

Academics' engagement with internationalisation of the curriculum: towards a more holistic understanding of teaching and learning at the coalface. (0238)

During the past decade, the conceptualisation of 'internationalisation' in higher education as an essentially economic enterprise has been challenged by those who believe universities have the responsibility to prepare all students to live in an increasingly interconnected world.

'Internationalisation of the curriculum' (IoC) is now seen as the means to this end. While universities worldwide have responded to this shift by developing IoC policies, a gap between rhetoric and practice still exists (Childres, 2009). This paper will examine this gap from the perspective of academics responsible for curriculum leadership within their disciplinary units (schools) at one Australian university. This 'neglected group' has considerable potential to 'influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute' at the coalface of teaching and learning. Understanding perceptions and practices within this group is particularly important in relation to IoC because the process calls for a collaborative and embedded approach across degree programmes (Olson, Green & Hill, 2005/2008).

Defining 'internationalisation of the curriculum' (IoC) for 'global citizenship'

In this paper we take the following widely accepted definition of IoC as a starting point:

the process of developing a curriculum which is internationally oriented, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally, socially) in an international and multicultural context, and designed for domestic students as well as foreign students. (IDP, 1995)

We extend this definition, by considering the concept of 'global citizenship', in order to frame IoC as a transformative enterprise for academics and students. Acknowledging that the concept of 'global citizenship' is contested (Rhoades & Szelényi, 2011), we propose the following working definition: a global citizen is one who, understanding him/herself to be both subject and object of the 'widening and deepening' engagement and convergence across the globe (Held et al, 1998, p.2), assumes rights and responsibilities accordingly and actively pursues sustainability and social justice. Thus, global citizenship concerns one's *identity* as a social, cultural, and economic being, with *rights and responsibilities to act locally, nationally, and globally* (Lingard & Rizvi, 2010; Rhoades & Szelényi, 2011) and IoC for global citizenship will necessarily involve individual and social transformation.

Background and methodology

This paper focuses on one subset of findings in a larger case study undertaken at an Australian research-intensive University. The whole study was instigated by the university's senior executive, in order to establish current perspectives and practices of their senior academic staff within faculties, schools and research institutes.

All senior academics within faculties, schools and research institutes were invited to take part and almost all did. Semi-structured interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed in an inductive

and iterative manner, which included feedback from interviewees. Although the international learning experience at this university has historically been conceived primarily as study abroad, interviewees were asked to describe their own understanding and practices of IoC.

Significant findings drawn from the whole study have been reported elsewhere (Green and Mertova, 2009). However, we believe that interviews conducted within a particular group, those at the lowest level of management, within the schools warrant a closer look. From a total 115 interviews, 29 of those from the University's schools are re-considered in this paper.

Making sense of the findings

The most obvious finding was that all school-based interviewees identified a range of socio-cultural and material-economic challenges to the enactment of IoC in their context, including confusion about the university's definition of IoC, lack of identified leadership, 'know-how', support and resources to develop IoC within disciplinary contexts, lack of recognition and reward, isolation/lack of awareness about others' IoC initiatives, (perceived) constraints imposed by accreditation bodies/university rules regarding curriculum change, and in relation to study abroad, issues of access and equity.

Although these challenges were voiced uniformly across the schools, there was a wide variation in actual responses to IoC, from enthusiasm to lack of interest and cynicism. Characteristically, proponents: a) defined the concept as encompassing both internationalisation at home (Wächter, 2003) and student experience abroad; b) saw it as essential in order to develop students as global citizens; c) saw their discipline as 'inherently' or necessarily global; d) identified themselves as 'cosmopolitan' or 'global' in outlook; e) believed that their own international experience was critical to this; f) assumed responsibility for changing practices within their schools.

In contrast, those who had not engaged with IoC characteristically: a) focussed on study abroad and/or 'transactional' aspects of internationalisation at home (e.g., the economic benefits of international students versus the need for remediation); b) did not mention their students' need for an international education, or perceived it as a purely economic value; c) perceived their disciplinary knowledge as dominantly and uncritically Anglo/US in orientation; d) did not mention their place within the global context; e) did not mention personal international experience; f) saw all challenges as barriers to action.

Implications and conclusion

Previous studies investigating academics' engagement with IoC have focussed on disciplinary cultures (Clifford, 2009) and conceptions of teaching and learning (Bell, 2004). Because the current study was exploratory and open-ended in nature, from a limited range perspectives (i.e. leaders'), it is impossible to draw any substantial conclusions in relation to this previous research. Nevertheless, our findings serve to complicate current understandings and point to implications for further research and practice.

For all interviewees, perceptions and practices were influenced by the socio-cultural and material-economic contexts within which they worked, as well as their personal worldview and the purpose of education, understanding of globalisation, identity as teacher/researcher and citizen, and their discipline's orientation to the global context. These findings call for a serious engagement with

Sanderson's (2007) concept of the 'internationalisation of the academic Self', as a way of theorising the centrality of experience and self-reflexivity in IoC. In addition, we argue that this 'Self' needs to be considered alongside the socio-cultural, political and economic factors - the 'practice architectures' - which 'prefigure practice', while also being subject to change by those affected by them (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008, p. 59). In short, our practice needs to be informed by further research which investigates the complex interplay between individuals and social conditions at the coalface of teaching and learning.

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