

might achieve desired international and intercultural learning outcomes.

In summary, the process of internationalization of the curriculum must consider learning outcomes as well as learning inputs.

AN INTERNATIONALIZED CURRICULUM FOCUSED ON STUDENT LEARNING

An internationalized curriculum focused on student learning is defined by two key characteristics. First, it will occur within the context of the different cultures and practices of knowing, doing, and being in the disciplines. Second, faculty who do not have the experience, skills, or knowledge required to internationalize the curriculum will be supported by expert facilitators in the process of defining intended internationalized learning outcomes and assisting all students to achieve them.

An internationalized curriculum will engage students with internationally informed research and cultural and linguistic diversity, and purposefully develop their international and intercultural perspectives as global professionals and citizens.

Disciplines have distinct cultures and values and will often have different rationales for internationalizing the curriculum. Faculty will need to be clear about why they think internationalization of the curriculum is important for their program. Program teams, as distinct disciplinary communities, will need to engage in discussions and debates on the international and intercultural learning outcomes that their graduates will require to be effective professionals and citizens in a globalized world. If students are to achieve the intended learning outcomes faculty will need to develop a clear and systematic plan to support their students' learning. Learning activities in different modules/subjects/courses at all year levels of the program will need to be designed to incrementally develop students' international perspectives and intercultural skills. Students will need formal and informal feedback on their international and intercultural learning and advice on how to improve their performance at different levels of the program.

Faculty who do not have the experience, skills, or knowledge required to internationalize the curriculum will

need to be supported by expert facilitators in the process of defining intended internationalized learning outcomes and assisting all students to achieve them. Facilitation and support is important because faculty who are not prepared are likely to adopt a narrow focus. This will have serious consequences for the international strategy of the university and student learning.

Facilitators may come from outside the discipline or the university. They will include experts in teaching, learning, and internationalization, who can provide guidance and advice as well as practical support. There will be an emphasis on building capacity for the future to address critical issues and key questions associated with internationalization of the curriculum across disciplines and across the institution over time. In this way internationalization of the curriculum becomes an ongoing process focused on student learning, in which faculty are deeply engaged.

Approaches to and interpretations of internationalization of the curriculum will inevitably vary across disciplines. What is important is that, regardless of the discipline, the focus of the process of internationalizing the curriculum is focused on student learning. This puts faculty and the disciplines at the center of internationalization of the curriculum. ■

Graduate Employability and Internationalization of the Curriculum at Home

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Over the past two decades and more, frequent surveys of employers have found that, while graduates may have the technical skills required for a given role, they often lack the so-called soft skills that are key to effective working. Sometimes called employability skills, these include team-working, negotiation, and mediation, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills, flexibility, organization, and good communication. These surveys have been conducted in a wide array of countries from Australia to Zambia, and similar

sets of requirements have been found repeatedly across the world.

Academics are often oblivious to such calls from employers, perhaps believing that the intellectual rigor of their program may be compromised by a focus on “mere skills.” Indeed, it is undeniable that education is about much more than getting a job at the end of the process. Yet, global dimensions in working environments are no longer limited to multinational corporations and are now integrated into professions and roles, which had previously been seen as more locally based. It could be argued, therefore, that we are failing our students unless we prepare them effectively for contemporary employment, and a range of scholars have urged that university curricula should be better aligned to employer needs. The ability to interpret local concerns within a global context and to judge the impact of global issues on one’s personal and professional life should surely be an attribute of all graduates in contemporary society.

EDUCATION ABROAD AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

What is remarkable is that many of the skills required are precisely those which studies have found to be developed through international experience of study, work, volunteering, or service learning. It has been demonstrated that even short periods of such activity, if students are effectively prepared and guided through the experience, can achieve these results, along with the many other benefits offered through international experiences. Studies in several countries have identified profound transformational learning in various geographical locations. The research covers a range of activity which challenges the student to a greater or lesser extent. Results show clearly that exposing students to alternative perspectives and cultural contexts can result in a questioning of personal identity, values, beliefs, and mindsets, and can offer significant results in terms of personal growth, self-efficacy, and maturity and enhance students’ intercultural competence.

Proponents of experiential learning may argue that it is the physicality of the experience which results in such transformation, nevertheless the international/intercultural element seems to play a role. Furthermore, it could be argued that those students who already possess some of these skills, or who have a propensity to develop them, are particularly attracted to the opportunity of studying, working, or volunteering abroad. These points give pause for thought but still the findings are both significant and repeated in one study after another.

IMPLICATIONS FOR UNIVERSITIES

This has a number of implications for policy and practice within institutions. First, the link between international experience and the development of employability skills is not widely recognized at the institutional level. This means that, secondly, its importance is not transmitted to students either in encouraging more of them to take part in education abroad, or in helping them understand the skills they have developed as a result of doing so. Thirdly, this link is not communicated to employers; note that they call for more soft skills, not for more students with international experience.

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Finally, and perhaps most significantly, there is a lack of exploration of what this means for the curriculum of all students, not simply the mobile minority. If education abroad can support employability in this way, can internationalization of the curriculum at home offer similar benefits for the static majority? As yet, there is insufficient evidence of student learning outcomes from internationalized curricula in the domestic setting to indicate the full potential of this approach.

INTERNATIONALIZING THE CURRICULUM AT HOME

It has been argued that the real benefit of international experience for the kind of transformational learning noted above comes through the many “disorienting dilemmas” a student is faced with outside the comfort zone of their home environment. A number of academics are seeking to offer virtual mobility through technological means in order to share differing national and cultural experiences. But other opportunities are closer to home; cultural “otherness” comes in many forms and there are different kinds of comfort zones. Students in a contemporary university are likely to include people from differing religious, national or ethnic backgrounds, of different sexual orientations, or with differing physical abilities. If “otherness” is understood as anybody whom you perceive as different from yourself, cul-

tural others are not merely those from different countries or language groups.

Sharing perspectives across this alternative cultural divide means that, with imagination, creative “intercultural” opportunities can be used within a domestic curriculum. For example, if international community volunteering can result in personal transformation, could the same be true for local “intercultural” volunteering such as with different religious or faith groups, drug addiction centers, shelters for homeless people, women’s refuges or homes for mentally or physically challenged individuals?

The answer is that we do not know whether internationalization (or “interculturalization”) of the curriculum “at home” can be as successful as education abroad, including in the development of transferable employability skills. What is clear, however, is that we have yet to make the most of the diversity in our universities and local communities to support intercultural learning in domestic settings. However, if we accept that transformational learning, of the kind identified in the literature on international mobility, relates to the intercultural and experiential dimensions of that international experience, it is likely that replication in domestic intercultural contexts may offer some equivalence, at least.

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In order to achieve this, international and intercultural must be understood as complementary aspects of the broader notions of equity, diversity, and inclusion within our institutions, something not yet accepted in all universities. Relevant intercultural learning outcomes will need to be incorporated into curricula for all students—not simply opportunities for international mobility—and innovative assessment tasks developed which measure whether the outcomes have been achieved.

The assumption that study abroad offers the golden remedy must be challenged. The demands of today’s global professional contexts require us to offer an internationalized curriculum for all our students not simply the mobile few. Perhaps more importantly, the enhanced perspectives that result can help the development of more just and tolerant societies. ■

The Missing Link in Intercultural Competence Development: The University’s Organizational Capability to Deliver

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One can state comfortably that internationalization is an established reality at most continental European universities and that it has become an integral part of institutional strategies for education and research. Most universities in one way or another have adopted an international dimension in their strategies, either as core to and fully integrated in the overall institutional strategy, or as a separate pillar and action line.

The academic discourse around the rationales for internationalization of higher education at institutional, governmental, and supragovernmental levels typically includes cultural awareness and developing mutual understanding. Indeed, intercultural competence is a traditional rationale that over the years has retained its validity. However, the underlying values have shifted from contributing to “a better, more peaceful world”; to recruiting and attracting talents in the context of the knowledge society; and from “creating global citizens” to increased opportunities for employability and “obtaining knowledge useful of the internationalized professions of the post-industrial era.” The problem is that beyond statements that “internationalization is also about relating to diversity of cultures” or “celebrating cultural difference,” these rationales offer little clarity on how higher education institutions that aspire to enhance intercultural learning and competence development have progressed in this regard.

SHIFTING FOCUS ON OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT: A STEP FORWARD

Although shifts can be observed in the discourse on internationalization—from outputs in terms of internationalization activities to outcomes of these activities in relation to intercultural competence development and how this is assessed—the question arises whether one can also comfortably state that universities actually deliver and enhance