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How Internationalised Is Your Curriculum?

A REFLECTIVE TOOL AIMED AT ENHANCING STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Developing students' understanding of their own cultural background, enhancing their intercultural understanding and ultimately accepting and valuing alternative cultural perspectives, have had an increasing profile in higher education programmes of study over recent years. This has been driven by the international movement of peoples and the human rights movement, both of which have increased awareness of equality and diversity issues. The focus of this article is a reflective tool developed by Cardiff Metropolitan University to gauge the current capacity of programmes of study to develop students' cultural understanding.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of Internationalisation at Home is to use the taught curriculum, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to develop students' cultural capacity so they are better equipped to work and live in an increasingly globalised world. To do this, Cardiff Metropolitan University developed a reflective tool for the purposes of

- raising awareness of the existing university strategic objective to internationalise the curriculum;
- establishing a benchmark of current practice across programmes of study to enable our central Quality Enhancement Directorate to plan events and workshops, and develop resources and case studies to build the capacity of our academic staff to deliver on this strategic objective; and
- developing teachers' understanding of potential internationalisation practices, piquing interest in internationalisation and encouraging on-going development of an internationalised curriculum.

This article presents a rationale for the development of the tool, outlines the processes of developing and of introducing the tool to staff, and discusses some of the outcomes and further potential of the tool. It is aimed primarily at staff whose role is the enhancement of teaching practices across a university or within a faculty, and who may wish to use and adapt the tool presented, or develop something similar. It could also be useful to any university teaching staff interested in developing a more internationalised curriculum.

Context Internationalising the curriculum is a visible strategic objective across much of the university sector in the UK and in other Western nations. Two drivers for this have been recognised: the first is largely economic (and probably until recently the more dominant driver) and focuses on developing the skills and knowledge of graduates to work globally (Haigh, 2002; Jones & Killick, 2007). The second is values-based and focuses on broader conceptions of the global citizen including notions of moral responsibility to all peoples, social justice and human rights (Clifford & Montgomery, 2011; Jones & Killick, 2007; Morey, 2000; Clifford & Montgomery, 2017).

The concept of global citizenship

The notion of the global citizen is somewhat contested; there is no global state to which one could hold citizenship (Clifford & Montgomery, 2017). However, the concept of global citizenship does encourage consideration of social responsibility, a critical understanding of oneself and one's own culture, and an appreciation of other's cultures and perspectives (Nussbaum, 2002; Tangney & Clifford, 2018). It also implies active engagement in facilitating social change (Clifford & Montgomery, 2017; 2014; Giroux, 1988).

Truly transformative values-based approaches to curriculum design are gaining greater traction in the literature and in universities' responses to curriculum development (Clifford & Montgomery, 2017). Cardiff Metropolitan University itself has moved even further in this direction since

the development of the internationalisation tool, which is discussed in more detail below. There is also greater visibility in the literature of impact of indigenous and other alternative perspectives on disciplines themselves, on learning paradigms, and on research methodologies (e.g. McKinley, Grant, Middleton, Irwin, & Williams, 2011; Smith, 2012; Hooks, 2009). This parallels with greater engagement with other aspects of inclusivity (in the UK the protected characteristics covered in the Equality Act 2010 are a useful reference point) and the resultant pressure to ensure that all students are reflected in the discipline itself, and can approach the discipline from their own perspective.

Developing university teachers' capacity to respond to changing strategic objectives can be challenging, not least because of the tensions generated by a range of competing agendas and demands on teachers' time. To implement internationalisation of the curriculum, teachers need to engage critically with a concept which is complex and multi-faceted and this may pose greater challenges than those of other strategic objectives. Internationalisation requires not only the inclusion of alternative material to the curriculum; it also requires a rethinking of how the curriculum is taught, and how and what skills we are developing in our students. It requires opportunities for students to examine their own cultural values, and to consider how these shape our understanding of the world, our relationships with others, and our approaches to collaborative work and problem-solving. Teachers themselves may not have explicitly considered this through their own learning, and so may be developing their own perspective whilst thinking about it in terms of their teaching. Teachers also need to be able to interpret internationalisation within their own teaching context and discipline (Green & Mertova, 2001). All these challenges formed the rationale for the design of the tool.

In Cardiff Metropolitan University internationalisation of the curriculum was included as a cross-cutting theme in our Corporate Strategic Plan 2012–17, and all academic programmes of study were required to demonstrate the integration of internationalisation within their curricula before the end of the planning period. As in many universities, once themes for teaching development are identified and agreed in the Strategic Plan, a breakdown of the process for development is led from the centre in consultation with schools through the Learning and Teaching Board.

In Cardiff Metropolitan University, in response to the internationalisation objective, the Learning and Teaching Board commissioned the Quality Enhancement Directorate to create the institutional internationalisation reflective tool, which could then be used periodically gauge the extent to which curricula were internationalised. Companion guidance documents, the staging of development, linkages with other quality assurance procedures and timeframes were then determined. Staff from the Quality Enhancement Directorate then generated this material and reported regularly to the Learning and Teaching Board on progress and outcomes.

The rationale for the design of the tool

Internationalisation of the curriculum at Cardiff Metropolitan University

Decisions to internationalise the curriculum

In the case of internationalising the curriculum, it was decided the following:

- The reflective tool would be developed and data from the tool would be used to assist in determining the scope of subsequent teaching development.
- After piloting of the tool, its dissemination to programme directors would be accompanied by drop-in sessions across both campuses to help staff complete their programme's responses to the reflective tool. Subsequent online resources would be developed outlining the principles of internationalisation and incorporating best-practice examples from the reflective tool data.
- Workshops would run 2–3 times per year to highlight the principles, present best practice, and provide a discursive environment for staff to continue to develop their understanding and to familiarise new staff with internationalisation.
- Quality assurance processes would be updated so that programme directors would be asked to reflect on ongoing changes to teaching practice annually and through their five-yearly programme review.
- Training of reviewers in quality assurance would also be updated.
- Progress reports would be presented annually to the central Learning and Teaching Board by the schools and by the Quality Enhancement Directorate.

2. Literature Review

In the literature, the characteristics of an internationalised curriculum have developed over time as conceptions of internationalisation have become more sophisticated. Several themes emerge and are persistent throughout the literature, however, and these were taken into consideration in the development of the tool.

Using international content

Intentionally using international content and/or comparative studies are a useful start to engaging students in alternative cultural perspectives (Morey, 2000; Whalley, Langley, & Villarreal, 1997; Green & Mertova, 2001; Kitano, 1997). However, many writers support the idea that internationalisation is greater than introducing alternative content. “[T]eaching methodologies, learning strategies and assessment mechanisms” (Jones & Killick, 2007, p. 109) also need to be enhanced. Cultural learning potential needs to be explicitly valued through methods of engagement

in the classroom, and particularly through purposeful inclusion into assessment questions and marking criteria. Use of alternative texts can be transformative, but not if these texts continue to be examined through a Western lens. Alternative ways of seeing can also be facilitated by engaging international academic staff in the conversation, through mobility, and ongoing self-critique. Aligned with this, is the need for inclusive teaching, where stereotyping and discrimination are not tolerated (Morey, 2000; Whalley et al, 1997).

Providing opportunities for students to examine their own cultural beliefs so that they subsequently re-examine their view of the 'other' is also commonly cited in the literature (e.g. Morey, 2000; Haigh, 2002; Clifford & Montgomery, 2011). In addition, encouraging, valuing and incorporating the knowledge and cultural understandings brought by the diversity of the student group itself can open up 'other ways of knowing' for students (e.g. Leask, 2009; Joseph, 2011). It is easy to assume that the basis on which individuals determine what they know is the same for everyone; however it is likely that there is a range of ways to acquire knowledge—such as learning from others in authority, using gut instinct, or learning from evidence-based scientific studies. For example, how do individuals make decisions about their health and illness? Do they defer unquestionably to authority, and which authority (e.g. doctors, homeopaths, religious figures)? Do people trust their own judgment based on the body's response to a new fitness regime? Are they convinced by the scientific method of drug testing?

Providing opportunities for students to examine their own beliefs

Ways of knowing are culturally bound, and even in the West, constantly being revised. Consider for example the arguments and counter-arguments for assisted dying or for stem cell research where there are perspectives from medicine, ethics, human rights and religion. Appreciating these tensions can create an openness to others, and this may be particularly pertinent for graduates in the health sector.

Enabling student recognition that ways of knowing and knowledge itself is socially constructed, and that disciplines themselves are culturally bound is a key aspect of the internationalised experience (Morey, 2000; Clifford & Joseph, 2005; Ryan & Tilbury, 2013). For example, Nicholson (2010) reports that

"between 2003 and 2007 undergrads made up 80 per cent of study subjects in six top psychology journals, and that 96 per cent of all psychology samples come from countries that make up only 12 per cent of the world's population" (p. 1).

This inevitably produces a bias in the data and in the understanding of the subject area. Nicholson goes on to note that perception-related tests done under research conditions often have surprising results, even in areas that Westerners might consider definitive across all populations. The Muller-Lyer visual perception test for example (cited in Nicholson, 2010, p. 1) shows two lines of equal length with arrowheads converging or diverging at each end. American undergraduates tend to perceive these as different lengths, whereas an indigenous population in the Kalahari does not, undermining the 'taken for granted' assumption that what Westerners consider 'scientific' may not be universal.

Interdisciplinary opportunities may further enhance alternative perspectives as students may more readily recognise the impact of their own discipline on other people, e.g. the capitalist model of business based on building profits for shareholders is often in direct conflict with ethical issues such as impact on the health and wellbeing of small communities which students studying global health may be encountering.

Expanding students' understanding of alternative perspectives and other ways of seeing can also be facilitated through purposeful links between international and local students (Green & Mertova, 2001; Leask, 2009), and increased mobility opportunities for students. Introducing international speakers into the teaching environment may offer further opportunity for critique or assessment of the extent to which a discipline may be culturally bound as long as they bring a distinct perspective.

A curriculum that enables and encourages students to examine their own perspective, and to challenge underlying assumptions about discipline knowledge, can be truly transformative for their learning. It can also lead to an increasing appetite for and commitment to informed social action. Encouraging students not only to respond with openness to workplace situations where alternative perspectives are voiced, but also to challenge others in social situations who may present homophobic or racist attitudes, may help build a more inclusive society for all (Morey, 2000; Clifford & Montgomery, 2011; Banks, 2007).

3. Tool Design

The reflective tool (Tangney, 2015) was based on the prevailing themes in the literature on internationalisation of the curriculum and linked with strategic objectives and existing opportunities within the university. The reflective tool included:

- ten open questions highlighting areas of the curriculum that could be enhanced to increase students' intercultural skills;
- three possible responses to these questions;
- corresponding feedback for each response within the tool itself; and
- open text boxes for users to explain their practice in more detail.

The three possible responses and the corresponding feedback were presented hierarchically with responses indicating a high level of engagement, a moderate level, or minor or no engagement with internationalisation initiatives. This was to encourage programme teams to discuss

the options amongst themselves and thus provide further opportunity for developing their understanding. The tool was created in Moodle using a quiz tool and the 'Making Assessment Count' approach (Kerrigan et al, 2011) whereby respondents were asked to reflect on practice and received customised feedback based on their response to further develop their understanding.

The ten questions (expanded with the responses and feedback in Tangney, 2015) were as follows:

The ten tool questions

- Does the programme promote a global perspective by, for example, international case or comparative studies, articles or texts?
- Does the delivery and content of the programme acknowledge the existence and validity of a range of international perspectives, values and ontologies?
- Does the programme content include critical reflection on students' own cultural values, the cultural values of others, and the cultural values underlying the discipline discourse?
- Does the programme content avoid inappropriate ethnocentric language and cultural assumptions?
- Is intercultural student interaction actively encouraged, for example, through sensitively but explicitly directed collaborative learning activities?
- Does the programme offer opportunities for face-to-face interaction with people from different cultures, for example, through guest presenters, use of internet technology or international placements/projects?
- Do the programme descriptions and publicity clearly explicate the nature and extent of the international content?
- Does the programme learning environment foster the development of intercultural competence of all students?
- Are intercultural skills explicitly developed in PDP (personal development planning) activities?
- Are staff teaching on the programme encouraged to develop their own intercultural awareness and skills, for example, through international exchanges?

Hierarchical responses were written for each question. For example, the question 'Does the delivery and content of the programme acknowledge the existence and validity of a range of international perspectives, values and ontologies?' has three alternative responses from which teaching staff may select:

- 'The teaching and content of the programme clearly articulates alternative cultural perspectives and ways of thinking about the discipline itself, and these are systematically developed and assessed throughout the programme.'

Three alternative responses to each question

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- 'Students are able to undertake comparative studies if they wish, but the dominant cultural perspective pervades the teaching and assessment processes.'
- 'Students are not exposed to alternative perspectives on the discipline.'

As is highlighted here, the possible responses, while brief, provided further context to the question and the expectations of the university.

In addition, each response also had corresponding feedback' associated with it; for example, if the programme director makes a claim of moderate engagement based on the response descriptor, the feedback would be aligned to this hierarchical level (see Tangney, 2015, for more detail on this). The feedback would first acknowledge the level of engagement the programme is already integrating into its learning and teaching. It also provided further contextual information to expand conceptions of internationalisation, asked further questions of staff, provided advice on appropriate teaching and assessment approaches which could be developed, and included links to existing case studies and resources on Cardiff Metropolitan University's and other websites. It also enabled the Quality Enhancement Directorate to make links between, for example, this initiative and the pre-existing university-wide graduate attributes which include cultural awareness and global citizenship, and to embed a specific reference to the Welsh context where appropriate. For example, the three feedback statements associated with the above responses were:

Three feedback statements to each response

- 'This is a great achievement and one which will enable students to develop a sophisticated understanding of alternative cultural perspectives and intercultural working. To continue this, the staff team needs to maintain its own understanding of cultural perspectives of knowledge and practice within the discipline through ongoing engagement with the literature and to strive for broader institutional recognition of this principle.'
- 'To fully embed internationalisation the team needs to consider the broad scope of intercultural literacy and this includes challenging the prevailing cultural frame of the discipline itself, and to offer alternative perspectives alongside the mainstream within the teaching programme. This may be challenging, but may just require a change of focus to the team's engagement with the relevant literature, and this could also be enhanced by inviting guest lecturers and seeking out relevant conferences. Alternative perspectives could also be invited from students and rewarded. The assessment processes could be enhanced to expect students to engage with more than one cultural perspective.'
- 'To be truly inclusive we need to be mindful of the cultural boundaries of the disciplines within which we teach and share these with students. This may not be happening because staff themselves are not required or encouraged to examine the cultural basis of knowledge and practice within the discipline, and perhaps this would be a good place to start a conversation. A broader reading of the discipline literature, inviting guest lecturers into the university, or linking up with a university or other agency abroad are all suggested starting points.'

Furthermore, to mitigate against over-estimating engagement with internationalisation, if staff selected high or medium engagement with each question, they were asked to provide an example. These examples provided further confirmation of engagement, and could then form a pool of resources for the development of others.

The tool, once developed, was piloted in two schools across a total of six programmes nominated by senior management in the respective schools. Programme directors were asked to discuss the questions with their programme teams and determine the response option that most accurately reflected their programme. The pilot indicated the tool encouraged staff to reflect on how the curriculum was designed and delivered. Staff also found the feedback statements to be helpful, and the tool helped teams to identify their programme's strengths as well as areas for further development.

Introducing the tool to staff

The pilot also highlighted the challenges of using the tool, for example programme directors realised that it was easier to get the programme team together face to face to respond to the tool as the director did not necessarily know all the appropriate learning opportunities offered to students across a whole programme, and other means of communicating this information were less effective.

The feedback from the pilot study enabled further guidance regarding completion of the tool to be provided. It was sent to all programme directors and it was suggested they discuss the questions at their next meeting with all the programme team, and select the most appropriate response. At the same time workshops and drop-in sessions were run across the university to engage staff more generally in the principles of internationalisation, and answer any questions that staff might have as they engage with and complete the reflective evaluation process. A deadline for the completion of the process was given.

4. Results and Discussion

Following the first release of the evaluation tool, responses were received from 65% of programme directors, and following prompting this increased to 87%. Whilst the pilot addressed most of the challenges that programme directors and their teams faced in responding to the tool, competing demands continued to impact on the timeliness of responses from programme teams.

The tool enabled both quantitative and qualitative data to be collected. The data demonstrated that most programmes indicated some engagement with internationalisation and the quality of the examples they provided was generally appropriate. An engagement was evident particularly in using international and comparative case studies and articles; providing an inclusive learning environment; avoiding making cultural assumptions; and taking advantage of face-to-face interactions with people from different cultures through the student group itself, guest lecturers and international links.

Fortunately, there was also evidence from some programme directors' open text responses of considered discussion with the team, and the identification of purposeful changes they intended to make to their curricula as a response to the questions being discussed.

Areas that emerged from the data

There were some areas that emerged from the data however where programme teams acknowledged weaknesses in their internationalisation provision: helping students to articulate the links between the development of cultural competencies and their employability; explicit reference to the opportunities for development of intercultural skills within programme documentation and marketing materials; and making explicit the cultural boundedness of the discipline itself.

The first of these is particularly emphasised in Cardiff Metropolitan University as the university strives to improve employability outcomes for our graduates. So while we have continued to engage staff in all aspects of internationalisation, encouraging teaching staff to explicitly discuss the purpose of internationalising the curriculum with students to broaden their employability prospects, as well as to enhance all aspects of their lives in an increasingly global and diverse community has been a major theme of discussion within workshops.

Example from social sciences

Full analysis of the data will not be presented in this article; however, some examples are provided for illustrative purposes. The most sophisticated responses were unsurprisingly from programmes of study with a significant social science component and where interaction with the public in often stressful circumstances was integral as is the case, for example, in health care programmes and youth and community work. In the youth and community work undergraduate degree offered at the university, it was reported that the programme included for example, consideration of how politics, multinational companies and the banking industry all had an impact on social, local and global poverty. In addition, there was an examination of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice included in the curriculum, using examples from the American Civil Rights Movement, apartheid in South Africa, LGBT (lesbian, gay,

bisexual and trans) campaigns, and disability campaigns. There was also evidence of a purposeful discussion of the competing perspectives related to globalisation, and evidence of a purposeful individual self-discovery and discovery of others through thinking about the communities students worked within as political, socio-economic and cultural entities.

Other programmes, e.g. some in art and design, were mindful of the Eurocentric bias that some students had probably been exposed to before entry into higher education. They presented evidence of active encouragement of students to tackle current political or social issues that they feel passionate about in their artistic practice, such as mental health, the Syrian civil war or ageing. Through assignment briefs, the programme attempts to develop students' understanding of their responsibilities as people as much as artists, and this is encouraged through trips abroad, staff mobility, visiting lecturers and comparative studies.

Example of art and design programmes

Responses from staff in sports programmes were varied depending on whether the emphasis was on the scientific or social aspects of sport. In one science-based sports programme, it was acknowledged that the development of inter-cultural skills was mostly incidental. There were opportunities for this development but it was not an explicit part of the course, and they identified potential areas of expansion in this regard in the future.

Example of sports programmes

5. Follow-Up to the Reflective Tool

Following the responses of the evaluation tool, a range of initiatives has been undertaken to further embed internationalisation into curriculum development. These have included

- embedding the tool and examples of good practice into a workshop run several times during the year, and compulsory for new academic staff;
- extracting case studies of good practice from the tool data and adding these to the website;
- purposefully linking people and programme teams to facilitate further development—this has been further facilitated by our Open Door network where staff can highlight expertise they are willing to share with others;

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- adding internationalisation as a theme to the university's next learning and teaching conference;
- integrating requests for evidence of ongoing development through the cycles of annual programme review and five-yearly periodic reviews, and providing corresponding training for quality assurance evaluators;
- liaising with the Students' Union to integrate internationalisation into the annual Student-led Teaching Fellowship awards; and
- suggesting that internationalisation become a standing agenda item at programme committees.

The integrated approach to engaging staff in developing an internationalised curriculum was an important aspect of the university's application for the Comprehensive Internationalisation Learning Badge provided by the International Association of Universities. We were successful in receiving this Badge in 2017, the first university in the world to receive it. Our approach to integrating internationalisation into learning and teaching was commended.

Keys to success and suggestions for development

As stated in the introduction, developing teachers' capacity for internationalising the curriculum is perhaps more challenging than other strategic initiatives. Some staff may not be particularly far along in this journey themselves, and mid-career staff who are often in leadership positions do not generally participate in learning and teaching workshops to the same extent as new staff. Yet all staff are vital to the embedding of internationalisation in the curriculum because it cuts across all modules and levels of a programme. Expecting staff to engage with the tool as a programme team rather than as individuals was a major key to its success. It enabled ideas to be generated collectively and facilitated the discussion of an integrated approach across a whole programme of study.

Development of alternative questions

In developing a similar reflective tool to gauge engagement across a group of programmes, readers may wish to alter the questions or develop alternative questions. The internationalisation literature continues to evolve, and this may generate additional ideas for further development, particularly in encouraging students to take an active approach in their day-to-day lives. Skills preparation and empowerment for subsequent action was less emphasised in the first iteration of the reflective tool in our university but has been part of the further discussion since.

Other areas for inclusion

Other areas that were less emphasised but which might be considered by readers include:

- capturing learning through informal opportunities between international and local students (Green & Mertova, 2011; Leask, 2009);
- optional exchange opportunities and extra-curricular activities such as volunteering (Jones & Killick, 2007); and
- interdisciplinary learning (Green & Mertova, 2011); there is considerable potential for themed projects approached from a range of disciplines to enhance understanding of the global citizen.

Through embedding internationalisation into other quality assurance processes Cardiff Metropolitan University has managed to maintain the profile of internationalisation. Programme directors are asked to report on it through their annual programme review, and students are asked about their lived experience of internationalisation in validation and review processes.

The university is currently re-envisioning its graduate attributes framework, moving away from skills and attributes towards a values-based approach to curriculum design and graduate development. Ethical, digital, global and entrepreneurial (EDGE) dimensions will be integrated into learning outcomes and will be measured through assessment points at levels 4 and 5 (second and third-year undergraduates). Students will first encounter EDGE before they even arrive at the university through a learning gain tool that will ask them to reflect on their personal values, skills and attributes. This will provide a basis for ongoing meaningful discussion between the student and their personal tutor. This is a work in progress, but it is anticipated that this will provide further capacity for ongoing and sustainable development of internationalisation for both staff and students, and has been made possible by a changing commitment to internationalisation in the university.

Further developments at Cardiff
Metropolitan University

6. Conclusion

This article has provided a rationale for the development of a reflective tool to gauge and enhance engagement with internationalising the curriculum across all programmes in the university. It provides suggestions for introducing the tool to staff, and some discussion of the data generated by the dissemination and use made of the tool. Using the tool has highlighted strengths of Cardiff Metropolitan University's internationalised provision and identified areas for further development thus providing a platform for additional workshops and other approaches. Programmes with high levels of success have also offered ideas for advancing internationalisation in other programmes, and the tool has introduced us to 'internationalisation champions' in the university while providing case studies for dissemination. It has been a very worthwhile approach for the university.

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