



# JOURNAL OF Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice

## Editorial: Exploring Internationalisation of the Curriculum to Enhance the Student Experience

**Edited by:**

**Monika Foster, Edinburgh Napier University, UK**

**Lorraine Anderson, University of Dundee, UK**

Internationalised curriculum development is central to any institution wishing to approach internationalisation in a coherent way. The discussion on Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC), emphasizes the notion of curriculum as encompassing all aspects of learning and teaching (Kemmis & Fitzclarence, 1991) and works at formal, hidden and informal levels. Internationalisation of the curriculum as a process is summarized as 'the incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study' (Leask, 2009, p. 209). We are on the journey of our understanding of internationalised curriculum where the complex nature of IoC is only just beginning to be grasped by theorists and practitioners.

This special edition of the Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice builds on the enthusiasm in the community to further our understanding of these powerful forces in higher education today. It takes on the challenge to capture the latest innovation in theory and practice in the debate on IoC. Specifically, it sets out to explore the implications of internationalisation of the curriculum, how it can inform programme development, the extent to which internationalisation necessitates programme change, and the ways in which internationalisation and intercultural dimensions can be built into learning and teaching to enhance the student experience.

Within this issue we have a number of case studies which illustrate IoC and explore ways in which it can be an enabling factor to benefit all. We begin by exploring students' voices and perspectives in internationalisation. Jackson et al investigate international students' engagement with the 'global community' in Higher Education institutions. They conclude that students, while feeling part of many small 'communities', are less sure of their part in the wider community and the experience of postgraduate and undergraduate students may vary a lot. Sutherland et al put a spotlight on Erasmus students and explore the support offered under this programme. Instead of a mechanistic approach to supporting students in large homogenous groups, they propose that universities should embrace a more student-centred and reflective approach, encouraging students to develop the cultural intelligence necessary to fully benefit from their study in the UK.

Exploring technology enhanced learning in the provision of international and intercultural skills, one of the enablers of IoC, is on the agenda for many institutions. McKinnon et al report on an innovative study using the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) approach in entrepreneurship education. COIL stimulates the development of intercultural skills for students working with their peers at a Japanese institution using a Wiki, Skype and Facebook. The project has greatly enhanced students' awareness of the demands of cross-cultural team working and it has also enabled academic staff to experience collaboration across national borders.

Fillipponi et al's case study on a close collaboration with a charity and university in Uganda demonstrates how a unique opportunity was provided for nutrition and geography students to engage in community development projects and to develop a variety of key employability and intercultural skills. They also stress the support that must be offered for the facilitators in utilizing real world experiences and the value of supporting the development of relationships with external organizations. This theme is further explored by Middlemass and Peat in their 'on the horizon' paper which explores a virtual internationalisation model with a selection of recent case studies from UK and European universities. They provide recommendations on how to ensure students gain an international awareness and benefit from a collaborative experience with students and staff from other countries.

Dunford et al, in their 'on the horizon' paper, report on the development of the intercultural engagement toolkit for academic staff in higher education institutions. The toolkit is designed to support staff across subject disciplines in developing intercultural awareness in the classroom, one of the key areas of the internationalised curriculum. This innovative work is considered within the context of wider issues such as how to ensure a wider staff engagement with the toolkit and how this helps us to develop classroom practice.

In the quest to keep abreast of the latest theory and practice in internationalising the curriculum, this special issue includes two reviews of contributions from the *Internationalization in Higher Education* series, edited by Professor Elspeth Jones. Patricia Perry skillfully reviews a welcome addition to the literature on teaching 'educationally mobile students' by author and scholar Jude Carroll: Carroll, J. (2015). *Tools for Teaching in an Educationally Mobile World*. This guide includes practical suggestions for intercultural pedagogy to engage with educational mobility. Catherine Bovill takes on the challenge of reviewing the latest addition from a leader in the field of internationalisation of the curriculum, Betty Leask, in Leask, B. (2015). *Internationalizing the Curriculum*. This book

Editorial: Exploring Internationalisation of the Curriculum to Enhance the Student Experience

challenges our existing perceptions, suggesting that, instead of international students, our focus should be on subject discipline and ways that it supports all students to develop “graduate capabilities, global citizenship and intercultural competency” (Leask, 2015).

This special issue concludes with an opinion piece from Professor Sue Robson who proposes ways forward for the study of internationalisation of the curriculum and suggests that institutions build on the Higher Education Academy’s Internationalising Higher Education Framework to develop a more global and inclusive learning experience that responds to the needs and expectations of the diversity of students.

It is good to see such a great selection of innovative and subject driven contributions exploring both students’ and staff perspectives in internationalisation of the curriculum. These papers should encourage further discussion on this fast evolving and diverse area of higher education. We hope you enjoy reading and engaging with these ideas.

Monika Foster  
October 2015

References

- Carroll, J. (2015) *Tools for Teaching in an Educationally Mobile World*. Abingdon: Routledge
- Kemmis, S. and Fitzclarence, L. (1991) *Curriculum Theorising: Beyond Reproduction Theory*. Deakin University Victoria.
- Leask, B. (2015) *Internationalizing the Curriculum*. Abingdon: Routledge
- Leask, B. (2009) Using formal and informal curricula to improve interactions between home and international students. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 13(2) 205–221, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1028315308329786>