Internationalising the Undergraduate Curriculum

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Internationalising the curriculum – what does it mean?

• “internationalisation certainly does mean ensuring that all students understand the international context of their discipline or professional course, that the content of their course incorporates multinational experience and thought, and that ideally they have the opportunity to study a portion of their course in another country…..
Internationalising the curriculum – what does it mean? (2)

• *Internationalisation also means that the way in which the course is delivered is culturally inclusive........*”

Professor David Robinson, VC Monash University, Monash.
Internationalisation

• Increasing interest in HE
  – Income earner?
  – Diversity / breadth
UK fails to integrate overseas students

Institutions warned to act now or lose foreign income to rivals, Rebecca Attwood and Tariq Tahir report

Overseas students will open UK universities unless more effort is made to integrate them, the sector was warned this week.

A recent British Council report put the export value of education and training at a whooping US$128 billion, more than the financial services and car industries.

However, concerns have been mounting that some universities are not doing all they could to ensure that international students mix with those from the UK, potentially alienating them and damaging the quality of their experiences.

Figures from a survey by the International Graduate Insight Group, published in full this week, show the UK lagging behind its competitors when it comes to integrating foreign students into university life.

As The Times Higher reported last week, the same survey revealed that UK universities are well ahead of rivals in the US, Australia and South Africa in the core areas of teaching and learning support. But they do not do as well in the areas of enabling overseas students to make friends, fit into the host nation’s culture and get to know its students.

This week, Martin Davidson, the British Council’s director general, was due to tell a CBI Higher Education and Industry conference on internationalising education: “We have always marketed ourselves on the quality of education, and we know that is one aspect that is very important for foreign students.”

 Leeds

John Humphreys and Jane Cotlon

The West should help African universities not only offer degrees but also cut poverty, say John Humphreys and Jane Cotlon

The Times Higher October 27

14 OPINION

Lancashire

The Lancashire Development Council’s £1.3 billion investment in the region’s infrastructure has been a major success, says Nick Buxton

14 FINANCE

University

The University of Manchester’s £350 million investment in the city’s economy has been a major success, says Nick Buxton

14 NEWS

Science

The science sector has a bright future, says Nick Buxton

14 SCIENCE
Internationalisation

• Increasing interest in HE
  – Income earner?
  – Diversity / breadth

• Different for medicine / HC professionals?
  • Limitation on numbers
  • Course outcomes – international and home students
  • Career goals

• Local relevance vs transferability
  – Bologna, Erasmus etc – emphasis has to be on transferability!
### Desirable qualities for international(ised) graduates

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<tr>
<th>Graduate qualities indicator</th>
<th>Generic indicators of graduate quality in an international curriculum</th>
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<td>1. Open to ‘otherness’</td>
<td>Willingness to think globally and inclusively, able to consider issues from a variety of perspectives and worldviews</td>
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<td>2. International perspective</td>
<td>Awareness of the implications of local decisions and actions for international contexts and communities and of international developments, decisions and actions for local communities and contexts</td>
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<td>3. Self-aware</td>
<td>Awareness of own cultural tradition and its perspectives in relation to other cultures and perspectives</td>
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<td>4. Aware of international professional contexts</td>
<td>Appreciate the relation between own field of study locally and professional tradition elsewhere. Appreciates and is able to apply international standards and practices within own discipline or area</td>
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<td>5. Respects ‘otherness’</td>
<td>Appreciates the importance of multicultural diversity to professional practice and citizenship. Accepts and values diversity in language and culture</td>
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<td>6. Understands ‘otherness’</td>
<td>Understands the tenets of different world views. Able to see the world as others conceive it. Appreciates the complex and interacting factors that contribute to notions of culture and cultural relationships. Recognises intercultural issues relevant to professional practice</td>
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From Leask, B. (1999)
What are the skills required for the global economy?

The 2004 report by the DfES, *Putting the World into World-Class Education*, defines them as:

- The ability to work confidently in multi-national teams;
- Knowledge of different business methods, legislation and ways of working;
- Understanding and appreciating different cultures;
- Feeling confident when working in and with different cultures
In theory...our students should develop them

CIHE report (2006) – benefits of UK (and Ireland) HE

- Our multi-cultural and diverse society, institutions and systems;
- *Our problem-based learning develops more innovative, questioning, analytical, lateral-thinking and entrepreneurial graduates*;
- The multi-disciplinary and work-experience approaches available to students, creating a broader knowledge and skill base;
- *The high international regard for our qualifications and research and development excellence*.
International students are at a disadvantage in the UK…

- Want to find placements in UK
- Ambitious and motivated
- Part-time work through friends e.g. in Chinese restaurants, cleaning etc

- Difficult to know UK students/other international students
- Have no/little knowledge of work application process in UK or at home
- “It took me a few interviews to grasp the ‘style’ of a British interview.”
- “Our lack of understanding of this country….is a big problem. It could make our work performance much more worst”
- Not confident of own language abilities

- Employers not confident of students’ language abilities – ‘…oral skills lacking…didn’t come across as confident in interview….’

(Evidence from Bournemouth & Sunderland focus groups)
But are UK students at a disadvantage globally?

- Poor language skills
- Poor empathy skills/lack of self awareness/reflection/bigger picture….in particular..
- Lack of cross cultural understanding and competence

Some multinationals say overseas students who come to the UK show “more initiative, self-motivation and drive as well as language skills….They wonder if such students through their very mobility are a self-identifying elite with senior management potential.” CIHE (2006)
Aspects to internationalising the curriculum

1. Focus on international matters and issues within the curriculum
2. Development of particular attributes and attitudes within students
3. Making a distinctive international contribution
4. All of these, and more?
International issues within the curriculum

• Types of students
• Incorporating international aspects within curriculum
• Embracing / promoting multicultural / multiethnic ethos
  – Staff development / recruitment
  – Student admissions
  – Teaching and assessment practices
  – Learning environments
  – Student support systems

Resources: Global health teaching resources available at
http://www.medact.org/content/Global%20Health%20Studies%20complete%20file.pdf
Development of particular attributes / attitudes within students

• Course outcomes
  – Specific
  – Ensure recognise view world as a potential employer

• Options to give students “added” international advantage or perspective
Challenges

• Ensuring institutional strategic commitment to internationalisation
  – *For the right reasons – e.g. profile higher than quality as a motivator according to IAU2005*
  – *Student & Staff Development is a key emerging rationale*

• Reviewing curriculum/LTA strategies for managed, cross cultural interaction
  – *Pressure to teach more students in less contact time?*
  – *Pressure to ensure ‘subject knowledge’ LOs achieved leaves little room for inclusion of important transferable skills?*
Challenges

• Managing tutors’ attitudes/developing their skills

• Managing students’ attitudes/fears/disinterest
  – Fear of communicating across culture – need guidance!
  – Passive xenophobia?
  – Challenge view that employment opportunity is better than employability development
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