

Uk-Japan Symposium on Intercultural Communication and International Universities

5-7 September 2016, Newcastle University

The symposium took place over three days, with two days of presentations and discussions, and one day of 'data session' workshops.

In the initial two days, all presentations were thematised around half-day themes – (1) International students in the local culture, (2) Extra-curricular support for international students, (3) Language assessments for international universities, and (4) International students and second language use outside of formal settings. Presentations were all followed by Q&A and discussion time, and emerging issues running across the presentations were identified and discussed.

The data session workshop day was divided into two separate data analysis meetings, one each for different data taken from international university contexts. At the end of each meetings, broader issues and themes were also discussed.

Discussion and debates which arose during the formal symposium programme were also continued and elaborated upon during the various social programmes which were arranged during the evenings.

The symposium, subsequent workshop day, and final day research meeting, were all reported to be hugely successful. Each individual who attended, both those who presented and those who did not, shared their delight in being involved in an exciting and lively event, with lots of interesting discussions and debate. The range of participant backgrounds – from Professors to Early Career Researchers, from late-stage PhD students to beginning PhD students – helped to make the discussion useful and relevant to all, with PhD students making a good impression (and at least one late-stage PhD student discussing the possibility of conducting postdoctoral research with one of the Japan-based invited speakers). For example, the data session workshops focussed on research student projects (relevant to the conference theme), and in so doing, led to not only interesting discussion and practice of analytic skills, but concrete advice for how those (and all attending) PhD students could move their research projects forward.

Future research events were discussed and put into place; for example, two of the invited speakers (Professor Greer and Dr Hauser) are co-organising a symposium in Tokyo next May. The theme of the symposium is closely related, although slightly different to the present event. A number of participants at this symposium confirmed that they would apply to attend, and discussions were held about how to use the symposium as a spring-board for more Pan-Asian research networking (not least because some of the Newcastle University research students present will return to their home countries – Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, etc. – upon completing their studies, and will be keen to work more closely with colleagues in Japan.

Aside from bringing together researchers from different levels of experience, and different national backgrounds, the event also brought together some Japan-based colleagues from different research backgrounds, and who had not met previously, with the possibility of future multi-methodological research projects discussed. – Dr Adam Brandt (UK Academic Lead)



Symposium Participants