Theoretical Approaches to Internationalisation of the Curriculum

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Alongside the impact of historical, economic, political and social developments on Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC) there has been attempts to theorise how institutions have reacted to these changes. In this section the Economic Rationalist and Integrative approaches are discussed. The Transformative approach is also examined and advocated for in the policies and practices of IoC.

Economic rationalist approach

The Economic Rationalist Approach is often mentioned in relation to internationalisation efforts that have an agenda of generating revenue e.g recruiting more international students. This is a somewhat cynical belief, perhaps, but nonetheless one that is prevalent in IoC discussions. The basic adage is that 'the more foreign students paying a high tuition fee, the higher the economic return and the less the national governments need to invest in higher education' (Knight and de Wit, 1995: 11). Fee paying students are therefore considered necessary as 'financially hard pressed institutions seek to attract increasing numbers of overseas students to shore up holes left by reduced government funding' (de Vita & Case, 2003: 383). Therefore, there is a tendency to view fee paying students as 'customers' or part of the university's global trade. International students 'are now located within the discourses of economic globalisation as 'trade goods'' (Rhoades & Smart, 1996 quoted in Devos 2003: 158). Similarly curriculum is also seen as 'an international commodity to be traded' (de Vita & Case, 2003: 387). In this approach is the notion that curriculum must be standardised for all students, wherever it is delivered.

Schapper and Mayson (2004) argue that 'Enterprise Universities' 'seek to maintain their competitive advantage in global education markets by developing universalised and commodified mass education programmes' (Schapper and Mayson, 2004: 193). This results in

a loss of academic autonomy as a standard curriculum is introduced across all campuses. Schapper and Mayson (2004) see higher education as being 'Taylorised'. The early twentieth century production theorist F.W. Taylor introduced scientific management techniques into factories because management needed to 'wrest control of production from workers to the employers' (p.196). These techniques required that 'employers had to diminish workers' power vested in their knowledge of work processes based on experience and traditions of their various trades' (p.196). Similarly Schapper and Mayson (2004) see academics are being displaced as thinkers by 'centralised corporate decision makers' and reduced to workers who 'deliver pre-packaged education with efficiency and economy' (p.197). The authors find this unconscionable and go on to discuss two approaches that they feel will enhance academic autonomy and promote student participation.

Integrative approach

This approach is the one usually adopted by universities in Australia. Generally, it is inspired by the definition of internationalisation, written by Knight (1993). IoC is understood as the integration of intercultural dimensions/perspectives into an already existing curriculum. There is a clearly defined role for university staff in this approach and that is to 'integrate cultural understandings and trans-cultural student interaction across their curriculum design and their teaching and learning processes' (Gelade, 2003, no page numbers).

This is the approach favored by the University of South Australia (UniSA) which is committed to internationalising the curriculum. UniSA works from Knight's (1993) definition of IoC and stresses the importance of intercultural aspects of internationalization (Leask, 2004). UniSA's internationalisation policy 'focused on learning processes and on the development of skills and attitudes within students as much as on curriculum content and the developments of knowledge in students' (Leask, 1999: 2). To drive an IoC agenda a graduate attribute on IoC was added to the UniSA Graduate Qualities (#7).

There have been three major challenges to these developments: embedding the policy into teaching practices; staff training and development; and changing the teaching practices of staff. The first challenge was the development of 'curricula which, in methodology and content, are culturally inclusive and which develop multicultural awareness and cross-cultural communication skills' (Leask, 1999:2). In response to this, the UniSA has 'taken an 'infusion' approach . . . [that] ensures that international perspectives permeate both the teaching methodology and content of subjects and the structure and organisation of courses' (Leask, 1999: 2). The university has the related challenge of ensuring that staff 'develop new knowledge, skills, attitudes and values'. At UniSA, staff development workshops have been organised around the themes of IoC, to support staff in developing an understanding of IoC. Some of the myths current at the University were that IoC is 'someone's else responsibility . . . mainly about attracting international students' (Leask, 1999). These myths were 'exposed and confronted' in an attempt to progress towards more holistic ideas of IoC. Staff were challenged in 'the way they think about teaching' (Leask, 1999: 3) and 'Best Practice' was described as 'a range of teaching processes designed to assist all students to learn about and understand the international context of the studies and to cope in international professional environments'. This is more than the transmission of knowledge about different perspectives, it is also about learning processes.

At UniSA the 'Graduate Qualities [GQ] provide a strong framework for curriculum planning and change'. GQ were introduced in the mid 1990s and meant a 'shift from an emphasis on *inputs* (such as funding, academic staff qualifications and student entry scores) to an emphasis on educational *outputs*' (Leask, 1999: 4). The GQ number seven is the one that relates to IoC and it has seven indicators against which curriculum can be judged. There is a requirement set by the university that subjects and courses must weight each of the GQs. This has 'proven to be crucial to the internationalisation of the curriculum' (Leask, 1999: 5*).* If it is stated in the course outline that GQ #7 is an objective it must be 'demonstrated how it develops international perspective in *all* students'. Leask points out that GQ 'as a framework for curriculum planning,

was initially resisted by many academic staff, who saw it as proposed by management and irrelevant to their daily practice'. This resistance has been met with special staff development. This development is 'based on small group reflective practice' and was introduced in 1997. This development has been useful for implementing IoC as staff worked in small teams with a subject specialist. The recommendation is that 'staff development consultants work more closely with schools rather than providing generic courses across the university' (Leask, 1999: 7).

UniSA developed a Code of Good Practice to support staff to develop IoC teaching and learning processes. Strategies included, making contacts with academic staff overseas, using international examples, meeting with international students, group activities in class and small group tasks. UniSa saw 'group processes and tasks are an integral part of internationalizing the teaching and learning' (Leask,1999: 9). Over fifty strategies were described in line with the code of good practice. Leask notes 'many of them require that academic staff step out of their traditional role as the authority in authority and learn from the international students in their classes. This cultural exchange can only benefit all involved, but is a significant cultural shift' (Leask,1999: 10).

There are two important considerations to be mentioned in regards to the Integrative approach. Firstly, is the centrality of culture and secondly is the idea of relinquishing the 'traditional authority' of the academic. Volet (1999) in a study of the transfer of culturally specific learning cautions that any change to authority in a classroom must take account of different learning styles and traditions. She found that students who have learnt in a country dominated by a Confucian system of thought valued highly the teacher as 'one who knows a great deal about the content . . . [and] have responsibility to assist students' (Volet, 1999: 633). This would indicate that if students hold concepts of 'traditional' authoritarian structures, then they may find shifts in power dynamics in the educational process difficult and confronting. Research is needed to monitor the responses to and results of such change. Volet's findings indicate that

enforcing such change may be a source of trauma for students not only unused to it but actually valuing another way of learning.

A study conducted by the University of Melbourne (2004) into the learning needs of Asian students looked at how they responded to different teaching practices in Australia. They found that, 'In particular, students familiar with didactic teaching styles were not skilled in the conventions for breaking into discussion in interactive tutorials' (University of Melbourne, 2004: no page numbers). One comment from a student was 'The other students in my group were all Australians and they just talk like I was not there, they ignore me'. This does not mean that an 'interactive' teaching style should be avoided but rather that it needs to be implemented with sensitivity to the fact that it is a culturally specific style of teaching.

Cogan (1998) is a champion of the integrative approach. He argues that 'we need to strengthen and revitalise existing courses with the infusion of new materials' (Cogan, 1998: 106). This is done by 'the integration of examples of research and scholarly work into our assigned course work. These include the assigned readings, the illustrations I use in my class lectures, my experiences from working in other nations, and the use of course assignments'. Cogan was able to do this because he had the necessary experiential base of working for over twenty-three years in universities throughout the world.

Taylor (2004) wrote a review of the practices of four universities world wide that have implemented Internationalisation strategies. He takes Knight's 1993 definition of internationalization as his starting point and sees internationalization as the integration of perspectives which must pervade the whole of the university. He understands that this is challenging to the entrenched culture of the university with unclear aims, beliefs in academic freedom and 'institutions staffed by diverse professionals' (Taylor, 2004: 151). He saw effective leadership as crucial to guide large scale changes to counteract traditional cultures strongly embedded within universities.

There are some important concerns with the Integrative approach. De Vita and Case (2003: 388) for example, are highly critical of this approach, arguing 'most attempts at curriculum internationalisation in UK higher education appear to be based on the idea that more internationally educated graduates can be produced by means of a mere infusion of some international material in existing course syllabi' (deleted). They raise three criticisms of this approach. Firstly, curriculum remains based in 'western cognitive learning philosophy' (de Vita & Case, 2003: 388) and can become fragmented, losing its coherence. Secondly, 'by stressing the role of knowledge dissemination in the learning process, it heavily neglects the intercultural learning that' takes place in interaction with people from other cultures. Finally, they raise concerns about the' risk of offering a mono-cultural model of internationalization, of disseminating unreflexively ethnocentric views (p.389). This last criticism will be taken up in the following section on a Transformative approach to IoC.

De Vita and Case propose a culturally inclusive pedagogy based in constructivist educational theory. This requires the teacher to construct learning tasks that move students towards being more 'progressively mature and critical' (2003:p.393). The authors suggest a wider range of assessment tasks (e.g. with oral exam and portfolios) with students able to choose tasks that reflect their strengths. These suggestions far exceed the 'infusion' approach and direct us towards an approach that is critical and informed by pedagogies of inclusion.

Transformative approach

Banks (1999) wrote that 'while the students view the experiences of others from the perspectives and conceptual frameworks of the traditional Western canon in the infusion approach to internationalizing the curriculum, the transformative approach entails students and teachers making paradigm shifts and viewing the work from the perspectives of different racial, cultural and gender groups'. This current project favours a Transformative Approach for IoC initiatives, an approach aligned with a critical understanding of pedagogical inquiry that includes

inclusive education, feminist, critical and, multicultural, anti-racist and postcolonial pedagogies. These diverse educational inquiries all challenge current knowledge and pedagogy. They are 'both an ongoing critique of conventional classroom dynamics and an attempt to create alternative pedagogical strategies' (hooks, 2003: 144).

Two possible models for a Transformative approach to IoC are presented here: Gough (1998, 1999) and Mohanty (2003). These models, one situated in the Australian context and the other in the USA, draw from post modern and feminist thought.

Deakin University has recently passed a policy on 'International and Culturally Inclusive Curricula'. This policy is notable because of its holistic interpretation of internationalisation. 'Deakin University will incorporate international and intercultural perspectives and inclusive pedagogy into its courses in order to prepare students to perform capably, ethically and sensitively in international and multicultural professional and social contexts' (Deakin University, 2002: 1). The focus on 'ethics' extends the responsibility of curriculum beyond a response to diversity within the classroom. It places an emphasis on students to learn how to be ethical in an era of globalization where they must confront differences.

Gough (author of the Deakin policy), is interested in how learning within the university can become a process where different knowledges are critiqued. He believes that this may lead to an avoidance of the situation where the curriculum values only one kind of knowledge. Gough views knowledge as actively produced within specific locations. This means that curriculum is presented as something to be engaged with and critiqued. The classroom, both virtual and face-to-face, becomes a site in which this occurs. In this way *difference*, that of the students and/or the lecturer, and/or the national and cultural context of the classroom etc. informs the curriculum. The curriculum is interpreted through this context of difference where there are cultural, social and political differences within and between groups of students and teachers. Under this process, even the most standardized of curricula can be challenged as

students/academics engage in a process of questioning (Gough 1998, 1999). The following questions become part of the curriculum in considering IoC:

> How does knowledge work in this curriculum?
>
> How was the curriculum produced?
>
> Where does it come from?
>
> Why are we using this type of curriculum?
>
> How does this curriculum understand cultural, gendered, racial and other differences?
>
> What does this curriculum mean to me as an educator and academic in the field?

Another transformative model is one developed by Mohanty (2003). Mohanty's work developed as part of an 'antiglobalisation pedagogies' strategy. It is useful to note that she uses the terms North/South "to distinguish between affluent, privileged nations and communities, and economically and politically marginalised nations and communities, as in 'Western/non-Western'" (Mohanty, 2003: 226). Mohanty developed this model within the context of the internationalisation of the women's studies curriculum. She argued that 'while I choose to focus on women's studies curricula, my arguments hold for curricula in any discipline or academic field that seeks to internationalise or globalize its curriculum' (p.238). Like Gough, Mohanty understands that knowledge is political and as such the three models of IoC that she identifies are analysed for 'the politics of knowledge at work'.

Mohanty's first model 'Academic-as-Tourist':

> involves a pedagogical strategy in which brief forays are made into
> non-Euro-American cultures, and particularly . . . cultural practices addressed
> from an otherwise Eurocentric . . . gaze . . . This is a perspective in which the
> primary Euro-American narrative of the syllabus remains untouched, and
> examples from non-Western . . . or South cultures are used to supplement and
> 'add' to this narrative. (p. 239).

This model is analogous to the 'integrative approach' as discussed above. In relation to an

analysis of knowledge as political, Mohanty argues that knowledge produced within a Western hegemonic framework remains the norm. Relations of power do not get examined within this model.

The second model 'Academic-as-Explorer ' is based on what Mohanty refers to as 'area studies'. The ''foreign' . . . is the object and subject of knowledge and the larger intellectual project is entirely about other countries . . . Distance from 'home' is fundamental to the definition of international in this framework' (p. 240). Mohanty sees this model as resulting in 'us and them' attitudes and encouraging cultural relativism.

Mohanty's model of choice is 'The Academic Solidarity or Comparative Studies Model'. This is about engagement, critique and change. 'This curricular strategy is based on the premise that the local and the global are not defined in terms of physical geography or territory but exist simultaneously and constitute each other' (p. 242). Emphasised in this model is 'mutuality, co-responsibility, and common interests', including the common interest of how power works to create knowledge. 'By doing this kind of comparative teaching that is attentive to power, each historical experience illuminates the experiences of the others'. In this way, students can understand how power is implicated in history and knowledges. Values, concepts, ideas and knowledge are thought about in connection to issues of power and difference. This model is one that aims to be transformative of existing relations of power and received curriculum.