

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.

We have yet to make the most of the diversity in our universities and local communities to support intercultural learning in domestic settings.

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

JEANINE GREGERSEN-HERMANS

Jeanine Gregersen-Hermans is director of Student Recruitment at the University of Hull, UK. She is pursuing her PhD studies at the Centre for Higher Education Internationalization at the Università Cattolica, Milano, Italy. E-mail: j.gregersen@hull.ac.uk.

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

the intercultural competence of their graduates. Recently, Hawanini, a professor at INSEAD, raised serious concerns about whether transformation toward truly global universities is actually taking place. Even though considered successful in their internationalization reach, institutions might fail to deliver in terms of richness of the international experience and student learning. The process of internationalization might be failing because of institutional grounding in a domestic setting, organizational inertia, and regulatory and institutional barriers. This analysis makes clear that any approach to internationalization must not only take into account the developments in the external national or international environment. Internal factors, such as the organizational culture or available internal resources, are of influence as well. A focus on the organizational capability of a university to actually deliver on the promise of intercultural competence development for its graduates so far seems to be a missing link in continental European universities' strategies on internationalization and receives only limited attention in the academic literature.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY: THE MISSING LINK

Constraints in organizational capability can be identified according to three levels in a university: the institutional level, the academic disciplinary level (as organized in a faculty or school), and the level of the individual academic staff member.

THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

A disconnect can be observed in continental European universities between the strategic statements on intercultural competence development and how staff members actually include this learning outcome in their education and their daily activities, if at all. This is caused by a lack of awareness of intercultural competence development as an institutional strategic aim; a lack of an agreed-upon institutional vocabulary on how intercultural competence should be understood and how it could be developed; or a lack of the professional competence to contribute to the development of intercultural competence. An accepted university-wide approach to intercultural competence development for all students is rarely found.

How diversity is perceived in a university and included in the construction of daily activities depends on the salient approach to diversity in a specific institution. Perceptions regarding diversity and the associated level of institutional intercultural competence determine the relevance of intercultural competence and thereby the focus of the learning activities (what); the target groups (for whom); and how assessment and quality control are tailored. Many continental European universities have realized that the ability to include English as a medium of instruction is one of the con-

ditions for successfully achieving their internationalization aims. Therefore, they have included English-language competence in their human resource requirements for their staff and their systems of quality assurance. Integrated human resource requirements regarding intercultural competence, assessment of the level of intercultural competence of staff members—new and/or current—and requiring professional development of intercultural competence, can be considered rare exceptions.

Despite the evidence in the literature to the contrary, the prevalent assumption in universities is still that exposure to diversity and different international contexts will lead to the development of intercultural competence. Even when this type of exposure leads to personal transformational experiences, these are not necessarily intercultural ones. Gains in levels of intercultural competence development mostly are self-reported and the perceived levels of intercultural competence often are higher than the actual levels. This assumption is sustained through the personal experience of staff members, who themselves have spent periods abroad and, or, have been participating in an international professional or academic community.

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 who aspire to enhance intercultural learning and competence development have progressed in this regard

THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINARY LEVEL

A discipline and the community of scholars and students, which a discipline represents, can be described as a culture that reaches across national and cultural boundaries. The epistemology of a discipline will refer to its unique language, paradigms, and theoretical concepts. The culture of a discipline can be identified by disciplinary conventions and how these impact the interaction between its scholars and the external world. Differences can be observed between the range of academic disciplines—languages and linguistics, the social sciences, economics, medicine, and the natural sciences—which also can be understood as cultural differences. A strong academic culture can lead to constraints for intercultural competence development.

Intercultural competence, as a transferable skill, will be perceived as less relevant to effectively function within the context of an academic discipline. When students “join” the academic discipline, they are socialized toward how things are done within the discipline, both through formal and informal learning. Consequently, the impetus to develop advanced-level of competences to handle complex and controversial intercultural situations is lacking.

THE LEVEL OF THE INDIVIDUAL ACADEMIC

An individual academic is caught between the demands of the discipline and the institutional aspiration to educate graduates for a globalized labor market. Integrating intercultural competence as a learning outcome in education is perceived to take valuable time away from a focus on the academic discipline.

The past decades have seen a transformation from teacher-centered academic education to more student-centered approaches. For many academics, the role change from a teacher to facilitator is still an uncomfortable one. Adding the ability to understand cultural differences among students and within oneself, to recognize intercultural incidents, and to create an intercultural learning experience out of these, demands high levels of intercultural competence of an academic. Yet, traditionally these skills are not part of a university’s definition of the academic profile. This work demands specific pedagogic and didactical skills about which an academic may rightfully feel uncertain.

In their aspiration to develop interculturally competent graduates, university leaders need to focus not only on outputs or outcomes. Institutional work needs to be done on the missing link: the university’s organizational capability to deliver the desired results. To enhance intercultural competence development in its graduates, universities should focus on developing and implementing generic and discipline-specific learning outcomes. They should support the professional development of academic staff and enhance their ability to facilitate multicultural classrooms and intercultural competence development in students. They should also include intercultural competence as a basic requirement in all job specifications and human resource frameworks. To achieve such an ambition, a university-wide, adequately resourced change program—with a specific focus on intercultural competence development and in which a university engages actively with its stakeholders—seems to be needed. Focusing on the organizational capability to deliver is about transforming the dotted line between outputs and outcomes into a solid one. ■

Internationalizing Students in the Home Country—Dutch Policies

ADINDA VAN GALEN AND RENATE GIELESEN

Adinda van Gaalen is senior policy officer /researcher at Nuffic, Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education. E-mail: avangaalen@nuffic.nl. Renate Gielesen is senior project manager at the same organization. E-mail: rgielesen@nuffic.nl.

The internationalization of higher education is a key priority for the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Its aim is that all students in the Netherlands have obtained international and intercultural competencies upon graduation. No less than 91 percent of Dutch institutions participating in the study have an internationalization policy at the central level. Some institutions include the policy in their institutional plan, but close to 76 percent of all Dutch higher education institutions have a specific internationalization plan or are currently working to develop one. This is comparable to the global average of 75 percent in the International Association of Universities (IAU) 4th Global Survey 2014.

International and/or intercultural competencies of students are mentioned in many of the institutional strategy documents as the main goal of internationalization. Institutions tend to describe these competencies in general terms, specifying that further elaboration is to take place at the program level. Most institutions opt for a program-specific approach to international and intercultural competencies and are cautious when it comes to the implementation of a centralized institutional policy. Several policy plans explicitly mention that the context of a study program is essential in determining the relevant international and intercultural competencies. Institutions which do formulate competencies do not often distinguish between international and intercultural competencies. Examples of such competencies include (1) an attentive and inquisitive attitude; (2) intercultural effectiveness and communication; (3) knowledge of foreign languages; (4) flexibility and the ability to apply knowledge; and (5) ability to innovate according to international standards. This serves to demonstrate that—in addition to international and intercultural outcomes—internationalization can yield general learning outcomes, such as professional knowledge or personal skills.

INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HOME

These competencies cannot be achieved by all students through mobility alone. Between 2003 and 2011 a stable average of 22 percent of Dutch graduates has been inter-