Internationalising the curriculum – Exploding myths and making connections to encourage engagement

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Introduction

This contribution to the Teaching International Students resources comprises one individual’s view of what constitutes the internationalised curriculum and how it might be achieved in the light of issues commonly encountered in the field. The guidance provided here draws on a vast array of work produced by practitioners who have engaged in a scholarship of teaching and learning in order to try to deconstruct, understand and evaluate their practice (often in collaboration with their students) in the context of the internationalisation of Higher Education. Much of this work is readily accessible via the web-pages of CAPRI, Leeds Metropolitan University’s Centre for Academic Practice and Research in Internationalisation. If you want to know more about CAPRI further information is provided under ‘Resources’.

For some colleagues the points raised in this contribution will seem obvious but this work is designed primarily to support the uninitiated - those who are new to higher education, are new to the concept of the internationalised curriculum or have struggled to make sense of it. As with all knowledge, the ideas, concepts, suggestions etc. discussed here are contestable and thereby designed to fuel debate and the sharing of practice which is essential to further our understanding of current issues and possible solutions, and indeed, to try to anticipate future issues in a sector which will continue to undergo rapid, complex and extensive change in the globalised world.

What is the internationalised curriculum?

Internationalisation is a concept firmly rooted in traditional structures of Higher Education which has evolved over recent years in response to globalisation. As experience of internationalisation processes in 21st century contexts has matured, so these processes have themselves gained currency and legitimacy right across the sector. At the same time definitions have become less ambiguous and more readily applied in operational contexts. In contrast, Internationalisation of the Curriculum is a relatively new and unfamiliar phenomenon. It presents particular issues of conceptualisation since its emergence coincides with a period of rapid and complex change in HE and its meaning in practice tends to be blurred by the traditional distinctions drawn between home and international students.
For practitioners operating on the ground, teaching and supporting students, the meaning of the internationalised curriculum may be quite difficult to grasp. Often colleagues can readily discuss it in abstract terms but find it hard to identify essential principles, let alone apply them to specific educational contexts. Internationalising the curriculum tends to convey mixed messages and making sense of the concept and developing the capacity for curriculum change is heavily dependent upon mechanisms to support the dissemination and sharing of good practice.

A contemporary definition of the internationalised curriculum is provided by Betty Leask in her contribution to the inaugural symposium of CAPRI (Centre for Academic Practice and Research in Internationalisation) Ten Years On: Critical Issues in the Internationalisation of Higher Education held in April 2010 (see symposium materials available at: http://tinyurl.com/48bpbi2

Betty refers to the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning processes and support services of a program. She also refers to the need to be inclusive in the way we teach and assess students. Clearly then, the internationalised curriculum is about curriculum content, but it's also about the way in which that content is taught, learned and assessed and how students are supported within these processes. It is not only about being international or global in outlook it is about being intercultural and inclusive. Internationalisation therefore leads to discernible change in educational practice rather than the re-labelling and re-packaging of existing practices.

The contributions of managers, staff and students from six universities located in England, Wales and Australia to a recent ECU (Equality Challenge Unit) project Internationalisation and Equality and Diversity in Higher Education: Merging Identities http://tinyurl.com/4ungtaw not only provide a comprehensive view of the internationalised curriculum but also reveal a striking consensus of view across stakeholders. For participants in this project the internationalised curriculum is culturally relevant and empowers international and other ethnically diverse students, whilst enhancing the global dimension for all students. It therefore takes account of students’ diverse backgrounds and prior learning experiences and provides curriculum space to discuss and reflect on transitions. It enables students to appreciate their position within a globalised world, and to develop as global citizens with global perspectives and cross-cultural capabilities. The internationalised curriculum embraces both ‘internationalisation abroad’ and ‘internationalisation at home’ by providing
opportunities for staff and students to experience education, work placements etc. in other countries whilst, at the same time, bringing new cultural experience to the home campus through sharing international teaching, learning and research experience in multicultural classrooms.

Key concepts within the internationalised curriculum: inclusion, multiple perspectives and cross-cultural capability

What do we mean by inclusion?

There are two alternative theoretical positions on inclusion in educational contexts each of which influence the nature of student engagement in learning and the kind of learning development offered: firstly, no one should be disadvantaged and secondly, all should be helped to learn by a curriculum designed to achieve success. In the first case academic cultural capital is defined only in traditional or dominant mainstream ways (which are likely to create conditions for disengagement or opposition). The ‘no one should be disadvantaged’ scenario may be based on the principle of targeting support at particular groups of ‘non-traditional’ students or it may be integrated, based on the premise that all students require some level of support in acquiring academic cultural capital and adjusting to higher education practices and disciplinary norms. In the integrated model learning development is mainstreamed within the curriculum, focusing on the development of academic literacies within the disciplines rather than simply focusing on academic socialisation. This integrated model does help all students to acquire mainstream cultural capital but it does not necessarily imply a curriculum designed to help students achieve success when they come from a wide variety of ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The theoretical position that all students should be helped to learn by a curriculum designed to achieve success suggests a model of academic cultural capital development which not only builds upon but includes students’ backgrounds and cultures. In effect inclusion involves negotiating a balance between affirming students’ funds of knowledge and identities and bridging the gap in cultural academic capital to succeed.

Traditionally there has been a tendency in UK higher education to focus on mainstream academic cultural capital in providing student learning support and the second and more proactive approach has been challenged on professional grounds, as having a negative impact on the core business of universities, ‘dumbing down’ the academic standard and denigrating the home culture by teaching practices that not only lack academic rigour, but
also historical accuracy. This position however, fails to acknowledge that a curriculum which espouses only one perspective is unlikely to be synonymous with a high quality and rigorous education. The critical curriculum has to include many perspectives in order to ask the big questions which will draw out conflicting views and dispositions. Secondly, teaching practices that are student-centred, embrace students’ experience as a resource, engage relevant pedagogies and learning activities which enable them to deconstruct their own lives and to imagine alternatives is empowering. Such empowerment can in turn, assist integration processes and positively influence rates of attrition.

**Does the concept of multiple perspectives simply mean that students should be able to acknowledge another person’s cultural viewpoint?**

A key challenge for teachers in multicultural settings is balancing the tensions relating to inclusion, acknowledging that to some degree students need to assimilate in terms of becoming familiar with common practices (this is the way we do things around here and we can support you in adjusting to that) but the curriculum should also take account of the diversity of students’ backgrounds and cultures, particularly if learning is to have relevance. In negotiating the appropriate balance, it is useful to consider that within the internationalised curriculum inclusion effectively goes hand-in-hand with the principle of multiple perspectives. The internationalised curriculum is first and foremost the curriculum that acknowledges multiple ways of knowing, multiple ways of producing knowledge, different ways of living, doing, being and perhaps more importantly *becoming*. In a sense then multiple perspectives are inextricably linked to a familiar concept in UK higher education – criticality. In other words, questioning learning materials and experiences from multiple cultural standpoints, integrating, applying and extending the bounds of knowledge are essential components in achieving the multiple perspectives which heighten awareness of the contestability of knowledge in a globalised world.

**What about cross-cultural capability then?**

David Killick (2006)¹ defines cross-cultural capability as:

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intercultural awareness (awareness of self in relation to ‘other’)  
skills that enable students to communicate effectively across cultures  
national and multiple perspectives on the discipline that have traditionally characterised the ‘content’ approach to internationalising the curriculum.

Developing this capability doesn’t happen overnight as implied by the related concept of intercultural competence defined by Nilsson (2003)\(^2\) as ‘A long term change of a person’s knowledge (cognition), attitudes (emotions) and skills (behaviours) to enable positive and effective interaction with members of other cultures both at home and abroad’

Where do I start in internationalising the curriculum?

A useful starting point in curriculum design is to consider the question ‘What are the ‘internationalisation enablers’ which are present in the programme of study?’

It is important to note that firstly, whilst the programme of study is the initial unit of analysis and evidence of internationalisation in terms of cross-cultural capability does not need to be present in all constituent modules, the two principles of inclusion and multiple perspectives should be in evidence across the board. Secondly, internationalisation of the curriculum does not have to entail wholesale re-development of teaching materials and practice but can often be achieved by relatively small changes to existing practice.

Enablers of the internationalised curriculum include:

- the presence of international students and/or home students with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds in campus classrooms
- international collaborations and partnerships
- links with organisations in the community (business, industry, voluntary sector, public sector, third sector etc.) which are either representative of cross-cultural interests or are involved in work which has a cross-cultural dimension
- international accreditation of programmes
- international staff who are contractually available to teach and staff who have experience of teaching and research in other countries
- Learning materials and resources which originate outside the host country
- Opportunity to learn languages

Each enabler tends to come with its’ own challenges and opportunities and the way in which they are harnessed to support internationalisation may be usefully conceived as a process of

moving along a continuum from ‘technical observance’ to ‘relational participation’ (McTaggart, 2003). Technical observance represents a stage of development whereby for example, more international students are recruited to programmes, more learning materials originating from different parts of the globe are introduced, and more opportunities for study, work placement, volunteering etc. abroad are provided. Relational participation however, represents a level of much deeper engagement where curriculum designers consider how students will engage critically with text and theories, their peers and teachers, real world experience etc. in order to, not only reproduce knowledge in the traditional sense, but produce new and often challenging knowledge, from a process of viewing their world from diverse, multiple perspectives.

Cross-fertilisation between the disciplines

The variation in curriculum content across the disciplines tends to influence how the internationalised curriculum is formulated. For example, business and commercial subjects tend to focus on international perspectives whereas subjects like teacher education, sports studies and design explore intercultural and diversity issues and subjects like art, media and global ethics straddle the boundaries between the international and intercultural in curriculum content. A cross-disciplinary approach to curriculum development may well be beneficial particularly in designing the structured opportunities that will enable students to go beyond mere contact in the multicultural classroom and beyond. The creative and arts-based disciplines for example, require the development of technical skills complemented by open-mindedness about unfamiliar ideas and experiences, so personal knowledge and cultural knowledge become central resources in learning. By privileging and sharing personal, embodied stories in cross-cultural interactions new insights can provoke students to critically reflect on knowledge re-conceptualising it in the context of their own and others’ personal and professional lives.

What are the issues?

Most teachers and students experience similar issues in relation to the internationalised curriculum irrespective of the university, programme and discipline in which teaching, learning and assessment is taking place. Some of the more common issues are listed below although colleagues could undoubtedly extend the list in light of their experience:

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A mis-match of student and teacher expectations in multicultural classrooms
What teaching, learning and assessment strategies can make my curriculum more inclusive and how can they be introduced to an already packed curriculum?
The conundrum – Students don’t want to work together on multicultural group projects to develop cross-cultural capability. It seems that in order to cross the cultural boundaries students need the capability in the first place!
Students see the relevance of having cross-cultural skills in a globalised world of work but they are not explicitly assessed on them
On some programmes cohorts of students tend to be mono-cultural how does the internationalised curriculum work for them?
The majority of students do not want to go abroad even for a short period of time – how is cross-cultural capability to be developed for them?
How does global citizenship fit in the internationalised curriculum?

Possible solutions: suggestions for action

**Addressing the mismatch of expectations**

Developing the ‘international mind-set’ is a challenge for students and teachers alike and a major stumbling block is the relative expectations of lecturers and international students in their learning encounters. Lecturers may possess stereotypical views of international students as passive, obedient learners, lacking in autonomy who memorise and are unfamiliar with the host academic culture and therefore academically ‘deficient’.

However, globalisation means that educational practices across the world are developing apace through processes of cross-fertilisation. For indigenous staff collaboration with international colleagues on campus and at partner institutions can challenge the fundamental premise of this view which, put simply, is that culture is static. Teaching teams can also benefit from engaging colleagues working in international student support and specialists in international education, discussing how they feel the differences between UK and other cultures’ educational approaches might affect their and their students’ expectations about teaching and learning behaviours in the multicultural classroom. Perhaps more importantly it is necessary to engage students in considering their prior learning experiences in countering the mis-match of expectations and this leads us on to consider how teaching, learning and assessment strategies may be made more inclusive.

**Teaching, learning and assessment strategies for inclusion**

In diverse HE learning environments cultural pluralism should extend beyond the selection of course content to include experiences, perspectives and discourses which
enable students (and staff) to think critically about their own cultural values and biases. This process in turn, can inform the development of inclusive strategies. As noted earlier the inclusive curriculum should, at the very least, take account of students' diverse backgrounds and prior learning experiences. It may be appropriate in first meeting a cohort to, for example, ask individuals to write a short report of their prior learning and experience and allow subsequent curriculum space to discuss transitions. ‘First day introductions’ which encourage students to talk about their backgrounds can also produce useful responses which assist in determining just how much and what academic cultural capital they have and the kinds of interventions which can firstly, draw on this experience to enrich student learning through engaging them in diverse pedagogies and secondly, suggest the interventions required to support learning in the context of the host culture.

Different learning stimuli and environments can also allow students to gradually diversify and expand their learning style portfolio. Often colleagues will complain that the curriculum is too packed with content to allow space for consideration of individual learning styles etc. but it is not a case of tailoring curricula to individual needs but more a case of designing a curriculum which at its core, is sufficiently flexible and adaptable to be adjusted in a way that enhances its relevance for diverse student cohorts. Freeing up vital curriculum space can be achieved by applying the notion of the ‘threshold concept’ to curriculum design. Threshold concepts are a means by which teachers can avoid the ‘stuffed curriculum’ where different elements have different value, some more important and fundamental to learning than others, yet nothing gets left out and students become confused about what really matters and what does not. There is a growing body of research in HE which suggests that every discipline has its threshold concepts, ideas which enable students to ‘get it’, ideas which are not the whole story but are necessary, ideas which open doors revealing all sorts of other aspects of the subject which have remained hidden. Just ‘googling’ ‘threshold concept’ provides useful links to websites where the work of colleagues like Jan Meyer, Ray Land and Glynis Cousin can be accessed along with resources which suggest how threshold concepts are being developed in different disciplines.

In terms of assessment strategies within programmes, the received wisdom is that international students tend to under-perform in their first year of study as a consequence of cultural adjustment and language competence issues. However, there is some evidence to suggest that the greatest difficulties are encountered in the transition from
levels one to two of undergraduate study as a result of the threshold for success being significantly raised. In this respect the range of assessment methods applied at different levels and how they relate to the introductory nature of modules studied at level one are factors to consider. Notwithstanding this the key to inclusive assessment is mixed-method assessment strategies including for example, reflexive, problem-solving and comparative processes within cross-cultural contexts.

Mixed-method assessment strategies represent good practice generally but they are particularly important in the context of diverse cohorts. Evidence suggests that end of course examinations disadvantage students operating in a second language through ‘intellectual self-censorship’, that is, if a complex idea cannot be readily expressed in a second language it will not appear. Linked, formative assessments based on the use of learning journals or critical essays on selected readings, with hands-on input from a tutor are useful in preparing students for what can be quite challenging summative assessments. Short critical essays also have the advantage of enabling a diversity of students - no matter what their prior learning experience - to learn how to draw ideas from a literature, integrate, apply, extend and critique knowledge and develop their own informed opinions whilst justifying their arguments. In this way they provide a useful way of engaging students with concepts of plagiarism and collusion which assume relevance and meaning when discussed in the context of students’ own work. Finally, formative assessment feedback can be used to facilitate the transition from levels one to two of undergraduate study mentioned earlier, forming the basis of targeted support linked to students’ personal development plans (PDPs).

In order to close the ‘culture gap’ the specification of assignment briefs in module/programme handbooks needs to be supplemented by opportunities for students to engage in a dialogue that enables them to consider what they think they are being asked to do in comparison with their prior learning experience. Assignment titles can be a particular cause for anxiety for students and they need to be proactively engaged in strategies such as small group brainstorming sessions which enable them to explain their interpretation of key terms in the task specification and to discuss any they might introduce themselves.

For example, students often assume that to write in the first person is not appropriate in academic work so special attention needs to be paid to explanation when tasks involve self-evaluation and reflection in the first person. Similarly, inclusive assessment
strategies require a degree of flexibility and the inclusion of some space for collaboration and negotiation between tutors and students and collaboration between peers.

**Good practice in multicultural group work – addressing the conundrum**

It is sometimes assumed that multicultural group work is the most common and effective way of achieving the internationalised curriculum. However, two essential points should be emphasised at the outset:

- Group work generally exists within the curriculum with the primary purpose of developing key transferable skills such as team-work, problem solving etc. The cross-cultural perspective is simply another layer or dimension of the process. In principle it makes sense when faced with multicultural cohorts to harness their experiences, perspectives etc. to foster international/intercultural learning
- Students can develop international/intercultural perspectives without having to engage in multicultural group work. There are other possibilities for developing multiple perspectives through individuals engaging with multiple sources of knowledge, say via the world-wide web and working in multicultural communities in local or international settings.

It is generally the case that the ‘multiple mind-sets’ available in culturally heterogenous groups can generate a far superior output to that which can be achieved by monocultural groups or by individual competence alone. Achieving the superior output is however fraught with difficulty if not carefully thought through. Monocultural groups benefit from a high level of initial cohesion which enhances interaction and co-operation whereas in multicultural groups the richness of diversity itself can make intra-group interactions challenging and complex. Work in ‘relational demography’ shows that working with dissimilar others is often associated with negative outcomes. In multicultural contexts students may therefore be expected to experience tension between their own competing perspectives of social justice and self-interest in the absence of practical interventions which reduce uncertainty and promote real (as in connecting with students’ identities) conversations and two-way communication. If cultural differences remain unresolved conflict that impacts negatively on group dynamics is likely to be the outcome of students’ attempts to cross cultural boundaries.

Many home students fail to engage with their international counterparts for fear of at best, being mistakenly offensive or at worst, being seen to be ‘politically incorrect’ with all the possible implications that has for individuals and institutions. In crossing cultural boundaries it is essential that we and our students understand how beliefs about the world in which we live are culturally determined, that these beliefs shape our values and
these in turn determine our attitudes in particular circumstances. The good news is that as groups interact over time so deep level diversity, based on common identity can emerge to reduce intra-group conflict. Genuine interaction however, goes beyond mere contact, students need to be able to learn about ‘differences’ and get to know each other with sufficient intimacy as to be able to discern common goals, personal qualities etc.

In designing multicultural group work transparency of rationale within the context of overall learning aims and outcomes is crucial and it is necessary to convey a clear message to our students based on the principles that:

- Alternative cultural perspectives are to be encouraged, they are valued not least for their contribution towards developing students’ skills in being analytical, critical, flexible, adaptable and more aware of the complexity of the world in which we live
- Multicultural group work has tremendous relevance for students’ future lives and careers – whether you choose to work abroad or not, societies and the workplaces within them are increasingly multicultural
- Conflict and disagreement is to be anticipated as the inevitable consequence of crossing cultural boundaries and engaging multiple perspectives, but the classroom is constituted as the ‘safe’ environment in which to traverse this territory (just as much as it is the safe environment for those who feel uncomfortable presenting to an audience to develop appropriate skills, an environment where they can learn from their peers and tutors without fear of the ridicule that may be encountered in the sometimes highly competitive and less congenial world of work)
- The aim of the exercise is to consider alternative dispositions, but ultimately to understand where the common territory exists and why in some cases essential differences persist

Creating the safe and welcoming environment to enable students to share their alternative and sometimes conflicting views is perhaps the most challenging issue in relation to multicultural group work. The temptation is to provide students with material originating from outside the host culture and simply ask students to discuss from their own individual cultural perspectives. However, this kind of strategy tends to result in cultural silencing for the reasons outlined earlier. De-personalising the exchange of views can be achieved by considering the specific kinds of questions we want students to ask of the text or other medium that they are considering. The Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry website http://www.osdemethodology.org.uk/resources.html developed initially as an international education initiative with DFID funding, by the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice at the University of Nottingham, offers a wealth of useful resources to teachers in Higher Education who want to develop teaching strategies to support cultural boundary crossing. A good starting point is a Powerpoint presentation
‘Introduction - Critical Literacy’ which differentiates between the concepts of traditional reading, critical reading and critical literacy and provides a list of questions we might ask of text for each of the three levels of engagement.

Of course multicultural group work will benefit from applying the principles of good practice in group work more generally, in multicultural contexts. These principles may be summarised as follows:

- Consider the timing and intensity of group work – introductions to multicultural group work as part of induction coupled with reflection on the process in subsequent sessions are useful in relating the cross-cultural dimension of learning to students' lived experience on their programme of study.
- Design tasks which are relevant in terms of students’ profiles, work experience etc. and complementary to overall learning outcomes and syllabus.
- Randomly allocate individuals to groups and continually manipulate group composition to counter the influence of ‘comfort groups’.
- Think about using a range of learning stimuli (posters, presentations, simulations, video presentations etc.)
- Allow time for students to get to know each other, to explore their understanding of task requirements, to identify ground rules, to discuss ‘free-rider’ problems openly and decide a strategy for dealing with dysfunctional behaviours (under facilitator guidance) and to consider individual skills, resources, interests etc.
- Provide guidance on the types of group processes likely to create a positive working environment, such as regular summaries and functional pauses for reflection.
- Support groups in demarcating time to hear and learn about different cultural perspectives and interpretations and to evaluate and integrate their learning.
- Provide the opportunity for individuals to engage and be assessed in reflexive and constructive discussion of the group work process, exploring strengths and weaknesses, roles adopted, critical incidents etc. This is possibly a key component in assessing students’ cross-cultural capability as discussed in the subsequent section.

Finally, when designing internationalised curricula it is worth considering how learning and support within informal environments can assist in breaking down the cultural barriers that are encountered in multicultural group work. For example, online ‘compatriot clubs’, peer mentoring schemes involving home and international students, engaging home and international students in work in the local community are all helpful in developing meaningful relationships based on a sense of common identity.

**Assessing students’ cross-cultural capability**

The first question to consider when thinking about assessing cross-cultural capability is what learning outcomes we want students to be able to demonstrate in relation to their capability. Learning outcomes themselves are dependent upon a variety of considerations not least the
disciplinary context and the level of study. A good starting point is perhaps to consider the fundamental differentiation between international/intercultural awareness, international/intercultural competence and international/intercultural expertise which taken together constitute a continuum representing progressively deeper and broader levels of engagement with the cross-cultural dimension of learning. In effect the continuum is more representative of graduate attributes or over-arching principles for international/intercultural learning rather than learning outcomes per se which tend to be more granular and involve the use of significant verbs or ‘doing words’ to denote the level of cognitive (knowledge structures) and affective (perception of value issues) engagement.

The traditional emphasis on this differentiation has engendered a quite rigid view of the kinds of learning experience appropriate to each level of engagement. The use of international literature, case studies etc. has been recommended for developing international/intercultural awareness, international/intercultural competence has embraced the principle of ‘Internationalisation at Home’ involving international online collaborative projects or projects within the local community. Furthermore, it has been argued that international/intercultural expertise can only be developed through periods of study, work placement etc. abroad. This kind of taxonomy in itself reflects the popular myth that cross-cultural capability is a skill which those who are well-travelled are likely to possess, whilst those who have limited experience abroad are likely not to possess, at least in any great quantity!

Undoubtedly the taxonomy provides a useful framework to get us thinking about the kinds of experiences (and their duration) which might support different levels of engagement but at the end of the day it’s probably the case that whatever the context – online collaboration, study abroad, work in local multicultural communities etc. – the key consideration is how do we want students to engage with the experience? In a sense Bloom’s taxonomy of learning objectives (in both cognitive and affective domains, but particularly the affective) applied in cross-cultural learning situations remains the key principle in articulating the appropriate level of learning. So maybe the key question is how does Bloom’s taxonomy relate to the three levels of international/intercultural engagement identified earlier, or what ‘doing words’ (e.g. describe, apply, analyse, synthesise, critically reflect, create, receive (be aware) respond (to ‘other’) etc.) are commensurate with developing awareness as opposed to competence or expertise?

It is important when assessing for cross-cultural capability to bear in mind that it is not an absolute concept in the sense of either you have it or you don’t. Cross-cultural capability is
emergent, iterative and is highly dependent on experience. So the first principle in assessing cross-cultural capability is determining individual starting positions in relation to a topic, idea, concept, problem, experience etc. which will be dependent upon past experience, existing knowledge, beliefs, values and attitudes. Development of cross-cultural capability suggests some kind of shift in disposition, understanding how cross-cultural encounters have influenced beliefs, values and attitudes or alternatively, where dispositions remain constant or indeed, have been reinforced, understanding equally the factors related to the encounters which have given rise to this situation. This in turn tends to suggest that assessment should involve some kind of reflexive activity.

This represents something of a ‘two-edged sword’. On the plus side focussing on how students rationalise encounters and their influence on sense of self, focussing on the level and quality of the discourse counters the popular criticism in the field, that we as academics are not here to tell our students what values they should or should not espouse. With this kind of assessment we’re not asking students to demonstrate that they have internalised what we deem to be ‘appropriate’ values, we’re just asking them to think about their beliefs, values and attitudes in the light of cross-cultural encounters - what has changed, what remains the same and perhaps more importantly, where they go from there. The dilemma presents itself in that reflexivity calls for some measure of reflection which many colleagues tend to regard as a higher order cognitive skill not necessarily appropriate to the curriculum for say first year students. It is worth bearing in mind however that just as with criticality (a five year old can assume a critical stance but the way it is formulated and articulated and it’s meaning in knowledge contexts will be entirely different from the criticality of a PhD student) reflection can take on different forms. Just thinking ‘Oh dear, I wonder what went wrong there?’ involves one level of reflection, ‘Oh dear I didn’t plan for things to go that way, why did that happen?’ engages a different form and level of reflection, ‘Oh dear, I didn’t plan for things to go that way, I’m going to go on the web to see what I can find out about others’ experiences when they try to do this’ engages yet another form and level of reflection, and so on. So perhaps there is no dilemma at all! Perhaps it is possible to pitch the level of reflection by the judicious use of appropriate ‘doing words’. We can then assess the cross-cultural dimension of learning in terms of reflective processes which discuss awareness of self in relation to other, how knowledge is constructed in a globalised world, how students feel about encountering difference, how they cope with it and perhaps the degree to which it has been enriching, threatening or even perhaps innocuous!
**Internationalising the curriculum for monocultural cohorts and students who are reluctant to go abroad**

If the cohort won’t go to the global then the global must somehow be brought to the cohort. Engaging diversity from external sources is a way of achieving this and initiatives can range from fairly large and ambitious enterprises such as hosting an international summer school to much smaller (and what many colleagues might mistakenly consider inconsequential) initiatives like teachers sharing their own experience of teaching and research abroad with their students. The key principle is engaging multiple perspectives so the communication needs to be two-way.

In a sense the absence of cultural difference within student cohorts and the challenge of internationalising the curriculum for students who are reluctant to travel overseas to encounter difference prompts consideration of one of two particular possibilities: firstly, the use of learning technologies to make global connections, working online with students and/or staff at partner institutions overseas and secondly, the possibility of students (and staff) engaging in projects within multicultural groups, organisations etc. in the local community.

**Online collaboration**

The nature of interaction in computer-mediated communication (CMC) clearly differs from real face-to-face encounters in the field. Some argue CMC is no substitute for the rich cultural experience of say, student exchanges. In the field interaction is with people and places whereas in the virtual field trip it is with time and space. In online discussion the interaction is with people but without the places therefore task design should be carefully considered not only in the context of learning outcomes but also in terms of how ‘place’ can be created through the use of appropriate resources and learning materials.

Using online collaboration to internationalise the curriculum also requires careful thinking about pedagogy. Arguably applying the principles of the internationalised curriculum (inclusion, multiple perspectives and cross-cultural capability) implies a constructivist, rather than behaviourist model of learning anyway, but this is particularly evident in online collaborations. The learner assumes an active role embodying control, self-direction, and decisions in an atmosphere of reflection and free articulation. The learner constructs knowledge with the teacher acting as coach and scaffold, maintaining the collaborative, challenging and supportive learning environment.
Taking steps to identify the common ground between collaborating partners whilst also acknowledging local circumstances is a useful place to start when developing structures for online discussion. Basic organisation can itself be quite a challenge in the face of different terms and semester times, different curricula and assessments and different group sizes. Space for social exchanges early on to enable students to get to know each other is a particularly important consideration in online discussions which cross cultural boundaries. However, social space in itself can potentially conflict with another key principle in developing structures for interaction - that is authenticity of task. The interaction has to be meaningful, students need a reason to talk to each other and both groups of students need to benefit from the activities involved in the task. Therefore the social space may be more productively used by students to discuss for example, their initial interpretation of the task in hand.

Flexibility in design should allow students to engage their preferred learning style (which will be influenced by local educational practices) and to transfer knowledge to local contexts. Learning materials also need to be capable of interpretation from the perspective of each of the collaborating partner countries. Other key considerations are the extent to which tutors should guide discussions and perhaps more importantly, the incentives for students to take part.

Virtual communication in itself introduces another layer of complexity in cross-cultural relationships, whilst physical distance may not be an issue pedagogical distance can be more difficult to deal with in the online environment. This pedagogical distance needs to be considered in the context of student and staff expectations and relationships, learning approaches and behaviours, including literacy and how ideas, concepts, views etc. are expressed. Success will also be heavily dependent on the degree to which the societies of collaborating institutions or organisations embrace the ‘e’ concept within everyday life.

**Experiential learning in local multicultural community settings**

In common with international work placements, international volunteering schemes, exchange programmes etc. the possibilities for experiential learning opportunities in local multicultural community settings hinge, in the first place, on the existence of sustainable partnerships. A key issue related to such opportunities in terms of the student learning experience is the degree to which intervention is required to support learning, assuming that experience and learning are not synonymous. Kolb’s (1984) 4-stage learning cycle which comprises two fundamental processes to enable learning from experience - that is, grasping the experience and transforming or acting on the experience – may well provide the
necessary pedagogical insights to shape curriculum interventions that enable students to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes in real world cross-cultural encounters.

Kolb (1984) argues that experience can be grasped in two different ways. Firstly, concrete experience focuses on tangible elements of the immediate experience, encountering specific events and relating to people. Abstract conceptualisation - the alternative way of grasping the experience - relies on conceptual interpretation and symbolic representation of the experience, logical analysis of ideas and acting on intellectual understanding of a situation. Reflective observation and active experimentation are two different ways of acting on the experience. Reflective observation is an internalising mechanism, a process of trying to understand meaning, while active experimentation involves actual manipulation of the external world, influencing people and events through action.

In essence, the model suggests a process to transform experience into learning, which involves experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting. The model assumes that having or grasping an experience without doing anything with it (transforming or acting) is not sufficient for learning. Similarly, transformation cannot occur without an experience to be acted upon. Hence the model suggests tangible episodes or events (apprehending concrete experiences) form the basis for descriptive processing (reflective observations, internalising) which are then distilled into conceptual interpretations (abstract conceptualisation or comprehension of an experience) which then become the basis for action (active experimentation or testing ideas in the real world).

Arguably without appropriate interventions students engaging with local, multicultural communities may tend towards the concrete and the immediate, rather than reflective, in grasping the experience. Reflective journaling with support which enables students to identify critical incidents may provide the raw material to enable them to consider how their experience relates to their cross-cultural capabilities in terms of awareness of self in relation to ‘other’, communicating effectively across cultural boundaries and gaining multiple perspectives on their world.

A word about global citizenship
Global citizenship is essentially about participation, responsibility and activism. The connection between global citizenship education and the internationalised curriculum is clear from the guiding principles which underpin the pedagogy of ‘global citizenship’:

- **Empowerment** to develop as critical beings able to apply different ways of thinking about the world and the issues that confront it, challenging orthodoxy to bring about change
- **Ability** to understand the relevance of global issues to one’s own life
- **Global perspectives** which demonstrate the relationship between local actions and global consequences, highlight inequalities and encourage reflection upon major issues such as global warming, world trade, poverty, sustainability and human migration, within a framework of social justice and equality

Experiential learning in global contexts like, for example, international volunteering offer the opportunity for internationalisation of the curriculum and for developing graduates as global citizens. As discussed above, the degree of intervention required to support and articulate learning from the process of *participation* is an issue which is underscored within the context of global citizenship by considerations of responsibility and activism. In reality, students may be exposed to multiple experiences of people, but the impact of such exposure may pale into insignificance over time in the face of popular culture’s construction of the world which tends to over-simplify our understanding of cultural issues. Furthermore, action implies some understanding of how marginalised people have come to experience their world and how multiple voices and perspectives can challenge dominant and seemingly universal ways of reading the world. It seems that in Kolb’s terms the activism enshrined in notions of global citizenship perhaps requires more than a process of reflection on and internalising of experience. The experience perhaps needs to be supported by engagement with learning materials which can develop a more abstract conceptualisation of the experience.

The British Council’s ‘Counterpoint’ website ([http://www.counterpoint-online.org/](http://www.counterpoint-online.org/)) is certainly worth a visit in this respect. ‘Counterpoint’ is the ‘think-tank’ of the British Council - founded in 2002 - which aims to shape and develop thinking on the future of cultural relations and on the role and nature of culture in the globalised age. A key interest is how cultural relations can help to foster new collaborations that are crucial to the collective capacity to face major international challenges. The website offers a wealth of off-the-shelf, easily accessible, online resources such as podcasts, pamphlets, short books etc. representing the views of intellectual leaders in the field. These seem to offer much by way of facilitating deeper and broader thinking about the historical, social, cultural and economic implications of the different lives and conditions encountered within a broader global citizenship context. A wide range of key issues are covered, including for example, what does global civil society
mean and why is it important for cultural relations? The nature of humanitarianism as a historical phenomenon – are we hot-wired to be humanitarian? Does the problem of 'the gift' produce cultural hierarchies? What is the relationship of colonialism and humanitarianism? What understandings of the self drive humanitarian actions and the way they are received? How to return a sense of agency, individualism and humanity to non-refugees’ perceptions of refugees? The nature of the global village as a modernising force creating distinct cultures through a reciprocal process of exchange between individuals, groups and nation states?

The Teaching Citizenship in Higher Education website hosted by the University of Southampton (http://www.soton.ac.uk/citizened/) similarly offers eleven free to access learning activities that challenge students’ to explore different aspects of citizenship in contemporary society and to reflect on academic debates and their own attitudes and behaviours as citizens. Topics include: What is meant by global citizenship? (drawing on an approach developed in the ‘Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry’ educational project recommended in DfES Citizenship and Diversity Curriculum Review); Citizenship, Equality and Diversity - reflecting on the relationship between cultural rights and the demands of citizenship; New media and citizenship - where students consider the impact of new media technology on citizenship and whether the internet is a force for empowerment or disempowerment in contemporary societies.

Resources and further reading

As mentioned in the introduction this contribution draws heavily on a wide variety of resources accessible via CAPRI, the Centre for Academic Practice and Research in Internationalisation based at Leeds Metropolitan University, UK http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/world-widehorizons/index_CAPRI.htm

CAPRI ‘...seeks to revolutionise thinking in the field of internationalisation of higher education through the collaborative development and delivery of a new research and practice agenda.’ The Centre acknowledges that internationalisation has become a key issue in higher education and a key concept in the student learning experience right across the globe. Whilst colleagues, within their own practice and research settings, are continually responding innovatively to the challenges posed by globalisation much of this work is relatively inaccessible. CAPRI aims to consolidate this work, making it accessible via the development of a fully searchable resource facility. It also aims to broaden and deepen it through sustained collaboration facilitated by CAPRI’s global networks. Essentially CAPRI’s work is founded on four principles:
praxis - a virtuous circle whereby practice constitutes experiential learning, which feeds into research and theory, which in turn informs practice

a cross - disciplinary approach - promoting cross-fertilisation of disciplinary insights to encourage new approaches

global collaboration - engaging practitioners from regions with a relatively long history of work in the field of internationalisation (including North America, Australasia and Europe) and regions where internationalisation is a relatively new phenomenon (African and Asian continents)
crossing professional boundaries and hierarchies to enable staff in whatever role to develop sustainable innovative practice via multiple perspectives (academic, professional, support, managerial etc.)

CAPRI’s themed resource bank and events

The Resource Bank at CAPRI currently provides links to links to the Higher Education Academy commissioned (2007) The Internationalisation of UK Higher Education: a review of selected material and other more recently commissioned, themed and annotated bibliographies covering the internationalisation of Higher Education. The bibliographies provide live links where possible, and synopses of the work of colleagues who have researched their practice in internationalising the curriculum. Themes include:

- Internationalisation, intercultural learning and ‘Internationalisation at Home’
- Global perspectives, global citizenship and global graduates
- Understanding social and cultural adjustment and integration: where internationalisation meets equality, diversity and inclusion
- The technology-enabled internationalised curriculum: ICT facilitating border crossing
- Academic good conduct: from plagiarism to critical thinking
- Teaching, learning and assessment in the multicultural classroom: group work, inclusion and integration
- Intercultural competence and cross-cultural capability: practical examples and design tools
- Internationalisation abroad: designing and embedding transformative overseas experiences in the curriculum

http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/world-widehorizons/index_resource_bank.htm

CAPRI also offers a wide range of events for researchers and practitioners across the range of HE activity and operations. By hosting conferences, workshops, seminars and guest lectures, CAPRI seeks to:

- inform future developments in educational research and academic practice
- showcase cutting-edge practice and research related to Internationalisation of Higher Education
- develop international partnerships and networks with committed researchers and forward-looking institutions
- exchange effective practice across institutions, disciplines and individual stakeholders
You can browse events and access supporting materials by visiting: http://tinyurl.com/4pe9qlf

**Other resources**

CICIN Oxford Brookes’ Centre for International Curriculum Inquiry and Networking http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsld/ioc/ which forms part of the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development (OCSLD) aims to identify, promote, facilitate and share good practice and research into internationalising the curriculum at Brookes and nationally. The Centre collects research and provides teaching resources

Bournemouth University provides us with an example of internationalisation where the focus is firmly on global citizenship having been one of the first UK universities to establish a Centre for Global Perspectives http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/about/the_global_dimension/centre_for_global_perspectives/centre_for_global_perspectives.html. The centre provides a ‘hUBbing’ and co-ordinating function in supporting global perspectives in the curriculum, developing global awareness among staff and students, providing students with an international curriculum and opportunities for cross-cultural learning in an international environment. Curriculum development, integration of UK and international students, strategic partnerships, staff and student exchanges, concepts of ‘citizenship’ and global sustainability are all areas of concern for the centre. Teaching resources are available and a newsletter, the BUGLE, is published twice a year.

You can also go to http://www.ucl.ac.uk/cal/internationalisation/ and see how UCL is tackling this issue, with guidance documents but there are also useful collection and guidance sites overseas. One of the best is Sherri Williams' *Internationalization of the Curriculum* at: http://web.uvic.ca/~sherriw/index.htm which is organised with useful drop down menus and cites an extensive literature collection. Australian universities have long been a source of useful information on the internationalised curriculum and Betty Leask has been in the vanguard of developments. Take a look at Betty’s webpage: http://www.unisa.edu.au/ltu/staff/practice/internationalisation/info-kit.asp where she has created tools for academics to work on their curriculum.

The Teaching International Students project has collected resources linked to disciplines which you can find at: http://tinyurl.com/39hlyb

Two sources of particular interest which are useful as the basis for programme development within workshop settings are Val Clifford’s (2009), *Engaging the disciplines in internationalising the curriculum*, International Journal for Academic Development, Volume 14, Issue 2 pages 133 – 143 and Jude Carroll’s (2011) *An integrated model of curriculum redesign for internationalisation.* (NEED A LINK TO JUDE’S PIECE HERE WHICH WILL PRESUMABLY SIT ON THE MAIN TIS IoC PAGE) Val’s work explores disciplinary understandings of the concept of internationalisation of the curriculum and ways academics might be encouraged to engage with the discourse. Jude provides us with an integrated series of activities and tasks which can be used as part of an event or events aimed at programme teams who want to internationalise their curriculum and have both the time and expertise to take a broad and inclusive look at their programme as a whole.