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‘Empty signifiers’ and ‘dreamy ideals’. Perceptions of the ‘international university’ among higher education students and staff at a British University

Introduction

‘Internationalisation’ is now a ubiquitous term in the UK higher education (HE) sector. However, it means ‘different things to different people’ (Knight, 2008: 2), and therefore remains very much a ‘conceptually elusive term’ (Doiz, Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2014: 172). This is reflected in the recent research literature, where a range of authors point to a lack of clarity and consensus surrounding this term (e.g. Turner and Robson, 2007; Ray and Solem, 2009). For the purpose of this paper we adopt J. Knight’s (1994) frequently cited conceptualisation which defines HE internationalisation as ‘integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of the institution’ (p. 7).

Most universities, both in the UK and elsewhere, now have internationalisation strategies, but these are often poorly implemented and characterised by a lack of leadership (Warwick and Moogan, 2013). Most universities also brand themselves quite explicitly as ‘international’ but the extent to which they truly are ‘international’ remains doubtful as the focus remains largely on economic imperatives, in particular international student recruitment, at the expense of more holistic and transformative approaches to internationalisation (Robson, 2011; Young et al., 2016). Robson and Turner (2007) caution that tensions between internationalist rhetoric at the policy-level, and commercial approaches to internationalisation at the practical level, may hinder the development of an international ethos in a HE institution.

Staff, both academic and administrative; as well as students, both ‘home’ and ‘international’, are key constituencies at HE institutions and have been identified as ‘core players’ (Teekens, 2000: 30) in the internationalisation process. Their experiences can not only inform definitions of HE internationalisation, which are currently inadequately understood (Sanderson, 2004); they can also provide indications as to whether internationalisation strategies identified at policy-level actually translate into practice (Llurda et al., 2014). However, much of the prevailing discourse in HE is ‘laden with theorising about internationalisation’ (Hyland et al., 2008: 6), and the ‘lived’ experiences of HE staff and students remain largely underexplored (Trahar and Hyland, 2011; Vinther and Slethaug, 2015). However, their experiences and perceptions are crucial if we are to align

internationalisation strategies with the reality of those working and studying in an internationalised university. As Turner and Robson (2007: 6) state:

Providing extensive opportunities for university people to participate in discussion and become involved in determining the scope, penetration and content of an 'internationalization' agenda seems a necessary prerequisite for 'success' however it is measured.

Students play a crucial, dual role in HE internationalisation processes, both as consumers of internationalisation, selecting their university based on international rankings, and as outputs of processes aimed at producing globally minded graduates (Yemini et al., 2014). Whilst the 'lived' experiences of internationally-mobile students are relatively well understood (e.g. Young et al., 2013; Schartner, 2015), little is known about their orientation towards concepts such as 'internationalisation at home' and 'global citizenship'. The perspectives and experiences of 'home' students have thus far been neglected in the educational and intercultural literature, although research is now growing (e.g. Ujitani and Volet, 2008).

The perspectives of staff are especially important as the internationalisation of HE goes hand in hand with a transformation of staff roles and professional identities (Larrinaga and Amurrio, 2015), with many lecturers now expected to integrate global perspectives into their teaching and administrative staff routinely operating in multicultural and multilingual settings. Nonetheless, research too often overlooks their views and little work has been published that explores their experiences and perceptions of internationalisation (Dewey and Duff, 2009; Daniels, 2013; Llorca et al., 2014).

Internationalisation at home and global citizenship

As it is becoming increasingly clear that staff and student mobility is not in itself a panacea for universities seeking to internationalise, 'internationalisation at home' (IaH) is gradually moving to the top of internationalisation agendas in UK universities. IaH acknowledges that the majority of students and staff are not internationally mobile and thus intercultural opportunities cannot be gained through study or work abroad (Trahar and Hyland, 2011). Closely linked to IaH is the concept of 'global citizenship' as the ever-increasing need to develop globally competent graduates is becoming a key imperative for HE institutions to internationalise (Dewey and Duff, 2009; Thanosawan and Laws, 2013). However, whilst there are arguably increasing demands on HE staff to prepare students for a 'globalised workplace' (Ray and Solem, 2009), what exactly global citizenship means remains open to

interpretation (Bourn, 2011). This is especially true for learning outcomes of global citizenship education in HE where tensions pertain between those who view these outcomes as a set of ‘marketable skills’, and those who emphasise aspects such as social justice and global responsibility (Landorf and Feldman, 2015; Haigh and Clifford, 2011). This tension is captured by Lewin (2009: xviii) who cautions that ‘everyone seems to be in such a rush to create global citizens out of their students that we seem to have forgotten even to determine what we are trying to create.’

Against this backdrop, the aim of this mixed-methods case study was to explore how university staff and students experience and perceive HE internationalisation. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do HE staff and students perceive an ‘international university’?
2. How do HE students and staff understand and experience the concepts of ‘internationalisation at home’, and ‘global citizenship’?
3. How do HE students and staff envisage that international perspectives can be incorporated into learning, teaching, and staff development activities?

The setting for this case study was a research-intensive British university. It employs a large number of ‘international’ staff (around 20% of its workforce), and with more than 6,000 international students it was among the top 20 largest recruiters of international students in the UK in 2014-15 (UKCISA, 2016). Through its internationalisation strategy the institution aims to incorporate an international dimension into all its core functions, including teaching, research and professional services.

Although ‘internationalisation at home’ is identified as a key priority area in the strategy document, this appears to be largely situated within a recruitment agenda, as exemplified in the three core objectives which are:

1. Recruiting international staff and students
2. Developing international opportunities for staff and students
3. Attracting international researchers for research collaborations

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, defined as

‘the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches ... for the broad

purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration' (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner, 2007: 123).

Data was gathered through (a) an online self-report survey (N=148), and (b) a series of focus groups with students and staff (N=19). Given that we were interested to explore experiences and perceptions of HE internationalisation, the chosen methodological approach was mostly of a qualitative nature (cf. Hyland and Trahar, 2011). Nonetheless, some quantitative survey data was collected to provide a context for the qualitative data (cf. Wright and Schartner, 2013). We felt that the interactive nature of focus groups was more likely to produce debate, and therefore richer data, than a one-to-one interview scenario (Wilkinson, 2003).

Focus groups

Focus group (FG) discussions were held in four groups, and each was moderated by a facilitator.

- FG 1: 'Home' postgraduate students (N = 3; two females, one male)
- FG 2: 'International' postgraduate students (N = 8; all female)
- FG 3: Undergraduate students (N = 2; one male 'home' student, one female 'international' student)
- FG 4: University academic staff (N = 6; two female, four male, all UK nationals)

Participants were recruited via e-mail and places were allocated on a first-response basis. It was difficult to attract 'home' students, in particular those undertaking undergraduate degrees, and on one occasion only two students attended and a mixed pair interview was conducted instead (FG 3). This challenge is not uncommon and has been reported by other authors (e.g. Trahar and Hyland, 2011). It is important to note that all focus group participants were self-selected volunteers and therefore likely to have an interest in HE internationalisation. Whilst this might stimulate discussion, it might also mean that these individuals were more likely to have strong opinions on the subject matter. Focus group questions were initially open-ended (e.g. 'What does 'internationalisation at home' mean to you?'), but follow-on questions were asked to probe specific aspects raised by the participants.

Focus groups with staff, and with 'home' and 'international' students were conducted separately (cf. Hyland et al., 2008) in order to create a 'safe' setting which could stimulate open and honest expression of opinions and experiences. We hoped that this would allow conversations to flow freely and therefore generate more fine-grained data than would have

been the case in mixed-groups. The literature on small-group processes seems to suggest that greater participant homogeneity encourages increased self-disclosure and, consequently, more productive interaction (Corfman, 1995; Morgan, 1997). Written consent to audio-record the focus groups was obtained from each participant.

Self-report survey

The self-report survey, a combination of Likert-scale items and open questions, was administered online. A link to the survey was sent via e-mail to students and staff by school office managers on behalf of the researchers. The survey consisted of three sections. Section 1 collected demographic data on sex, age, employment role/student status, and discipline background. Section 2 focused on the notion of the ‘international university’. It included 13 Likert-scale items preceded by the instruction ‘Thinking of the UK-context, to what extent do you think the statements below characterise ‘an international university’’. Participants were asked to rank the statements from 1 [not at all] to 5 [to a great extent] (Table 1, below). Survey items on language and mobility were adapted from Llurda et al. (2014) to suit the English-speaking UK HE context (items #1-#8), whilst survey items on curriculum and staff development (#9-#13) were adapted from the UK Higher Education Academy’s Internationalising Higher Education Framework (2014).

Table 1. Likert-scale survey items

#1	There are a range of languages present at the university
#2	There are many different nationalities working at the university.
#3	There are many different nationalities studying at the university
#4	Many home students (i.e. British students) study abroad on exchange programmes (e.g. Erasmus).
#5	The university has many exchange and institutional collaboration programmes with universities from different countries
#6	The university offers a wide range of foreign language courses.
#7	The university website includes some information in languages other than English
#8	Students have the option to follow modules in languages other than English.
#9	Global exemplars and perspectives are embedded into the curriculum.
#10	Curriculum content, delivery and assessment are adapted to the diversity of learners.
#11	The university allows for flexibility to facilitate international mobility and collaboration (e.g. timing and format of assessment; modes of delivery).
#12	The university promotes a range of accessible opportunities for intercultural learning (e.g. volunteering opportunities, mixed-nationality group projects).
#13	The university has reward and recognition systems that value individuals’ contribution to higher education internationalisation.

Additionally, an open response item asked participants to write down the first five things they associate with the term ‘international university’. Section 3 contained an open response field asking ‘Please write down the first five things that come to your mind when you see the term ‘global citizenship’. We hoped that the free-text responses would provide more fine-grained qualitative data.

Seventy-six staff responded (aged 25-65; 65% female, 35% male). Of those, the vast majority had either a medical (27%) or social science and humanities (68%) background. Seventy-two students responded to the survey (aged 22-56; 76% female, 24% male). Of these, a majority (63%) were students undertaking taught postgraduate degrees (e.g. MA, MSc), followed by those undertaking doctoral research degrees (31%). The vast majority of respondents were studying degrees in the humanities and social sciences (93%). A majority were international students (64%), followed by UK students (24%), and EU students (11%)¹.

Data analysis

The four focus groups were transcribed verbatim, anonymised and then analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Content was initially categorised separately by each author using NVivo 10. Both authors listened repeatedly to the audio recordings and carefully scrutinized each transcript, until recurring patterns or ‘themes’ began to emerge in the data (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010). A ‘theme’ is understood here as ‘a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations, and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon’ (Boyatzis, 1998: 161). In order to achieve consistency in coding and interpretation, the authors then compared emergent themes and any coding differences were discussed until consensus was reached (St Clair Tullo et al., 2016).

The keyword questionnaire data was analysed in NVivo 10 using content analysis, following the procedure employed in Garrett, Evans, and Williams (2006). Keywords were first identified and then clustered into broader ‘thematic units’. Responses were varied, with a range of keywords used to describe closely related concepts. We provide below the main thematic units we arrived at, and the subgroupings of keywords within them (Tables 5 and 7).

Finally, the Likert-type survey items were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This included descriptive statistics (means scores, percentages of responses) and independent-samples t-tests for group comparisons between staff and student responses.

¹ The dominance of international postgraduate students undertaking degrees in the humanities and social sciences reflects the practicalities of this research. The authors had greater access to this student segment as they were themselves based in a postgraduate school for social science and humanities students.

For the latter, an alpha-level of 0.05 was used as is common in the social sciences (Capraro, 2007).

Findings and discussion

We first respond to research question 1 (How do HE staff and students perceive the ‘international university’?), then research question 2 (How do HE students and staff understand and experience ‘internationalisation at home’ and ‘global citizenship’?), and finally research question 3 (How do HE students and staff envisage that international perspectives can be incorporated into learning, teaching, and staff development activities?). A brief discussion is included at the end of each section below.

The ‘international’ university

The first aim of this study was to explore HE student and staff perceptions of what features characterise an ‘international university’. Percentages of responses of the Likert survey items (Table 2) revealed that respondents associated an ‘international university’ most strongly with incoming mobility, of both staff and students (#3, #2), followed by international collaboration (#5) and international/intercultural learning as part of the curriculum (#9) and beyond (#12). Outgoing student mobility (#4) and the promotion of languages other than English (#6, #7, #8) were less strongly identified as a key feature of an ‘international university’.

Table 2. Percentages of responses for Likert survey items (n = 148)

	Item	% of respondents rating this item 5 [to a great extent]
#3	There are many different nationalities studying at the university	69.7
#2	There are many different nationalities working at the university.	42.2
#5	The university has many exchange and institutional collaboration programmes with universities from different countries.	39.6
#9	Global exemplars and perspectives are embedded into the curriculum.	34.7
#12	The university promotes a range of accessible opportunities for intercultural learning (e.g. volunteering opportunities, mixed-nationality group projects).	32.9
#1	There are a range of languages present at the university	31.3
#10	Curriculum content, delivery and assessment are adapted to the diversity of learners.	27.4

#11	The university allows for flexibility to facilitate international mobility and collaboration (e.g. timing and format of assessment; modes of delivery).	23.0
#6	The university offers a wide range of foreign language courses.	22.8
#13	The university has reward and recognition systems that value individuals' contribution to higher education internationalisation.	22.4
#4	Many home students (i.e. British students) study abroad on exchange programmes (e.g. Erasmus).	19.0
#7	The university website includes some information in languages other than English	14.2
#8	Students have the option to follow modules in languages other than English.	4.9

In order to obtain more fine-grained data, a series of independent-samples t-tests were then conducted. These revealed that staff and student respondents differed significantly on four survey items (Table 3). Mean scores for items #2, #4 and #5 were significantly higher for staff than for students, whilst the opposite was true for item #12. Staff were more likely to view outward mobility (#4) and institutional collaboration programmes (#5) as key features of an 'international' university. It may well be that staff were more aware that the UK lags behind other European countries in outward student mobility (European Commission, 2013) and were therefore more inclined to emphasise this aspect. Current discourses on research excellence in UK HE (e.g. Ratcliffe, 2014) could explain why staff were more likely to identify institutional collaborations as important. The finding that students identified intercultural learning opportunities (#12) as more important than staff is not surprising as students would be the beneficiaries of this kind of provision whilst staff may be concerned about extra work and new tasks above and beyond their regular workload (de Wit and Jones, 2014).

Table 3. Significant differences between staff and student ratings

Item	M (students)	M (staff)	F	t	p
#2 There are many different nationalities working at the university.	3.70	4.42	13.73	4.73	0.000
#4 Many home students (i.e. British students) study abroad on exchange programmes (e.g. Erasmus).	3.11	3.64	0.31	2.96	0.004
#5 The university has many exchange and institutional collaboration programmes with universities from different countries.	3.83	4.26	4.14	2.79	0.006

#12 The university promotes a range of accessible opportunities for intercultural learning (e.g. volunteering opportunities, mixed-nationality group projects).	4.17	3.83	5.33	-2.33	0.021
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In the keyword questionnaire item, respondents were invited to write the first five things that came to mind for the term ‘international university’. Table 4 below shows the main thematic categories we were able to discern, with associated references² for each.

Table 4. Thematic categories for ‘international university’

Category	References
<i>Diversity</i>	Comments about the multicultural and multi-national university environment, and the presence of international students and staff
<i>Mobility</i>	Comments about mobility-related aspects of HE internationalisation, including overseas campuses, staff and student exchange programmes, international conferences
<i>Partnerships</i>	Comments about international research collaborations and institutional partnerships
<i>Academic excellence</i>	Comments about excellence in research and teaching, and the global reputation of universities
<i>Language</i>	Comments about the multilingual university environment, language learning and training, and the role of English
<i>Critical/cynical</i>	Comments which were critical or cynical about internationalisation in HE, including aspects such as international student recruitment, high tuition fees, perceived elitism, and ‘westernization’ of HE
<i>Education</i>	Comments about learning and teaching, such as the internationalisation of curricula
<i>Open-mindedness</i>	Comments about open-mindedness as either a feature of or a prerequisite for the international university

For staff, the main categories (20 or more references) were ‘diversity’, ‘mobility’, ‘partnerships’, ‘academic excellence’ and ‘critical/cynical’. Three smaller categories (7-14 references) were ‘education’, ‘language’ and ‘open-mindedness’. Comparison of these findings with those from students (Table 5) shows that three out of the four top categories were the same for staff and students, with both groups sharing a strong association with ‘diversity’. Comments in this category typically related to the presence of multiple ethnicities, cultures and religions at the university, and, most especially, to the diversity of backgrounds among students and staff. Examples include ‘Students come from many countries’ and ‘Diverse nationalities amongst staff’.

Table 5. Most frequent thematic categories for ‘international university’

Staff (no. of references)	Students (no. of references)
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² Please note that ‘references’ here refers to either individual words or longer phrases

Diversity (85)	Diversity (80)
Mobility (40)	Academic excellence (35)
Partnerships (28)	Language (25)
Academic excellence (27)	Mobility (19)
Critical/cynical (21)	Critical/cynical (14)
Education (14)	Open-mindedness (12)
Language (12)	Partnerships (11)
Open-mindedness (7)	Adjustment (5)

Reflecting the Likert data above, ‘mobility’ was seen as an important feature of the international university by both groups, although the number of references was proportionally higher for staff (Table 5). Both group also attached great importance to ‘academic excellence’. What is noteworthy here is that for students this was second only to diversity and included a range of comments on university facilities and services (e.g. ‘Well-equipped university’, ‘World class facilities’). A notable difference between students and staff concerns the importance attached to language. This category was considerably more salient for students who not only pointed to the ‘multilingual’ nature of an international university, but also highlighted the role of English as a medium of instruction and a *lingua franca* (e.g. ‘Courses delivered in English’, ‘Use English language to communicate’). For staff, on the other hand, partnerships with other institutions, for teaching and research purposes, were considered more indicative of an international university (e.g. ‘Research links with other institutions’, ‘Strategic partnerships with Universities abroad’). Finally, both groups exhibited a considerable amount of cynicism and scepticism about internationalisation in HE, which was viewed by many as commercially-driven and revenue-generating. Staff were especially unequivocal about this as the following example illustrates:

‘...I think of universities in advanced countries aiming to make as much money as possible out of the children of the nouveau riche in developing countries, especially China and India. In other words, I see a one-way process that basically involves using international students as cash cows.’

Similar comments were found in the student data. One student compared the international university to a ‘money-making machine’, whilst another felt that ‘the only reason behind the opening of universities is the money from international students’.

In sum, it is evident in both the Likert and keyword survey data that mobility and diversity are the predominant themes associated with an ‘international university’ among students and staff, suggesting that a conventional, mobility-focused conceptualisation, much in line with the institutional priorities outlined above, seems to prevail among both groups. The focus on

inward mobility (i.e. international students and staff coming to the UK) rather than outward mobility (i.e. British students going abroad) may well be a reflection of the UK's unique position as a major recruiter of international students (OECD, 2015) with a long history of incoming mobility. The term 'international university' also evoked associations with academic excellence, with these being mostly linked to metrics commonly used to measure a 'world class university' such as the reputation of an institution. This could be a reflection of current discourses that privilege performativity over more values-based approaches to internationalisation (Young et al., 2016). The promotion of languages other than English was identified as playing a relatively minor role in making a university 'international' which is perhaps not surprising as this study was conducted in an Anglophone institution where English is the default medium of instruction. It may also reflect the decline in foreign language provision in the UK more generally which has caused concern about the country's commitment to multilingualism (Worton, 2009). Finally, opportunities for intercultural learning were identified as a key feature of an 'international' university, pointing to at least some awareness of more 'transformative internationalisation' (Robson, 2011).

Internationalisation at home (IaH) and global citizenship

Cynicism and scepticism characterised much of the focus group discussions around IaH and global citizenship. Whilst instances of this were found in the student focus group data, staff were arguably most vocal about this and expressed dissatisfaction with the status quo at their institution. For example, one academic pointed to shortcomings in terms of IaH at his institution and remarked:

'The only place, actually, that is internationalised is that the toilets have been clearly signed.' (FG4)

Another participant expressed concerns that IaH was a one-way process where local pedagogical approaches were being privileged. He described IaH as

'... foreign students coming over here to be shown how it's done, and an assumption that we know how to do it better.' (FG4)

A related comment by a colleague highlighted the importance of adjustments being made on the part of the host university:

'...if you could have a thousand Chinese students on campus and you don't have one noodle bar how are you an international centre?' (FG4)

There was also a fair bit of comment about the economic imperatives for HE internationalisation, and scepticism about the intentions of the university. One participant noted that ‘internationalisation literally just means money in the bank’, whilst a colleague identified high international students fees as problematic:

‘... they’re still paying a lot of money. That’s why they’re being targeted, and targeted, you know, the students are marketed.’ (FG4)

A further theme related to language and communication dilemmas. There seemed to be a consensus that staff were not adequately prepared for teaching a multilingual and multicultural audience. One participant recounted an observation he made about the use of localised idioms and metaphors in the classroom, and pointed to a need for language adjustments on the part of staff lecturing to multilingual audiences:

‘...he [a university lecturer] used the expression, “Pick the ball up and run with it”, and fifty percent of the students I interviewed thought it meant cheating, and I said, “Fundamentally, you’re not using language to address your audience”...’ (FG4)

A similar experience was shared by a student from Thailand who described a lack of awareness of different accents on the part of the lecturer:

‘... he [the lecturer] just kind of “What?” and trying to like make fun of the structure that I speak, and I saw that as not well mannered...and it’s not only one lecturer...they try to make fun of the accent that I speak because it’s different from the British speaker which is the majority of the classroom. Yeah, so I think it’s not very nice.’ (FG 2)

However, staff also seemed aware of the need to make adjustment to language although this did seem to create some frustration as one lecturer pointed to the complexities of having to cater to different linguistic abilities:

‘When I’m doing a lecture I have to be very conscious of the language I’m using, I have to be very aware of the speed of my speech and what I’m going through. I mean, it’s a bit frustrating, especially with people here ... who don’t want me to speak too slowly.’ (FG4)

Staff were also mindful that well-intended language initiatives on the part of their university could potentially do more harm than good. One participant, for example, was critical of signage in different languages, expressing concern about the perceptions this could create:

‘... it could be helpful or it could backfire quite spectacularly, like reinforce boundaries that these students need extra help, they don’t speak well enough, so I think it’s a tricky, tricky one.’ (FG4)

Whilst staff acknowledged that there were a number of worthwhile IaH initiatives under way at their institution, there was a consensus that these were often sporadic and not widely enough communicated:

‘I think this university has actually got some very good initiatives going on but often they’re not really advertised ... sometimes they start off and they get diverted.’ (FG4)

This was also reflected in the student focus groups where students reported a lack of visibility of international events and activities on campus, and suggested that these be made more prominent in promotional materials. Some students did, however, also admit a lack of initiative on their part:

‘... maybe we’re too busy, whatever reason, we just don’t look at website, but if there is some other visual materials that remind us of any activities going around, so that would be a helpful way to encourage students to join these kind of activities.’ (FG2)

Staff identified lack of planning as a reason for the failure of many initiatives, and pointed to the absence of a central strategy. This was exemplified in an account by one academic of a project that came to a halt due to a lack of interest:

‘... we’ve got some money to build an app ... for orientation on the campus but nobody was prepared to take it on after we built it.’ (FG4)

A further dominant theme relating to the status quo of IaH at the institution was the perceived segregation of ‘home’ and ‘international’ students. A priori categorisations, both implicit and explicit, were viewed especially unfavourably. This was epitomised in the following exchange around the university’s induction programme, where separate induction sessions were being held for incoming students under the banner ‘International Welcome Week’:

P1: ... we now have international students induction and home students ...

P2: Oh, that’s dreadful, I hate that, I hate that ...

P1: ... and the international student induction also takes place at the same time when our home students are completely drunk on campus, you know ...

P2: ... it’s even worse, it’s a week before. (FG4)

Students too reported a perceived segregation and pointed to a lack of meaningful interaction between the two student groups. Some participants attributed this segregation to structural

factors such as skewed student intake, most especially on postgraduate programmes where the majority of students were ‘international’:

‘I would like to be more in touch with British students, but it’s actually pretty hard. So it took me a lot of effort at the beginning of the year to really form friendships with them, especially since our programme is very international and there are not many British students.’ (FG2)

Others attributed difficulties in instigating social contact with local students to the reluctance of the latter to look beyond established friendship circles.

‘...they [British students] already have their friends, they already did three years undergraduate here and they already have their group, they’re happy in their groups.’ (FG2)

However, there was also an acknowledgement that approaching ‘the other’ was challenging for both groups:

‘...they [international students] feel kind of awkward, I mean even worried, scared to approach the home students because they feel they might get rejected or British students might not be as interested or be annoyed. But also from their perspective, from the home students’ perspective, I think they’re also kind of worried about approaching international students because, as I said, there are kind of two communities and none of them feels comfortable approaching the other.’ (FG2)

Finally, some international students viewed themselves as key players in the IaH process, who could create opportunities for intercultural interaction through their presence at the host university, for the benefit of the non-internationally mobile majority:

‘I think UK students will not go abroad a lot, and we, as other nationals, come here and UK people here have the chance of internationalisation at home, I guess.’ (FG2)

In the keyword questionnaire item, respondents were invited to write the first five things that came to mind for the term ‘global citizenship’. Table 6 below shows the main thematic categories we were able to discern, with associated references for each.

Table 6. Thematic categories for ‘global citizenship’

Category	References
<i>Global responsibility</i>	Comments about taking a global perspectives i.e. being aware of and taking responsibility for global issues
<i>Mobility</i>	Comments about international mobility e.g. travel, working/studying abroad

<i>Languages</i>	Comments about multilingualism and foreign language ability
<i>Critical/cynical</i>	Comments which were critical or cynical about the concept of global citizenship, including references to consumer culture, elitism, and marketing
<i>Attributes/skills</i>	Comments about attributes/skills, including tolerance, open-mindedness, understanding, empathy, and respect
<i>Equality</i>	Comments related to human rights and equality
<i>Nationality (students only)</i>	Comments related to multiple citizenship, and to nationality as an obsolete concept

Comparison of the most frequent thematic categories (see Table 7) showed that most categories were shared by both staff and students, albeit with some variation in terms of degree of salience. The two groups shared a strong association with ‘global responsibility’ and ‘mobility’, although the former was somewhat more salient for staff. Examples include ‘Awareness of global events and history’ (staff) and ‘Social responsibility to the world, not just one's own country’ (student). The willingness to travel and work abroad was considered by both groups an important characteristic of a global citizen, exemplified in comments such as ‘Ability to work and live in other cultures’ (staff) and ‘You are not afraid to travel’ (student).

Table 7. Most frequent thematic categories for ‘global citizenship’

Staff (no. of references)	Students (no. of references)
Global responsibility (34)	Mobility (22)
Mobility (20)	Global responsibility (18)
Attributes/skills (58)	Attributes/skills (50)
<i>diversity (18); tolerance (15);</i>	<i>diversity (11); communication (17);</i>
<i>communication (14); understanding (15);</i>	<i>languages (13); open-mindedness (10);</i>
<i>open-mindedness (11); empathy (9); respect</i>	<i>respect (10); tolerance (10); knowledge (10)</i>
<i>(8); languages (8)</i>	
Critical/cynical (17)	Nationality (13)
Equality (10)	Critical/cynical (9)
	Equality (6)

Both groups frequently linked global citizenship to a set of attributes and skills. These were either expressed as individual words (i.e. ‘tolerance’ or ‘tolerant’) or incorporated into a sentence (e.g. ‘Tolerance of other people’s views’). They included an appreciation of and interest in diversity (e.g. ‘Curious, willing and able to learn more about different cultures’), willingness/ability to communicate with others (e.g. ‘Strong communicative competence’), openness to other values and beliefs (e.g. ‘Open to all perspectives’), respecting others and their opinions (e.g. ‘Respect different cultures/people’), and the ability/willingness to speak multiple languages (e.g. ‘Confidence to at least attempt to communicate in other languages’).

Among staff, there were several mentions of empathy as an important character trait (e.g. ‘Empathy and compassion’), whilst students pointed to the importance of knowledge (e.g. ‘Knowledge of other cultures’). Finally, whilst staff were, on the whole, more expressive of critical or cynical sentiments, both groups appeared disillusioned with the term global citizenship. It was described by staff as a ‘marketing jargon’, ‘airy fairy’, ‘an empty signifier’, and a ‘dreamy ideal’. Similarly, students described it as an ‘ill-defined buzzword’ and an ‘idealised concept’.

What was most discernible from the focus group discussions was a perceived lack of clarity surrounding the term ‘global citizen’ or ‘global graduate’, with one staff member describing them as ‘fluffy concepts’. Students were equally sceptical about the meaning of these terms:

‘I don’t know if achieving the label of global graduate is quite as important because to be perfectly honest I still don’t think we’ve managed to figure out what that actually means.’ (FG1)

However, there was also an acknowledgement of the importance of a globalised mind-set in terms of employability post-graduation:

‘We can’t get away with just living in the UK and thinking of the UK...we have to accept the fact that we’re competing with students and with employers and employees on a global basis.’ (FG3)

Staff also pointed to the importance of not making inferences based on somebody’s national background:

‘I just got back from being abroad, and I was kind of resisting this whole British thing, “Oh, you’re British”, “You’re British so therefore you’re...”’ (FG4)

In sum, cynicism and suspicion characterised much of the focus group discussion around IaH and global citizenship. Staff most emphatically challenged market-driven approaches to HE internationalisation generally, and the perceived profit-motive of their own institution more specifically. This provides further indications that commercially-driven approaches to HE internationalisation may be in conflict with traditional academic values (Meek, 2011; IAU, 2012), and is indicative of a climate where academics, as well as students, are increasingly voicing their opposition to the marketization of HE (Malik, 2012; Ratcliffe, 2015). Staff also expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction with the status quo of IaH at their institution. There was a sense that well-intended initiatives were sporadic and often ineffective, with some, such as ‘International Welcome Week’ reinforcing boundaries between ‘home’ and

‘international’ students. The perceived segregation and lack of meaningful interaction between these two groups, alluded to by both staff and students, is in line with much of the prevailing literature (e.g. Peacock and Harrison, 2009; Schartner, 2015). It appears that rhetorical commitment, at the institutional level, to IaH is hardly translated into the daily realities of students and staff. This is also indicated in a recent European Parliament report showing that few European universities have made progress with IaH (de Wit et al., 2015).

Learning, teaching and staff development

Reflecting on their day-to-day experiences at their institution, staff reported a lack of support for those who teach and work with international students and described a mentality of staff having to simply ‘get on with it’:

‘There is no support, there just isn’t anything that comes through, “Oh, there’s these international students”, and that’s it, there’s nothing.’ (FG4)

There was some acknowledgement of peer support from colleagues, but participants were mindful of the limits of this kind of informal support, and highlighted the need for a more systematic approach:

‘Without that central support there’s a limit to how much can be tackled ...’ (FG4)

There was a sense that the current provision of support and training was ineffective and slow to respond to staff’s daily realities. This is exemplified in the comment below by a long-serving member of staff who, after encountering difficulties when pronouncing the names of his Chinese students, felt language training should be offered to staff:

‘... thirty years I’ve been here, I’ve been wanting it the whole time, you know, because it’s incredibly important to pronounce people’s names correctly, it’s rude if you don’t.’ (FG4)

Some students suggested that the university could more actively encourage the mixing of ‘home’ and ‘international’ students. One example of good practice was identified as especially useful - ‘buddies’ and peer-mentoring schemes for international students:

‘...home students that kind of take care of incoming students and show them around and help them, and that’s how friendships and contacts are established, and you stay in touch over the whole year and get to know each other, and that’s how you have this international aspect as well.’ (FG1)

More overt mixing in student accommodation was viewed by some as problematic:

‘It could turn into some form of social engineering couldn’t it?’ (FG1)

All students agreed that there should be international and intercultural events, but there was some discussion as to whether these events should be informal extra-curricular activities, or formalised and integrated into the curriculum:

‘I think there’s a need for more informal events that encourages internationalisation because some of these events feel formalised...I don’t know if this is just me, but a more like informal get togethers, you know, like, I don’t know, like a party or something.’ (FG2)

Some students also pointed to the need to develop a multi-lingual university website if an international ethos is to be achieved:

‘Especially considering the University now has campuses abroad now, it would be interesting to see them developing the website in other languages as well, you would think that would kind of go hand in hand with opening a campus in another country.’ (FG2)

Conclusion

In sum, the findings indicate that more coordinated institution-wide efforts are needed if IaH is to be achieved. Efforts by individual academics, although beneficial at department or course-level, are unlikely to permeate the institution more widely. It is therefore paramount that those in university leadership roles endorse and actively promote IaH as part of an internationalisation strategy (EUA, 2013). This must go hand in hand with support for lecturers, administrative staff and personal tutors. Staff in this study described current support provision and development opportunities as sporadic and dependent on the efforts of well-meaning peers. A similar lack of more coordinated institutional support was observed in other UK universities (Warwick and Moogan, 2013) and elsewhere in the Anglophone world (Crossling et al., 2008). Development opportunities could usefully include foreign language provision tailored to the linguistic realities staff may encounter in the classroom and in student meetings. An example might be Mandarin pronunciation classes which could be offered in ‘bite-sized’ formats (e.g. lunchtime tutorials) and delivered by international students. This would have the added benefit of empowering the latter to become active agents in the internationalisation process at their host university.

Concerted efforts are also needed to encourage meaningful interaction between ‘home’ and ‘international’ students. Opportunities for intercultural interaction should be actively fostered

within and outside the classroom through, for example, peer mentoring schemes. It is especially important that universities do not alienate or exclude 'home' students in their endeavour to internationalise. Unless local students experience the university as an international community, long-term sustainable IaH is unlikely to be achieved (Spiro, 2014). A global citizenship agenda might go some way towards addressing this dilemma. Events explicitly branded as 'international' could be designed to be more inclusive of local students, and opportunities for intercultural learning should be offered to all students, whether internationally-mobile or not.

Whilst the generalisability of the findings from this case study may be limited, we hope that the lessons learned can inform internationalisation processes under way elsewhere. Future research directions could usefully include comparisons of staff and student perceptions across institutions and countries, as well as more in-depth investigations of the 'home' student perspective and the experiences of administrative staff which to date remain largely neglected (cf. Llorca et al., 2014).

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