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Research Paper

International tertiary education in Australia – A consideration of ethical dilemmas

Education

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D.A. Robinson,	Faculty of Arts, Business, Informatics & Education, CQUniversity, Gold Coast, Australia
P. Chiu	Faculty of Arts, Business, Informatics & Education, CQUniversity, Gold Coast, Australia
R. Williams	Faculty of Arts, Business, Informatics & Education, CQUniversity, Gold Coast, Australia

ABSTRACT

International education has become an industry in Australia. Its dramatic expansion has given rise to situations where universities have needed to find solutions to previously unknown situations. Some of these solutions may have been derived from expediency rather than wisdom or a consideration of the ethical dimensions. With the benefit of hindsight, and armed with a technique designed to help resolve ethical dilemmas, this paper examines six dilemmas commonly associated with international tertiary education in Australia and discusses the way one university has sought to deal with each of them.

Introduction

Learning has been defined as 'a persisting change in human performance or performance potential, resulting from the learner's experiences and interactions with the world' (Driscoll, 2000, p. 11). Delanty (2001) believes it is incumbent upon universities to improve their teaching and learning practices in such a way that they meet the needs of today's learners. So vast is the range of discussions surrounding educational design, that Arthur, Hisrich and Cabrera (2012, p. 502) were prompted to state that 'educators were left perplexed as to how to move forward', in the light of contradictory research findings.

From the authors' observations at a university in Australia, six ethical issues appear to be pertinent.

First, international education has become an export commodity for Australia and an 'industry' in its own right. Second, classroom dynamics are far more complex and this is especially relevant to group work, which is a necessary component in most degree courses. Third, the motives for international students to study at an Australian university may differ widely from those of domestic students. Fourth, teacher-student relations are more demanding as a result of wide variations in cultural expectations among international cohorts. Fifth, teaching business in Australia through the medium of English to students whose first language is not English requires an understanding of TESOL as well as the content of the course being taught. And sixth, the examination process must acknowledge the limitations resulting from some students' English reading and comprehension ability, especially where case studies are prescribed as is common in MBA examinations.

Literature Review

Tertiary education may be in the midst of a global paradigm shift, which includes the way societies think, prioritise and practice all levels of education (Moravec, 2006). It is a challenge for educational institutions to meet the dualistic requirements for academic excellence and financial viability (Rae, Martin, Antcliff, & Hannon, 2012). The continuing development of internet-based social networks are also impacting the education sector (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), giving rise to a social-constructivist approach, according to Anderson (2005). It has been stated that academics need to 'embrace the potential for innovative, potent and cost-effective pedagogies appropriate to living and working in a digital age' (Taylor, 2011, p. 15). An example of such a shift in pedagogical process is the concept of BYOD, meaning bring your own device. Whereas mobile phones and personal computers may previously have been regarded as distractions in a classroom, they are now accepted as useful aids in autonomous learning. Johnson, Levine, Smith and Stone (2010) have suggested new learning processes may make their way into the classroom in the form of visual data analysis and gesture-based computing as soon as 2015.

Vaill (1996, p. 42) has emphasised that all learning is a way of keeping abreast of 'surprising, novel, messy, and obtrusive recurring events' in society. It therefore comes as no surprise when Mitchell and Howell (2009) agree that Australian academics need to place significant emphasis on ensuring that students are actively engaged in meaningful learning. But the question remains whether international students studying in Australian universities can be expected to adapt to such environments. Patterson, Dannhauser and Stone (2007) recognised that a global perspective requires introspection as to whether or not teacher-centred instructional pedagogy is sufficient, when it is clear that student-centred problem-solving provides superior opportunities for student engagement in the learning process.

It may be argued that the use of digital technologies in education can lead to a lack of cognitive skills (Gu, Ostwald, & Williams, 2009). On a more positive note, Feinstein (2009) noted that today's students have a keen sense of social consciousness and are far more concerned with connecting to peers and lecturers alike than with pure knowledge. Yet a university remains a place of learning, so perhaps Kift, Nelson and Clarke (2010, p. 3) succinctly stated the obvious when proclaiming that 'students must be engaged primarily as learners if they are to have a successful university experience'.

In essence, academics need to adapt to the changing needs of students, as substantiated by five macro-level themes (Kift et al., 2010; McCrindle, 2008; Patterson, Dannhauser, & Stone, 2007), namely: the impact of the advancing networked society, the shift from teacher-centred to student-led problem-solving, the lifestyle priorities of current tertiary students, the changes in cognitive skill levels, and the changing role of academia in society.

It is essential that students engage in so-called deep learning to develop intrinsic meaning-seeking motives if they are to develop sufficient knowledge to cope in an ever-changing world (Biggs, 1987). The strongest predictors of such engagement are the quality of learning and the appropriateness of assessments (Lizzio, Wilson, & Simons, 2002, p. 40).

Astute lecturers will be aware of the potential for ethical dilemmas arising from the above issues. In this paper, an attempt is made to explicate those dilemmas by the use of a model that expresses them in terms of their respective 'creative tensions'. Subsequently, by the use of the same model, the dilemmas may be resolved with integrative and synergistic thinking.

The Synergy Star Technique of resolving ethical dilemmas

Kierkegaard (cited in Wogaman, 2011, p. 178), speaking from an existentialistic perspective, suggested that, where morality is concerned, one is obligated to make definitive choices, which are facilitated by reducing them to 'either/or': 'He who would define his life task ethically … the act of choice has far more importance for him … it is not so much a question of choosing the right as of the energy, the earnestness, the pathos with which one chooses'.

Any decision where moral considerations are relevant may give rise to an *ethical dilemma.* In general, an ethical dilemma may result from a decision that:

- Requires a choice between rules
- Has no rule, precedent or example to follow
- Morally requires two or more courses of action, which are practically incompatible
- Should be taken (in self-interest), but which appears to violate a moral principle.

Since every business decision contains an ethical component, then the real challenge, as Sternberg (cited in Megone, 2002, p. 28) asserts, is 'to make the ethical component of business decision-making explicit so as to make it better'.

The model that will be used to describe the selected dilemmas has previously been used extensively to describe and resolve ethical dilemmas in business (Robinson, Davidsson, Van der Mescht, & Court, 2007) and is known as the Synergy Star.

The Synergy Star serves to reduce any ethical dilemma to its component parts. It is constructed by first defining the desired outcome (referred to as O), then stating succinctly two necessary conditions. Usually, one condition describes the business consideration and the other representing the ethical consideration. The two complementary considerations are referred to as necessary conditions (NC1 and NC2). In order to construct the Business Ethics Synergy Star (BESS) consistently, the business condition is always placed in the NC1 position and the ethical consideration at NC2. The final step is to define the respective pre-requisite actions for NC1 and NC2, respectively. It is a feature of the Synergy Star that the action required to support NC1 is the exact opposite of the action required to support NC2. These two opposing actions are referred to as Pre-requisite 1 (PR1) and Pre-requisite 2 (PR2).

In applying this technique to any dilemma, the following logic is used:

In order to achieve a desired outcome (O), NC1 is a necessary condition; in order to achieve the same desired outcome (O), NC2 is also a necessary condition. Therefore, NC1 and NC2 are both necessary conditions to achieve the desired outcome (O). Now, in order to create condition NC1, PR1 is a pre-requisite action, and in order to have condition NC2, PR2 is a pre-requisite action. But PR1 is an action that opposes PR2, therefore it is not possible to action both PR1 and PR2. Thus either condition NC1 or condition NC2 appears to be unavoidably obviated, with the logical consequence that the stated objective, O, is unattainable.

The way to resolve the dilemma is to look for possible ways to combine NC1 with PR2 and/or NC2 with PR1. If a way can be found then the dilemma can be resolved. It has been our experience that every dilemma can be resolved in this way.

Brief overview of each of the six identified ethical dilemmas in international tertiary education in Australia

1. The International Student 'Industry' Dilemma

Any tertiary institution must be economically viable; therefore it has the dual responsibility to provide appropriate educational services *and* to meet its economic objectives. The dilemma arising there from is premised upon the perceived pre-requisites for each of these components. In order to meet its educational responsibilities, the institution must be extremely discerning with regard to the quality and number of students it enrols. To be economically viable it needs to generate sufficient revenue, which in a competitive market translates to admitting as many international students as possible, especially given the premium fees usually paid by international students in Australia. This dilemma typifies the classic quality versus quantity decisions that are pertinent to all businesses.

The dilemma may be depicted as follows:

Figure 1. Synergy star representing international student 'industry' dilemma.

The dilemma may be resolved by attempting to combine NC1 with Pre-Req 2 *and/or* NC2 with Pre-Req 1, giving rise to the following possible strategic options:

- NC1-PR2: Ensure extra capacity sufficient to meet peak demand on facilities and lecturing staff
- NC2-PR1: Place a high level of emphasis on marketing to ensure high-quality applicants in sufficient numbers.

What happens at this university

Through the retention of an independent private company, this university has responded to NC1-PR2 capacity variable by employing lecturing staff on a 'casual' basis. Staff are contracted per semester depending on a combination of student enrolment numbers and operational decisions pertaining to the selection of courses on offer. CQUniversity has only recently recognised the need to place more emphasis on the quality of applicants due to changes in Australian government policy regarding international students.

Critique of the dilemma resolution implemented at this university

The strategy, in addition to ensuring sufficient capacity by contracting in 'casual academics', has the obvious advantages of cost savings and capacity variability. This strategy also has potentially problematic consequences. Casual academics are only hired to teach, which may result in inconsistent levels of academic contribution, behaviour that is consistent with agency theory. The variance in performance must then be normalised through an increase in quality assurance processes and administration, rendering the organisation top-heavy. In the extreme, 'casual academics' may become totally mercenary, doing the minimum amount of preparation and neglecting to represent the university's best interests as well as those of the students.

2. The Motivations for Studying in Australia Dilemma

Many international students make the decision to study overseas with the intention of acquiring a permanent residency permit upon completion of their degree, which will allow them to remain in that country. In the case of Australia, there are strict requirements surrounding the granting of permanent residency and it is by no means automatically attained once a degree has been completed at an Australian university. Students who have completed a two-year degree in Australia, do however accrue points that may help them achieve an overall level of eligibility for immigration when combined with other factors such as age, experience and employability.

Students are allowed to work up to twenty hours per week as long as they maintain an attendance in their enrolled course of greater than 80%. International students, once in Australia, soon realise that it is a very expensive place to live. Many are forced to find employment, generally of a casual nature, often involving rostered shift work. To keep such jobs they are expected to comply with the shifts they are assigned, which often results in them missing scheduled lectures. The university has a duty of care to the student and a responsibility to the immigration authorities to monitor student attendances. While the university's internal reporting procedures ensure that there are records of student attendance and indicate that faculty administration has taken steps to ensure all students are reminded of their obligations with regard to attendance, in practice the government of Australia does not implement any real programs that seek to ensure compliance with attendance specifications. The university thus has to decide whether or not it takes steps to discipline those students who are not meeting attendance requirements and if so whether or not it should discern between those doing so deliberately and those who have become forced to do so through financial circumstance.

The dilemma, in so far as it concerns the university, may be depicted as follows:

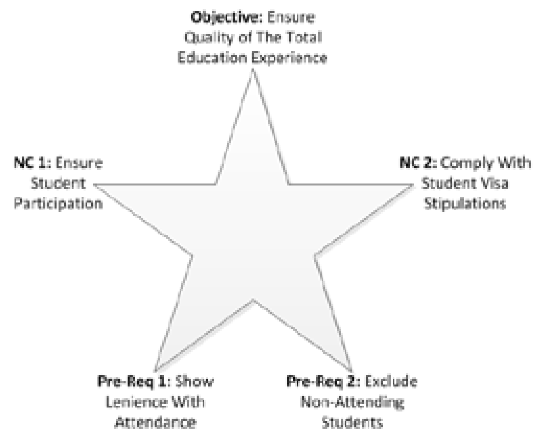

Figure 2. Synergy star representing motivations for studying in Australia dilemma.

The dilemma may be resolved by attempting to combine NC1 with Pre-Req 2 *and/or* NC2 with Pre-Req 1, giving rise to the following possible strategic options:

- NC1-PR2: Strictly enforce attendance stipulations as per student visa BUT accept that student numbers will decline, along with the corresponding loss of revenues
- NC2-PR1: Passively monitor attendance without reporting pro-actively to immigration authorities.

What happens at this university

Through the student services directorate, international students have access to counselling and advisory services regarding any aspect of visa compliance. Attendance is monitored so that the records are available for inspection but the university does not automatically report poor attendance to immigration, preferring instead to provide support to individual students in an effort to assist them with balancing their financial and study commitments.

Critique of the dilemma resolution implemented at this university

Students soon become aware that attendance is not being regarded seriously and may then start to play the system. Poor attendance is associated with poor grades, which could lead to early exit from their program.

3. The Lecture Content Dilemma

Given that international students by definition are unlikely to have previously studied through the medium of the English language, it follows that they may experience difficulties with nuances of the English language and may be limited in their vocabulary. These difficulties are in addition to the normal challenges associated with understanding and learning a new subject matter. As new knowledge cannot be assimilated unless it is understood, lecturers have to ensure that the words they use have meaning to the students. Currently, most courses undertaken by international students have been designed for domestic students and are therefore steeped in big words that are loaded with meaning and nuance. With time limitations, lecturers to international students must therefore often decide whether to focus on certain aspects of the coursework to ensure comprehensive understanding, including of vocabulary, or to cover the whole content at normal pace, thereby risking severe misunderstandings or confusion on the part of international students.

Tange (2010) points out that a course developed specifically for international students may necessarily be very different in design than the same course offered to domestic students. To complicate the issue further, there are differences in the level of understanding between various cultural groups within the same class. One reason for these necessary differences is, as Ryan and Viete (2009, p. 147) assert, is due to 'limited linguistic repertoire', which renders in-class communication less effective. They are quick to stress that 'linguistic repertoire' is not an indicator of comprehension or intellectual ability.

The dilemma, in so far as it concerns the university, may be depicted as follows:

Figure 3. Synergy star representing the lecture content dilemma.

The dilemma may be resolved by attempting to combine NC1 with Pre-Req 2 *and/or* NC2 with Pre-Req 1, giving rise to the following possible strategic options:

- NC1-PR2: Extend considerably the duration of lectures and tutorials
- NC2-PR1: Specify EAP as pre-req for enrolment in tertiary studies OR specify participation in extra-mural classes for students needing assistance to understand English vocabulary.

What happens at this university

Although a certain predetermined level of English language proficiency is required for acceptance into a tertiary education program in Australia, that in itself does not specifically ensure sufficient comprehension of advanced business vocabulary and certainly does not guarantee that students are able to discern the numerous nuances of meaning that the English language contains. The severity of the issue is compounded by the possibility that international students may not be aware they are misinterpreting the words of their lecturer.

As is the case with most universities (Benzie, 2010), this one has an English language school attached to it, where international students may undertake a range of English language courses before or during their degree studies, at their discretion. It has been shown that those who avail themselves to these opportunities fare better in their degree studies, yet few students elect to spend the additional time and money to improve their English communication skills beyond the level required to comply with admission requirements, and as Benzie (2010) further asserts, such pathway courses offer only limited immersion and real-life applicability. Indeed, she argues that for comprehensive improvement to take place in language skills, concomitant social adaptations and even adjustments in self-identity may be required. This may be a step too far for international students. The authors recall one instance where a Chinese student, when encouraged to adopt an English-centric writing style, remarked that the request was tantamount to cultural abuse! In practice, individual lecturers are left to deal with the dilemma in the best way they see fit. Each lecturer chooses either Pre-Req 1 or Pre-Req 2 as a coping strategy.

Critique of the dilemma resolution implemented at this university

In practice the way the university has dealt with this dilemma is to make a choice between pre-requisites 1 and 2, which is a sub-optimal solution that doesn't actually resolve the dilemma. The university needs to adopt a policy approach to the resolution of this dilemma by allowing additional time in international classes to ensure that all vocabulary necessary for complete understanding of the prescribed material can be assimilated as well as for the course content.

4. The Classroom Dynamic Dilemma

Most degree courses require group work in the form of in-class tutorial participation as well as extramural team assignments. As most courses are completed over a twelve-week semester, tutorial group work is introduced within the first three weeks, with assignment teams needing to be formalised by week four in order to maximise the benefits of a team-based learning experience. It is natural for students to associate with others from their own country of origin as they already share a common understanding of their culture and communicate more effectively in their home language. While recognising the tendency or preference for students to naturally gravitate toward their countrymen when asked to form teams, lecturers also need to ensure that the benefits of a truly multi-cultural experience are also inherent in the team-based experiences of the students. Therefore lecturers must decide whether they will allocate students to teams, and if so on what basis, or if the lecturer allows the students to self-select, whether to insist on mixed teams or allow segmented teams. Ryan and Viete (2009) present evidence that many international students perceive their domestic or native English-speaking counterparts as ignorant and/or careless! Such preconceived notions present difficulties in ensuring team cohesion as well as a great learning opportunity.

The dilemma, in so far as it concerns the university, may be depicted as follows:

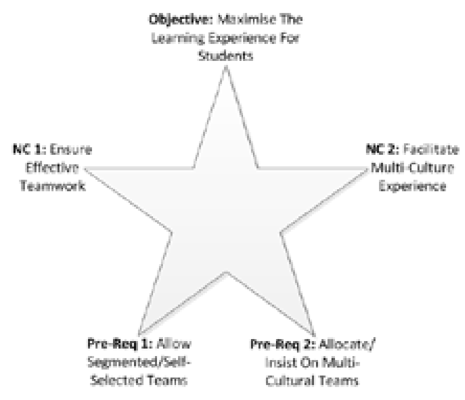

Figure 4. Synergy star representing the classroom dynamic dilemma.

The dilemma may be resolved by attempting to combine NC1 with Pre-Req 2 *and/or* NC2 with Pre-Req 1, giving rise to the following possible strategic options:

- NC1-PR2: Adopt a method of allocating students to multi-cultural teams that ensures they are able to establish communications, roles and processes that will allow them to work together effectively within a short period of time
- NC2-PR1: Let them operate as single culture teams when meeting extramurally for the purpose of completing assignments but design classroom interactions so that they also get exposure to multi-cultural experiences within the larger cohort during class time.

What happens at this university

It is largely left up to individual lecturer's discretion when deciding how to the student teams are to be formed. Some course coordinators specify that the lecturer is responsible for the allocation of students to teams and that the teams should ideally be multi-cultural, but in practice it has been found that students associate more readily and attain more effective teamwork relationships when allowed to freely associate. Realising that the most-likely result of allowing free associations is typically like-with-like, lecturers have adopted the habit of first informing the class of the benefits to be derived from learning to work in multi-cultural groups, suggesting guidelines, such as identifying each other's functional roles as well as team roles, before stating that while the lecturer could insist on doing the allocations, he/she would prefer to allow them to associate freely as long as they give due consideration to the practicalities of working as a team toward the learning outcomes required of the course, rather than simply associating along ethnic lines. Leask (2009) stresses that intercultural exchanges do not for the most part occur naturally; hence it is incumbent upon the lecturer to create situations whereby intercultural dialogue is made a necessity.

In addition, our university has now introduced an initial minor assessment item, known as the team charter, into most course for which teamwork makes up a significant component. These team charters expect students to state concisely the roles and processes they intend all team members to follow. The approach certainly assists teams to accelerate through the initial phases of team formation and become productively engaged in their team-based assignments more quickly. Furthermore, at the conclusion of each course, an individual assessment item has been added, wherein each student reflects and reports on the effectiveness of their team and any specific difficulties they or their team may have encountered over the twelve weeks of the course.

Critique of the dilemma resolution implemented at this university

The flexible approach appears to be a viable option, provided the individual lecturers make the effort to explain to students the purpose of the team charters and ensure that the students accept accountability for the performance of their chosen team. Most significantly, according to Ryan and Viete (2009), lecturers' involvement in group formation and team compatibility provide moderating influences that may mitigate cultural differences. Glass (2012) also found that participation and engagement improve students' knowledge retention, a finding further supported by Jackling and Natoli (2011).

5. The Examination Process Dilemma

With only a few exceptions, university courses in Australia generally demand students pass an end of semester examination. Such examinations are held under strict examination conditions that include a time restriction and a prohibition on the use of electronic translators. Much of the vocabulary pertinent to a discipline is difficult enough to master in and of itself, but when combined with an academic examination setting, wording may become nigh impossible to understand without the help of a dictionary. Although word translation dictionaries in book form are allowed, these do not facilitate the speedy translation of phrases couched in academic jargon. Additionally, many of the exams are case study based, meaning that there is a requirement for students to read and repeatedly consult the case content in order to construct their written answers to the examination questions. Given that international students are not as proficient at reading and writing in English as their Australian counterparts, they invariably use up a large portion of the allocated exam time by having to search for information in the case content. Zhang and Mi (2010) found that, whereas international students tend to improve reading and listening in about two years, the majority struggle with writing skills throughout the duration of their degree studies. Therefore, it can be argued that the examination process consistently places international students at a disadvantage throughout their degree.

The remaining and more pertinent problem is the additional time needed by international students to construct and write their answers in English. Even the most-proficient English speakers among them experience difficulties with written English under exam conditions, firstly because the answers are hand-written, not typed on computers, and therefore not easily corrected if written incorrectly. Secondly, there are certain styles of writing, such as sentence construction, paragraphing, logical reasoning, even grammar and spelling, which are familiar to English first-language students but unfamiliar to international students. All of these factors together amount to a problem of great magnitude when it comes to a written examination. Ryan and Viete's (2009) observation that communication skill and subject-specific knowledge may be independent of each other does little to alleviate these problems, since it is clear that all current assessment of learning methods, and written examinations in particular, are dependent upon communication skills.

The dilemma, however, rests with the marker of these exams. In order to maintain the efficacy of an international degree from an English language university, the marker rightly considers it essential that student submissions conform to the norms of academic English, yet at the same time the marker realises that students for whom English is not their mother tongue must also be accommodated within the examination process.

The dilemma, in so far as it concerns the university lecturing staff, may be depicted as follows:

Figure 5. Synergy star representing the examination process dilemma.

The dilemma may be resolved by attempting to combine NC1 with Pre-Req 2 *and/or* NC2 with Pre-Req 1, giving rise to the following possible strategic options:

- NC1-PR2: This possibility does not exist
- NC2-PR1: This appears to be an undesirable situation, but since it is the only option we have, we must find a way to accomplish both the NC2 and the PR1 simultaneously.

So, how can the lecturer insist on English first-language academic quality written work while at the same time accommodating second language writing? The key may be to differentiate between the grammatical issues in the written work, i.e. spelling, sentence structure, phrasing, punctuation, paragraphing and even perhaps a student's style of logical reasoning, as opposed to the actual content of their work. This is not always easy to discern, and indeed lecturers who are inexperienced in marking international students' work often struggle to make the distinction. What is essential is that the students are able to make their point clearly and concisely even though their grammar may contain technical errors and that the lecturer is able to exercise the necessary patience to read and comprehend their written work even when the meaning is not immediately apparent as a result of the students having used a style of writing that may be vastly different from the way an English first-language student may be expected to write.

An example pertinent to style of writing, from this author's observations, is that Chinese students tend to write a lengthy justification, more as a narrative about the issue(s), before stating their conclusion, if at all, without any logical breaks or paragraphing, whereas English-speaking scholars usually prefer to start a paragraph with a concise general statement that at least gives the reader a clue as to the essence of the discussion that is about to follow, then proceed to its detail. Though it may appear to an English first-language marker that the Chinese student is not writing in a logical way, and thus be regarded as expedient to not waste time reading it all, such a presumption may be false as the real essence of the written work can only be gleamed after taking the time to read the whole section.

What happens at this university

My own university has partly addressed the reading problem by making the exam case available to students one week prior to the exam sitting. Although they may not bring the pre-exam version of the case into the exam room, which is to ensure that they cannot access notes that may have been written with another person's assistance, at least students have had time to read and digest the case content and in a sense should know where to find the information they might be required to search for when under exam conditions.

Furthermore, while academics assigned to international campuses are expected to have had experience with international students, there are no specific assurances that markers have mastered the special skill-set required to grade their work effectively. Some lecturing staff have voluntarily undertaken training in TESOL (teaching English as second language) and found it to be most beneficial in understanding the different writing and reasoning styles pertaining to students of cultures and languages other than English.

Critique of the dilemma resolution implemented at this university

There appears to be a definite lack of consistency across different lecturers, some insisting on grammatically perfect English writing and deducting marks for any technical imperfection, while others do invest considerable time and effort not only to gleam the essence of what the students are trying to express, but also to then provide them with valuable feedback on how the same would normally be written by first-language English speakers. It would seem that all lecturers of international students could benefit from further training in this regard.

6. The Teacher-Student Relationship Dilemma

No one would argue that teacher-student relationships form an integral part the learning experience. International students arrive in this country after having studied in their home country for at least twelve years in the case of bachelor degree students, or at least fifteen for master degree students. During those formative experiential years they have formed certain habits representing what they regard as normal ways of interacting with their teacher. These may vary widely between countries or cultures and will almost certainly differ in some way from the standard Australian model. For example, China's education system places the teacher in the role of not only expert but also authoritarian, whereas Australia's promotes the role of the teacher as learning facilitator with no disciplinary responsibility and little authority over the pupil's behaviours. Velliaris and

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Warner (2009, p. 1) describe the Australian education system as 'student centred, self-directed, problem-based, real-world, and embracing peer assisted learning', stating that 'successful transition into a new educational environment requires adaptation to the teaching and learning culture of the host institution'.

While Australian higher education lecturers encourage and expect student participation in class, the idea that a student may offer any view that is potentially in opposition to the teacher's is abhorrent to any student first arriving here from the likes of China, or any nation where there exists a traditional 'power-distance' (Hofstede, 1984) between teacher and student.

The lecturer is therefore faced with two distinct challenges in the classroom. The first is to identify any students who may be experiencing a certain dissonance as a result of teacher-student interactions that go against their established home country norms. The second, more difficult, problem is how to deal with it effectively, which entails showing respect for cultural idiosyncrasies while ensuring that the attention they give to individual students is seen as equitable and fair.

The dilemma, in so far as it concerns the university lecturer, may be depicted as follows:

Figure 6. Synergy star representing the teacher-student relationship dilemma.

The dilemma may be resolved by attempting to combine NC1 with Pre-Req 2 *and/or* NC2 with Pre-Req 1, giving rise to the following possible strategic options:

- NC1-PR2: While accommodating the interactional/relationship needs of individuals, take the time to explain to the whole class that you have found it useful to respect the different expectations of individuals with respect to the way they relate to their lecturer
- NC2-PR1: Lecturer explains his/her position regarding the teacher-student relationship.

What has this University done in their effort to deal with this dilemma

Fortunately for the students, our university has been able to maintain small class sizes, which creates a less-threatening environment for people who may be shy or unused to speaking or responding to a teacher's questions in front of their fellow students. Notwithstanding this, there are often as many different cultures in a class as there are students, and each one brings their own pre-formed idea of teacher-student normality with them. The author has found it useful to explain the concept of power-distance to the students during the first few classroom sessions so that they might comprehend that different expectations are quite normal on their part. Additionally, the students are invited to approach the lecturer either during class or immediately after its conclusion if there was to be any aspect of the lesson that they felt uncomfortable about, so that the lecturer may suggest and implement adaptations to classroom interactions according to the expressed needs and preferences of those present. In that way, rapport is created whereby the students and the teacher realise that the enactment of the teacher-student relationship is to be regarded as somewhat fluid, subject to adaptations on both parts over the duration of the course and most especially in the first few weeks.

Critique of the dilemma resolution implemented at this university

Some students struggle with the concept of fluidity and expect consistency from the beginning. Many students do not feel comfortable approaching the lecturer to discuss their needs and preferences, thus the benefits of fluidity are never realised. Lecturers may struggle to know the extent to which their particular style is compatible with the learning needs of their students.

Implications

The importance of the business school classroom interactions between students and lecturers cannot be over-emphasised, nor is it limited to international education. Indeed, Knight (1987) argued that the quality of business school education (with particular reference to entrepreneurship education) would have a drastic effect on the number and quality of graduate entrepreneurs that could in turn affect economic development. As a direct result of ineffective curriculum development and teaching, it has been found that student's aspirations for business may actually reduce over their university years (Piperopoulos, 2012). For business schools, the ability to apply a technique like the Synergy Star will assist curriculum developers and faculty to adopt teaching and learning strategies grounded on students' needs, as proposed by Blenker, Dreisler, Fargemann and Kjeldsen (2008), Cowie, Jones and Otrel-Cass (2011), as well as Shah, Lewis and Fitzgerald (2011), thereby helping them move towards the educational paradigm shift that is required.

Conclusion

In this paper, six dilemmas pertaining to the teaching and learning of international students in Australia have been explicated. In each case the dilemma has been defined by means of the synergy star model and a means of resolution has been explicated. Additionally, the current method used to resolve each at this university has been noted. The dilemmas discussed were Education versus Revenue; Student Motivations; Lecture Content; Classroom Dynamic; Examination Process; and Teacher-Student Relationship. It was found that ways to resolve them could be arrived at by the use of the Synergy Star technique to resolve an ethical dilemma. When one university's current practices were described, they could also be situated within the framework offered by the Synergy Star. In cases where the university had adopted sub-optimal solutions, it appeared that these were more of a choice between competing pre-requisites than a dilemma-resolution per se. It is believed the use of the Synergy Star technique could improve the dilemma resolution process and lead to more effective outcomes for the international students and the university.

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