



**Interaction and Integration in
Multicultural Classes:
Insights from the Global Education Profiler
on Students' Desires and Experiences**

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*Classroom Interaction at the
Internationalised University*
Plenary talk, University of Surrey,
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Outline

- Introduction
- Findings from the GEP on academic integration
 - Quantitative findings
 - Open comments
- Strategic reflections.
- Concluding comments



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What are our assumptions?



True or false?

A. The more diverse our body of students and staff, the more our students learn.

True or false?

B. Students appreciate an interactive, multicultural classroom.

True or false?

C. Staff successfully facilitate an interactive, multicultural classroom.

Internationalisation & integration

“simply having a diverse student body does not mean the education or even the campus is global in nature. What comes as an essential part of a global education is the inclusion of international students in communities and classes.”

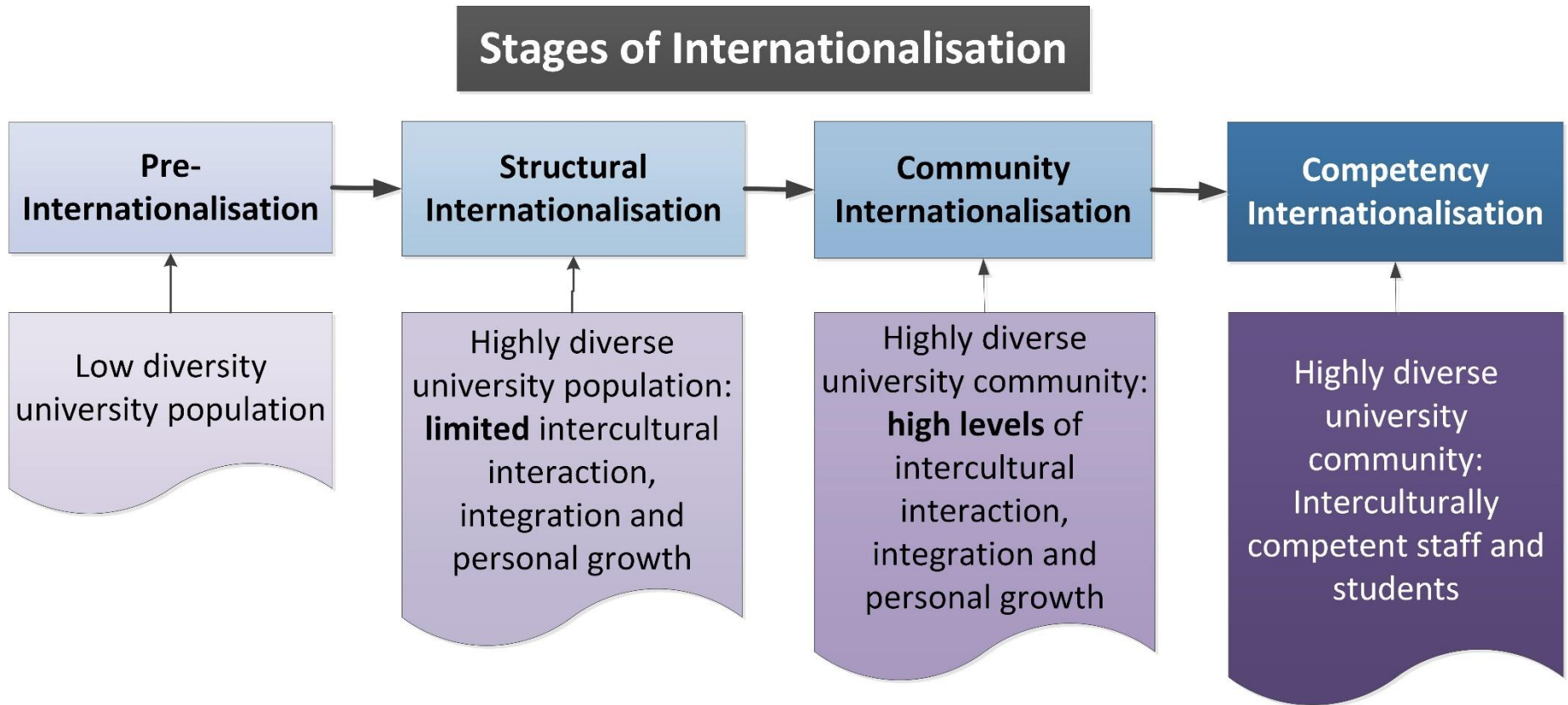
British Council

Integration of international students:

A UK perspective

2014

Stages of Internationalising HEIs



Internationalisation & integration

- What do students think about this?
- What can we learn from Global Education Profiler (GEP) data?





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Design of the GEP

Measuring internationalisation

	Traditional	GEP
Composition: International students	✓	
Composition: International staff	✓	
Incoming & outgoing student mobility	✓	
International student support	✓	
International joint projects	✓	
Social integration		✓
Academic integration		✓
Communication skills		✓
Foreign language skills		✓
Global graduate skills support		✓

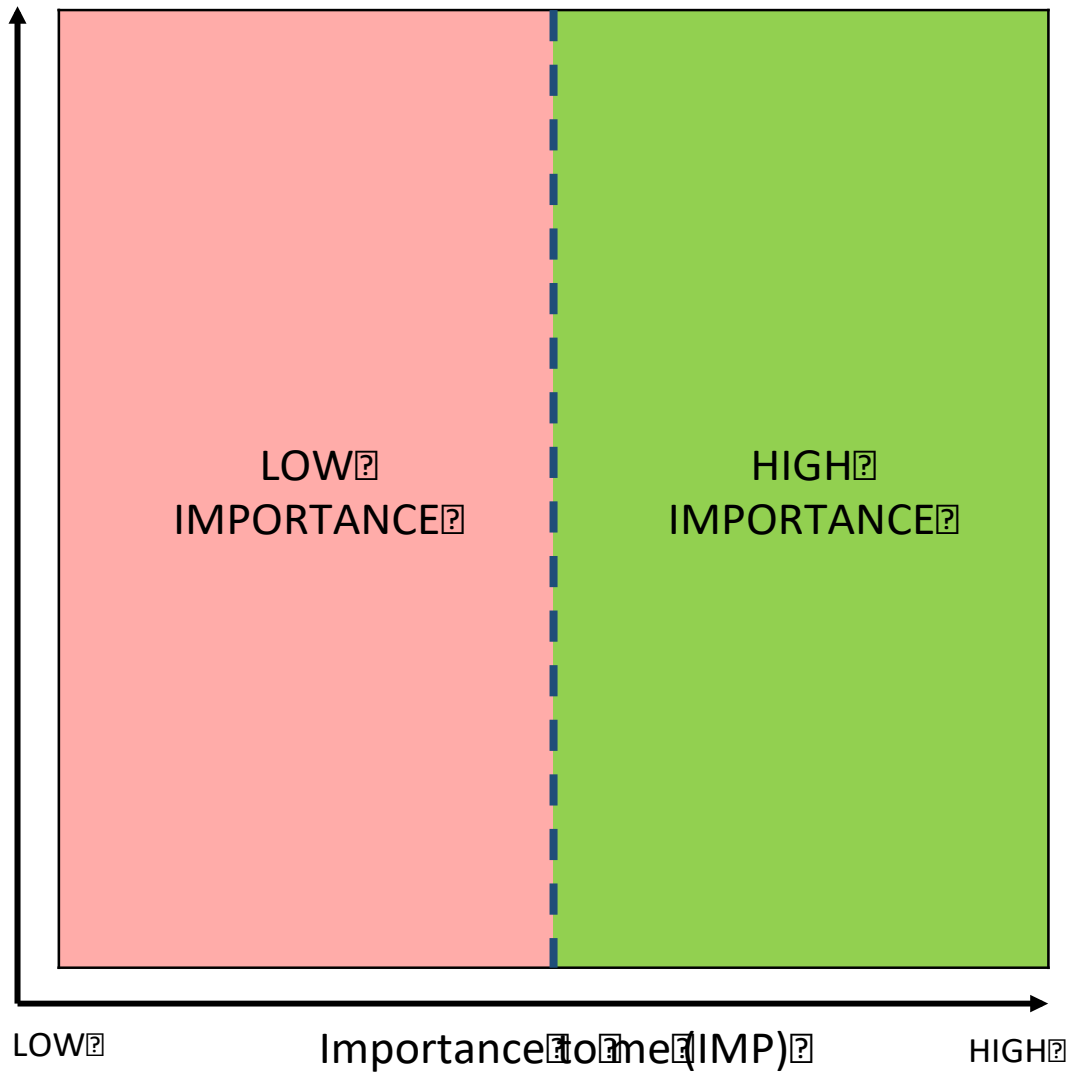
Needs analysis



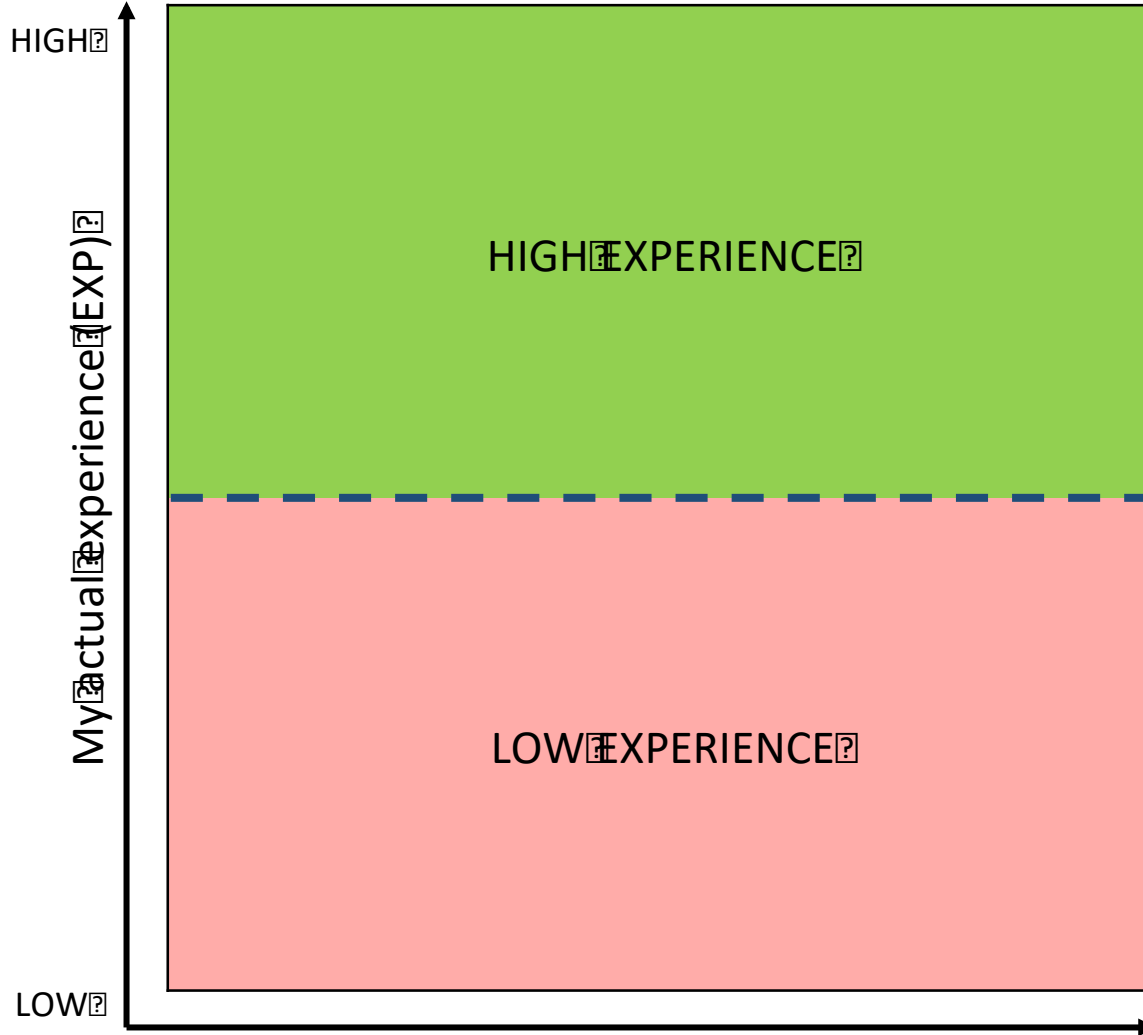
What does the GEP offer?

- Respondents rate items in two ways:
 - Importance
 - Actual experience.

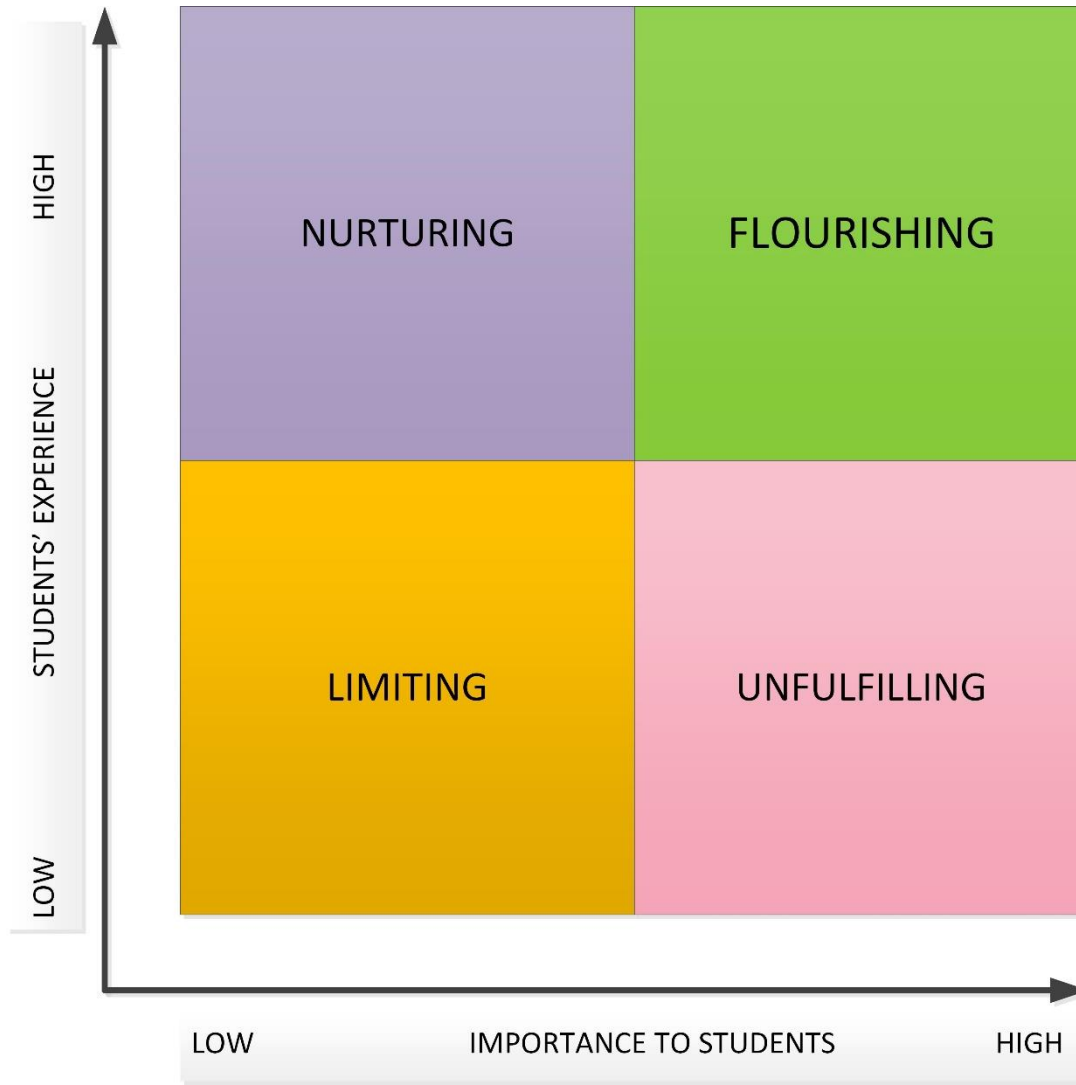
The GEP Matrix



The GEP Matrix



The GEP Matrix





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Empirical insights: the big picture

Data sample

- 2360 students
 - 1455 home/domestic
 - 265 European Economic Area/EEA
 - 640 Asian
- from 6 institutions, located in 4 different countries (UK, Republic of Ireland, Germany, Belgium)
- 51% female; 76% undergraduate students (for open comments, proportions slightly different)

Academic integration (AI)

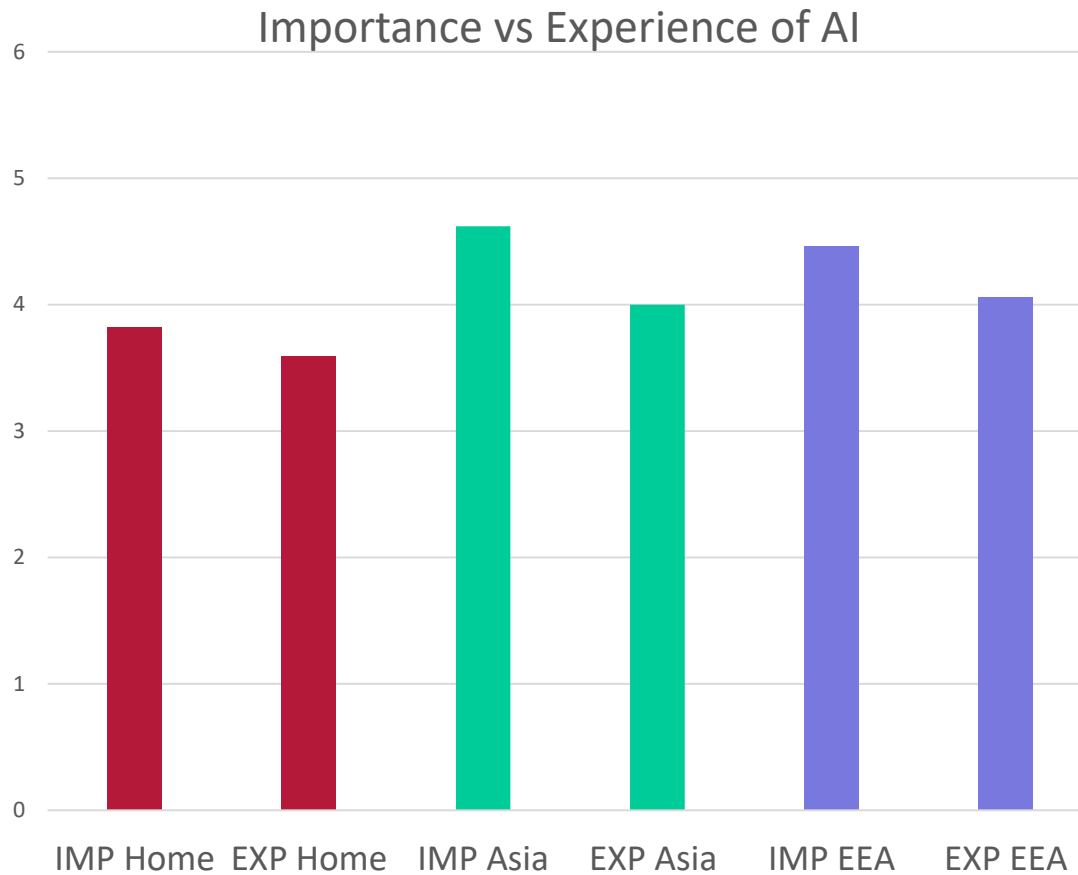
Design:

- 10 Likert-style items on 6-point scale
- Space for open comments

Probes :

- the interaction within classrooms and courses of students from diverse backgrounds
- the interaction and engagement among students and academic and support staff in the department/university.

Overall means for AI construct



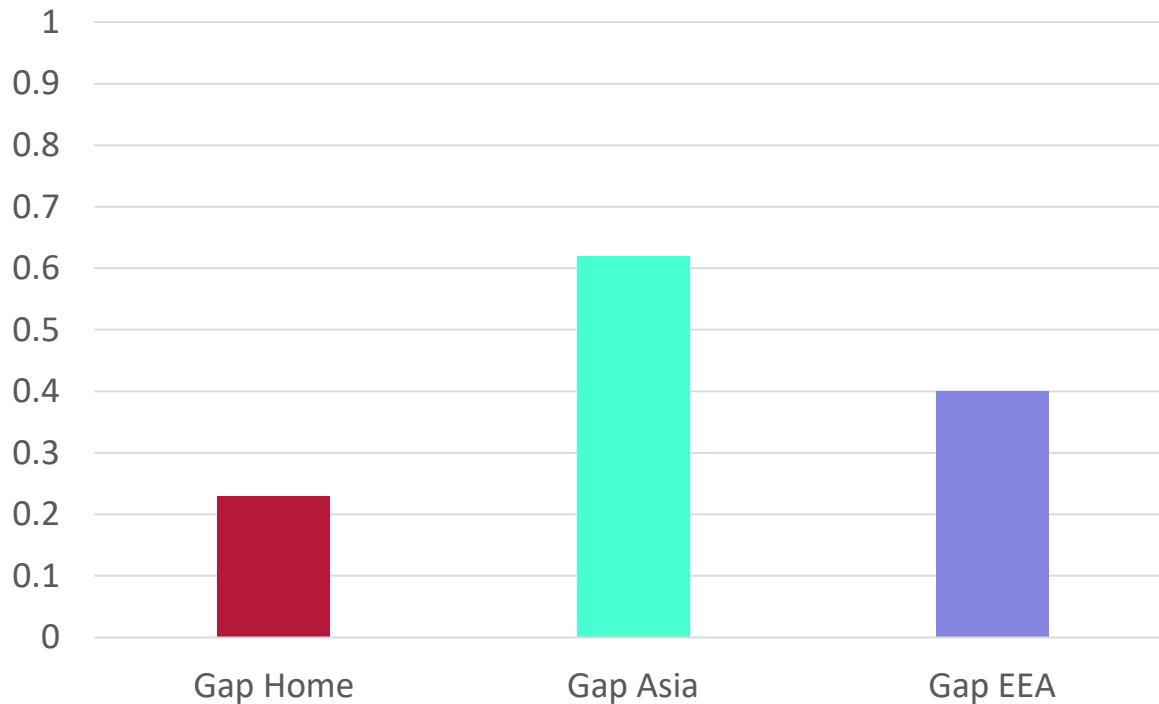
Overall scores for AI construct

Statistical tests showed:

- Significant difference between IMP and EXP scores for students from all regions;
- This is particularly marked for students from Asia and the EEA;

Regional variation in gap scores

Gap between Importance and Experience
by Region

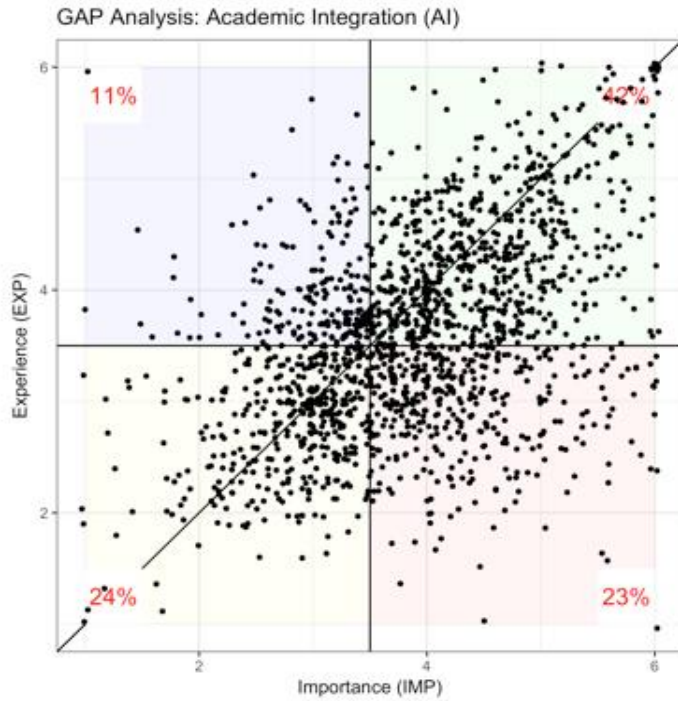


Overall mean scores for AI

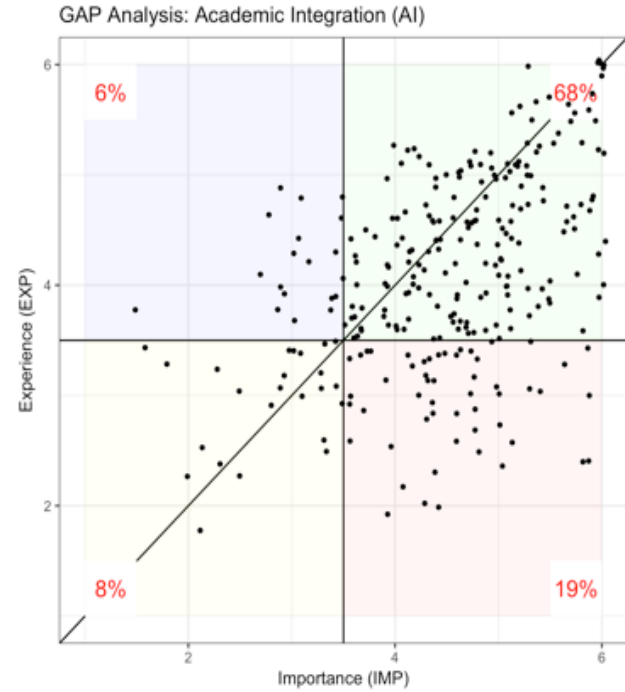
Statistical tests showed:

- Significant difference between IMP and EXP scores for students from all regions;
- This is particularly marked for students from Asia and the EEA;
- Home students attributed less importance to AI than other students;
BUT
- A wide range of viewpoints, especially for home students.

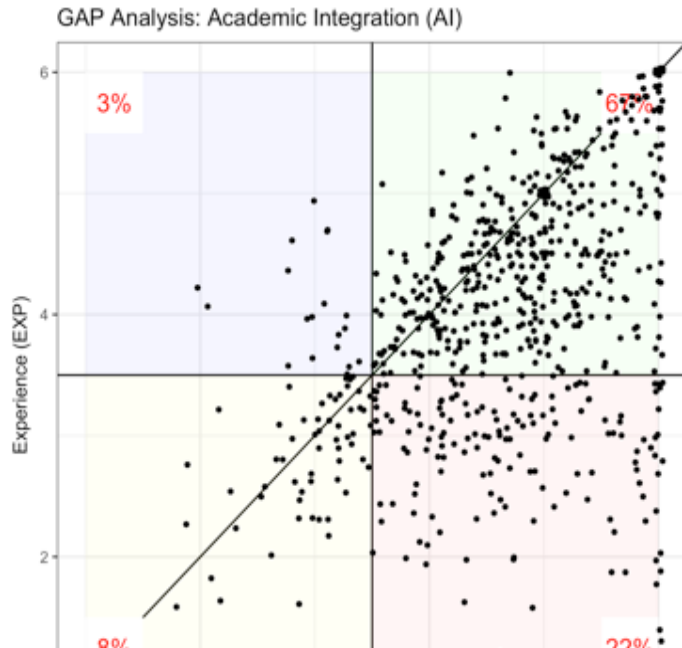
HOME



EEA



ASIA



High Importance to Academic Integration

- Home: 65%
- Asia: 89%
- EEA: 87%

High Experience of Academic Integration

- Home: 53%
- Asia: 70%
- EEA: 74%

Importance of AI

For reflection ...

- Why is academic integration less important for home students?
(only 65% regarded it as important; 35% regarded it as unimportant)
- Open comments give some hints ...

Attitude to diversity

General relevance of diversity

“I do not feel diversity of cultural backgrounds is a significant aspect for groups of people.” [Home]

“Cultural background totally irrelevant. Ability the only importance in discussion.” [Home]

“Lectures and seminars are academic, not cultural experiences. Where people are from is completely irrelevant to their purpose.” [Home]

Attitude to diversity

Impact of subject area

“Doing a science subject (Biology), it doesn't matter if I am exposed to other cultures in lectures, and there is nothing to be gained from a colleague being of a different culture when working in group projects. I can see this not being the case for an arts subject, however.” [Home]

“I study mathematics which is similar across many different cultures so I feel being from different cultural backgrounds is not as important as in other subjects.” [Home]

Attitude to diversity

For reflection ...

- Is diversity less relevant for certain subjects?
 - Is diversity really irrelevant for some or even irrelevant *per se*?
- OR
- Should we be helping people appreciate the value of diversity?



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Empirical insights: a more detailed look

High importance issues

	Home	Asia	EEA
1	Participate comfortably in class	Participate comfortably in class	Participate comfortably in class
2	Interaction opportunities with staff	Learn from working in groups	Confidence in seminar group members
3	Confidence in seminar group members	Discussion of academic topics with diverse people	Interaction opportunities with staff
4	Learn from working in groups	Interaction opportunities with staff	Discussion of academic topics with diverse people

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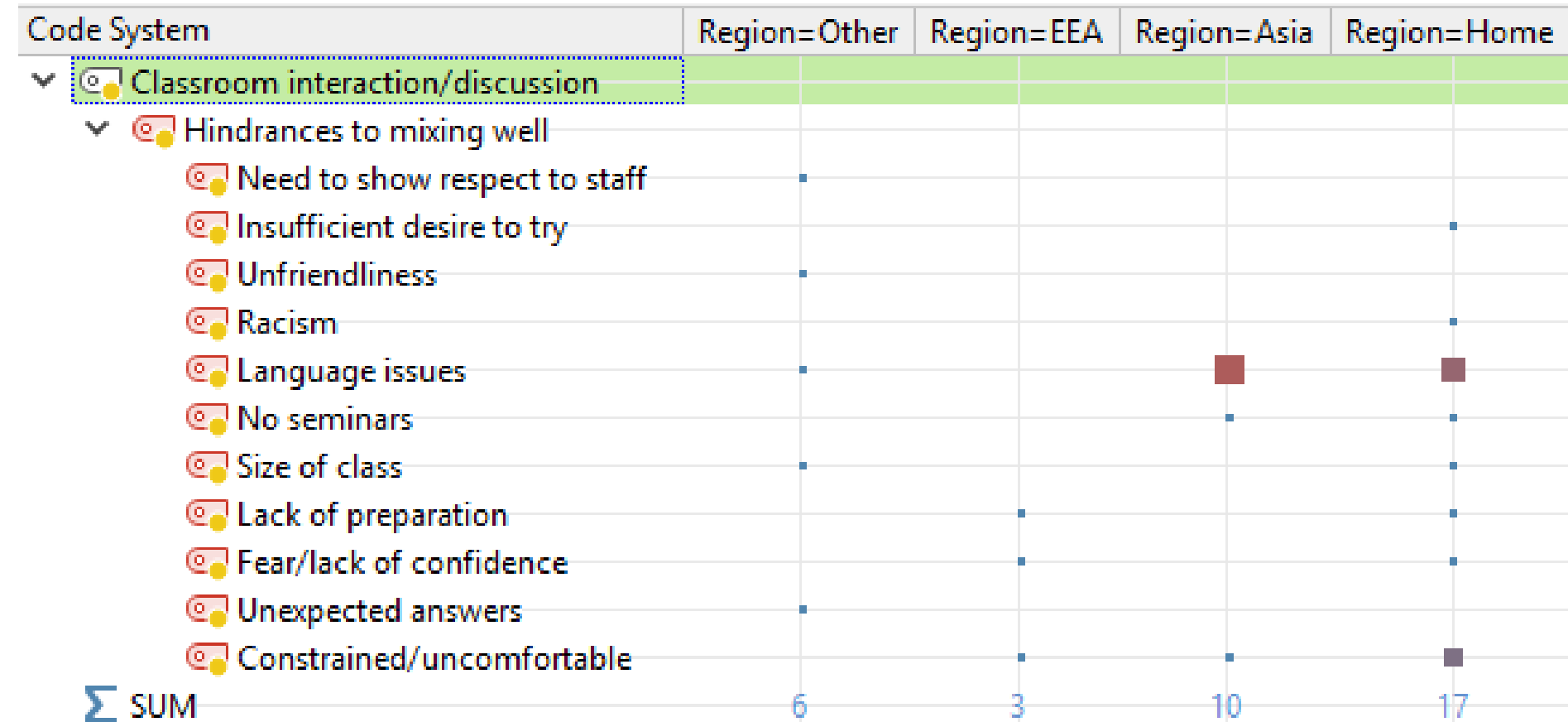
Biggest gaps

	Home	Asia	EEA
1	Participate comfortably in class	Discussion of academic topics with diverse people	Interaction opportunities with staff
2	Interaction opportunities with staff	Participate comfortably in class	Opportunities to give examples from my background
3	Opportunities to give examples from my background	Opportunities to do group projects	Participate comfortably in class
4	Learn from working in groups	Opportunities to meet people from diverse backgrounds	Learn from working in groups

Open Comments

Classroom interaction: Participation

Hindrances to participation



Language hindrances

“With regards to language barriers on my course, I feel as though the duty is placed on the students to overcome these which is hell if you're trying to prepare a presentation that is 50% of your course”.
[Home]

“I knew it would be hard to take part in class room activities because of my less fluent English, but it is actually worse than I thought. Discussion is so fast that I hardly catch up with them.” [Asian]

“We often get to work together with people with different backgrounds and who just study here I like working with them, sometimes the language can be a barrier but it can definitely be broken.” [Home]

Staff management & participation

Code System	Region=EEA	Region=Asia	Region=Home
Classroom interaction/discussion			
Staff management			
Good management	■		
Smaller groups encouraged		■	
Participation encouraged			■
Poor management		■	■
Seminars not long enough or frequent enough			■
More case studies needed		■	
Little encouragement to speak		■	■
Difficulty engaging international students			■
Variation across staff	■		■

Staff management/interaction (1)

*“Seminars & tutorials are generally **awkward** with very few people wanting to talk – probably because the lecture **atmosphere** is similarly muted so it becomes habit forming”.*
[Home]

*“**Academic staff was not at all engaging. Discourage class participation.**” [Asian]*

Staff management/interaction (2)

*“Lecturers seem **bemused as to how to engage international students** who are sat silently in the corner.”*

[Home]

*“I have found that there is reasonably **little encouragement for students to contribute in seminars**, particularly those from different ethnic backgrounds, and as a result frequently find myself in one on one discussions with the seminar leader for the whole hour as no one else is willing to or encouraged to contribute.”* [Home]



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Open Comments

Group work

Positive comments on group work

*“I feel strongly about working in groups as I believe it **helps you in later life** when working with different teams on a job.” [Home]*

*“Would appreciate more mixed group work; presentations, etc. Can be **daunting, but is rewarding**”. [Home]*

*“I **learned how to discuss with people** because of working in group. It isn't always easy. It learned me that a lot of people are very different in customs/habits the me and they think very different.” [Home]*

Negative comments on group work

*“It’s really difficult to do group projects with people with different cultural backgrounds. You **cannot understand each other** most of the time and they are often behind on an **intellectual level.**” [Home]*

*“I find it **uncomfortable to join in a group with all British students**, and it’s hard to get involved. So it is more likely to study with other international students because the opinions of mine can be more possibly discussed and accepted.” [Asian]*

Staff management of group work

*“The amount of group projects is insanely high and rendered useless by the **absolute absence of debriefing/comments** from the staff and teachers on the quality of work. The teachers have never helped us improve our work by giving actual feedback on anything. Considering the amount of time a group work takes, this is very valuable time wasted by teachers who would be considered unprofessional in any other country.” [EEA]*

*“Whenever there is a group project, I get no help from the teams whatsoever, there should be **a peer review form** at the end of each project, and that form should directly affect the scores that each student will be getting. There should also be mid-term reviews, hosted by faculty members to monitor group dynamic and guide the team to work in a more effective fashion.” [Home]*

*“I think it’s really good that we have group work for **formative assignment only**, this way if there are issues in the group it doesn’t impact our academic performance.” [EEA]*



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Summary and implications

Student beliefs/attitudes to diversity

A significant minority view, especially among home students. Diversity ...

- Is not relevant to certain subjects;
- Is not relevant *per se*, only academic excellence;
- Causes extra work/difficulties, because of:
 - Language (difficulties during discussion; distribution of work for presentations and written reports);
 - Academic competence/calibre.
- ***What should our response be to these viewpoints?***

Course/classroom management

Participation

- “Feeling able to participate comfortably” – top importance for all students;
- **What elements enhance this? How can we incorporate/improve these?**

Interaction with staff

- “Opportunities to interact with staff” – top importance for all students;
- **How can we enhance this (given various constraints)?**

Course/classroom management

Group work

- “Learning from group work” – top importance for all students;
- **What features enhance learning?**
- **What features limit learning**
- **How can we improve these?**



Warwick resources

Warwick resources

For university students:

- e-Capsules
 - ✓ Working in groups
 - ✓ ... [more under development including 'Asking questions']

Available at

www.warwick.ac.uk/globaluni



Complementary tools/resources



GlobalPeople tools to foster IC development:

- **3R Reflect** tool
(Report, Reflect, Re-evaluate)
- **4S Stretch** tool
(Spot, Select, Stretch, Strengthen)

Available at

www.warwick.ac.uk/globalknowledge

Other resources



For professionals:

- **GlobalPeople@work**
 - Seeing Culture@work
 - Diverse Teams@work
 - Global Leadership@work



Available at
www.warwick.ac.uk/globalknowledge

Further information on GEP

- Student and staff (Academic/Teaching + Admin/Management) versions available.
- Dashboard with data from about 4000 students from 7 universities in 5 countries available here:

www.warwick.ac.uk/gep

- Quantitative data
- Open comments
- GEP available from i-Graduate



Thank you!

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www.globalpeople.org.uk

www.i-graduate.org/services/global-education-profiler/