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Title: Getting diverse students and staff to talk about integration on campus, and what they say when they do: A UK-India collaborative case study.

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the early stages of a UKIERI-funded project, 'Widening Participation: Diversity, isolation or integration in Higher Education?'.The project is concerned with greater equity, social justice, community and social cohesion within the current globalised, market oriented context of higher education (HE), and with enabling students to be better prepared for, and thrive in social networks and work-related arenas which are increasingly diverse, multicultural, interdependent and global.

The main aim of this 3 year project is to explore the nature of social cohesion, integration and separation, diversity, equality and discrimination experienced by diverse, minority, disadvantaged and under-represented students attending HE in UK and India.

Group stereotypes are often subconsciously held, emerging into consciousness only when they appear confirmed or confounded by personal experience or public events. Where there is little knowledge or personal experience then reliance upon group stereotypes is more likely (Kunda & Thagard, 1996). This can impact upon student and staff expectations of, responses to, and interactions with each other.

Individual students' experiences and perceptions lie at the core of this project, but the ultimate purpose is to illuminate our understanding as to how these are mediated, shaped and formed, in relation to and in interaction with the structures and contextual features of the educational environments in which they, as students, are located. It is thus framed by socio-cultural rather than psychological or therapeutic theories and is located within a social-constructivist perspective (Moore, 2000). Social constructivism facilitates the development of improved understandings of educational and social environments that shape rather than determine individual dispositions towards social diversity encountered on campus. It is highly suited to the understanding of perceptions, and exploring resonances with actions, reactions and interactions.

The initial stage of this project involved inviting students and staff (academic and support staff) from five HE colleges and universities in England and India to keep a record (written and photographic) of what for them seemed to be important and relevant events relating to what they saw, heard, did and experienced on campus for a period of 1 month, in teaching, learning and social situations; namely interactions in classes and social settings; what seem to be good experiences and what seem to be negative ones; how and if their particular knowledge and experiences were used, valued and incorporated into their HE experience and learning or how they were negated. A sample size of 90 record keepers was sought across the participating institutions.

Getting that sample presented significant difficulties to all but one of the participating institutions, and raised questions about
- *the methods initially adopted,*
- *the general willingness of students and staff to address and share issues relating to diversity, equality, social cohesion and integration on HE campuses with researchers*
- *cultural differences in accessing respondents to take part in the research*

Additional data collection methods were adopted and by January 2009 the intended sample size almost met.

This paper will address the problems encountered in undertaking the first stage of this research and present initial findings from the data that were eventually obtained.

Introduction

This paper reports on the interim findings of a three-year UKIERI-funded collaborative research project between UK and Indian academics on Widening Participation in Higher Education, covering 5 different HEIs, 3 in the UK and 2 in India The project is primarily concerned with enhancing equity, social justice, community and social cohesion within the current globalised, market oriented context of higher education (HE). Its main aims are to explore the nature of social cohesion, integration and separation, diversity, equality and discrimination experienced by diverse, minority, disadvantaged and under-represented students attending HE in the UK and India.

The initial stages involved inviting students and staff (both from academic and student support areas) located in the 5 HEIs to keep a record (written and photographic) of what for them seemed to be important and relevant events relating to what they saw, heard, did and experienced on their campus for a period of 1 month, in teaching, learning and social situations; namely interactions in classes and social settings; what seemed to be good experiences and what seemed to be negative ones; how and if their particular knowledge and experiences were used, valued and incorporated into their HE experience and learning or how they were negated.

Although a sample size of 90 record keepers was initially sought across the 5 participating institutions, getting that sample presented significant difficulties to all but one of the HEIs. This raised questions for the team about the methods initially adopted, the general willingness (or not in many cases) of students and staff to address and share issues relating to diversity, equality, social cohesion and integration on their campuses with researchers, and of cultural differences in ways of accessing respondents to take part in the research. As a result additional data collection methods were adopted and by January 2009 the intended sample size had almost been met (88 of which 85 used).

This paper thus addresses the problems encountered in undertaking the first stage of this research and then presents initial findings from the data that were eventually obtained.

Background

This project takes as its starting point that, in order to be better prepared for, and to thrive in social networks and work-related arenas which are increasingly diverse, multicultural, interdependent and global it is essential that students are helped to develop and value intercultural knowledge and skills during their education and that all HE staff, students and campuses model the integration, cohesion and social interaction that underpins their development. However, this desired outcome is not readily achieved. Advancement of disadvantaged people/ widening participation initiatives in both India and the UK have brought with them problems around lack of integration and social cohesion. The potential benefits of cross-cultural learning and enrichment are being lost through student segregation, isolation, alienation and, in some cases, ghetto-isation.

Yet, educational environments are potentially important sites for the development of intercultural knowledge and skills, and for the enhancement of social cohesion and integration. Research reported by Bloom (2008:42) found that 'school friendship groups were more diverse than out-of-school groups' in the secondary schools studied, and it seems likely that this might also be the case in FE and HE environments as well. They are, in most instances, places where people from diverse backgrounds and cultures come together, and as such offer opportunities for intercultural mixing and greater diversity within study, work, friendship, and social groupings, from which greater integration and social cohesion might emerge and through which those important inter-cultural skills and perspectives might develop.

> *'The cultural diversity of the modern university provides us with rich opportunities to learn about each other. Such learning cannot only prepare students to cope in a world that is multicultural and interdependent (OECD, 2004) but can also ensure that academics operate beyond local and national perspectives.'* (Hyland et al, 2008:3)

Intercultural learning, understanding, competence and communication are important skills for graduates of the future, and they are desired outcomes for HE (Killick, 2009). Our students need to be better prepared for, and enabled to thrive in social networks and work-related arenas which are increasingly diverse, multicultural, interdependent and global.

But it is not just about work-related skills development or economic survival, though those are strong drivers. It is also, and the authors believe more importantly, about enhancing social justice through greater knowledge, understanding and respect for similarities and differences between people with different combinations of backgrounds, experience and cultures, and treating them as equally important individuals and peers. There is a moral as well as a practical purpose to education. Giroux (2005) amongst others, notes 'the civil obligations of the academy', and that pedagogy is a 'moral practice'. He argues that educators must:

> *'... defend critical education, help students come to terms with their own power as individuals and social agents, and reclaim those non-market values such as caring, community, trust, conviction and courage that are vital to a substantive democracy'*
> (*Giroux, 2005:3*)

Moral arguments such as Giroux's support the promotion of intercultural learning in HEIs, for non-economic related reasons. It is the authors' view that intercultural learning is particularly important for home-based, majority or 'traditional' HE students, whatever their racial and social origins, backgrounds or past experiences, not least because so-called 'international', minority and 'non-traditional' students are, by definition, already doing it, by immersing themselves in educational systems and cultures with which they are unfamiliar. For some HEIs the recruitment of increasing diverse students is driven by the need for income generation but many also recognise the importance and educational value that such diversity offers, within their missions/ visions/ statements of aims, even if the reality on most campuses doesn't quite live up to such ideals. The drivers for such mission/ vision statements/ aims, and more diverse recruitment, especially in the UK, include legislation, and quality and outcome measures which are used to judge and rank HEIs (May & Fan, 2009). A particular driver in India is the National Policy for the upliftment of the Dalits i.e. Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled Castes (SC) through reservation policy and quotas (Wankhede, 2002:41).

The Literature

The lack of integration or mixing between students from diverse backgrounds and cultures on HE campuses is widely acknowledged in the literature (Deakins, 2009; Carroll & Ryan,2005, UKCOSA, 2004; Hyland et al, 2008). Much has been written about minority, disadvantaged or under-represented groups of students experiencing feelings of isolation (Daniel, 2009; Hockings et al, 2008, Furnham, 1997), marginalisation (Read et al, 2003), exclusion (Hockings et al, 2008), and invisibility (Coram, 2009).

Being invisible, or isolated, is another aspect of mistreatment, or discrimination on the basis of some difference, such as race, religion, sex etc. but is equally exclusionary and damaging in terms of individuals (and groups) sense of belonging, of equal worth and of being valued and treated with respect. Minority, disadvantaged, 'non-traditional' and international students in HE often feel powerless, like interlopers or outsiders, even that HE 'is not their place'. They can be made to feel lacking in some way, and treated as deficient when compared to the ideal or 'traditional', majority HE student. For such students, as Coram (2009) notes, HE implicitly 'says "come", through statements of equity and diversity, inclusion and opportunity, but then says "no" ' - they are drawn in then rejected.

There has been relatively 'little research into the complexities of intercultural encounters and communication' in HEI environments' (Daniel, 2009; Hyland et al, 2008:6; Pelletier, 2003). Leonard and Morley, in their preface to Pelletier's review (2003) for UKOSA, of unpublished work in the area, note, for example, that there has been 'surprisingly little research… on the progress and

achievement of international students' or on internationalising HE provision in the UK in general. What is available usually refers to recruitment statistics and particular markets. Pelletier's review (2003) did find a substantial body of mainly small-scale, institutionally based, 'socially decontextualised' (p.5) studies which primarily homogenise students from particular regions, and which focus on the problems and challenges faced by academics in meeting their needs, rather than the actual students experiences.

However, there is a substantial body of work regarding the experiences of different groupings of HE students (for example, Quinn, 2003, on women; Reay et al, 2005, & Archer, 2000, on class; Mirza, 2005, Bailey, 2003, & Panesar, 2003 on race and ethnicity; Wankhede, 2002, on caste; Pickerden, 2002, & Ahmed, 2001, on religion; Thomas & Quinn, 2007, on first generation entrants; Borland & James, 1999, Riddell, Tinklin, & Wilson, 2005, and Hall & Healey, 2004, on disability; Bowl, 2003, & Tett, 2004 on mature ethnic minority students; Cantwell & Scevak, 2004, on APEL entrants).

Actual divisions or groupings may variously form around, for example, race, class, caste, sex, age, language, religion, culture, marital status, educational background, qualifications, course and cohort, but form they do, and students grouped by age, race, sex, nationality and language, for example, can be seen and heard within most student facilities on most HEI campuses albeit alongside some mixed groupings. Hyland et al (2008:1-2) note 'how far we still have to go in encouraging some students to break out of their familiar cultural groups to socialise cross-culturally'.

The Western literature does refer to the difficulties some students from overseas have in integrating – socially and in classes - with 'home students'. (UKCOSA (2004:12) report that

> *'Students from East and South-East Asia were considerably less likely to have UK friends than average and students from the EU (except Greece), North America and Sub-Saharan Africa were more likely to have UK friends. Only 15% of Chinese students said they had UK friends.'*

There is also some evidence of UK students displaying 'strongly ethnocentric attitudes' which can lead to 'feelings of exclusion and disadvantage among international students, whatever and wherever their origins' (Ledwith and Seymour 2001:1292), although this seems to apply less to students from the European Union, whom UK students may feel 'culturally closer' to (UKCOSA 2004; Ledwith and Seymour, 2001), and who rarely study in the UK as native speakers of English.

It may also help to explain why so few international students (apart from native English-speaking students from overseas), actually report having UK friends (UKCOSA 2004), with some saying that they 'rarely met home students', and why one lecturer in Hyland et al's (2008) study felt that international students were being 'ghettoised' by 'giving courses the title "international" thus biasing the likely applicants' (p11). UKCOSA's findings are supported by Deakins (2009:209) work in New Zealand, where almost half of his overseas students reported that they 'never study with NZ students', and some of Hyland et als (2008:22) home students who said 'we don't actually make an effort to get to know international students, I mean that's the problem.' If and when they do those students are seen differently – they acquire a human, individual face, and the reality of hybrid, complex identities comes to the fore.

> *'it was only when they lived with international students did they stop seeing them as 'international students' but rather that they 'became people who, as one facet of their lives, were studying' (Hyland et al 2008:20).*

The UK home student – EU student affiliation shows signs of mutual affirmation. Hyland et al (2008:5), in their study of internationalisation experiences of HE staff and students, found 'several mainland EU students self-identified as 'home' students and participated in a 'home' student focus group'. This may say something about integration within the EU, or it may say something about cultural similarity, white, western power and advantaged student status.

It is indeed common, if not inevitable, much of the time, in education as in wider society, that 'like gravitates towards like'. Bloom (2008: 42), reporting a study of 1500 secondary school pupils, notes that, while school friendship groups were more diverse than out-of-school ones, 'Friendship circles were clearly divided by sex', and that 'Most pupils prefer to spend time with people from the same ethnic group'. Hyland et al's (2008:21) HE research parallels these findings; it identified ' "cultural cliques", where similar cultures and nations had a tendency to socialise together…. because it was easier to do so'.

> ' ...it's not about rudeness or about people disliking each other, it's just the natural groups that people tend to form with people from their own countries. Sometimes people prefer to speak in their native tongue as well...' (Home Student)

Mono-cultural groups can have benefits; a study of 29 African students in UK universities found that, for most of these students, their social networks were largely composed of other African students, and that these networks provided emotional, recreational and spiritual support, and practical help (Maundeni, 2001). However, such networks may also have drawbacks; some students in Maundeni's study found it difficult to improve their knowledge of English, and several students regarded their social network as a source of stress, through discrimination, domination, and gossip:

> 'Students...felt under pressure to associate more with other students from their own countries, just to please them or in order to be regarded as 'genuinely Africa'.'(Maundeni 2001:253).

Where students (and staff) share cultural histories, values, experiences and expectations, not to mention language or religion, it is understandable that they would gravitate towards each other, but it should not be to the exclusion or detriment of others or their own education and social experiences in HE.

However, when groups act and present themselves to others in mono-cultural groupings they can be seen as representative of others with similar or the same characteristics. This can lead to stereotyping (positive or negative) especially if there are no counter representatives or inter-cultural encounters that might challenge simplistic stereotypes and demonstrate the more realistic complexity and diversity that exists within groups as well as between them. Mono-cultural groupings mask the complexity of their group members identities, their individual differences and what are likely to be their genuinely hybrid identities.

The literature suggests that intercultural mixing, learning, understanding, competence and communication frequently don't happen despite the opportunities afforded within HE (Ledwith & Seymour, 2001; Carroll & Ryan, 2005). As Hyland et al (2008:5) note, it requires 'effort being made by learners and teachers to effect such a process', that there is a need for some facilitation, perhaps even engineering, through the incorporation of intercultural learning and mixing into the structures, functions, content and pedagogy of HEI provision, both academic and social. One example, commonly referred to in the literature, is mixed group working.

> 'When (mixed) groups were arranged for them, (the majority of) students said that socialisation improved, as well as their own cultural competency' Hyland et al (2008:16).

Opportunities for intercultural learning and social mixing are readily available in HE, and if taken are likely to benefit all – students, staff in HEIs, employers, economies, societies and the global world. If they are deemed a social good, readily accessible through education environments and are not being availed of by choice (conscious or unconscious) then understanding why, and how greater integration might be facilitated or enhanced is important, and is the focus of this 3 year research project.

Theoretical underpinning

The experiences and perceptions of individual students and staff members lie at the core of this initial research phase, but the ultimate purpose is to illuminate our understanding as to how these are mediated, shaped and formed, in relation to and in interaction with the structures and contextual features of the HEI environments in which they are located, and to identify ways in which they might be addressed by and within HE. Our work is thus framed by socio-cultural rather than psychological or therapeutic theories and is located within a social-constructivist perspective (Moore, 2000). Social constructivism facilitates the development of improved understandings of educational and social environments that shape (but do not determine) individual dispositions and responses toward the social diversity that they encounter on their campuses. It is highly suited to the understanding of perceptions, and exploring resonances with actions, reactions and interactions.

Human surface characteristics, such as sex, age, skin colour, dress, body language, spoken language and dialect, impact strongly on people's perceptions of others. They are the basis of 'first impressions', and stereotypes based on them arise from the fundamental human trait of classifying and grouping in order to simplify and manage the diversity and complexity of the social worlds we encounter and experience. Group stereotypes are often subconsciously held, emerging into consciousness only when

they appear confirmed or confounded by personal experience or public events. Where there is little knowledge or personal experience then reliance upon group stereotypes is more likely (Kunda & Thagard, 1996). This can impact upon student and staff expectations of, responses to, and interactions with each other, and it is possible that a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' could be the outcome (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

All human beings act on the basis of the meanings that they attach to the objects, images and events that they encounter. These are not pre-given; they are socially constructed and they vary between groups and individuals, and by place and in time. They are formed, amended and changed through life experiences and the processes of social interaction. Yet for human society to exist there is also the requirement that meanings are largely shared and understood by its members. Whilst not pre-determined, meanings and symbols are structured, patterned and subject to social constraints. Variations occur, but within social and historical contexts which influence individual interactions. It is here that surface characteristics or stereotypes of different groups of people are located, and which at times, consciously or unconsciously, are drawn upon to inform, prejudice, preclude or provoke particular types of interactions.

Methodology

Five HEIs are involved, three in the UK and two in India (see Table 1, below). However, data were obtained from only four of these HEIs in the first phase of the project due to problems in accessing willing participants, a key issue for this paper.

Table 1: Characteristics of Participating HEIs 2007/8 (all in principle English medium)

HE Institution	Size	Std Composition	Provision	Priorities/orientation
UK: New South Shire University (NSS)	22,550 UG & PG students , full and part-time	15% International 85% UK & EU 55% female 53% white	The Arts; Health & Human Sciences; Engineering; ICT; Business; Law; Humanities and Education	'New model uni. , business like and business facing, shaping graduates futures in a global environment'; entrepreneurial, engendering international & MC understanding
UK: Old North City University (ONC)	14,464 UG & PG students , full and part-time	17% International 83% UK & EU 50% female 47% white	Health & Life Sciences; Design, Engineering & Technology; Comp, Informatics & Media; Social & Int. Studies; Management	'Making Knowledge work'; transformative role of HE, outward-facing, confronting inequality & celebrating diversity
UK: New North City University (NNC)	6,000 UG & PG, full and part-time	5% International 95% UK & EU 71% female 95% white	The Arts; Education; Theology; Business; Health & Life Sciences	'Excellent, open & progressive HE that embraces difference, challenges prejudice and promotes justice'; Anglican foundation, personal/professional development, life-long learning, sustainable
INDIA: International city-based Deemed University (IDU)	994 UG & PG (PG big majority) students, full-time	3.5%International 96.5% Indian 50% female 1% white 50% reservation (15% SC, 8% ST, 27% OBC)	Social Science & Social Work; Health; Rural Development, Management; Media; Cultural & Education	'Towards a people-centred tomorrow'; Social Justice; Professionals for practice; research and teaching, reaching out to the wider community
INDIA: Specialist HE city-based College (SHEC)	100 PG students, full-time, studying UG course	1% International 99% Indian 80% female 0% white 50% reservation for Punjabi students	1yr Full-time secondary BEd (teacher education) under Faculty of Arts	'Share, Care, Learn & Grow'; : secular environment; special attention to academically challenged and vernacular students

Planned method

The initial stage of this project involved inviting students and staff (academic and support) from five HE colleges and universities in England and India to keep a record (written and photographic) of what for them seemed to be important and relevant events relating to what they saw, heard, did and experienced on campus for a period of 1 month, in teaching, learning and social situations; namely interactions in classes and social settings; what seem to be good experiences and what seem to be negative ones; how and if their particular knowledge and experiences were used, valued and incorporated into their HE experience and learning or how they were negated. Through analysis of these accounts it was hoped to illuminate any resonances with particular social and educational experiences occurring within the HE context that challenge or reinforce stereotypes, discrimination, separate or parallel learning; that enhance or hinder full interaction, or a sense of community, social cohesion and equality of opportunity.

At the UKIERI Team Meeting in India in February 2008 the methods of accessing and gathering the sample were agreed. Team members would advertise and invite students and staff from within their own institution to Information Meetings about the project, targeting Social Science/ Social Studies and Education students, and in addition staff from these or any other Schools or Faculties would be invited. The sample could include students from any year, level or type of course provided they were studying at Higher Education level. Each Institution was to select a sample of diverse students and staff to be 'Event Recorders' (hereafter referred to as diarists) from those who completed consent forms at the meetings. They would be invited to a briefing session where the purpose, nature and extent of event recording required would be explained.

Difficulties experienced in acquiring the sample

Invitations to participate were issued to students and staff in September 2008 and it was anticipated that all diaries would have been completed and collected by January 2009. HEIs in India and UK have different academic years, in India the academic year runs from June or July to April but in UK it runs from September to May. This meant that students and staff were invited to take part at different points within the academic year depending on whether they were in India or UK: participants in India were invited at least two months into their academic year, whereas participants in UK were invited at the very beginning of their academic year. The Indian students at SHEC were all studying on 1 year post-graduate courses. However, the Indian students at IDU were in either their first or second year of a two year course, and some of the UK students were involved in three year under-graduate study programmes, so some of these students may have been returning for their 2nd or 3rd year of study when invitations were issued.

A sample size of 90 record keepers was sought across the five participating institutions, but achieving that sample presented significant difficulties to all but one of the participating institutions.

By the beginning of November it was clear that there were difficulties in attracting sufficient participants: in the UK only one student and seven staff diarists had come forward (all from NSS University), although the HEIs in India were more successful. SHEC was able to recruit 14 students and 2 staff, all of whom kept diaries for one month, some with photographs; the other, IDU, recruited 2 students and 1 staff member, but none of these provided photographs.

The team had agreed a common approach to acquiring the sample but the different sizes and structures of the HEIs affected team members' ability to make contact with students and staff. The team members working within the two large UK HEIs (NSS and ONC) were not in a position to contact all students and staff personally, instead having to rely on email and internet to advertise and make contacts. Strenuous efforts were made to attract students and staff to the information meetings but in the end there was no response at all from ONC or NNC, and only 1 student came to the meeting at NSS. There was a slightly better response from staff at NSS, who knew the team member contacting them; 16 staff attended the information meetings and 7 produced diaries (although one of these was not used, being an account of home life rather than life on campus).

The contact method at IDU in India was in some ways similar to that within the UK in that personal contacts were limited and most staff contact was via email but students were contacted in a more

personal way: students who were well known to the team member were told about the project and were asked to contact other students to let them know about the project. Most staff were informed by email although some were personal contacts. Initially the response seemed hopeful: 20 students volunteered to keep diaries, but in the end only two students completed them. In addition one staff volunteer, known personally to the team member, was acquired.

The situation in SHEC was quite different: it is a very small institution and the poster advertising the meeting was placed in the lecture hall where everyone would see it, in addition an announcement was made so that students would read the notice. All seven staff were told about the project by the team member and a notice about the meeting was posted in the staff room. In addition the team member making the presentation was well known and respected, holding a senior position within the institution. Fifteen students volunteered to take part, although only fourteen submitted diaries, two of which were not substantial enough to use. Two of the small staff of seven also volunteered and submitted diaries.

Essentially successful recruitment to the project seems to have occurred where there was a personal relationship or approach: at SHEC the students and staff all knew the team member and there was a good response, at NSS the team member knew the staff members well but did not have personal contact with the students, at IDU, where students had a personal relationship to the team member there was initially a large group of student volunteers, even though the final response was poor.

The difficulty in attracting students to projects concerned with diversity and integration has been remarked upon elsewhere (Hyland et al, 2008; Johnston, 2007; Pelletier, 2003; McDowell and Marples, 2001).

> *'Although all the Subject Centres, and therefore all subject disciplines, were invited to take part, getting academics and students on board was problematic'* (Hyland et al, 2008)

Pelletier (2003) noted that getting the co-operation of groups of international students is a problem faced by all researchers. But she also observed that this was less problematic where the researchers themselves were international students, and suggested that personal contacts and *cultural and situational affinity* helped them to gain co-operation. In contrast, Hyland et al (2008) contacted students across a number of different locations by means of advertisements on websites rather than through more personal approaches. They suggested that their difficulties in recruiting students may 'suggest that home students may not consider intercultural learning as an important outcome of their HE experience' (Hyland et al, 2008:28), but perhaps the lack of personal contact was also an issue. McDowell and Marples (2001), discussing the issue of acquiring student volunteers for research purposes, suggest that students, in large HEIs having limited contact with lecturers may be less likely to volunteer to participate in educational research, and Johnston (2007), describes ways in which research studies working with hard to reach samples, found that the use of personal contacts was an effective approach.

Use of additional methods

By mid-November the team was discussing a methodological shift:

> *I continue to struggle to find students willing [or even perhaps able] to take part in our research. Should we consider a methodological shift away from 'diaries' and towards individual interviews and or focus groups? (ONC & NNC member of the UK team email communication - Nov 18th 2008)*

> *Even I am struggling with diaries...I agree with you for shift in methodology to personal interview or FGD (IDU member of the India team email communication -19th Nov 2008)*

And at the beginning of December it was agreed by the whole team that we would have to consider some sort of supplement/ alternative. But, since SHEC in India had successfully recruited diarists we felt we should not abandon the data we already had and were in the process of collecting. We would instead adopt mixed data collection methods (using different tools and different sources).

Additional data collection methods were agreed and adopted: focus groups and group interviews would be used in HEIs where there had been little take-up of invitations to keep a diary (all except SHEC). Again each of the HEIs obtained their additional samples in different ways. At NSS purposive

sampling was used; students were chosen to reflect a range of backgrounds comprising UK students, European Union students and overseas fee paying students. The sample also included full-time undergraduates, as well as some part-time and postgraduate students. In terms of gender, 13 women and 12 men were interviewed spanning an age range of students entering higher education from school through to mature students. Ten interviews were conducted in total and ranged in number of respondents from individual interviews to group interviews with four students.

At IDU senior students and the student union helped to enlist students for focus groups, with two focus groups, each of 10 students, including 1st and 2nd year students, male and female and students from a range of castes including reserved and non-reserved groups. These focus groups were also video-recorded.

Three informal focus groups were conducted at NNC on 13th January 2009 with education undergraduate students from 1st, 2nd and 3rd years: two groups of female students, one group in their 1st year and another group in their 2nd year, and one group of 2 male students in their 3rd year.

Common questions for focus groups and group interviews were agreed by the team (see appendix). These were used at IDU in India in late December 2008 and at NNC and NSS in the UK in January 2009. However, the questions were used in slightly different ways within each institution: at NSS a group interview style was used, at NNC an informal FG approach was taken, but not all the questions were addressed, whereas at IDU in India all questions were addressed using focus group discussions but in a much more formal setting which had similarities to a group interview. By January 2009 the intended sample size of 90 was almost achieved: 88 respondents were involved, but, as noted above, data from 3 of these was not suitable for inclusion (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Respondent Data Sources

	Student Diaries	Staff Diaries	Student Focus groups	Staff Focus groups	Total
NSS (UK)	1	6+1 not used	25	3	36
NNC (UK)	0	0	13	0	13
ONC (UK)	0	0	0	0	0
SHEC (INDIA)	12 + 2 not used	2	0	0	16
IDU (INDIA)	2	1	20	0	23
Total	15	10	58	3	88

Although not originally planned, the additional methods of acquiring data could be regarded as a strength.

> *'Focus Groups, used increasingly in educational research, have been shown to be a useful tool to generate data in the form of facts, opinions, experiences and feelings.'* (Chionel, Van Der Veen, Wildemeersch & Jarvis, 2003) *and… can stimulate memories and debate.'* (cited by Hyland et al, 2008:7).

By adopting the methods outlined above and accessing the sample through a variety of methods, as recommended by Johnston (2007), we were able to avoid sole reliance on "joiners" who might bias the sample.

Discussion of Methodology

The methods initially adopted and the subsequent additions to data collection procedures have been addressed above. It was a complex process that evolved over time through negotiated agreement amongst the research team that took into account the different contexts and circumstances of each participating researcher and institution.

The media and contact points available at each of the 5 participating HEIs varied considerably. MLE's (web-based Managed Learning Environments) were present in all 3 UK institutions but none of these researchers had access to a full email list of students. General 'adverts' on the various MLE systems were in some cases an option but, where used , provided just a single student response (at NSS). Alternative contact points such as posters and invitations displayed on notice boards and leaflets left on table in libraries, resource centres and refectories (NSS & ONC) proved equally unproductive. Accessing potential staff diarists though a general staff email list was reasonably productive at NSS but

far less so at IDU, NNC and ONC, while at SHEC, given its small size, direct personal contact was used successfully to recruit both staff and students.

The use of staff and student contacts to obtain participants for focus groups/ group interviews (at IDU, NNC & NSS) was somewhat more productive and contributed significantly to increasing the sample size. However it failed to work at ONC. The additional use of a research assistant, at NSS, to randomly approach student's produced a reasonably good response. All this appears to indicate that the use of face-to-face contacts rather than written requests, plus professional contacts and influence, are more likely to result in successful sample acquisition. Potential respondents may be more willing to engage with sensitive research such as this if they can see, or know, the person who is asking them, if they trust and respect them, or if they perceive them to be senior, powerful figures. However, there are other factors involved as well.

Questions about the general willingness (or not) of staff and students to address and share issues relating to diversity, equality, social cohesion and integration on HE campuses with researchers need to be raised. Although we have no conclusive answers to give, there is some evidence, in the literature and elsewhere, that activities and events carrying an 'equality' or 'diversity' label are avoided by a large number of their target audiences. This applies to CPD (Continued Professional Development) for HE staff and governors in schools (Bagley, 1993) in the UK; to home students who don't attend things with an international/ multicultural label – seeing it as 'not for them' (Carroll & Ryan, 2005; Hyland et al, 2008); and to some international students (Pelletier, 2003).

Lack of volunteers in our own and others related research, as cited above, suggests that there is an undercurrent of lack of willingness to share issues relating to diversity, equality, social cohesion and integration on HE campuses.

There are also likely to be cultural differences in gaining access to respondents. It is somewhat difficult to identify them with any precision, because in reality the processes and factors involved are complex and overlain by other contextual influences. These would certainly include institutional size, student demographics and course provision (professional, vocational), plus the roles and positions held by the researchers (including seniority, and degree of personal contact with staff and students).

For instance, HE students in India could potentially be considered more likely than UK students to be amenable to requests for help and participation, given a tradition of respect for academics, and a similar case might be made for HE staff, regarding Indian researchers seniority within an institution. However, problems experienced acquiring diarists who would deliver at IDU undermines this proposition. Given that IDU is a large HEI and SCHE a very small one the differences that occurred might be better explained via the notion of personal contacts. By way of contrast, at NSS in the UK, the largest of all the participating HEIs, the researcher had a wide range of personal staff contacts due to her role and functions within the institution, which lent itself to acquiring staff (but not student) volunteers. A further contextual influence on response rates might be the professional nature of programmes of study on which potential student respondents were enrolled. Students studying professional programmes in both countries, such as teacher or social work training, are more likely to encounter equity issues as an important part of their studies, and to have a professional commitment engendered within in them to address such issues. The four participating HEIs that produced data are strongly represented in these fields whereas ONC is less so.

The type of help initially sought, namely 'event recording', may also have led in some instances to a low response rate, possibly leading to a perception amongst potential participants that a great deal of time and effort would be involved. Indeed some who did volunteer apologised for not completing their record, or to the standard they had set themselves, because of time constraints and workloads. In addition, event recording involves self-direction and a longer time commitment from participants than the focus group/ group interviews that were later adopted.

While we had hoped to generate more in-depth individually selected observational and reflective data from the diarists than we might have expected from the later focus groups/ group interviews, in the end that was not the case. As will be seen in the next section the initial sample of committed and concerned volunteer diarists do not have substantially different views from the more opportunistic groups involved in the later focus groups and interviews. Similar issues and themes ran through each of the different data sets.

Initial Findings

The data from diaries, focus groups and group interviews reveals that students and staff from both UK and India, in all four of the different HEIs from whom data were acquired, share common experiences regarding integration and separation on HEI campuses although the degree of emphasis on particular lines of division varies between institutions and countries. In India, at IDU, divisions around caste are to the fore, while at SHEC divisions are more frequently region and class-based; in the UK, at NSS, a common focus is on race and nationality, while at NNC international students are more likely to be mentioned. Understanding the characteristics of the different institutions (see Table 1) and respondents (see Table 2 and Appendix 2) helps in some ways to explain such differences, given variations in institutional foci, recruitment policies and the subsequent make-up of their student bodies

The two smaller HEIs in each of the countries, NNC (UK) and SHEC (India), with respondents entirely composed of trainee teachers seem to experience a greater sense of integration than the two larger HEIs in each country and indicate a wider variety of social areas where integration occurs. This may be because they are potentially more cohesive in terms of developing professional orientations/ professional values amongst their student respondents as a fundamental part of their course programmes, or because of their smaller size.

Nevertheless, the diary, focus group and interview data all give commentary on four main aspects of student life and their impact on integration or isolation on HEI campuses:

1. people and their attitudes,
2. places where people meet,
3. the teaching experienced
4. the structures that affect their HE life.

Each of these areas are discussed in turn.

People and their attitudes

The student commentary revealed that groups based on race or region, caste and class, religion, gender, age, and course studied are a feature of student life on all of the HE campuses studied. Such tendencies are not unexpected and do not necessarily lead to isolation, indeed some of the data indicates integration despite the presence of such demarcations. However there is also evidence to suggest that separation and isolation does result from some of these groupings, as these general comments from students indicate:

But people like to think, act and participate in groups. While being asked to participate in any activity, everyone wants to stick to their own groups. The sense of comfort within their own people is so strong that they don't even allow any one to come any closer to the group.(SHEC - Indira student diary)

People feel safer in their own social groups, which is why you're getting ghettos forming, because people like to be together, people who are from the same religious and cultural backgrounds, otherwise they feel isolated.(NSS - Interview 8: White British group)

In the UK the groupings most often mentioned were race and ethnicity, whereas students in the Indian HEIs most often talked about regional and caste differences. In both countries these issues were often accompanied by references to language differences.

If you look round at the moment now, in the café, and you see people, all the races, black races, white and oriental, they still tend to stick with themselves (NSS – Tibetan, Interview 6)

So when I look at grouping, it's based on class, ...caste based or language based so the major, major thing is that one I think, it's rare to find a group which is different caste. (IDU- Negasi FG1)

The references to caste at IDU were usually linked with the Reservation Policy, although this was not the case at SHEC. There were clear concerns expressed by some IDU students that being of reservation caste, which appeared to be widely known, reflected badly upon them, especially amongst their non-

reservation peers, and which could result in inequitable treatment, regardless of the academic ability that they may display.

Madhu -I am a post- metric scholarship holder so people come to me and said that you are lucky, you are getting free education here and a scholarship also. Anytime you can get money. So such kind of things are very bad to hear. They said that you are getting free education though they are ignoring my talent. They still think I am in (reservation?) category.
Nitesh – the same comments have been made not less than fifty times by my own classmates, every time they say the same thing. If I do something or something is happening or you have to attain so they retaliate "... You people are getting here everything free, so why should we bother about you?" So, such kind comments they are making in different contexts - I don't know whether they are joking or serious. But they are making comments. (IDU - FG2)

I think it should be kept if possible, as secretive. I mean it should not be divulged that this from the category and this is from this background in the notice board, because once they come to know all these things then they don't consider it as merit. They think that because of this (reservation) quota they get in not because of merit. (IDU - Nitesh FG2)

Examples of helpful actions of teaching staff suggest that they can encourage integration among those of different cultures, and those speaking different languages:

...excellent lecturer....Very inclusive of all class..... I noticed that the lecturers have to ask the more accented students to repeat things and they do – our lecturers are patient and sometimes it takes two or three go's to understand meaning. (NSS- Student diary)

... in our social work class ... the teacher encourages us to speak Hindi or Marathi, there are some teachers who don't know Marathi but they encourage us to ask whatever the doubts are (IDU – Teta FG2)

On the other hand a number of comments suggest that members of the teaching staff may aggravate the isolation of some students by their actions, perhaps inadvertently.

Favouritism of teacher educators towards some student teachers of the B.Ed class is also found, like giving good remarks to a particular student teacher. Due to which others within the group feel neglected, inferior and isolated and in turn develops stress for B.Ed course. (SHEC -Madhur Staff diary)

2 students who explained that they had to leave the lecture part-way through at natural break (tea) were told that the 'excuses' weren't enough of a reason to miss the rest of the session. ... Both students (1 ethnic minority, 1 mature student) said that they felt belittled, patronised and were upset with their treatment. As an onlooker I felt that this was not conducive to good tutor/ student relations and could have been handled differently (NSS - Susan student diary).

... yes I found in the class that professors would like to interact with those who are more knowledgeable, who are sophisticated, who are articulate rather than those who are lagging behind them. They would not pay attention to those and even they do not care for them. They are happy with those who ... talk more and others are no matter to them. (IDU -Rashi FG1)

Non-teaching staff have less frequent contact with students and so fewer references were made about interactions with this group and they were divided almost equally between positive and negative comments. However, the actions of non-teaching staff do impact upon students feelings.

Today a member of academic staff brought her international students to [the library] *during their English language teaching session. .. This session was set up because Helpdesk staff had concerns about not being able to understand the questions they were asked on some occasions by international students. Students had also said that they didn't always understand the answers they were given. (NSS-Alex staff diary)*

All the clerical staff of college are very supportive and co-operative when ever we require any information from them, they do not deny us. We get full support from them for all our requirements. I

have never came across such a great support from any clerical staff of any educational institute (SHEC- Misha student diary)

The language used by [the librarian] *for students and subordinates is very unprofessional. Once a student came to return a library book, the librarian was not able to find out his library card from the bunch of cards. The student asked whether can he help her to search for the card. She got very angry and repeated*
" you are not qualified enough to touch officials documents, do you have any degree to check this card drawer?. Keep quiet and stand till I find it" (SHEC- Misha student diary)

...as far as my experience goes; the administrative staff here is one of the best. ... all the staff from the academic section, account section, and library staff especially with whom I interacted; even if we would not understand the instruction they have been repeated it in a polite manner. ... and even we fail to return library books or we are late to collect our certificate and all they always have things with them and they always oblige our request. (IDU- Dvita FG2)

Places where people meet

A range of places was identified by students and staff where integration occurred and also where separation was observed: halls of residence and hostels, dining areas, bars and other social meeting places.

Halls of Residence were seen by some UK students as helpful in encouraging integration:

I think halls are quite good in the sense that you do have a mixture of people and you get to know different people from different backgrounds or from different places.(NSS- Interview 1: Mixed ethnicity, British)

However, living accommodation was seen as a source of separation by many students in both UK and India, although most of these comments came from UK students, and none from SHEC where students do not have hostel accommodation:

From my observations of living in halls, groups tended to stick to each other, like you had the Oriental groups would be together, the Asian groups would be together, especially if they were from a different university, like abroad. (NSS- Interview 1: Mixed ethnicity, British)

There is clear cut division and even when administration allots hostels then there is groupism clearly seen. If you see the room allotments most of the people allotted the same room or same hostel are from a particular category or particular caste. (IDU- Madhu FG2)

Speaker 1: *And they also bung them* [International Students] *all in* [Hall X] *they're never on* [Hall Y], *they're never at* [Hall Z] *... So that's where like all the internationals go.*
Speaker 2: *As opposed to the majority of us* [Non-international students] *are in different halls.(NNC - Male Yr 3 FG)*

Eating and drinking areas were also places where segregation was observed:

[At the Student Union Bar] *I think it's because you've got so many different types of people in one place, they end up segregating themselves into different groups, and where you get segregated groups you get conflicts between groups of people. That's what happens here I think. I'm not saying I've experienced it, but you do notice it (NSS- Interview 10: Mixed Nationalities).*

Even while having dinner in the Dining Hall a clear pattern emerges wherein SC students dine together and hardly any students from the unreserved categories dine with SC students on a regular basis.(IDU- Kuljit Staff diary)

In this past few weeks I see a lot of rifts happening between people. Bigger groups are becoming smaller. They eat separately now. So I see a lot of Isolation (SHEC - Indira student diary)

There were a few positive comments about places for eating and drinking from students from India but no similar comments were made by UK students

Today I have seen a group of girls having their lunch together. ...I felt very pleasant while watching them sharing their lunch boxes sitting together without caring for which religion, caste and area they belong to. They all were gossiping, laughing and eating together. (SHEC – Deepa student diary)

What if you will go to Dining Hall alone? You will sit with other people and you will start discussing with them.....(IDU -Negasi FG1)

Lecture halls were places where a lot of separation was observed:

[We] realized that all seats were taken. The most amazing part is although lots of people come after us their seats are reserved by their friends. Just because we do not belong to a group, it is not deemed right for us to sit near them. Even though sometime we sit on the seats shamelessly, curt looks and glances make us shunt back, although we hate to be back benchers- not belonging to a group takes its toll on us. (SHEC - Indira student diary)

When you're in a lecture room you can see like you know, sort of like all the whites, white students will be in one row and if anybody tries to you know, sit with them there would be a really bad atmosphere, and it's vice versa with the black students, and it's quite sad to see that actually...(NSS- Interview 6: Tibetan female)

Teaching experienced

The use of English as the principle medium of instruction (in all participating HEIs) was commented on by many as a barrier to understanding and as a cause of division and separation. Despite a few references to integration there were numerous references to problems resulting from language differences. Language was regarded as a cause of difficulty by many students and staff in India and in UK. Students from all HEIs, except NNC (UK), remarked on this issue. However, the ethnic profile and low percentage of international students of NNC may have been the reason for their lack of comment.

The Chinese students tended to speak to each other first, before addressing me, and were less confident in speaking English. It seems to me that one of the reasons for taking this course is to integrate with other students and it is a pity if a student feels isolated from the rest of the group.... (NSS- Alex Staff diary)

Isolation is found between some Student teachers of B.Ed Class due to language problems.(SHEC-Madhur Staff diary)

...most of the SC and ST Students fail to participate in the discussion thinking that their English is not as good as that of the unreserved category students.(IDU - Kuljit staff diary)

Language differences were discussed at some length in the IDU focus groups and a variety of different issues emerged: student-student interaction difficulties and isolation, difficulty in making friends, difficulty in understanding in lectures and in taking part in discussion, as well as teachers sometimes discriminating against students whose English is not good.

Group work seemed to lead either to improved integration or to increased separation depending upon how it was organised: where students chose for themselves which group they would be part of there was evidence of separation into the type of groups indicated in section 1 (People), but when the groups were chosen by the staff there were signs of more integration. Most comments about this came from UK students and staff, possibly because this kind of group work is used less frequently in India.

Signs of integration:

... you find at least once a term there's a group activity where ... you're forced into a situation to work with people that you don't know and on our course they tend to be, they're very mixed, you know

you've got all ages, all races, you know, all religions and personally it's been fine. (NSS- Interview 5: White British group)

Today the college organized one "Poster competition" in the second half of the day. All the students have to participate compulsorily. All the students were divided into groups of four. ... It was a nice thing that everybody participated in the competition and all were cheerful and busy. There was a very healthy ambience all around in the class. (SHEC - Deepa student diary)

Where students and staff referred to separation as a result of working in groups it was evident in many cases that the groupings were chosen by the students.

..when you are black most blacks would be on their own. So most of the time... it was very difficult to be in a group, in a mixed group you understand, so people tended to be in groups that are race sort of related. (NSS Int 7)

During class group task 12 students were told to split into 2 groups to complete a task. After 5 minutes there was a definite split and the group was divided into 3 and 9. Interestingly the group of 3 were ethnic minority and 8 out of the 9 were home students. (NSS- Pam Staff diary)

Structures affecting HE life

A number of factors that might be mediated by organisational changes were mentioned by both UK and India respondents. These included special events, specific course provisions and study programmes. In addition, UK students felt that available public meeting spaces could be more inclusive.

In both UK and India special events were commented on by students as either encouraging integration or as divisive. Those mentioned by UK students were organised by the Student Union or by individual societies and were perceived to be divisive.

And they have like Asian music nights, which are really... it gets my back up to be honest...That's what I don't get. Why not call it just a music night, why not have a different music night. Which again, that comes back to that thing, you've got people segregated, they've got their Asian music night, it's just total segregation. (NSS- Interview 10: Mixed Nationalities)

The few comments directly about societies, from students at UK HEIs, suggested that they might discourage integration and could be a source of division.

They stick to the International Society.
Yeah, and that's it. (NNC- Male, Yr 3 FG)

At the Freshers Fair there's always like the Sikh community and there's the Caribbean community, and they have their stalls and their stands to educate people about their cultures, but it's only like Caribbean people who will go and join that society and take part. It's a bit like you feel a bit stupid walking over. (NSS- Interview 10: Mixed Nationalities)

But special events could also be helpful in integration. Students in both UK and India referred to such events:

For example the Sikh society did a charity football tournament, and there was loads of different people there. That was one where everyone just got together, but they'd all got something different, it was for a good cause as well. (NSS- Interview 2: British Indian and Pakistani)

I and [another girl] have started bonding well. Because of the dance competition we came to know each other well (SHEC - Latika student diary)

... there was a time when there was a community radio centre where the people come together and sit together. ... I think if you have community radio event, or more of the events where you can come and talk, is the thing which can dissolve the barrier. So come and talk and shares ideas.(IDU - Amresh FG1)

Some specific course provisions in the UK and India were mentioned which seemed to encourage integration:

I have found the equalities and ethnic diversity modules helpful in opening up the difficulties experienced by international students. (NSS- Susan student diary)

The course curriculum helps me a lot because group lab, where they have taught to take humans as human beings, this makes it easy to adjust. (IDU- Rupesh FG2)

Both of the Indian institutions had made specific choices about the language of instruction: at IDU all classes were conducted in English, whereas at SHEC students could choose to be taught in one of a number of different instructional languages, including English. Students from both institutions mentioned problems with these course provisions. The problems for students at IDU, where English is the only medium of instruction, have been noted above, and although some students found that special English classes were helpful others felt that perhaps these would be more effective if they were better organised:

… we need to see that they should operate properly… [A friend] is taking English class because she is not well in English. But there is no further improvement in her fluency… in order to improve English of those people, classes should be organized in a proper manner, not only for name sake that ok we have English classes, but there should be proper presentation of students and professors as well as attendance must be updated.(IDU- Rashi FG1)

There were fewer references to language difficulties at SHEC, probably because a number of different instructional languages and related groupings were made available, post admission, to this designated English medium college including English and "vernacular medium" (local language). The following diary extract suggests that this HEI was well organised to deal with such language difficulties during teaching sessions:

All the teaching staff of our college are very supportive and co-operative. They always ensure that every student understands the lesson well. The teaching manner adopted by them is very nice and easily understandable. Most of the teachers explain the lesson even in local language so that every student can easily understand it. (SHEC- Misha student diary)

However, outside of taught classes the availability of different instructional languages could also be seen as divisive:

The vernacular medium students face the wrath of the students from mainstream English. Even though it has been a couple of months, but yet there is no kind of interaction between these two major factions. This is a great and Vivid Example of Isolation. The vernacular medium people are an island on to themselves. Even basic courtesies are not exchanged with them. It is a sad state to see. (SHEC - Indira Student diary)

Study Programmes might also encourage integration or increase isolation: students in the UK suggested that they tended not to mix beyond their own course unless they were compelled to do so, through particular modules or placements.

I think people on their own courses stay on their own courses and tend to be friends with [people from their course] *(NNC - Females, Yr 2 Ed FG)*

I think like the cohorts all stick together a little bit don't they really. ...All nursing people sort of stick together I think. I don't really speak to anyone else to be honest with you. (NSS- Interview 1 Mixed ethnicity British))

Professional placements seemed to encourage mixing of groups who might otherwise remain separate.

Yes and it depends who you're on placement with, like you tend to get on more with the people on placement don't you. (NNC – Female, Yr 2 Ed FG)

In placements when we are doing something whereby you go for a placement, if you meet some other student you become friendly because all of you will be students there I'm sure.(NSS – Interview 7: Zimbabwean)

The idea of more readily mixing with a diverse range of peers whilst on placements suggests that when there is an authentic reason for greater integration, such as mutual support while working in a less familiar non-student environment, where students are in the minority and relatively powerless, then the criteria for interacting changes: instead of 'I mix with them because they are like me in terms of race/ caste/ religion/ colour' it seems that we are more likely to find students saying 'I mix with them because they are like me, a student'. In this scenario being a student is the main criterion for group membership because it is the one that counts in this context and other group membership options are reduced in such circumstances (being a student and relatively powerless regardless of other classificatory criteria).

Students at all four reporting HEIs mentioned places where they came together and where integration or segregation was observed. In India these included common spaces that were not dependent on food or drink; at SHEC student common rooms were available and at IDU there was a social sitting area called 'The Courtyard'. However at NSS meeting spaces, apart from refectories and cafes, appeared to be limited to bars, and a number of students at this HEI felt that a meeting place, which did not depend on the sale of alcohol and where students could interact socially would be beneficial:

... there's no common room in this campus, and there's so many buildings, but there's no common room, so no students actually… there's no sort of place, like official place. (NSS – Interview 2: British Indian and Pakistani)

Be actually nice to have like a big common room like in sixth form. Like we had a massive room, no music or anything or a bar or a pub, but just like pool tables and cards and whatever, something like that ...Well the union you go to drink and there's loud music and things like that. (NSS - Interview 10: Mixed Nationalities)

Discussion of Interim results

People and their attitudes

The student and staff commentaries reported here confirm the prevalence of student groups on HE campuses that are frequently and visibly separated according to race, nationality, region and language. Divisions around caste, class, religion, age and sex are more subtle divisions that tend to be less visible to non-participants but are acknowledged by students themselves. While students on the same programme of study are more likely to mix with each other than with those on different programmes, through shared locations, timetables and academic interests, the separations and divisions cited above are largely repeated within cohort groupings.

Such divisions were not unexpected and can be supportive, but at times they were also found to be divisive and isolationist. The actions of teaching and support staff have a direct impact on how these divisions are experienced by students, as either negative and demeaning or positive and enhancing.

Places where people meet,

 Social meeting places, such as halls of residence, hostels, dining areas and bars were found to potentially have both integrative and isolationist impacts on campus experiences. They can bring different people together who might not otherwise have met or chosen to socialise with each other, such as home and international students in shared hostel accommodation, a charity football match or community radio project; and they can reinforce division and separation through event labelling that is perceived as exclusionary, such as 'Greek Night', or 'The Sikh Society'. More informal meeting spaces, which do not depend on the sale of alcohol, and where students, particularly on shared programmes, can relax and interact socially, were sought by some UK respondents.

Separation and division was strongly evidenced in formal lecture and seminar situations, with different groups sitting separately, saving spaces for friends, and choosing to work with same group peers when

faced with class activities, unless lecturers intervened. However, professional work placements seem to encourage a mixing of students who might otherwise remain in separate groupings in class and on campus. This suggests that having authentic reasons for greater integration, such as mutual benefit and support while working together as minority in an un-familiar environment, may prompt camaraderie across group divisions, leading to less segregation and the desired enhancement of intercultural understanding, learning and skills.

The teaching experienced

Language can be a barrier to integration and operates as one of a series of factors in group separation/ lack of integration. In all but one of the institutions (where the ethnic profile tends towards homogeneity and there are few international students), we found language differences and difficulties leading to feelings of separation, even isolation. When non-native speakers of English are studying alongside native speakers on English medium programmes difficulties occur regarding levels of understanding in lectures; taking part in discussions and mixed group work; in student-student and staff-student interactions; in making friends, and of teachers sometimes discriminating against students whose English is not good. The support offered to non-native speakers was also found wanting in some instances.

Working in groups, as a teaching strategy, can also to lead either to improved integration or increased separation depending upon how it is organised. If given the freedom to choose who they will work with students and staff report separation into groups of like with like according to surface characteristics such as race, region or gender: where groups are chosen by staff there are signs of subsequent, improved levels of understanding and integration.

The structures that affect HE life.

These have largely been addressed in the preceding sections given their overlap with people, places and teaching experienced. Organisational structures that might be mediated through institutional change include special events organised by Students' Unions, clubs and societies, and the availability and inclusiveness of informal meeting spaces, specific course provisions and study programmes available in HE are also open to change. Course provisions and study programmes that encourage integration are likely to include work placements, effective language support classes for non-native speakers of English, plus compulsory modules for all students, such as study skills, or Social Justice, that include intercultural skills acquisition and might also help integration or decrease feelings of isolation.

Conclusions and ways forward

Those who spoke to us, whether diarists, in focus groups or in group interviews, all said separation of groups was pervasive and ubiquitous, some for supportive reasons, some for convenience, some due to inertia, and some due to overt discrimination on the grounds of race, region, nationality, caste, class, religion, age or gender. However, most also said that greater integration was both desirable and possible.

By exploring both the experiences and perceptions of these HE students and staff about diversity and integration on campus, and their willingness (or not) to engage in such dialogue, as reported in this paper, we have also been able to begin to develop our understand of how diversity and integration may be mediated, formed, and reformed, in relation to and in interaction with the structures and contextual features of the HEI environments in which they are located (work in progress). We have also been able to begin to identify both commonalities and differences within and between different HEIs in India and the UK, and to identify some themes and strategies that might lead the way forward in enhancing integration on HE campuses.

What we have learnt, clearly and unequivocally, is that HE contexts for diversity and integration vary and that the authenticity of interactions counts for a lot. This is demonstrated through the varying accounts of a 'charity football match', societies and events with potentially exclusionary labels, and the need to work together on placements.

The most obvious, and least original of the specific strategies so far identified, relates to the opportunities afforded by mixed group work, organised and guided by HE lecturers. A linked study and

evaluation of one such strategy, in terms of its potential integrative/ anti-isolationist effects, is already underway.

A second strategy that appears to offer significant potential relates to work placements. In the current HE environment, in the UK at least, where work-related learning and vocational preparation are to the fore, many HEIs are building placements into courses and programmes that historically have not included them as part of HE study. Our results so far suggest this may also be an effective strategy for promoting interaction and enhancing integration amongst diverse student groups.

A third strategy relates to what is commonly known as 'internationalising the curriculum'. This is another issue that is high on the agenda for HE in the UK. Whilst not being mentioned specifically within our data sets issues that relate to it were, namely the importance and potentially beneficial effects of integrating modules on course programmes that sensitise students (and staff) to equality and diversity issues and which develop intercultural understanding and skills. A linked study and evaluation of one institution's approach to Internationalising the Curriculum, is also already underway.

A fourth strategy, linked to the third, seeks to develop inclusive practices in seminar teaching, while further strategies, arising from exploration of student accommodation policies, and the socio-metrics of student groups, are also being examined.

As for our methods?

These evolved over time through negotiated agreement amongst the research team, and they continue to evolve. They necessarily take into account the different contexts, circumstances and responses of different institutions and prospective participants in order to access the experiences and perceptions of individual students and staff members, which lies at the core of this initial research phase, and is in keeping with our social-constructivist approach. The adoption of this mixed methods approach has strengthened our confidence in the perceptions and experiences of those involved and allowed us to begin to explore how they are formed, amended and changed through campus experiences and the processes of social interaction.

Footnote

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APPENDIX 1

Focus groups questions – UK and India

1.   In your experience on campus, do different groups of students and staff get along Ok? Do they mix with each other, seem to understand each other, respect each other and so on?

2.   Have any of you experienced any tensions between different groups of students, or staff and students on campus?
(a)   If yes, can you give some examples?
(b)   What do you think tends to cause these tensions?
(c)   Any thoughts about how to resolve them?

3.   Are there any particular places (spaces) or events in the university where different people do come together, build friendships and mix comfortably?

4.   Are there any specific things which the university can do to
(a)   help build a sense of community and belonging amongst all its different staff and students?
(b)   help counteract any negative perceptions of, and attitudes to, people from different backgrounds?

5.   What role might different groups (such as staff, student, home, overseas, religious groups) have in building a more integrated community on campus?

6.   What might a university campus which is both integrated and socially cohesive look like?

Thank you for taking part in this discussion. It's been really helpful!

APPENDIX 2: Respondent details

NSS STUDENT INTERVIEWS (UK)

Interview number	Gender	Ethnicity	Pseudonym
1	female	White British	Emily
1	female	British oriental Buddhist	Charini
1	female	White British	Jess
2	male	British Indian Sikh	Pravit
2	male	British Pakistani Muslim	Jamal
2	male	British Indian	Manesh
2	female	British Indian	Hema
4	male	White British	Jack
4	male	Spanish	Teo
3	male	White British	Oliver
4	female	Turkish	Rana
5	female	White British	Sarah
5	female	White British	Chloe
6	female	Tibetan	Tylanni
7	female	Zimbabwean	Abigail
7	male	Zimbabwean	Thomas
7	female	Zimbabwean	Martha
8	male	White British	Josh
8	male	White British	Daniel
8	female	White British	Lily
8	male	White British	William
9	male	British Indian Hindu	Arjun
10	female	White British	Ella
10	female	South African Hindu	Neeta
10	male	White British	Chris

NSS DIARIES (UK)

Diary number	Gender	Ethnicity	Pseudonym
(Staff)	Male	White British	Mark
2 (Staff)	Female	White British	Alex
3 (Staff)	Female	White British/ NZ	Pam
4 (Staff)	Male	White British	Peter
5 (Staff)	Female	White British	Margaret
6 (Staff)	Female	White British	Daphne
7 (Student)	Female	White British	Susan

NNC STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS (UK)

Focus Group number	Gender	Course and year	Pseudonym
1	Female	Primary Ed Yr 1	Charlotte
1	Female	Primary Ed Yr 1	Katie
1	Female	Primary Ed Yr 1	Zoe
1	Female	Primary Ed Yr 1	Amy
1	Female	Primary Ed Yr 1	Bethan
1	Female	Primary Ed Yr 1	Harriet
2	Female	Primary Ed Yr 2	Hannah
2	Female	Primary Ed Yr 2	Megan
2	Female	Primary Ed Yr 2	Freda
2	Female	Primary Ed Yr 2	Erin
2	Female	Primary Ed Yr 2	Holly
3	Male	Yr 3 Ed Studies Primary	Tim
3	Male	Yr 3 Ed Studies Primary	Ian

IDU STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS (INDIA)

Focus group number	Gender	Caste/Religion/Ethnicity	Pseudonym
1	male	General	Amresh
1	male	SC	Avi
1	male	SC	Chandresh
1	male	ST	Govinda
1	male	OBC	Hemal
1	female	Muslim	Kanjri
1	male	African	Negasi
1	female	ST	Mya
1	male	SC	Ijay
1	male	General	Ishat
1	male	SC	Jairam
2	female	General	Chetna
2	female	ST	Rashi
2	female	General	Faith
2	female	General	Teta
2	female	General	Dvita
2	male	SC	Kapoor
2	male	ST	Madhu
2	male	SC	Nitesh
2	male	SC	Pradeep
2	male	General	Amresh
2	male	SC	Rupesh

IDU DIARIES (INDIA)

Diary number	Gender	Caste/Religion/Ethnicity	Pseudonym
1 (Student)	male	ST	Maadhav
2 (Student)	male	SC	Saatvik
3 (Staff)	male	unknown	Kuljit

SHEC DIARIES (INDIA)

Diary number	Gender	Caste/Religion	Pseudonym
1 (Student)	Female	Sikh Punjabi NA	Deepa
2 (Student)	Female	Hindu Punjabi Kshatriya	Ashka
3 (Student)	Female	Hindu Brahmin	Hiya
4 (Student)	Female	Hindu Punjabi Kshatriya	Indira
5 (Student)	Female	Hindu Brahmin	Jamuna
6 (Student)	Female	Hindu Kshatriya	Kavika
7 (Student)	Male	Hindu Kshatriya	Darshan
8 (Student)	Female	Hindu Brahmin	Latika
9 (Student)	Female	Muslim	Adila
10 (Student)	Female	Christian NA	Christina
11 (Student)	Female	Hindu Punjabi Brahmin	Priya
12 (Student)	Female	Hindu Brahmin	Not used
13 (Student)	Female	Hindu Punjabi Kshatriya	Not used
14 (Student)	Female	Hindu Brahmin	Misha
15 (Staff)	Female	Hindu Brahmin	Madhur
16 (Staff)	Female	Hindu Brahmin	Shreya