



Website context: Learning from internationalisation → The Curriculum

Towards international 'graduateness'

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Overview

This paper asks the question "what does it mean to 'internationalise' the curriculum?" and tries to offer some broad principles for doing so, by paying brief attention to some important contributions from the literature on the subject. An important related question is "internationalisation for who?" and highlights the concern that such development benefit both home and international students, and also staff within the university.

Defining Internationalisation in the Curricula

In considering what appropriate "graduateness" in respect to internationalisation is, the work of two European scholars, Bremer and van der Wende (1995:10)ⁱ is instructive. They offer this definition of internationalised curricula: "Curricula with an international orientation in content, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally/socially) in an international and multicultural context, and designed for domestic students and/or foreign students."

Approaches to Internationalisation of the Curriculum

The literature distinguishes four different approaches to describing the internationalisation process, in relation to the curriculum (variously summarised by Caruana and Hanstock (2003:3-4)ⁱⁱ and Qiang (2003:250-251)ⁱⁱⁱ):

The Activity Approach, generally in operation in the 1970's and 1980's, promoted a range of activities such as student, staff and curriculum exchange and described internationalisation in terms of specific programmes and activities. Clearly the fact that such programmes and activities were or are distinct and often un-coordinated means that the internationalisation efforts such as these are fragmented, since the benefits and impact between such activities is not known or well understood.

The Competency Approach emphasises skills, attitude and values development among staff and students. In this approach, the development of such competencies encouraging better national, international and global citizenships, rather than the programmes (or means of doing so), is the focus.

The Ethos Approach encourages a culture and climate, valuing international, intercultural and cross-cultural initiatives. This approach accords with organisational development approaches which aim to create a climate and culture within an organisation in support of specific goals and principles. In so doing, this approach acknowledges the fundamental importance of international dimension to the concept of 'university', recognising the need for a supportive culture if such institutions and organisations are to flourish.

The Process (or Infusion) Approach stresses integration and infusion of the international and cross-cultural aspects of living and interaction into the teaching, learning and service agendas necessitating a range of policies, procedures and activities to achieve this. Sustainability of such an emphasis

is of interest here so that the need for a range of activities, supporting policies and organisational arrangements need to work in co-ordination.

Elements of an Internationalised Curriculum: a typology

Bremer and van der Wende (1995) offer a typology of internationalised curricula that illustrates the range of initiatives, approaches, programmes and perspectives that may be considered in encouraging an internationalised curriculum. Their model is helpful in developing curricula with an international focus, this is curricula:

1. with an international subject (e.g. international relations, European law);
2. in which the traditional/original subject area is broadened by an internationally comparative approach (e.g. international comparative education);
3. which prepare students for defined international professions (e.g. international business management, accountancy);
4. in foreign languages or linguistics which explicitly address cross-cultural communications issues and provide training in intercultural communications skills;
5. embracing interdisciplinary programmes such as region and area studies, covering more than one country (e.g. European, Scandinavia, or Asian Studies);
6. leading to internationally recognised professional qualifications;
7. leading to joint or double degrees;
8. in which compulsory parts are offered at institution(s) abroad, with local faculty;
9. in which the content is especially designed for international students.

Curriculum for International Learning: Graduate Qualities

In an example of the competency approach to internationalisation, the University of South Australia has developed seven graduate qualities which it wishes to engender through a curriculum responsive the principles of inclusivity and international education. These guidelines assist the writing of it's programmes. An 'International Perspective' is the seventh such graduate quality, and is presented below:

Quality 7. A graduate...demonstrates an international perspective as a professional and as a citizen. (reproduced from Learning Connection: Inclusivity^{iv})

Indicators	Inclusivity indicators	Educational strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • display an ability to think globally and consider issues from a variety of perspectives; • demonstrate an awareness of their own culture and its perspectives and other cultures and their perspectives; • appreciate the relation between their field of study locally and professional traditions elsewhere; • recognise intercultural issues relevant to their professional practice; • appreciate the importance of multicultural diversity to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate a global understanding of issues which involve considerations relevant to particular social groups such as women and indigenous people; • appreciate the similarities and differences between their own and others' constructions of social, economic and cultural aspects of community and citizenship; • appreciate the importance of historical and socioeconomic contexts in the articulation and valuing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify examples of the various value positions in multicultural Australia and their implications for the field or profession; • search out scholarship in the area from other cultures and provide opportunities for analysis of this scholarship against cultural values and standards; • compare social practices between cultural groups; • analyse from a range of cultural perspectives the issues, methodologies and solutions associated with

<p>professional practice and citizenship;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appreciate the complex and interacting factors that contribute to notions of culture and cultural relationships; • value diversity of language and culture; • appreciate and demonstrate the capacity to apply international standards and practices within the discipline or professional area; • demonstrate awareness of the implications of local decisions and actions for international communities and of international decisions and actions for local communities. 	<p>of professional practices locally and elsewhere;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek out and identify a range of cultural expectations and interpretations relevant to their professional practice; • appreciate the intersecting and sometimes conflicting value positions of multicultural Australia in professional practice; • appreciate the complex interplay of language, history and cultural institutions that operate within and between cultures; • understand the social issues associated with particular cultural and international contexts <p>critique international standards and practices within the notions of best practice of a profession demonstrate an awareness of the complexity of decision making with respect to various sub-groups within an international context.</p>	<p>current areas of debate within the discipline;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine ways in which particular cultural interpretations of social, scientific or technological applications of knowledge may include or exclude, advantage or disadvantage people from different cultural groups; • compare and contrast approaches to cultural pluralism in different nations and their implications for citizens and for professional practice in their discipline.
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The document is illustrative of the range of competencies which could be encouraged when embedded into curricula and when supported by institutional policy and practice. It offers a more embedded approach than the "ethos", "mobility" and "content" common to most approaches (Caruana and Hanstock: 2003: 5).

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ⁱ Bremer, L. and van der Wende, M. (1995) Internationalizing the curriculum in higher education: Experiences in the Netherlands. The Hague: The Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education.

ⁱⁱ Caruana, V and Hanstock, J (2003) "Internationalising the Curriculum: From Policy to Practice" Conference Proceedings: Education in a Changing Environment 17th-18th September 2003. <<http://www.ece.salford.ac.uk>> Accessed: 26 August, 2009.

ⁱⁱⁱ Qiang, Z (2003) "Internationalization of Higher Education: Towards a Conceptual Framework" in Policy Futures in Education, volume 1, number 1, 2003 <http://www.wwords.co.uk/pdf/validate.asp?j=pfie&vol=1&issue=2&year=2003&article=5_Zh_a_PFIE_1_2_web> Accessed: 26 August, 2009.

^{iv} "Educational strategies for improving inclusivity in curricula, teaching, learning and assessment" University of South Australia. <<http://www.unisa.edu.au/ltu/staff/practice/teaching/inclusivity.asp>> Accessed: 29 August 2007.