

DISCOURSE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL PRACTICE: QUESTIONING EXCELLENCE AND EXAMINING PRACTICES OF DIVERSITY IN TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION

DR CATRIONA CUNNINGHAM, UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING, DR MARITA GRIMWOOD, INDEPENDENT ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT AND DR IRENE MALCOLM, HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY

Panel Proposal Introduction

UK Higher Education's (UK HE) key role in the knowledge economy arises as part of the entrenchment of new right ideas (Gov.UK, 2018; Joseph, 1985) that underpin neoliberal policies (SRHE, 2018). In what has become a conflicted field, UK Higher Education's economic and political value appears to be foregrounded in relation to potential societal contributions. This may represent a reinterpretation of the role of the university in society, adding a new twist to previous analyses of HE's central role in the "epistemification" of western societies (Nerland & Jensen, 2010). The increasing economic and political focus also compounds tensions that are at the heart of neoliberal discourses in education. While the discourse of a new capitalism in education espouses freedoms (Gov.UK, *ibid*), this belies growing inequality and marginalisation which have implications for the role of TNE (Walters & Cooper, 2009). The extension of neoliberal control to universities (Gov.UK, 2016) may be interpreted as part of a requirement that every organisation in a neoliberal society should contribute to economic production with outputs that may be monetised. The idea of a knowledge economy itself appears to reify the dominance of the economic over the social in public life. Our use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), post-colonial perspectives and practice theory aims to highlight the effect of UK HE's role in this policy nexus on staff involved in TNE, and on their practices,.

Indicative Literature

The Knowledge Society, Neoliberalism and Neo-colonialism

Our thinking draws on writing about the development of a knowledge society and the foundational values of TNE. The conditions of the knowledge society are linked to other phenomena such as liberalisation in new, late or fast capitalism (Hayek, 1941), globalisation and neo-colonialism (Bhaba, 2004) which, in turn, feed into neoliberal philosophies. In neoliberal critiques by management theorists, knowledge is emphasised as a productive force (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002). While neoliberal social, neo-colonial and economic phenomena have been found to affect the compulsory education sector (Gewitz, Ball & Bowe, 1995), their impact on universities and on teaching practices requires renewed scrutiny. It was, arguably, neoliberal university policies that led in early 2018 to conflict among the staff and leaders of 61 universities across the UK as universities sought to reinforce their position as liberal organisations, by cutting staff benefits while increasing the salaries of Vice Chancellors and Principals. The individualisation of responsibility and the flexibilisation of work described in some academic analyses (Marks & Huzzard, 2010) have been acknowledged features of a range of organisations for some time. Through increasing marketization and commoditisation of education these are also affecting universities, underpinning the stratification of the education market. These developments represent considerable challenges for teaching and for the professional development of university teachers. This is particularly the case when staff find their understandings of TNE challenged by the demand to extend their practices across global campuses. It can appear that TNE linked to the global market ambitions of some UK universities position transnational academic learning as neo-colonial, in contradiction of its foundational values.

It is precisely this problematic sense of 'values' and an uncomfortable feeling of complicity with such a neo-colonial agenda that lies at the heart of this panel discussion. This feels particularly timely in our post-Trump world. The authors here seek neither to impose their own agenda through their analysis nor to cast judgement, but instead to delve into and examine the real tensions and knotty

issues entangled in the space between policy and practice. Our concept of Trans National Education is the export of UK Higher Education to other countries rather than the recruitment of international students. Policies in this area often articulate professed values. A self-aware values-based approach is arguably an essential foundation for development and cultural change in a university. However, terms like 'global citizenship' - and even words like tolerance and respect - are laden with diverse meanings that require analysis and discussion.

Transcultural learning (Lütge & Stein, 2017) challenges us to think beyond our western paradigm and offers important messages for us in pedagogy as we think how to decolonise the curriculum particularly in relation to TNE. The prefix of 'trans' is of course critical here with its connotations of crossings, movement across and through, liminal spaces, transformation and is therefore rich in potential to explore how in learning and teaching contexts (Ryan, 2013). However, there have been significant critiques of western imperialist approaches to TNE, and, despite the arguments in favour of widening participation (O'Mahony 2014), there remains a problematic assumption that a UK education based on perceived prestige and value, is a desired commodity that can only benefit those in non-western countries. There are also profoundly ethical and pedagogical challenges implicit in some models of TNE delivery (Kim 2010, Wilkind 2017, Leung & Waters 2017).

The three papers take as their respective data:

1. interviews with staff engaged in TNE delivery at two research-intensive universities;
2. the language in which the values and policy of TNE are framed;
3. the changing teaching practices of staff engaged with TNE provision at two research intensive universities which apply different models of TNE.

List of references

Akdag & Swanson (2018). 'Ethics, power, internationalisation and the postcolonial: a Foucauldian discourse analysis of policy documents in two Scottish universities' *European Journal of Higher Education* 8:1, 67-82

Alvesson, M. & Wilmott, H. (2002). Identity Regulation as Organizational Control: Producing the Appropriate Individual, *Journal of Management Studies*, 39, (5), 619-644.

Bhaba, H. (2004). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Camic, C. Gross, G. & Lamont, M. (Eds) (2011). *Social Knowledge in the Making*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Harlow: Longman.

Gewitz, S., Ball, S.J., & Bowe, R. (1995). *Markets, Choice and Equity in Education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Gov.UK (2018). <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/delivering-value-for-money-in-the-age-of-the-student> (last accessed, 22.6.18).

Gov.UK (2016). Higher Education: success as a knowledge economy. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-success-as-a-knowledge-economy-white-paper> (last accessed, 25.6.180)

Hayek, F.A. (1941). *The Pure Theory of Capital*. Norwich, UK: Jarrold.

Joseph, K.S., (1985). <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1468-2273.1985.tb01445.x> (last accessed, 25.6.18).

Kim, T. (2010). Transnational academic mobility, knowledge and identity capital. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 31(5), 577-591.

Knight, J. (2016), "Transnational education remodeled: toward a common TNE framework and definitions", *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 34-47.

Leung, M. & Waters, J. (2017). Educators *sans frontières*? Borders and power geometries in transnational education. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(8), 1276-1291.

Lütge, C. & Stein, M. (Eds.) (2017). *Crossovers – postcolonial studies and transcultural learning*. Zurich: LitVerlag.

Marks, A. & Huzzard, T. (2010). Employability and the ICT worker: a study of employees in Scottish small businesses. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 25(2), 167-181. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-005X.2010.00246.x>

Nerland, M. & Jensen K. (2010). Objectual practice and learning in professional work. In S. Billett (Ed.) *Learning through practice, professional and practice-based learning* (pp. 82-103). Dordrecht: Springer.

O'Mahony, J. (2014). *Enhancing student learning and teacher development in transnational arrangements*. York: Higher Education Academy.

Ryan, J. (2013). *Cross cultural teaching and learning for home and international students: Internationalisation of pedagogy and curriculum in higher education*. London: Routledge.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803932>

Walters, S. & Cooper, L. Eds. (2009) *Learning/ Work: Turning work and lifelong learning inside out*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Whitchurch, Celia. (2008) 'Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: the emergence of 'third space' professionals in UK Higher Education'. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62:4, 377-396.

Wilkins, S. (2017). Ethical issues in transnational higher education: the case of international branch campuses'. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(8), 1385-1400.

Williams, Raymond. (1976). *Keywords*. London: Fontana.