Rhetoric and Reality: The Internationalisation of Education as Experienced in the Cross-cultural and Cross-disciplinary Studio *

CATHERIN BULL

Catherin Bull, Elisabeth Murdoch
Chair of Landscape Architecture,
Associate Dean (International),
Faculty of Architecture, Building and
Planning, University of Melbourne,
Parkville, Victoria, Australia.
Telephone: +61–3–8344 6454
Fax: +61–3–8344 5532
Email: cbull@unimelb.edu.au

THE RHETORIC OF MOST UNIVERSITIES now includes goals about internationalisation of the curriculum and the values that flow from that process. Such goals appear to support practice in the design professions, which are now international in flavour, with many students expecting to practice internationally during their professional lives. Can the academy educate graduates for international practice and, if so, how best should it do it?

This paper describes a tripartite programme currently under way between design schools from three continents: the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne, Australia; l'Ecole d'Architecture et Paysage, Bordeaux, France; and the Faculty of Architecture at Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand. The Bordeaux-Melbourne-Bangkok programme (BMB) builds on previous, informal bilateral teaching relationships between the participating institutions, converting them into a formalised trilateral teaching programme, with coordinated field and studio activities involving staff and senior students in each of the three disciplines of landscape architecture, urban design and architecture, in each of the three cities over three consecutive years (2003, 2004, 2005). A distinguishing characteristic of BMB is its programme of teaching research, which tracks whether and how the outcomes identified for students have been achieved through the life of the project. The results of the first research on student experience (from Workshop 1, Bangkok) are discussed and provide an example of how teaching research might assist in assessing whether institutional goals related to internationalisation are being achieved by the cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary studio.

INTERNATIONALISATION

Internationalisation of higher education is the process of integrating an international/ intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution (Knight, 1999: 18).

International education is a dynamic concept that involves a journey or movement of people, minds, or ideas across political and cultural frontiers. The development of 'Worldmindedness' can become the goal of any school, and hence, any school can become truly 'international' (Fraser and Brickman, 1968).

INTERNATIONALISATION IN EDUCATION is considered to be a response to, and in dynamic relationship with, its conceptual partner, globalisation (de Wit et al, 1999: 13), with globalisation seen as the catalyst and internationalisation in education as the response. Internationalisation is envisaged as a way to counteract the perceived negative effects of globalisation (domination of local cultures, loss of local identity and diversity, and so forth) through the conscious promotion of local values and the development of understanding in students of the positive and

negative effects of the globalisation process. Implicit in much of the literature is the expectation that students will be sensitised to the values and the contribution of other cultures by actually experiencing them first hand (Knight, 1999: 14; Clyne and Rizvi, 1998: 38, 45). There is also the expectation that, in a globalising world, skills in navigating other cultures will be essential for professional life (Gilbert as cited in Mak *et al*, 1999: 76; English as cited in Clyne and Rizvi, in Davis and Olsen, 1998: 37). The latter is described as the "competency" approach to internationalisation (Knight, 1999: 15) and informs the research described here. Are our international activities actually achieving the goals we intend for our students; specifically, to assist them in their professional lives?

Policy Developments

Like many universities world wide, the University of Melbourne embraces the idea of internationalisation in its strategic policies and employs internationalisation rhetoric in its strategic and operational documents and processes. The "Melbourne Experience" is a term used to describe the particular nature of the experience that students can expect at the university. Part of that experience is the expectation that students are being educated at a world-class university with international networks and opportunities to study internationally during their enrolment. Terms such as "internationalisation strategies", "internationalisation agenda", "encouraging and initiating international collaboration and cooperation", "promoting international mobility of ... students", being "internationally engaged and internationally competitive", "encouraging the internationalisation of curricula" and "giving priority in research planning to international research activities, collaborations", and so on, pepper policy documents (*The University of Melbourne Operational Plan 2004*).

Such approaches are not just part of the agenda of this institution, but are part of a broader set of expectations applying to Australian universities at large, as exemplified in the stated aim of the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) that higher education should embrace internationalisation as a means to help students "develop a global perspective" and enhance their "understanding of issues of the global flows in economy, culture and technologies" (Clyne and Rizvi, 1998: 35).

The Design Disciplines in Focus

Given the institutional commitment to internationalisation, the question arises as to how individual faculties and programmes, especially the design professions, respond and relate the broader concepts to their disciplines and pedagogical approaches. How do they, but just as importantly, how should they integrate international dimensions into their teaching and research? As with other institutions, at the University of Melbourne the stated aim of the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, within which the landscape architecture, urban design and architecture programmes are located, is to internationalise curricula by diversifying the range of cases and phenomena studied, and by

providing opportunities to study off-shore through off-shore field trips, studios and student exchanges. The diversification of the student body is also part of this process. Feedback from the various professions the Faculty serves reveals that all now count internationalisation as integral to practice.

DECODING RHETORIC, REVEALING REALITY

The Research Purpose

Despite a plethora of rhetoric and activity, there is some concern expressed in the literature that the high expectations for internationalisation may not be being met (Clyne and Rizvi, 1998: 38). Specifically, the concern is that outcomes are assumed rather than known, and that while there are many stated objectives, it is not clear whether these are being actually achieved or, if so, how. Further research is necessary to justify and guide various approaches. Terms such as "cross-cultural competence" (cross-cultural communication, negotiation and team-building skills), "personal mastery" (openness, adaptability, observational and listening skills), "country-specific knowledge" and "global orientation" (awareness of global interdependence and understanding of globalisation) are used to describe intended teaching outcomes; but, ask Kearns and Schofield, are they actually achieved? (Kearns and Schofield, 1997, as cited in Cummins and Smith 1999, in Davis and Olsen 1999: 62.)

The BMB programme was conceived, not only as a set of activities involving students and staff from three institutions, but as a programme of action research into design teaching with an international or, more specifically, with a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary dimension. Not only would the programme carry out activities, it would observe, critically review and document outcomes in order to generate formal knowledge in the field. Were objectives explicitly agreed upon, stated and achieved? What activities and mechanisms enhanced or impeded those outcomes? Who makes the assessment?

The Research Programme

In 2002, the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne, l'Ecole d'Architecture et Paysage, Bordeaux, France, and the Faculty of Architecture at Kasetsart University, Bangkok, decided to build on their existing bilateral arrangements (Bordeaux–Bangkok and Melbourne–Bangkok) and convert them into a formalised, tripartite teaching research programme. This programme would coordinate field and studio activities of a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary nature around the shared theme of water/culture/city/modernity, involving staff and students in each of the three cities over three consecutive years (2003, 2004, 2005). Senior students (years 4–6) in landscape architecture, urban design and architecture from each programme work jointly for an intensive workshop in each city. Specialist staff in each discipline from each institution would be responsible for teaching and would also involve local professionals.

Explicit aims and protocols were developed, to be reviewed progressively during

the life of the programme. Staff laid out agreed aims and purposes (Figure 1) of the programme prior to the running of the 2003 programme.

Figure 1: Educational aims and protocols

To provide disciplinary-based introductions to:	· Unfamiliar cultures, places and people. · Alternative attitudes, models of decision making, practices and techniques. · The world of international practice.
To provide guided field- and institution-based programmes that include:	· Working with unfamiliar student professionals in their discipline areas (as individuals and groups). · Working in unfamiliar physical and social environments. · Observing the relationship between international disciplinary theory and local conditions.
The purposes of these programmes are:	A. To support internationalisation policies at an institutional and national level by relating these to the disciplines within the built environment professions. B. For individual students, to develop: 　· skills (and confidence) in understanding and navigating other cultures 　· awareness of the ways in which other cultures (and the disciplines within those cultures) address environmental and social issues (thereby increasing the stock of models available to students) 　· respect for other places, cultures, people and practices 　· awareness of the value of 'culture shock' in stimulating creative thinking and problem solving 　· awareness of the commonalities of many phenomena internationally (tourism, equity, post-industrialism, post-colonialism and so on) as well as local particularities 　· capacities in reflective and critical thinking, particularly in applying work practices and theory to unfamiliar environments and cultures 　· enriched personal and professional networks. C. For staff, to develop: 　· reflective teaching practices, research and scholarship about teaching 　· awareness of the variety of teaching methods available and their characteristics 　· expertise in international teaching 　· techniques for formal and informal benchmarking 　· enriched professional and personal networks. D. To use the programme to inform international teaching, professional practice and stakeholders, especially in the planning and design of sustainable cities.

A programme of research has developed around these objectives involving staff from each institution, who meet as part of the programme each year to present the results of their own research and reflect on the process and outcomes. At present, ten topics of research focus in BMB teaching have been identified and are being worked on by staff, with presentation intended at the symposium associated with the final workshop in Bordeaux in April 2005. A symposium launching the BMB programme occurred in September 2002 and a book of the proceedings resulted (King, Panin and Parin, 2003).

The research that is the subject of this paper investigates whether and to what degree participating students consider the objectives (Figure 1, purposes B) were met by the first BMB Workshop at Kasetsart University in Bangkok in September 2003. The responses to project-specific questionnaires form the first of three sets of data to be generated over the life of the programme, and as such are preliminary to any final conclusions.

BMB Workshop 1, Bangkok

The three parties developed a protocol defining the features that would be common to all BMB workshops. These were:

·   The host institution to be responsible for the teaching/design process for its workshop.

·   Staff from various programmes to meet before each workshop to review objectives and process.

·   Staff from various programmes to meet jointly after each workshop to reflect on the process and outcomes against objectives (and record these).

·   One or more students from each programme to create a diary of their experiences for use as part of the research.

·   The common language to be English.

·   The student groups to be about a third each of landscape architects, urban designers and architects, to total nine or ten from each programme.

·   Each project team to mix both disciplines and parent programmes (Bordeaux, Melbourne, Bangkok) approximately equally.

·   Students to be senior undergraduates or postgraduates.

·   Each project to be of a landscape or urban scale.

·   The project to be about exploring the relationship between city, water, modernity and culture.

·   The project to last ten days, including briefings, field work, group work, presentations and free time (acclimatisation, relaxation and travel time to be in addition).

·   The host to provide accommodation and teaching facilities.

·   Visitors to cover their own travel expenses.

Given the complexities of finding common periods of availability for staff and students across the calendar year, each institution is responsible for organising how the workshop fits its teaching programme.

The first workshop in Bangkok operated within these constraints, with the following particularities:

- Students from Melbourne were postgraduate students studying landscape architecture, architecture and urban design at masters level, with the workshop contributing towards their assessments for the Sustainable Environments Studio, which uses landscape/urban scale projects.
- Students from Bordeaux had just completed their fifth year of study (the architects having studied five years of architecture and landscape architects two years of architecture/foundation studies followed by three years of landscape), including Urban Design Studio for that year. The workshop was not assessable as part of their studies since they were commencing their break.
- Students from Bangkok included four from the Urban and Environmental Planning Masters programme and six from fifth-year architecture.
- Visiting students were accommodated at the university, while the host students lived at home as usual.
- Before arriving, Australian students were provided with briefings about Thailand and Bangkok by staff, visiting professors and doctoral candidates studying aspects of urbanisation and landscape in Bangkok, and had prepared a brief 'imagining' exercise.
- Some of the Thai and French students had worked together during a Bordeaux–Bangkok studio in Bordeaux the previous year.

The workshop process was organised by the Bangkok staff (Dr Davisi Boontharm) to include a site map (site area 25–30 sq km) in digital and hard copy form, a briefing about urbanisation and land/waterscape conservation issues, a site visit (by bus, boat and walking), specialist lectures on site-specific technical matters such as wetlands, stabilisation and urbanisation, and a timetable identifying student presentations dates and reviews by staff. The project outcome required a strategic direction for the site, supported by design development of typical areas within the conceptual theme to be identified by each project group of eight to ten students. The final presentation was to be to a panel of staff and visitors with a maximum of 4 x A0 sheets in vertical format.

There was no pre-issue of project material to students or staff before the commencement of the workshop, although a staff member from the two visiting institutions had seen the site in advance.

STUDENT RESPONSES

Data Collection and Analysis
The issue to be explored here is student experience of the workshop – whether the students think that the various objectives set by the staff (Figure 1) were met, and if so, or if not, what were the perceived reasons. The objectives of the BMB project were described briefly to the students during their first meeting at the workshop, and they were told at that time that they would be asked to fill out a

questionnaire on their experiences after its completion. A questionnaire was prepared (Figures 2a and 2b) by converting the workshop aims and purposes into questions grouped under Section A, to be assessed on a one- (least) to five-point (most) scale. Section B of the questionnaire asked the students to assess the negative or positive contribution made by various operational factors identified by staff during the workshop process. Section C asked them to rate the degree to which their expectations had been met overall.

The questionnaire was prepared in English, translated into Thai and French, and administered within eight weeks of the workshop by local staff. The administering staff members were asked to ensure the anonymity of students, but this proved difficult, and it is apparent that this was not achieved in all Bordeaux and Bangkok cases. Administering the survey was complicated by the fact that these students had graduated or were no longer full time at their institutions. The French students appeared, nevertheless, uninhibited and voluble in their comments (both positive and negative). The Thai students were much more restrained in their comments, with one student declining to take part altogether, but their responses were sufficiently varied to suggest reliability. Participant anonymity will be addressed again in future surveys. While such surveys are normal practice for subject assessment at the University of Melbourne, where the anonymity of participants is a given, this does not seem to be the case at the partner institutions.

The responses were received electronically and translated into English where necessary. The totals were then compiled recording geographic source and analysed to calculate the mean, median and standard deviation for each question against each institutional/geographic group as well as overall. These are summarised in Figure 3 (Section A), Figure 4 (Section B) and Figure 5 (Section C). Individual responses were also recorded, but are not included here.

Student Assessment of Programme Objectives (Questionnaire, Section A)
The programme objectives included both generic objectives that might apply to any international teaching programme (A1, 3, 5–8) and those that are specific to the design disciplines (A2, A4). It should be noted that overall the students were positive about the achievement of all objectives, with only one question (A5) achieving an overall mean value under 3.5 (at 3.43). This question can be construed as somewhat abstract and, in retrospect, of greater interest to staff than students. It could also be suggested that "awareness of the commonality of many phenomena globally" requires technical knowledge of more than two environments and that the question itself could be flawed. Students considered that the more concrete objective of developing awareness of local particularities was better fulfilled (A6, mean 3.80). It is possible that abstract notions may well be beyond them at this stage of their development. There was very little institutional or geographically based variation in responses to A5 and A6.

What is apparent is that the students, irrespective of nationality or institution, rated the discipline-based question (A2, "developing awareness of how other cultures and your disciplines address social and environmental problems") the highest overall,

Figure 2a: Section A of the Student Experience Questionnaire

BMB Workshop #1 (Bangkok) – Student Experience Questionnaire					
Where are you a student? (circle)	University of Melbourne Ecole d'architecture et de paysage de Bordeaux Kasetsart University				
Are you (circle)	Post graduate student/Undergraduate student?				

Section A: Program Objectives

To what degree did the BMB#1 (Bangkok) experience help you, as a student, to develop:

(1 = least through to 5 = best)

	1	2	3	4	5
1 skills (and confidence) in understanding and navigating other cultures?	1	2	3	4	5
2 awareness of the ways in which other cultures (and your disciplines (urban design, landscape architecture, architecture) within those cultures) address environmental and social issues (ie, thereby increasing the stock of "models" or precedents available to you)?	1	2	3	4	5
3 respect for other places, cultures, people and practices?	1	2	3	4	5
4 awareness of the value of "culture shock" in stimulating creative thinking and problem solving?	1	2	3	4	5
5 awareness of the commonalities of many phenomena globally (tourism, equity, post-industrialism, post-colonialism, relationship to water, etc)?	1	2	3	4	5
6 awareness of local particularities?	1	2	3	4	5
7 capacities in reflective and critical thinking, particularly in applying work practice and theory to unfamiliar environments and cultures?	1	2	3	4	5
8 enriched personal and professional networks?	1	2	3	4	5

the responses to this question averaging 4.16 with the lowest standard deviation individually. While its partner, question A1 about developing skills and confidence in navigating other cultures, also rated highly with a mean of 4.02 and the second lowest standard deviation, this suggests that at the end of the day students place greater value on what they are in their teaching programmes for – to learn about their disciplines – than on broader issues promoted by the internationalisation agenda that drives institutional policies. Nevertheless, the responses to both A1 and A2 achieved the highest ratings and the highest consensus among students overall, with (somewhat understandably since the hosts were at home) the two visiting groups rating higher than the host group in both instances.

Figure 2b: Sections B and C of the Student Experience Questionnaire


Section B: Contributing factors

To what degree do you think that the following factors inhibited or promoted achievement of the program objectives and your expectations?

		Inhibited			*Promoted*	
1	Language differences	1	2	3	4	5
2	Different level of study (under/postgraduate)	1	2	3	4	5
3	BMB being part of an assessed subject for some students and not (ie, an 'add on') to normal studies for others	1	2	3	4	5
4	Sharing accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
5	Different level of skills	1	2	3	4	5
6	Different design methods	1	2	3	4	5
7	Different disciplines	1	2	3	4	5
8	Other (please nominate)					
	. . . .	1	2	3	4	5
	. . . .	1	2	3	4	5
	. . . .	1	2	3	4	5
	. . . .	1	2	3	4	5
	. . . .	1	2	3	4	5

Section C: Your expectations

(1 = least through to 5 = best)

To what degree did the BMB Workshop (Bangkok) experience meet your expectations?	1	2	3	4	5

Other comments you wish to add about the above or your reflections on the experience:

. . . .

. . . .

. . . .

Of interest is the response to the objective relating to the development of enriched personal and professional networks. While this achieved a positive response overall (mean 4.09), it is of note that almost a third rated this as 3 or lower (with one student at 1, and one at 2) and that the standard deviation was highest overall for this question. There was a large spread in responses, which appeared to be

more individually than geographically related (while acknowledging that there was a lower mean value from the Bangkok group). It could be concluded that the capacity to capitalise on opportunities such as this ultimately relies more on individual social skills than cultural bases.

Figure 3: Responses to the Student Experience Questionnaire, Section A; Mean and Std Error
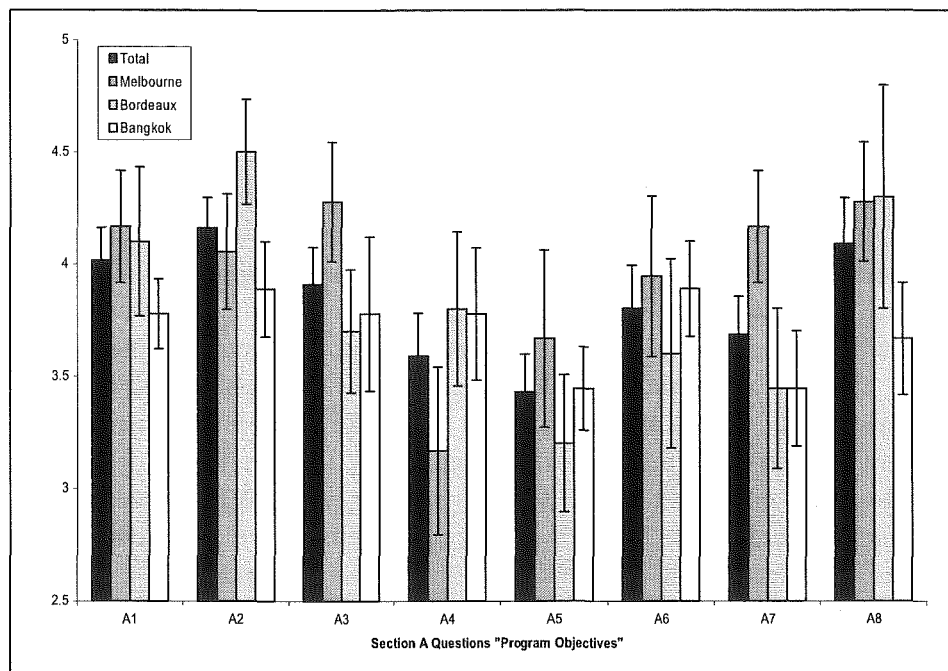
Differences that can be related to geography are the responses to questions A3 ("developing respect for other places, cultures ...") and A7 ("developing capacities for reflective and critical thinking ... in applying theories and work practices to unfamiliar environments..."). The Melbourne students were by far the most positive about both of these with a mean of 4.28 for A3 compared with that of the Bangkok (3.78) and Bordeaux students (3.70). For A7, the Australian mean was 4.17 compared to 3.44 for both other groups. The latter can, perhaps, be related to the general difference in approach expressed in comments by both Melbourne and French students – that the Australians were more oriented towards decisions and action when compared with the French, who preferred more time to interrogate the history of the environment under observation and the way in which change has occurred. Comments typically (supported by the responses to Section B of the questionnaire) include those from one Australian who considered that the French were more interested in analysis for its own sake because they did not have to return and produce an assessable piece of work. A French student observed: "The Australians wanted to apply their methods, to get more quickly to their results". Another described the Australians as being

"frenzied in their motivation", and yet another said that "the Australians forgot ... a level of study in their work: they went from the strategic level to the answer ... without asking questions before taking action ... they needed to produce a result, we just wanted to engage in reflection and debate". Yet another commented: "Contrary to the French, who may have the tendency to over-analyse, the Australian students are sometimes too aggressive ... the Thais were not incisive enough". It seems that the French found the process too short to satisfy their expectation of deep analysis, while the Australians were content overall with what had been achieved in the relatively short time, putting a greater emphasis on applying work practices than on reflection and critique. The Australians did, however, consider that they had developed respect for other places and cultures (A3) in the process.

Student Assessment of Assisting and Inhibiting Factors (Questionnaire, Section B)
During the course of the workshop, staff observed factors that may influence achievement of the programme objectives. These were incorporated in Section B, which also provided opportunities for participants to identify additional factors they thought might be important, or improvements that could be made (B8). While all responding students filled out questions B1 to B7, not all offered comments or suggestions beyond these, so these have only been discussed if two or more students made a similar suggestion.

What stood out as factors that students thought best assisted achievement of the programme objectives were the mixing of disciplines (over 21 students rated this as 4 or 5, despite the fact that two were negatively disposed); the fact that students brought with them different design methods (again, 21 students rated this 4 and 5 and there was significant consensus); and sharing accommodation. In fact, on the matter of accommodation, some students even suggested that the hosts should also share and that students should be accommodated according to their project groups to enhance interaction. In the comments offered about the experience by students, the amount of debate resulting from different design approaches was seen as one of the highlights of the experience overall. As one student put it: "Our methods were turned upside down during the brainstorming sessions, but that was very stimulating!"

While it could be expected that the different levels of study among participants (and therefore experience) might have a negative influence, in fact this was rated somewhat neutrally by the majority. It does not appear that different levels of skill (B5) had significance for the achievement of educational objectives. Likewise, language was not clearly identified as either a positive or negative, and (somewhat surprisingly) the French and Australian students were comparable in their response, finding it a slightly negative influence only.

What did stand out in the students' opinion as a negative was the difference in the way the workshop sat within the various educational programmes of the home institution. Thai, French and Australian students found the preoccupation

Figure 4: Responses to the Student-Experience Questionnaire, Section B;
Mean and Std Error
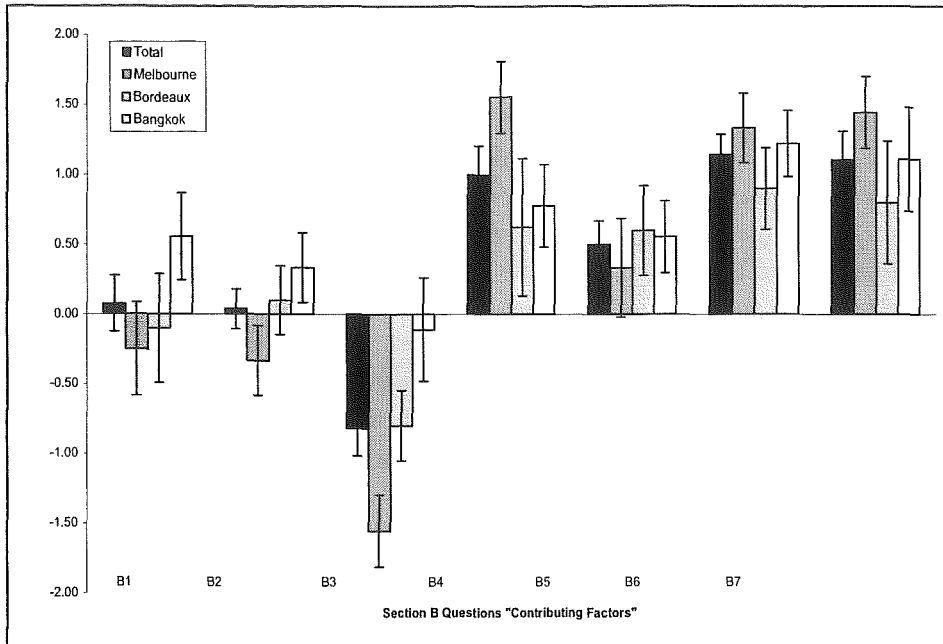
of the Bangkok students with other work (it was the end of the academic year for this group) a serious inhibitor to their involvement and the achievement of the project objectives. While Australian students found the fact that the other groups would not be assessed for their work as part of their educational programme somewhat problematic (saying it reduced the level of commitment), the French found the Australians' drive to produce inhibiting (see comments above). What had been, in the organisers' minds, a relatively minor issue at the time the programme was initiated was, to the students, significant.

Suggestions of significance (B8) included that there be more time for socialising/getting to know each other and the place both before and after the project; the receipt of information and the carrying out of an exercise before arrival; even more mixing of students in accommodation; and more lectures analysing urban change (in addition to those specific to site-specific technical issues).

Again, the biggest issue for all students commented on in B8 (irrespective of source) was the different assessment of the workshop outcomes by the different home institutions. Specifically, it was considered problematic that the hosts were insufficiently available during the process.

There was also some exploring (as much from the Australians as from the remainder) of the possibility that it was difficult for Melbourne students not to dominate because of their age and competence in English. This was, however, not clear, and the group was (as indicated above) mixed in its view about whether language was a help or hindrance.

*Fulfilment of Student Expectations (Questionnaire, Section C)*

The single question in Section C of the questionnaire enquired whether the workshop experience fulfilled the students' expectations, and while the median on a five-point scale for each group from Bordeaux, Melbourne and Bangkok was 4, the mean for all students was 3.85. Analysis of these responses reveals some significant issues.

One student from each of the three groups considered that the programme did not really meet their expectations, rating it as 2 on the five-point scale. This raises the issue of what the expectations were, and future surveys need to ensure that there is a more direct opportunity for students to explain this. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, in a programme such as this, there may well be a significant minority who experience problems during and after such activities because expectations are not met. Team leaders and teachers need to be aware of this. It may mean that there needs to be more and clearer discussion with participating students about how the programme is to run before it begins.

It also raises the question of whether such a question is an indicator of satisfaction, since the unexpected may in fact be a positive influence on experience. For example, while the Melbourne students appeared to rate this question highest overall with a mean of 4.11 and a third of the students rating it at the maximum of 5, they still indicated surprise about some aspects of the programme, such as the fact that they were often the oldest and that their groups included undergraduates (although these were students with five years of university study compared with six or seven years). The Melbourne students were not necessarily negative about this in the end, however. The Australian participant who considered that the experience had met his/her expectations at the low level of 2 on the five-point scale was actually very positive (compared with others who thought their expectations had been met) about the contribution made to the experience by sharing accommodation; the differing levels of skill, differing design methods; and different disciplines. This student did feel, however, that there should have been more time for informal exploration and interaction.

A number of Australian participants were specifically negative (despite their overall expectations being met at a high level) about what they saw as lack of structure in the workshop, commenting that it had less facilitation and explanation about process by staff than they were accustomed to in their studios at the University of Melbourne. By contrast, the loose organisational structure of the Bangkok workshop was only commented upon by some of the French, and those who did comment were positive about it, one appreciating "the deliberate choice not to give a precise orientation to the students" specifically, feeling it had offered more opportunities to debate and engage. As is consistent with the BMB protocol (Figure 1), this workshop was run according to the host institution's methods; for future workshops, methods are expected to vary again. Such differences may well continue to surprise visiting students and draw negative or positive responses – only time and this research programme will tell – but it

Figure 5: Responses to the Student Experience Questionnaire, Section C;
Fulfilment of expectations
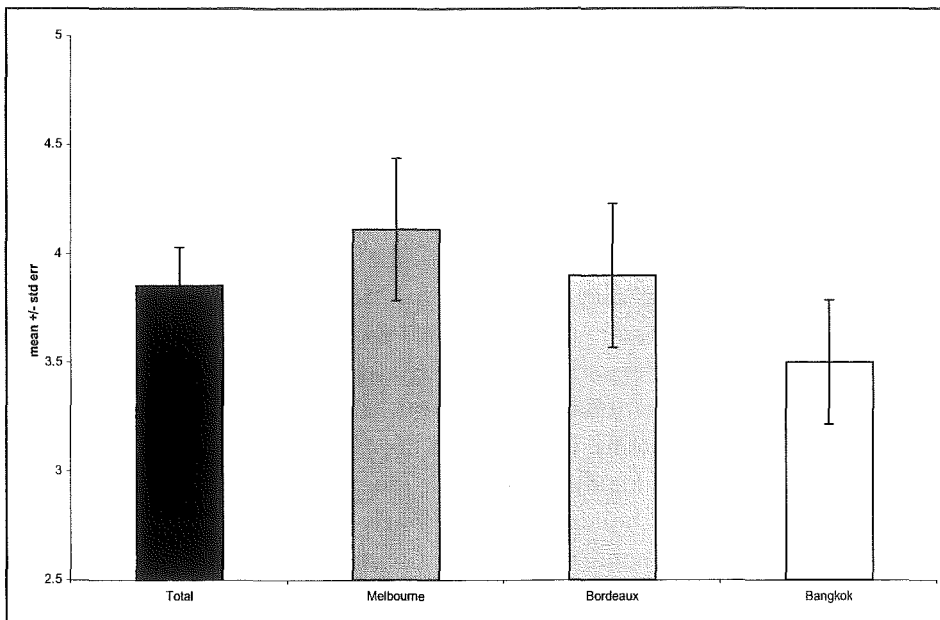
will be useful to explore the way in which such variations are perceived to contribute to the overall experience.

It is also apparent that the group least satisfied that its expectations were met were the host (Bangkok) students, with a median of 4 and a mean of 3.5 for this question. This may hint at an unavoidable inequality between host and visitor experience, to be tested in future workshops. It may be, however, that the relative lack of engagement of the Thai students in the process (negatively commented upon by a majority of students from all institutions) was simply because of other work that was not particular to this workshop. It may also be that not sharing accommodation and having inadequate socialising time during the workshop proper may prove significant.

All these issues need to be tested against the experiences of the forthcoming workshops. It is precisely these kinds of differences that will enable the BMB teaching research programme to identify the relative importance of factors across cultures and what such information might mean for confidently developing effective internationalisation programmes in design teaching.

DISCUSSION

Although this survey of student experience is of a relatively small group (just under 30 students), it is possible to identify some issues that may affect the successful running of future BMB workshops, and by extension, intercultural and interdisciplinary design workshops generally. While some results appear to be straightforward (most students really appreciate the intercultural and interdisciplinary characteristics of the programme, feeling it has enabled them to

develop awareness of other cultures), they need to be confirmed over time. Other results are less clear and can also now be flagged for more particular analysis over the life of the programme and its three workshops. For example, will there always be a distinction in the perceived value of the workshops between participants who are hosts and those who are guests? Is a preference for greater structure in the running of workshops culturally based? To what degree is it important that there are similar outcomes expected from the various home institutions about how the workshop fits with other studies? How critical is an equal time commitment from hosts and guests during the workshop? While the latter two factors had not been given priority when the protocol and schedule were developed, it appears that they may prove fundamental. Or, it may prove that the objectives for hosting and visiting students should vary in recognition of the fundamentally different experience of each and the complexities of finding common times and educational requirements across different schedules, time zones and educational systems. (It should be noted that the matter of developing times for the three years for the three institutions across three time zones and social systems (semesters, holidays) was extremely complex from the outset).

Two additional and unanticipated sets of responses would also add value to this investigation and will be included in the assessment of forthcoming workshops: how the participating staff respond to the same questions (to observe congruence in opinions about whether programme objectives have been met); and to what degree the students actually value the objectives identified in Section A of the questionnaire. It is as yet unclear, for example, how students compare generic skills (such as skills in navigating other cultures or respect for other cultures and so forth) with discipline-specific skills, in terms of importance, and an understanding of such questions will enhance interpretation of the survey results. It would also be useful to obtain the 'expert' (teachers') responses to the same questions in order to assess the degree to which teachers think the programme has developed various capacities in the students and what factors they consider have influenced outcomes. The programme has, after all, been generated by these experts and may, in their opinions, be fulfilling the pedagogical objectives irrespective of student views. An understanding of the two sets of responses should support the conclusions that can be drawn and enable closer analysis of issues such as whether everyone now agrees that the way in which the workshops sit within individual programmes is more important than originally thought.

CONCLUSION

If it is accepted, as is put here, that "the link between internationalisation and the acquisition of global skills by young Australians is acknowledged to be assumed rather than proven" (Clyne and Rizvi, 1998: 38), and that the same applies elsewhere (especially in relation to design teaching), then research such as that described here is long overdue. Agreeing and articulating objectives for internationalisation activities is the first step, but assessment of the degree to which those objectives have been

met by particular activities is equally important. Such assessment can be expert based (such as that being undertaken in other parts of the BMB research programme) or, as with the research reported here, it can focus on the participating subjects and be experience based. Ideally, it should be both. Without teaching activities and programmes being informed by such research, the internationalisation of higher education in design risks becoming exactly what it aims to counter, according to the literature – just another form of globalisation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clyne, F and Rizvi, F (1998) Outcomes of Student Exchange, in Davis, D and Olsen, A (eds) *Outcomes of International Education: Research Findings, A Set of Commissioned Research Papers Presented at the 12th Australian International Education Conference*, Canberra, 1998, Canberra, Australia: IDP Education Australia.

Davis, D and Olsen, A, (eds) (1998) *Outcomes of International Education: Research Findings, A Set of Commissioned Research Papers Presented at the 12th Australian International Education Conference*, Canberra, 1998, Canberra, Australia: IDP Education Australia.

Davis, D and Olsen, A (eds) (1999) *International Education, The Professional Edge: A Set of Research Papers Presented at the 13th Australian International Education Conference*, Fremantle, 1999, Canberra, Australia: IDP Education Australia.

de Wit, Hans and Knight, J (eds) (1999) *Quality and Internationalisation in Higher Education*, Paris, France: OECD.

Fraser, S and Brickman, WW (1968) in Hansen, HM (2002) Defining International Education, in Speck, BW and Carmical, BH (eds) *Internationalising Higher Education: Building Vital Programs on Campus*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kearns, P and Schofield, K (1997) Kearns and Schofield International Work Roles, Competence and Development Processes, quoted in Cummins, G and Smith, J (1999) Practitioners' Perceptions on Aspects of Staff Development to Support Internationalisation in TAFE, in Davis, D and Olsen, A (eds) *International Education, The Professional Edge: A Set of Research Papers Presented at the 13th Australian International Education Conference*, Fremantle, 1999, Canberra, Australia: IDP Education Australia.

King, R; Panin, O and Parin, C (2003) *Modernity, Tradition, Culture, Water: Proceedings of an International Symposium, Bangkok, 29–31 October 2002*, Bangkok, Thailand: Kasetsart University Press.

Knight, J (1999) Internationalisation of Higher Education, in de Wit, Hans and Knight, J (eds) *Quality and Internationalisation in Higher Education*, Paris, France: OECD.

Mak, A; Barker, M; Logan, G and Millman, L (1999) Benefits of Cultural Diversity for International and Local Students: Contributions from an Experiential Social Learning Program (The EXCELL Program), in Davis, D and Olsen, A (eds) *International Education, The Professional Edge: A Set of Research Papers Presented at the 13th Australian International Education Conference*, Fremantle, 1999, Canberra, Australia: IDP Education Australia.

University of Melbourne (2004) *University of Melbourne Operational Plan 2004*, <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/publications/opplan/OperationalPlan04.pdf > (last accessed 27 January 2004).