

Editorial

This special issue of the ALT Journal is timely in its focus on internationalisation; timely for the UK HE sector in general as work in this area is moving onto or up the agenda for many institutions, and timely for Leeds Metropolitan University in particular as we consolidate our reputation for a comprehensive and values-based approach through CAPRI – the Centre for Academic Practice and Research in Internationalisation – and timely for our work to refocus the undergraduate curriculum, perhaps in particular with an eye to the graduate attribute of ‘a *global outlook*’. It is also timely that this should be the focus of the first online journal, since this offers greater international exposure, and allows more opportunities for voices to ‘talk back’ through peer review and citations in other publications.

If there was any doubt that internationalisation is a very broad construct, a review of the submissions in this issue should convince any reader of its scope and reach. The call for papers was clear in seeking submissions to reflect this scope, and in wishing to exhibit the very personal/local responses that work on this global activity can evoke. The contributors have responded wonderfully to that call. A recent visitor from New Zealand was ‘thrilled’ to have her photo taken with what she described as the ‘gurus’ of internationalisation here at Leeds Met, and we are privileged to have papers from **Elsbeth Jones** and **Viv Caruana**, two of those gurus, in this edition. We are further privileged to have attracted an external submission from **Betty Leask**, a great activist in pushing forward the academic dialogue and praxis of internationalisation in Australia and internationally. Collectively, these three far-ranging papers provide a comprehensive critique of the ‘state of the art’ and the issues at stake in the field of higher education internationalisation today. Any readers still inclined to equate internationalisation solely with international student recruitment will find much here to help them broaden their conceptualisation. International students, and how we respond to them, are an important element to the internationalisation mix. Taking ourselves beyond the ‘deficit model’ (which problematises them) to a recognition of the learning journeys they take through living and studying here and of the richness they offer to our campus community is itself a significant move in the internationalisation process.

In its comprehensive form, internationalisation is focused on developing the (comprehensive) institutional responses to the challenges posed by the connectivities and disjunctures arising out of that messy complex called globalisation; enabling us and our students to make our way in the world responsibly, whatever “fragilities” it poses (Barnett, 2000). At Leeds Met, we began our institution-wide journey towards a comprehensive approach to curriculum internationalisation through a five-year University-wide curriculum review project, focused around cross-cultural capability and global perspectives (Killick, 2006). In part, this special edition offers a chance to view how that process has begun to embed global dimensions within our practice. In this journal, we are particularly concerned with the challenges and responses which relate to assessment, learning and teaching – but we should always be ready to step back and set these in the broader ‘liquid’ context in which HE now ‘flows’ - to steal a metaphor from Zygmunt Bauman (2000, 2005). These contexts impact upon how and where and to whom we might be expected to deliver courses. They should also inform *why* we shape our courses and their delivery in the ways we do. Threaded through all the contributions here we find the twin themes of curriculum internationalisation emerging – *inclusive practice* appropriate to a multicultural and international student body, and *global relevance* in terms of curriculum content, context, and experience.

Cath Sanderson’s personal reflection on working with Ethiopian university partners as students and as co-developers of a postgraduate award in higher education (our PGCHE) evocatively captures the personal impacts which international work experience can have upon colleagues, and the ‘washback’ this can have in terms of perspectives and practice back home. We see from **Rupert Bozeat, David Hind, Richard Wright** and **Kate Grafton** excellent examples of how international/intercultural learning can be brought into the experience of our home students through credit-bearing international study and work opportunities. Their respective rationales show clearly how embedding aspects of a global outlook serve to strengthen understanding of and engagement with the discipline and also add to their students’ cross-cultural capability and global perspectives. Short reflections from **Michael Ashley** and **Amie Elson**, student participants in Leeds Met’s

international volunteering opportunities, give vivid insights into the potential for personal transformation through even relatively short-term experiences. **Michelle Blackburn** illustrates how similar outcomes can also be effectively achieved through a carefully designed learning activity which requires no physical travel. Michelle's case study offers a model for others who may be pleasantly surprised, like **Adrian Richardson**, at the relevance found within the Leeds Met curriculum review guidelines document on cross-cultural capability and global perspectives (Killick, 2006). Adrian's challenge as to why this should have been a particular focus (when there are potentially so many others) may reflect how far this institution has come in responding to the curriculum challenges posed by globalisation. Certainly, where health and safety, sustainability, and many other agendas are a focus for course development, we should now feel confident that they will be addressed in any course with a mindful eye on international and intercultural attitudes and practices.

Whatever our subject area, the perspectives of 'others' and the abilities to hear and respond appropriately to those perspectives must be relevant to delivery to a diverse cohort, and even to a highly heterogeneous cohort whose future personal and professional lives will be enacted amidst the cultural complexity of the world(s) they will inhabit. Dimensions of the international student experience are captured by **Joe Ploner's** insightful reflective piece on his own experience as an international PhD student, and issues around inclusive support and (mis)conceptions about language abilities in our diverse student population are drawn out by **Dawn Leggott** in her info-piece on English language provision at Leeds Met.

The processes of internationalisation are ongoing, unlikely to ever be 'done-with', but as the issues that drive them become better understood, we can set them more firmly within the everyday business of ensuring our institutions, our curricula, and our academic practices are meeting the needs of our students. To do so means recognising that those needs are themselves in flux as the world in which we must all enact our lives changes rapidly and unpredictably. With a comprehensive programme of curriculum review currently in hand in this University, we have an opportunity to take forward our well-earned reputation as a sector leader in curriculum internationalisation, and to realise the potential synergies between this

work and that relating to equality and diversity, employability, responsibility, and resilience. The contributors to this special edition have provided personal stories, considered insights, and examples of practice which can inform that local process and contribute to the internationalisation agenda globally.

David Killick
Principal Lecturer, Carnegie Faculty
CAPRI (Centre for Academic Practice and Research in Internationalisation)
D.Killick@leedsmet.ac.uk

References

Barnett, R. (2000) Supercomplexity and the curriculum. *Studies in Higher Education* 25, 255–265.

Bauman, Z. (2000) *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2005) The liquid-modern challenges to education. In: Robinson, S. & Katulushi, C. (eds) *Values in Higher Education*. St Bride's Major: Aureus/University of Leeds.

Killick, D. (2006) *Cross-Cultural Capability and Global Perspectives: Guidelines for Curriculum Review*. Leeds: Leeds Metropolitan University. Available at: http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/Cross_Cultural_Capability_Guidelines.pdf [Accessed 27 May 2011].