

Internationalising the curriculum

The information on these pages has been developed as part of the Teaching International Students project





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1. Introduction

Curriculum content and the pedagogical approaches used by teachers are key vehicles for improving teaching and learning for all students.

Internationalising the curriculum involves providing students with global perspectives of their discipline and giving them a broader knowledge base for their future careers. You can also help to provide them with a set of values and skills to operate in diverse cultural environments; skills often labelled 'intercultural competencies' or 'cross-cultural capabilities'. These values, skills and knowledge are discussed in the literature in relation to graduate attributes and global citizenship with an acknowledgement that graduates today will need the resilience and competencies to communicate and compete in a rapidly changing, complex global workforce and world.

2. The main issues: getting started

A key question is what internationalisation might mean at the disciplinary level, for example, what should an engineering, psychology or arts curriculum look like if it is to meet the needs of the student? There is often not as much guidance at the level of curriculum content as might be expected although clearly much work is currently being done in this area. This type of work provides an exciting opportunity as by engaging with your communities of practice, such as professional bodies, you can listen to, debate and contribute to the process of curriculum internationalisation within your subject area.

Some disciplines are already 'internationalised' (such as International Studies, Comparative Religions etc.) or lend themselves to internationalisation more easily. Internationalisation could mean providing a broader knowledge base through including conceptual and theoretical work from non-Western sources; providing opportunities for practice in diverse cultural contexts; or examining practice in the discipline in different parts of the world. The ultimate aim is to better equip students with the knowledge and skills they will need in their future careers as well as to generate and pluralise knowledge.

3. Possible solutions: suggestions for action

- Consider with students how knowledge/content might be alternatively constructed in different cultures.
- Ensure that learning outcomes include values and skills as well as knowledge.
- Discuss relevant ethical issues in international contexts.
- Give time in sessions to considering how professional practice might differ across the world.

4. Top tip

Build-in experiential learning so that students can experience and reflect on the intercultural aspects of their learning alongside the core disciplinary learning.

5. Top resources

If you only have a short time to explore the issues raised here then a good place to start is the [Centre for Curriculum Internationalisation](#) at Oxford Brookes University.

[Internationalisation of the curriculum in action website](#)

Ryan, J. (2011, May). International education and global learning: A one-way exercise or an endeavour in mutual understanding? [Keynote address](#) at the Learning and Teaching Conference, University of Northampton, 11 May 2011

If you wish to explore these issues more deeply, the contribution by Dr Viv Caruana of the Centre for Academic Practice and Research in Internationalisation (accessible from the download page of this section) gives an excellent overview of key concepts and debates as well as detailed suggestions for action.

6. What is the evidence?

There is considerable literature on the internationalisation of the curriculum, particularly at the conceptual level (for a review see Caruana and Spurling, 2007 accessible on the download page for this section). With respect to content some academics in this area have argued that internationalisation should be deeply embedded into the curriculum so that its very foundations are multicultural.

The internationalisation of a discipline is complex and will mean different things in different disciplines. It does not merely refer to the addition of a few 'international' examples, but rather, according to Webb (2005) 'is more radical and refers to the integration of a global perspective to curriculum development. This means that content does not arise out of a single cultural base but engages with global plurality in terms of sources of knowledge (Webb, 2005).

6.1 Further reading:

Clifford, V., Henderson, J. & Montgomery, C. (2013) Internationalising the curriculum for all students: The role of staff dialogue. In J. Ryan (Ed) *Cross-cultural teaching and learning for home and international students: Internationalisation of pedagogy and curriculum in higher education*. London: Routledge.

Crossman, J. & Bordia, S. (2011). Friendship and relationships in virtual and intercultural learning: Internationalising the Business curriculum. In *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* 51(2).

De Wit, H. & Beelen, J. (2013) Socrates in the low countries: Designing, implementing and facilitating internationalisation of the curriculum at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (HvA). In J. Ryan (Ed.), *Cross-cultural teaching and learning for home and international students: Internationalisation of Pedagogy and Curriculum in Higher Education*. London: Routledge.

Green, W. & Whitsed, C. (2013) Reflections on an alternative approach to continuing professional learning for internationalisation of the curriculum across disciplines. In *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 17(2).

Haigh, M. J. (2002). [Internationalisation of the Curriculum: designing inclusive education for a small world](#). *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 26 (1).

Jones, E. & Killick, D. (2007). Internationalisation of the curriculum. In E. Jones & S. Brown (Eds). *Internationalising Higher Education*. London: Routledge.

Jones, E. & Killick, D. (2013) Graduate attributes and the internationalized curriculum: Embedding a global outlook in disciplinary learning outcomes. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 17(2).

Killick, D. (2013) Global citizenship and campus community: Lessons from learning theory and the lived-experience of mobile students. In J. Ryan (Ed.), *Cross-cultural teaching and learning for home and international students: Internationalisation of Pedagogy and Curriculum in Higher Education*. London: Routledge.

Leask, B. (2005) Internationalisation of the curriculum: Teaching and learning. In J. Carroll & J. Ryan (Eds), *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all*. London: Routledge.

Leask, B. & Bridge, C. (2013) Comparing internationalisation of the curriculum in action across disciplines: Theoretical and practical perspectives. *Compare*, 43 n(1).

Montgomery, C. (2013) A future curriculum for future graduates? Rethinking a higher education curriculum for a globalised world. In J. Ryan (Ed.), *Cross-cultural teaching and learning for home and international students: Internationalisation of Pedagogy and Curriculum in Higher Education*. London: Routledge.

Ryan, J. (Ed) *Cross-cultural teaching and learning for home and international students: Internationalisation of pedagogy and curriculum in higher education*. London: Routledge.

Ryan, J. (2013) Listening to 'other' intellectual traditions: Learning in transcultural spaces. In J. Ryan (Ed) *Cross-cultural teaching and learning for home and international students: Internationalisation of pedagogy and curriculum in higher education*. London: Routledge.

Sawir, E. (2013) Internationalisation of higher education curriculum: The contribution of international students. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 11(3).

Slade, S., Galpin, F. and Prinsloo, P. (2013) Exploring stakeholder perspectives regarding a 'global' curriculum: A case study. In J. Ryan (Ed.), *Cross-cultural teaching and learning for home and international students: Internationalisation of Pedagogy and Curriculum in Higher Education*. London: Routledge.

Streitwieser, B. (Ed) (2014) *Internationalisation of Higher Education and Global Mobility*. Oxford Studies in Comparative Education. Oxford: Symposium Books.

Waldron, R. (2013) [Integrative internationalisation: Discipline and interaction in articulation](#). In *Internationalisation and the Student Experience*. PedRIO Paper 5, University of Plymouth Research Institute and Observatory.

Webb, G. (2005) Internationalisation of the curriculum: An institutional approach. In J. Carroll & J. Ryan (Eds), *Teaching international students: Improving learning for all*. London: Routledge.

[Joining up agendas: internationalisation and equality and diversity in HE](#) (2011) Equality Challenge Unit [Senior management briefing on the benefits of developing joined-up working between equality and diversity and internationalisation].

7. Related resources

[A-Khavari, A. \(2006\). The Opportunities and Possibilities for Internationalising the Curriculum of Law Schools in Australia. Legal Education Review. 16\(1, 2\). \(PDF IMB\)](#)

[Burnapp, D. \(2008\). Supporting international students in UK Higher Education: a course for staff. Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, University of Southampton.](#)

Chalmers, L., Dibiase, D., Donert, K., Hardwick, S. & Solem, M. (2004) Internationalizing Online Courses and Degree Programs in Geography. Position Paper for the International Network for Learning and Teaching (INLT) Post-IGU Workshop in Glasgow, Scotland 2004. (RTF 69.2KB)

Dolan, M., & Macias, I. (2009). Motivating International Students: a practical guide to aspects of learning and teaching. From the Handbook for Economics Lecturers. The Economics Network of the Higher Education Academy (PDF 338KB)

Freeman, M. (2009). Embedding the Development of Intercultural Competence in Business Higher Education.

Kemp, P. & Atfield, R. (Eds) (2008). Enhancing the International Learning Experience in Business and Management, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, Tourism. Threshold Press.

Sovic, S. & Blythman, M. (2009). Group Work and International Students in the Creative Arts. In Learning, Teaching and the Studio pp 108-115 of proceedings for GLAD09 Conference, York St John University, 21-22 October 2009.

Trahar, S. (2007). Teaching and Learning: the International Higher Education Landscape – Some Theories and Working Practices. ESCalate Discussion Paper.

Tudor, C. (2006). Addressing the Support Needs and Expectations of International Students for Teaching and Learning within an Innovative Medical Education Curriculum.

A teacher from Loughborough University reflects on internationalising Computer Science curricula

Giving a broader perspective using culturally varied examples. - Chris Ennew et al. University of Nottingham

The Centre for Curriculum Internationalisation at Oxford Brookes University

Internationalisation Research - Leeds Metropolitan University

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