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11:20-11:50

Paper

Lead Presenter: Ian Watson

Session title: A case study of Malaysian academics and their experiences of teaching a western programme of study

Institution: Northumbria University

This presentation adds to the growing body of knowledge relating to the Internationalisation of higher education, it adds to this corpus by investigating not only the traditional student experiences of Trans National Higher Education (TNHE) but primarily of the staff teaching on an overseas course. The study investigates the experiences of teaching staff at a Northumbria University partner college in Malaysia. It considers the factors affecting the teaching of the eastern educated student using a western learning theory. Staff teaching the western designed programme, to eastern educated students face a number of issues, e.g. the education of the staff themselves, have they received eastern or western education? Foundations for the research rely upon the following: The eastern educated staff are from a Confucian influenced culture that seeks a middle way so allowing for correctness of the others viewpoint, it is often considered 'soft', and feminine, with the teacher central to the learning process and very much textbook and rote learning with government direction and influence, (Teoh et al 2014, Ng 2008, Zhang 2007). Western designed programmes of study are aimed at western educated students with typically looks at the confrontation between thesis and antithesis, leading to a new synthesis and superior power, often considered 'hard' and masculine. The learning process is student centric, with academic freedom to choose learning materials and is largely free from government direction, (Ng 2008, Zhang 2007, Bin Sirat (2010). The research details how staff adjust and adapt to the differences in learning and teaching styles to enable their students to achieve the best from the western designed programme. It also explores the cultural and academic factors affecting the teaching of a computer science course and the governmental, college and embedded cultural pressures and influences that the staff face. The data was gathered and analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, a technique adapted from Psychology that allows the voice of the respondent to be interpreted by the researcher using a flexible approach to identify key themes. These themes were contextualised in the literature reviewed, and include: Influence of the Confucian Heritage Culture; the three selves (eastern, transitional and western); staff scored by students; the rote learner and respect for authority. This investigation highlights and informs attendees that the franchising of a British designed programme of study is much more than simply sending teaching materials to a partner institution, there needs to be taken into consideration many cultural, pedagogic and governmental influences if our courses are to be successfully taught to eastern educated students.

References:

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