Towards more effective research supervision for international students in an Australian university *

[Symposium Crossing boundaries: Perspectives on internationalisation from one university.]

John Hall
Curtin University of Technology

Introduction
My intention in this paper is to contemplate what it might take for Curtin University to provide more effective research supervision practices for its language minority (LM) postgraduate students. I begin with the following premises: a) that LM students have special needs for their supervision; b) that at least some of the current supervision practices are less than effective for LM students at Curtin; and c) that there are ways and means (glossed below as a preferred model) for providing more effective supervision practices for these researchers.

What follows is: first, a display of some empirical evidence to support the propositions: that LM students do seem to be experiencing difficulties in their supervision and that these difficulties are somewhat different from those of mainstream students; second, the main focus of the paper, an outline of general principles for more effective supervision practices for LM students at Curtin.

Evidence from a case study
As part of a larger study on postgraduate research supervision at Curtin University in 1995 (Barker, Chung, Hall, Low and Shoebridge, 1995), I conducted a case study of 17 international research postgraduates' supervision experiences. My brief was to undertake a qualitative inquiry of these students' perceptions, employing face-to-

* An earlier version of this paper was presented at Quality in Postgraduate Research - Is it Happening? -- a national conference jointly presented by The University of Adelaide, The Flinders University of SA and the University of South Australia -- held at Stamford Plaza Hotel, Adelaide on 18 & 19 April, 1996.

face interviews rather than the questionnaire approach used by the other members of the research team. I had opted for an ethnographic study, believing it to be a more appropriate form of research with students whose first language was not English.
However, some of the potential strengths of such a methodology were lost with my willingness to comply with the wish of my team members to produce frequency distributions. For example, by soliciting a larger sample and using a more structured approach to the interviewing, I sacrificed contextual richness and depth of understanding of postgraduates' narratives. Nevertheless, my study, along with those of my colleagues, was deemed useful to others working on policy development in this area (Reeves and Robbins, 1995).

The main differences in the 'findings' I constructed from the interviews, as opposed to the findings from the questionnaire data for international students were: 1) the apparent precariousness of the students' relationships with supervisors; and 2) the lower levels of satisfaction expressed by the students about their supervision experiences. I believe the first four of the following sample sets of responses show some indications of their "precariousness":

i) when asked about the allocation of their supervisors, only 4/17 postgrads said they had any input in the decision; of the 13 who did not, seven were satisfied with the arrangement, the other six said they would have liked a say in the matter.

ii) on the question of choosing their research topic, only 1/17 postgraduate was allowed to exercise complete free choice; 10 had their topics modified considerably by their supervisors, and five of these said they had no say whatsoever in the formulation of their topic.

iii) when asked if they had been well prepared in the English language at the outset of their research programs, only 3/17 postgraduates considered themselves so; of the 14 who thought not, only four undertook formal instruction, though most of the ten regretted not having done so; as it happened, only 3/17 supervisors had advised their students in this matter, but, interestingly, the postgraduates did not blame their supervisors -- most attributed their decision to forego English instruction to their (the postgraduates') perception that it would take up too much of their time.

iv) as for the postgraduates being informed about their rights and responsibilities, as per the guidelines and regulations, only 1/17 thought they had been well informed; 12 claimed they had not been informed at all; with respect to receiving information about their material entitlements, such as availability of a computer, there was a similar response -- most had had to rely on informal student networks for this information, and five respondents confided that they felt
either too shy or too afraid to ask staff about these matters

The final response set pertains more to postgraduates' general wellbeing and sense of cultural identity, not at first glance pertinent to the research supervision act but, I argue below, an important aspect of empowerment for the LM student:

v) twelve of the 17 in the sample were asked if they had received recognition and support for their cultural identity by Curtin staff; 3/12 said they were satisfied -- two of these were Indonesian postgraduates who were pleased with the interest shown by their supervisors about Indonesia; the other was a Singaporean who proclaimed, somewhat magnanimously, "Australians respect Singaporeans"! The other nine stated they had received no such recognition or support from staff at Curtin, but six of these (mostly Indonesians) said they were getting good support from fellow Indonesian and other postgraduates, and from people outside the university in their respective churches/temples. One respondent, an African, suggested that many things could be done to make the campus a friendlier place for minority groups, such as providing in the library at least one newspaper from their part of the world.

I provide no further interpretation or analysis of these responses in this paper and, with the economy of time and space befitting this conference, move swiftly to reflect on a possible pedagogy for minority students at Curtin University.

A preferred supervision model for LM postgraduates
In contemplating what is needed for more effective supervision of LM research postgraduates, I draw on the perceptions of participants in

the aforementioned study, on my own experience as a cross-cultural teacher and supervisor, and I am especially indebted to the ideas of Cummins (1988). In his metatheoretical analysis of minority education programs, Cummins contends that programs driven by a 'liberal ideology' -- typically under the rubric of multicultural education or cross-cultural education -- have been ineffectual because they have not addressed the power relations between the dominant and the dominated (cf, McConnachie and Kapferer, 1981). Cummins favours a policy framework informed by critical theory (ie a neo-Marxist, action-oriented ideology) which typically employs the nomenclature of anti-racist education.

Though I concur with Cummins' basic posture, I am somewhat chastened by the realisation of having contributed to 'liberal' ideological policies
and practices; and even as I strive to adopt a more radical stance, being a West Australian, I am culturally inclined to speak with a softer tongue and use terminology like anti-assimilationist education!

In pondering effective minority education programs and practices, Cummins (1988, p.138) gives primacy to the interactions of educators and students; however, he claims these interactions are mediated by the following key institutional characteristics (minority parent participation is omitted here because it is deemed of little relevance to the tertiary sector), and the extent to which these characteristics are adopted in the role definitions of educators:

1) Minority students' first language (L1) and culture are incorporated into the educational program, thus majority language/culture is regarded as an add on (ie 'additive') rather than as a replacement for first language/culture (ie 'subtractive');

2) The pedagogy (teaching and learning practices/strategies) promotes students using their language(s) actively in order to generate their own knowledge, rather than emphasising the transmission of pre-determined knowledge (ie 'filling of the empty vessel'); and

3) When it comes to assessment, educators become advocates for minority students, eg by focussing on how students' academic difficulties are constructed by interactions within the institution, rather than legitimising the location of the 'problem' as only within students.

Now to apply Cummins' three key characteristics, along with other resources, to a consideration of how research supervision of LM postgraduates at Curtin (and elsewhere) may be improved:

1) cultural/linguistic incorporation: in his metatheoretical deliberations Cummins points to the weight of evidence in favour of minority students' first language (L1) being 'incorporated', ie being included, in minority education programs. Focussing on primary schooling, Cummins asserts that incorporation ensures "both the more solid cognitive/academic foundation developed through intensive L1 instruction and also the reinforcement of their cultural identity" (1988, p.139). However, at the tertiary level in Australia there are very few instructors or supervisors able to communicate with LM students in their L1, and given that LM students have at that stage acquired full literacy in L1 it is not such an issue. Nevertheless, it is surely important for supervisors of LM research students to have a clear conception of their role as facilitators of these students' literacy development in the dominant language. Thus the following postulation by Cummins has relevance for the tertiary supervisor:
Educators who see their role as adding a second language and cultural affiliation to students' repertoire are likely to empower students more than those who see their role as replacing or subtracting students' primary language and culture in the process of assimilating them to the dominant culture. (p.139)

Tikunoff is another researcher in the field of minority education who emphasises the need for teachers to take advantage of LM students' L1 and cultural experience. Tikunoff (1983) reports that incorporating aspects of LM students' home culture tends to promote engagement in instructional tasks and to contribute to a feeling of trust between the students and their teachers. It is interesting to note that LM postgraduates at Curtin, when defining what constitutes a "good supervisor", place a lot of importance on the respect shown by supervisors for their (the students') cultural background (Hall, 1995).

In our institution policy development on literacy is well under way (Curtin Policy, 1995), but I believe more consideration must be given to the special needs of LM students. I have argued elsewhere (Hall and Bell, 1995) that LM postgraduates in research programs have different linguistic needs from other students, in line with their main task of research writing, and that their post-program linguistic requirements ought to be carefully considered. For example, for those postgraduates who are returning to situations where increased English proficiency will not enhance their professional standing it may be possible to design with and for them a program with diminished English literacy requirements. It is also possible that arrangements could be made for the examination of at least some of these students' theses in their first language (Martinez, 1995). The others, who put a premium on acquisition of English literacy, will profit from intensive and sustained conversation and writing programs. These are just some of the possibilities for empowering LM research students through cultural and linguistic incorporation.

2) pedagogy to promote active learning: Cummins (1988, p.143) refers to several pieces of research which demonstrate that students "designated 'at risk' typically receive intensive, formal instruction that confines them to a passive role and induces a form of 'learned helplessness'". The alternative model, more conducive to their empowerment, encourages students to be active, independent learners who 'negotiate the curriculum' (Boomer, 1982) and construct their own knowledge. However, for some this will be a new approach to learning and instructors will need to ease them into it, with careful but hopefully non-intrusive monitoring of their progress.

An important dimension, according to Cummins (1988, p.143), is the
degree of control exercised by the educator over the classroom interaction. The situation where extreme control is exercised may be characterised as the 'transmission' model; at the other end of the continuum is the 'reciprocal interaction' model (ibid, p.143) which positions students as having a high degree of control in setting their learning goals and in achieving these goals. Cummins (1988, p.145) contends that the transmission model of pedagogy is not conducive to genuine multicultural (or cross-cultural) education because it "entails the suppression of students' experiences and consequently does not allow for the validation of minority students' experiences in the classroom".

At the tertiary level it would seem that active cross-cultural learning is eminently achievable, if two action research projects undertaken by Curtin lecturers to improve their cross-cultural teaching are anything to go by (Hall, in press). In these studies, one in the school of business and the other in engineering, minority and majority students were teamed up and required to work collaboratively on learning projects. Most students appreciated the opportunity for cross-cultural co-mingling and, as a serendipity feature of the research, they also thought they had achieved better learning of key concepts and knowledge. Wong-Fillmore & Valdez (1985) and Garcia (1989) likewise link more effective cross-cultural pedagogy to classroom discourse with high degrees of teacher-student and student-student interaction.

The implications of the preferred pedagogy for LM postgraduates' research supervision are fairly obvious. Because many LM researchers experience difficulty with their thesis writing there is a reported tendency for supervisors to dominate and even to take over the authorship completely; whilst this is usually well intentioned, it has the potential to be damaging to the relationship and to the self-esteem of the student -- to say nothing of the ethical implications! For example, as reported elsewhere, an Indonesian postgraduate, 'Namo', "complained that his supervisor always pushed him to write in the supervisor's style and always found Namo's expression to be incorrect -- which Namo found to be 'dehumanising'" (Hall, 1995, p.3).

This does not mean that supervisors should not be strong leaders. Indeed this is another characteristic favoured by LM postgraduates in their supervisors. But though there is bound to be some deference shown by research postgraduates to their supervisors, 'reciprocal interaction' seems a useful ideal for both parties to strive for. After all, many of the LM postgraduates are already professionals in their field and those who are not are expected to be independent, autonomous learners by the completion of their programs.
3) advocacy in assessment: Cummins (1988) is convinced that 'psychological assessment' has served to downgrade the academic achievement of minority students in the Western world by locating the academic 'problem' within the student, thus screening from critical scrutiny the subtractive nature of the educational program, the exclusionary orientation of educators towards minority communities, and the transmission model of teaching that inhibits students from active participation in learning. (p.145)

In other words if the only tools available to the assessor are psychological tests then it is inevitable that a student's difficulties will be "attributed to psychological dysfunctions" (ibid, p.145; cf McConnachie, 1982). And this serves to remind us that there is no such thing as a culture free assessment -- all tests have terms of reference which favour a particular set of 'culture capital'.

For Cummins (1988, p.147), non-discriminatory assessment means at the very least the minority student's linguistic background must be taken into account when crucial tests or placement decisions are being made that will seriously affect the student's future. The preferred role definition, then, is one of "advocacy", wherein educators should delegitimise the traditional forms of assessment and "become advocates for the student in scrutinising critically the social and educational contexts within which the student has developed" (ibid, p.148). Presumably this would entail educator intervention to ensure that LM students are not discriminated against in their assessment; in extreme cases this could mean educators refusing to use certain forms of assessment or modifying them to allow the minority students a more culturally appropriate opportunity to demonstrate their ability.

At the tertiary level any attempt to change established assessment practices is bound to be controversial because these are central to the organisation and conceptualisation of established fields of knowledge and their power bases. For example, in my institution what constitutes 'real' research is grounded in a positivist epistemology, and any attempt to challenge the orthodoxy is a hard-fought affair! Notwithstanding the resistance to change, I note that academic staff at Curtin are showing signs of being more aware of the disabling aspects of some forms of assessment for LM students and this awareness is being manifested in school policies and strategic plans. One small but significant change in University policy in recent years has been the allowance of extra time in examinations for students who qualify on the basis of a disability or LM status. There are also special conditions for entry into the University which apply to LM students, but it is
often a matter of 'sink or swim' once minority students have gained entry, with an assimilationist ethic holding sway -- especially in the case of undergraduates.

From personal observations and anecdotal evidence it would seem that at Curtin LM postgraduates are assessed in a much more sympathetic, if not culturally sensitive, manner than undergraduates and the net result for the former is more equitable. However, in policy terms, an advocacy-based form of assessment for LM research students needs to be explicated. At present too much is being left to chance in all aspects of supervision, and without some clear guidelines along "anti-assimilationist" lines there is a danger of there being serious casualties in this ever-vulnerable population.

Concluding remarks
This paper has grown out of a perceived need for me to be more explicit about the difficulties facing LM research students, as constructed by my research; and, in a more speculative frame, about possible ways of addressing these difficulties. Not all LM students are "at risk" of course, but many seem to be exposed to unhealthy and unnecessary stress and risk -- in a university environment in which we are becoming aware of our cross-cultural responsibilities (Curtin Cross-Cultural Education Policy, 1992), but in my view we have a long way to go in meeting these responsibilities.

However, despite the rather laboured and earnest manner in which I have begun to examine policy ideas for improving cross-cultural research supervision in this paper, I am pessimistic about improvement being achieved by a well-articulated list of do's and don'ts. Written policies and regulations do have their place, and at times they are downright useful; but in terms of bringing about widespread improvement, I believe, it is the process of policy development -- the debates and contestations (towards which, hopefully, this paper might contribute) -- which are likely to be more consequential than any policy product.

REFERENCES


Improving the quality of postgraduate supervision at Curtin University.
Unpublished report, Curtin University.


issues and innovations. Perth: Creative Research.


10

INTERNATIONALISATION

AND

ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Dr Anna Alderson
Teaching and Learning Group
Curtin University of Technology

INTERNATIONALISATION

AND

ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Introduction
Staff development for internationalisation can be understood as a journey through a series of stages towards the development of a culturally inclusive curriculum. Lesley Parker, in an accompanying paper, has outlined several ways in which we can conceptualise these stages. Her theorising is based on an understanding of critical pedagogy which, as she explains "both critiques and takes into account the links between classroom processes, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures and relations within the wider community"
If academic staff are to be assisted to make this journey through the stages (whatever they might be) several important aspects need to be taken into account.

In the first place it is important that we have a common understanding of some of the terms which we are using so, in the first part of this paper I will explore some of the more significant terms which are integral to the staff development process. Secondly, for learning to be successful it is necessary that we start where the learner is at and assist them to move to the point at which they want to be. And staff development is about academics as learners. In this next part of the paper I will examine some crucial factors in the learning process for students and staff. Finally, I will outline how, if staff development for a culturally inclusive curriculum is to be successful, it will be necessary to develop different delivery strategies for the different stages which themselves correspond with the different needs of the participants.

Towards a Common Understanding of Some Terms
Knowledge and Knowing
If a culturally inclusive curriculum is linked to critical pedagogy, as Parker (1996) suggests, which is in part about "the production of knowledge", then it is important that we examine further this notion of "producing knowledge". Most commonly, knowledge is thought of as something which one person has which is conveyed to another. This is often known as the "empty vessel" approach to knowledge. On reflection though this is based on conceiving of knowledge as a "thing" or "commodity" which Yaxley (1992, p.2) suggests comes about because we store the representations of our thoughts (i.e. our knowledge) in books, or journals or on discs. However, a more useful understanding of knowledge is offered by Bruffee (1993) who writes of "knowledge as a consensus: ...something [which] people construct interdependently by talking together." (p.113). Thus, as Yaxley (1992) puts it "Knowing is a state of understanding [and a]s such our knowing cannot be transmitted from one person to another and cannot be separated from the knower." (p.2)

The implication of this for a culturally inclusive curriculum is that the lecturer's view of a topic, a procedure or a theory will always be interpreted by the learner - which means that no matter what the lecturer believes they have delivered by way of knowledge this will not necessarily be what the student receives. A culturally inclusive curriculum will engage the world views of the students' cultures as they see them, not necessarily filtered through those of the lecturer or the texts which he/she has selected. Thus, while it is valuable for lecturers to have some basic understanding of the cultures from which their students come and the acceptable norms of polite behaviour, it is not necessary, as some fear, to have an in depth understanding of
them. Nor does it imply that the lecturer has no input and brings nothing to the student and the classroom. What is necessary is a willingness and capacity on the part of the lecturer to negotiate the content of the curriculum with the students recognising that the students bring to it understandings and skills about their society and its needs. They are in the best position to assess the value of the information to which the lecturer is able to provide access as far as their society is concerned. In part then, the role of the lecturer is to assist students in making those assessments, providing them with tools and theories which might inform those assessments and reassuring them of the appropriateness of them doing so.

Learners and Learning
While a culturally inclusive curriculum still recognises the learner as a novice it does not accept that the learner is a novice in all areas. In particular, the learner is seen as the expert on his or her own culture (i.e. their daily lived interpretation of that culture). Subsequent learning, which in the professions includes acculturation into the norms and mores of that particular sub-culture as well as mastery of specific information and technical and social skills, needs to enable the student to build on their own understandings and skills which they already have and help them gain new ones. It is not about assuming we are starting with an "empty slate" or replacing the old understandings with the new.

Learning then is seen as a collaborative effort and is, as Bruffee (1993) describes it, "a reacculturative process that helps students become members of knowledge communities whose common property is different from the common property of the knowledge communities they already belong to." (p.3) This implies that learning is most frequently a social activity, rather than the solitary task we often associate with tertiary studies. Of course, the social part is often mediated through the written word, but understanding learning as a social process implies that we will incorporate into the classroom opportunities for students to explore their thinking with others as they jointly seek to construct common meanings and understandings of the knowledge communities they are seeking to join. It gives different meaning to age old issues such as "cheating" and might even require us to reexamine current topical questions such as "intellectual property" and "plagiarism".

Some Factors in the Learning Process for Students and Staff

We also know a great deal about what constitutes best practice in the planning, implementation, facilitation and application of staff (professional) development (see, for example, Crowther and Gaffney, 1994, Fullan, 1991, and Louden, 1994) and how to provide for teachers' learning. While much of what has been written recently, especially in Australia, has been about teachers in schools, the principles of best
practice are equally applicable, if somewhat more difficult to achieve at the tertiary level.

While I do not intend to explore in detail all aspects of the process of academic staff development for internationalisation and a culturally inclusive curriculum for students there are some aspects which have particular importance.

Negotiating Understandings

If we are to work with staff in the university we must be applying the same principles to our understanding and facilitation of their learning as we expect them to apply with their students. Thus, we need to start where they are at and negotiate common understandings. If we accept the notion that professional courses at universities are about acculturating students into those professions then staff who are working with international students are faced with some of the following dilemmas. "Acculturation" for what? To work in this society? In their home society? In some other society? Are students going to be expected to preserve the status quo in their home countries? To challenge the status quo? Or even to change it when they return? How is a lecturer to determine this and what are they then to do about? Does it matter who pays for the student to come here? Does it matter what the political and social climate is like in the student's country of origin? Does it matter if the student does not fully measure up to the same standards as those required of local students? Does it matter for the overseas students, and for the local students?

As staff working with international students start to move through the stages which Parker has outlined they often begin to feel uncomfortable about the imposition of these sub-cultural mores onto their students especially if the come to see that the norms of their profession may reflect a specific orientation which may be equally foreign to local students of different ethnic or social origins as it is to overseas students. Their own reading, visiting and talking with the students and others from different overseas settings make them nervous about what they are providing for their students. They may be unsure as to the appropriateness of the knowledge base for another culture, the procedures that are used, and/or the attitudes and values which are an integral part of what they teach and the way they teach it. In severe cases a staff person can be reduced almost to a state of paralysis afraid of what they are "doing" intentionally or unintentionally to the students who are paying significant sums of money to become . . . what? Staff are torn between a necessity to impose the "standards" and "rigour" of their discipline and the fear that any or all of what they are providing for the students may be at best irrelevant and at worst actually harmful to the societies and communities from which they come an to which they must eventually return.

The problems are no less complex for staff who are trying to adapt to
the latest interpretation of internationalisation which is stressing that what they need to be doing is preparing all students, local and international for operating in a "global community" as "international citizens". Not only are they faced with the question of what do students need to know, which now may include another language, an understanding of other cultures and an ability to communicate across cultural boundaries, but also they need to address issues of how to operate "internationally". What does a "global person" look like? How does an "international citizen" behave? What and how does one acculturate people into a profession whose boundaries are now fluid and which is being defined increasingly by people whose expectations may be different to one's own? How indeed does one even determine if they are different? And then determine what one can do about it.

Staff are increasingly asking these sorts of questions but they are not finding very satisfactory answers. If they are operating with understandings of knowledge and learning which are static then the answers they will come up with may be appropriate for a single setting, but will not accommodate the diversity with which they are now faced. They need to take into account the way in which knowledge is socially constructed and learning is socially mediated in order to find answers which are satisfactory for them - and for their students. They need to negotiate with their students to determine mutually understood meanings for content which may be different to the meanings which they have previously taken for granted.

Negotiating Process and Assessment

The process of delivery will also need to be open to negotiation. Ideally, it won't necessarily be based on stereotypical notions of what counts as Western type teaching styles. Nor will it be based on equally stereotypical notions of what counts as Eastern learning styles. A culturally inclusive curriculum will allow for negotiation between the lecturer and the students according to the needs of individual students and may be limited only by the available technology rather than preconceived notions as to what counts as the necessary rituals for progress through a course.

Assessment too, will be under challenge. Instead of assessment being seen as testing the degree of successful transmission of knowledge from the lecturer to the student (or the staff development provider to the academic) which is carried out at the culmination of section of a piece of work, a socially constructed view of assessment suggests that it will be an integral part of the learning process which will be negotiated like all other parts according to the needs of the students for feedback, rather than the needs of the lecturer for grading (sorting) purposes.
Negotiating Time and Resources
Part of the ritual of university courses has been the weekly meeting with the lecturer. Forty years ago, before the Murray Report there were twice weekly lectures. Then tutorials were introduced to enable students to have face-to-face contact with an academic. The newer universities (many of which were previously CAEs) adopted more interactive teaching approaches using smaller classes and larger blocks of times. Whatever the approach originally, eventually the format comes to be seen as the norm. But there is nothing "normal" about any of these approaches. There is no reason why the time and format in which students meet with the lecturer shouldn't be negotiated. Indeed some classes already do this - and even meet at times without the lecturer! Reduced resources might make this more attractive and even a necessity. But a culturally inclusive curriculum (especially if it was also gender inclusive, disability inclusive and geographically inclusive) might consider a variety of approaches of academics and students meeting together which would be negotiated between them.

Resources do not come value free. Books (and libraries), computers, videos, the internet, human resources (staff, students, the community etc.) all come with their own biases and each incorporates assumptions about learning and the learner. The greater the range of resources, the greater the options there are for enabling students and staff to find resources which more adequately meet their needs. A culturally inclusive curriculum will encourage and support learners in their use of a variety of resources.

Similarly, time and resources for academic staff development could and should be open to negotiation for all academics throughout the institution. What is more, with the new technologies there are wonderful opportunities for the building of data bases of resources (human and physical) which staff could tap into and share with each other. This could then be followed with face-to-face or virtual meetings as and when groups of staff determine according to their needs.

The Importance of Critical Thinking
One of the basic tenets of Western university education is that students are expected to become critical thinkers. In an on-going study at Curtin (cited in Reid, 1996) researchers are finding that the notion of "critical thinking" and "critical literacy" has different degrees of currency and is embued with different degrees of importance in depending on the disciplines and the school. It cannot be taken for granted that every degree students in an Australian university will be exposed to a requirement to think critically during the course of their studies. If critical thinking is not a part of students' studies how can they be expected to be able to critically assess the value of their course as a whole or analyse its merits in relation to their own
and their society's needs? In reading Reid's analysis one can't help but feel that for many staff, critical thinking, like literacy, is seen as someone else problem. Perhaps this is not surprising if their understanding of knowledge is about getting it from their heads into the heads of their students, and their understanding of their profession is one of ensuring that students become functional (as opposed to critical) members of that knowledge community.

The implication of this in terms of academic staff development would seem to be twofold. Firstly, there may be a need for academic staff themselves to develop critical skills in relation to their discipline, the theories in which it is embedded and the practices which they undertake and to model this critical undertaking to their students. Secondly, it will be necessary for staff to have more opportunities to critically evaluate their own teaching and that of their peers - a practice which seems to be even less evident in universities than it is in schools. This process, however, like all others will need to be mindful of starting where people are at and assisting them to move on from that point. Perhaps this implies that a great deal more academic staff development in general, not just with reference to internationalisation, will need to take place at the school/department level rather than being conducted by a centrally located and funded body. Maybe there is a need for more consultants to work directly with schools helping them to identify and meet their needs rather than providing generic courses for academics across the university.

Negotiating Evaluation of the Course
A great deal of emphasis is now placed on the Course Experience Questionnaires administered to students. Based on the students' own assessments it is assumed we can judge the quality of a course. But this is only one assessment based essentially on client satisfaction. Students who are satisfied with their courses may not in fact be literate, may not have become analytical thinkers, may not be critical thinkers, and may have learnt nothing which is of value to their community. What is more, this self-selected sample may not include those who have gained least from the course. A culturally inclusive curriculum will incorporate the negotiation of an evaluation of the course based on the factors which students, lecturers and the professional community determine to be important. It will be determined before and during the course and may well change over that time. It may be different for courses delivered off-shore than those delivered on-shore and is likely to be at least marginally different each time the course is delivered.

Delivery of Academic Staff Development for a Culturally Inclusive Curriculum
In the light of the understandings explored about the nature of
knowledge and learning process involved in staff development what further lessons are there for the conduct of staff development? The most obvious implication is that if it is true that progress towards a culturally inclusive curriculum proceeds in stages then professional development for staff will need to be provided in a variety of ways and at variety of levels if it is to meet the needs of those people where they are at. Staff will need to determine for themselves where they are and what kind of professional development will best meet those needs.

Depending on what stage they are at they may need information, opportunities for discussion and reflection, to see other people in practice, to try out alternatives (and get feedback about these), to find a mentor with whom they can have on-going dialogue, to access a chat page on the internet through which issues of mutual interest can be explored, or any of a number of other possibilities. After these initial knowledge building experiences staff then need to engage in analytical and critical thinking about their own practice. In other words staff will need to determine what does this mean for them individually, what are they now doing that needs changing and what will they now implement.

This is not a one-off exercise. Staff need the opportunity, and most particularly, the time to revisit the issues, the practices and the mistakes they are making on their journey. Staff need to do this with other people - not just for the process of learning, but also to assist them to continue their journey.

To be effective staff development needs support, most especially from management at all levels. This support needs to be in the form of recognition from management, time to get together, rewards for good teaching equivalent to those available through research and opportunities to share their efforts with others.

Conclusion
Academic staff development for internationalisation can thus be seen as a journey which at each stage requires exploration and negotiation of understandings, re-examining of currently held beliefs, reflection on current practice, gathering and learning information from a variety of resources, and opportunities for the social construction of knowledge. Academic staff development cannot be a single process which fits all staff, in all schools, in all universities. If we teach in the ways we are taught then academic staff will need to experience learning in new inclusive ways in order that they may provide inclusive curriculum for their students.

References


[F1]

Dr Anna Alderson, Paper presented at AARE Conference Singapore, November 1996