and communication

How can the initiatives be evaluated for effectiveness?

2 What initiatives across the different domains can help promote a strong sense of belonging:

- Daily life
- Social life
- Academic life
- Language and communication

How can the initiatives be evaluated for effectiveness?

3 What types of 'globally-oriented' courses are helpful for promoting integration and a global outlook?

- Are they best run within degree programmes, as optional 'transferable skills' courses, or are both types needed?
- How can we assure their quality when staff may not be interested and/or have little expertise in promoting intercultural skills?

4 Both research and practical experience indicates that interaction opportunities are necessary pre-requisites for integration but are not sufficient in themselves. Moreover, some students are not interested in or motivated to promote integration. How can take-up and deep engagement with the opportunities offered be maximised?

5 Many of our interventions are currently assumption-based rather than evidence-based: we have a feeling they increase integration, but do not have the evidence to support this theory. What additional research could be undertaken into student attitudes and motivations to inform evidence-based interventions in the following areas:

- The impact of Orientation programmes on integration
- The role of food and alcohol provision/spaces
- The role of volunteering
- The use of social media
- The use of peer support versus institutional support services

It is our hope that over the coming months, the Warwick Integration Summit will establish a number of communities of practice to research the questions above and, in so doing, improve the internationalised experience for all students studying in the UK, regardless of their nationality.

UK Council for International Student Affairs



The UK Council for International Student Affairs is the UK's national advisory body serving the interests of international students and those who work with them.

It does so through research, print and web-based publications, a national training programme, dedicated advice lines for students and advisors, and liaison and advocacy with institutions, agencies and government.

Its aims are to:

- increase support for international education and raise awareness of its values and benefits
- promote opportunities for, and identify and work to reduce obstacles and barriers to, greater student mobility
- encourage best practice, professional development and the highest quality of institutional support for international students throughout the education sector

UKCISA's membership includes:

- every university in the UK
- a number of Students' Unions
- the majority of publicly funded higher and further education colleges which are active internationally
- a number of independent schools and private colleges and
- a range of specialist and representative bodies

UKCISA