Internationalisation of the curriculum: cross-cultural capability and global perspectives

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'Internationalisation…should infuse all facets of the post-secondary education system, fostering global understanding and developing skills for effective living and working in a diverse world.' (Francis, 1993, cited in McTaggart, 2003, p.4)

'Internationalisation of curriculum… cannot be done by a university edict but through the creative utilisation of the imagination of all those who make up that university.' (Rivzi, 2000, p. 6)

'Internationalising the curriculum cannot be an isolated activity or an end in itself. Rather it is a university wide process of continuous development, review, improvement and self-evaluation. That process must build a shared ethos of cultural inclusion and supports the integration and infusion of international and intercultural dimensions into teaching, research, service, and administration and support to students.' (McTaggart, 2003, p. 8)

Internationalisation is impacting variably on higher education in the UK as institutions grapple with what it means for them and how it relates to missions, visions, strategies, staff and students. Some institutions are only barely beginning; others have appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellors with a specific remit to drive internationalisation. As a sector overall, we have some catching up to do, certainly in relation to many other English-speaking countries, if we are to move to *developed* models of what it means to be 'international'. At Leeds Met, I believe, we are ahead of the majority of UK institutions, the holistic approach adopted at Leeds Met and Bournemouth are perhaps examples that all HEIs should be working towards' (Bourn, McKenzie, Shiel, 2006, p. 43), but there remains a significant amount of work to be done on a variety of levels. This article will explore just one dimension of internationalisation - the curriculum.

Terminology and Context
As is obvious from the morphology, internationalisation is a process not a product. For a university, internationalisation is the process by which we transform our practice from its current state to a state which is more 'international'. This of course begs several questions, and is leading to a wide range of responses across the sector. However, what is common is the emerging recognition that internationalisation is not simply to do with recruiting income-generating international students or offering more programmes overseas on a for-profit basis.

At Leeds Met we have adopted within the Internationalisation Strategy a frequently cited definition of internationalisation as, 'the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service of an institution.' (Knight and de Wit, 1995), which has subsequently been updated by Knight to read: 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education' (Knight, 2003, p.2). More specifically in curriculum terms at Leeds Met, I suggest, 'internationalisation is the process whereby we seek to provide the

environment in which graduates will be supported in achieving those attributes which fit them for a globalising world' (Killick, 2006a, p. 1). One point of considerable confusion stems from equating internationalisation with international students or activities – when, in fact, it is very emphatically about all students and all contexts. International students have the potential to contribute to and to gain from the internationalisation of the experience of all students (and staff), while off-shore teaching has the potential to internationalise programme content and delivery and staff perspectives to the benefit of all students. However, neither in themselves constitute internationalisation. Indeed, without significant related work on integration, mutual learning, and feeding back new perspectives, they may not contribute to internationalisation at all.

Our guidelines document identifies two key concepts as **Graduate Attributes** for students across the University (see D'Sena 2006 for explorations of the graduate attribute of Global Citizenship), and curriculum review as the process by which we seek to achieve and evidence this:

Graduate Attributes

1   Cross-Cultural Capability

As a graduate attribute for effective and responsible engagement with a globalising world, cross-cultural capability can be seen as comprising three major elements:

> Intercultural awareness and the associated communication skills
> International and multicultural perspectives on one's discipline area
> Application in practice

2   Global Perspectives

An ethical underpinning for the development of cross-cultural capability, and a values-based ethos for its application. Through Global Perspectives we seek to demonstrate the relationships between local actions and global consequences, highlighting inequalities, helping us reflect upon major issues such as global warming, world trade, poverty, sustainable development, human migration, and promoting a response based on justice and equality not charity.

Source: *World-Wide Horizons: Cross-Cultural Capability and Global Perspectives Guidelines for Curriculum Review*, p. 3 (Leeds Met).

Our review of all existing provision against the guidelines is now into its third year, while the Assessment, Learning and Teaching Strategy requires new provision and provision undergoing re-approval to make explicit how these aspirations are being addressed.

While it is arguable, and argued, that promoting 'values' or 'citizenship' have no place in university education, this supposes a deficit model of what is meant by education, and a rather naïve assumption about the value-neutrality of 'truth'. Our own vision incorporates concepts such as 'world-wide horizons', 'an international and multicultural ethos', and 'working beyond boundaries'. At least implicit in all of these is a core value relating to respect for the 'other'. UNESCO's World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century (1998) sets out a raft of values-based objectives for the role of universities, just

one example being to, 'educate for citizenship and for active participation in society, with a worldwide vision, for endogenous capacity-building, and for the consolidation of human rights, sustainable development, democracy and peace, in a context of justice' (UNESCO, 1998, p. 3). HEFCE is less ambitious, but has taken some steps into the values territory through developments around sustainability in higher education, including 'a commitment to continue to support the Higher Education Academy's work to identify, share and support the development of good practice in relation to sustainable development in the curriculum' (HEFCE, 2005).

Features of an Internationalised Curriculum
As professionals in higher education, aspects of cross-cultural capability which apply to ourselves include the ability and the will to provide delivery and assessment which is appropriate and inclusive across our whole student body. Efforts to achieve this are supportive not only of the process of internationalisation, but also our work on widening participation, access and diversity. In addition to this basic requirement for inclusive pedagogy, some key features of an internationalised curriculum would be one which, throughout:

- Requires students to engage critically with international[1] sources of knowledge
- Provides and respects perspectives on knowledge from other cultures
- Stimulates and facilitates meaningful and challenging student interaction across cultural boundaries
- Builds the skills of communicating across cultures
- Builds the skills of communicating with speakers of other languages
- Develops global perspectives on actions, outcomes, and professions associated with the discipline
- Explores global ethical issues – social justice, human rights, etc
- Requires students to engage with global issues relevant to the discipline area – environmental degradation, sustainable futures, poverty reduction, etc.
- Develops an appreciation of one's own cultural identity and values and their impact on our relationship to the "other"
- Incorporates an appreciation of global citizenship
- Values cultural diversity in its broadest sense

The Extended Curriculum
The formal curriculum is supported considerably by aspects within the extended curriculum. Examples at Leeds Met would include international volunteering, community learning, Global Citizen Awards, student exchanges, international festivals and celebrations, and by the University itself 'walking the talk' (through Fair Trade, sustainability projects, Leeds Met Africa, International Reflections, etc.).

Conclusion
Internationalisation is an institution-wide process, relevant to all students – and to all staff. While UK higher education has been a little tardy by comparison to some other contexts, perhaps Australia in particular, the sector is now seeing the central importance of grasping this complex nettle. Leeds Met is ahead of the game, and through the process of curriculum review we hope to continue to offer 'an education which is fit for purpose, and today that must mean a curriculum in all disciplines which prepares all our graduates to be able to play an informed and a principled part in the global community' (Killick, 2006(b), p. 5).

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[1] The term international should always be taken in its broadest sense – not limited to the 'Western'/ 'Developed' world.

Colleagues in many discipline areas at Leeds Met have begun to explore how this is being realised in current practice and to identify ways in which practice can be improved. First steps on a thousand mile journey.

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