

Diversity and not Dilution: Enriching undergraduate science education through internationalizing the curriculum

More than any other time in the past, in part because of technology and in part because of ease of global travel, students are facing a world of diverse and rich cultures upon which there is superimposed a global culture. Internationalizing the curriculum involves maintaining this balance of the global with the local, rather than aiming for homogeneity. Indeed, many of our current pressing problems are global in nature and solving them will take concerted efforts across disciplines, and throughout the world. Our science students increasingly work in a world where multicultural teams and concerns are the norm, understanding of Others' ways of viewing the world matters and has value. Yet are we doing everything we should to integrate cultural competencies or global awareness, understanding, and respect of otherness, both in terms of societal culture, but also in terms of the culture around science, into our undergraduate curricula? Do we have a responsibility to do so? Should we assume because science is objective, there is a universality to how it is done, so a common understanding exists? If we accept that this is not true at least on the more nuanced levels, then we must find ways to integrate global perspectives into our programs. In this presentation, we examine the concept of internationalizing the curriculum and consider possibilities for greater inclusivity within the classroom. We present a number of ways in which we have adapted our respective curricula to include diverse perspectives, and invite participants to explore possibilities in their own disciplinary settings.

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