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Perceptions of pedagogy for employability at a transnational university

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Perceptions of pedagogy for employability at a transnational university: A qualitative case study

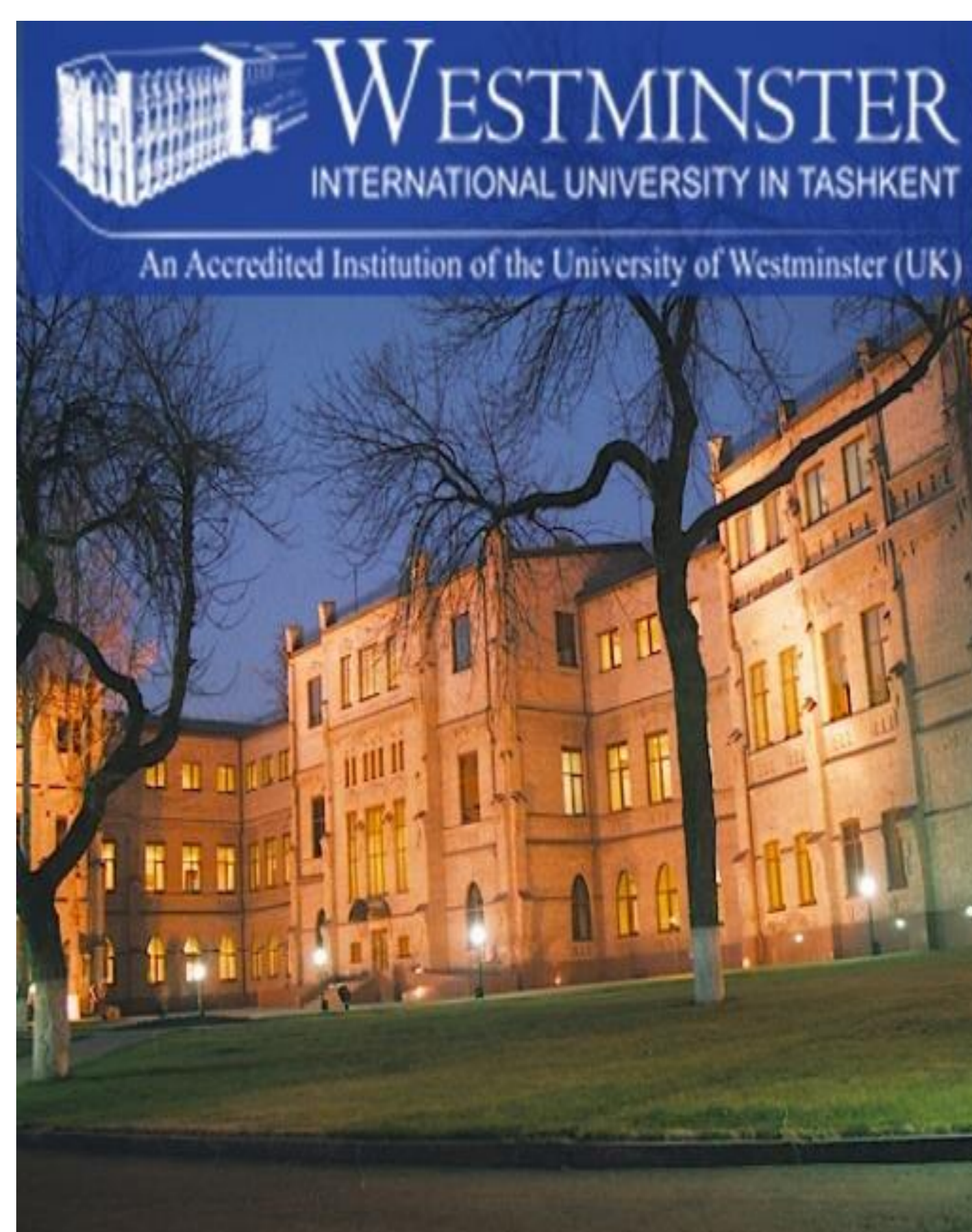
Research Location

Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT)

- First international university in Uzbekistan
- Founded in 2002
- WIUT provides internationally recognised higher education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels

Undergraduate Courses

- BA Business Administration
- BA International Commercial Law
- BSc Economics
- BSc Economics with Finance
- BSc Business Information Systems



Rationale

The embedding of employability skills into course and curriculum design is aimed at reducing the perceived shortfall in the ability of graduates to perform tasks needed in the workplace

The study of employability and higher education in the context of Uzbekistan is a recent development and has been limited to general overviews of the sector in relation to regional changes in government policy

No previous studies in Uzbek HE have focused on pedagogy for employability

Previous Research



'Because Sometimes Your Failures Can Also Teach You Certain Skills': Lecturer and Student Perceptions of Employability Skills at a Transnational University

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Abstract

This exploratory study investigates lecturers' and students' understanding of the concepts and language underpinning higher education strategies of developing employability skills. While a solid grounding in discipline-specific knowledge and skills is what most graduate degrees aim at providing, employability skills are increasingly becoming an important factor when evaluating prospective employees. Embedding the acquisition of employability skills into higher education courses has emerged as a response to industry demands for work-ready graduates. The forces of internationalisation and globalisation mean that employers the world over are looking for graduates with additional soft skills, abilities and achievements. The context for this study is Westminster International University, Tashkent (WIUT), a transnational university in Uzbekistan. By means of a qualitative case study, the views of lecturers and students were investigated and common themes and perspectives identified. The main findings indicate that although students and lecturers share similar perspectives on the importance of employability skills, the purpose of employability focused pedagogy is not easily communicated to students. Furthermore, students feel that a more systematic approach to recognising and demonstrating employability skills would help them in their transition from education to work.

Research Questions

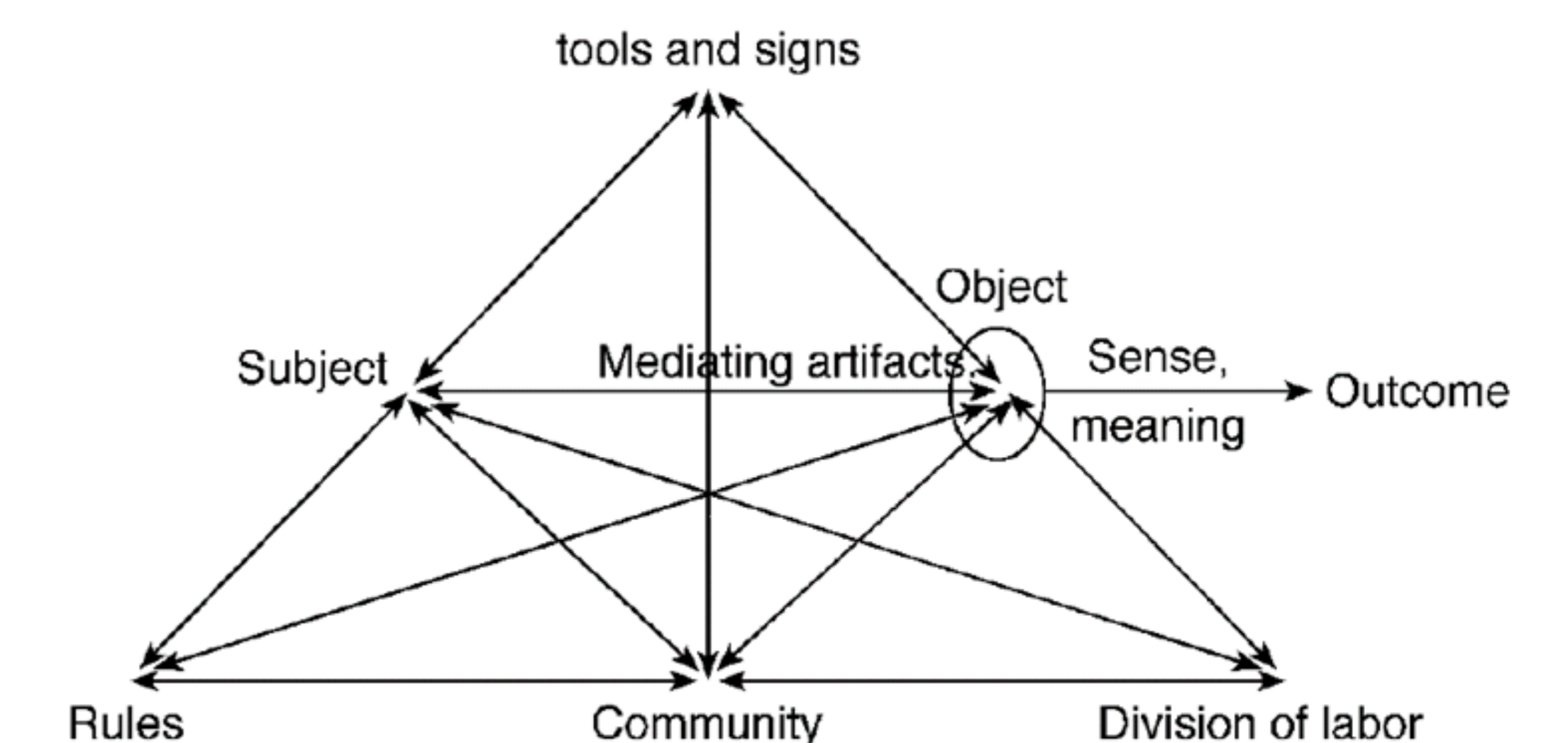
- I. What are the lecturers' understandings of employability pedagogy in undergraduate degree courses?
- II. How do lecturers mobilise their perceptions of employability pedagogy to construct classroom activity systems?
- III. How do lecturers perceive that employability pedagogy is integrated in curricula of different undergraduate degree courses?
- IV. What kind of awareness do students have of the use of employability pedagogy in their undergraduate studies?

Data Collection

- ❖ Semi-structured interviews
- ❖ Lecturer and student reflective journals
- ❖ Classroom observations
- ❖ Focus groups

Data Analysis

Data constructed, transcribed and analysed using categories drawn from Activity Theory



Contribution to Knowledge

- Unique setting of research in Uzbekistan transnational higher education
- Explores how students and lecturers manage and activate their own perceptions of employability pedagogy
- Activity Theory has not previously been applied to employability pedagogy
- Contributes to the literature on Activity Theory as a tool for qualitative research