GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Internationalising the Curriculum at Glasgow Caledonian University

Project Plan

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Introduction

The GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES Project is a university-wide strategic change initiative which supports the embedding of GCU's new Internationalisation Strategy 2012-2015. It focuses on the process of internationalising the curriculum for home and international students and runs from 2012 until 2015. Led and managed by GCU LEAD (Centre for Academic Practice and Learning Enhancement) it will be delivered in partnership with the academic schools, the GCU Students' Association and relevant support departments.

1. **Background and rationale**

The process of internationalizing higher education has attracted a great deal of attention and debate in British universities over the past twenty years. Ever since the UK government changed its funding policy in the late 1990's institutions have looked to increase their income through recruiting premium-fee paying students from countries outside the EU/ EEA area. As a result their numbers have increased significantly [1] and all UK universities have international strategies which set out their approach to addressing internationalisation in teaching, research and administration (Turner and Robson, 2007).

GCU is no exception. The number of international students has increased from 1,035 in 2008-09 to 1,364 in 2010-11[2]. The income from international student recruitment is to be doubled from £6.8 m to £13.6m by 2015 [3] and the international strategy has been revised to define clear aims and objectives that will help us achieve the overall goal of becoming a "globally networked university" [4].

One of the seven aims presented in the strategy is the 'internationalisation of the curriculum' (IoC)[5]. Given that "the pedagogic implications of internationalisation are at the heart of our approaches to learning and teaching"[6] , GCU LEAD has been tasked with planning and leading this project to investigate the benefits and challenges of embedding IoC at GCU and support academic staff in achieving it. Collaboration and support from academic staff and senior management will be required to achieve its outcomes.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES aims to explore the following questions:

- What does 'internationalisation of the curriculum' mean in practice and how is it currently being implemented at GCU and elsewhere?
- How do students and academic staff experience the impact of GCU's internationalisation strategy on learning and teaching?
- What are their perceptions of the benefits and challenges of developing an internationalised curriculum?
- What are the best mechanisms for embedding an internationalised curriculum in all schools?
- What support is required to enable academic staff to deliver it on their programmes?

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[1] In the academic year 2010-11 the number of international students at UK universities rose from 405,810 in 2009-10 to 428,225 , an increase of 6% http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/about/statistics_he.php#table1

[2] [2] In the session 2011-12 the number fell to 1,113 which might be explained by the effects of a change in UK immigration policy.

[3] GCU 2015 Key Performance Indicators

[4] GCU Internationalisation Strategy 2012-2015, p. 5

[5] Ibid, pp. 21-22

[6] Ibid, p. 21

2. The debate about an internationalised curriculum

2.1 What is an internationalised curriculum?

There is no shortage of definitions of 'internationalisation' or an 'internationalised curriculum'. Neither the plethora of academic literature on the theme (Caruana and Spurling, 2007) nor the abundance of university strategies has made the concepts any clearer though. It remains a "contested notion" (Turner and Robson, 2007, p. 4) which can be perceived as "elusive and unsatisfactory" (ibid) by academic staff. Compared to many others Clifford and Joseph's (2005) definition is fairly brief and straightforward:

"Internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC) is about students developing global perspectives and cross-cultural capability in order to be able to perform, professionally and socially, in a multicultural environment."

In an attempt to define what constitutes a global perspective Webb points out that students "need to be knowledgeable about and open to views that differ from their own" (Webb, 2005). This would involve a level of 'intercultural competence' which can be defined as:

"The process of acquiring the culture-specific and cultural general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. It is a dynamic, developmental and on-going process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviourally and affectively." (Paige et al, 1999, cited in Dunne, 2011)

Van der Wende's (1996, p. 187) suggests a wide variety of approaches to IoC in her widely cited 'typology of international curricula'. They can be **curricula**
1. with an international subject
2. in which the traditional/ original subject area is broadened by an internationally comparative approach
3. which explicitly address cross cultural communication issues and provide training in intercultural skills
4. which are interdisciplinary covering more than one country
5. which prepare students for international professions and/ or recognised international qualifications
6. which lead to joint/ double degrees from different countries
7. of which compulsory parts are taught at institutions abroad
8. in which the content is especially designed for foreign students.

Given that a curriculum consists of the *content* (knowledge, skills and attitudes) as well as the *process* of learning and teaching, any approach to internationalising must consider *what* as well as *how* it is taught and learnt (Webb, 2005, p.110).

The more recent academic literature has been moving away from providing broad definitions and started suggesting practical ways of putting IoC into practice (Carroll and Ryan, 2005; Leask and Carroll, 2011; Jones, 2010; Ryan, 2012). It emphasizes how important it is for institutions to engage the people who are in charge of designing and delivering the curriculum; i.e. their academic staff. Their role in the institution-wide process of internationalisation is "vital" (Dunne, 2011, p.615). Sanderson refers to them as "a catalyst in assisting their institutions and their students to realise their internationalisation goals" (Sanderson, 2011, p. 662). As Dunne and others (Bell, 2004; Turner and Robson, 2007; Friesen, 2012) point out, their genuine commitment to curricular change is essential if the university's strategic internationalisation ambitions are to be achieved. Friesen (2012, p.2) sees their role as "primary agents in the internationalization process" who can not only actively

further the process but also inhibit it. Bell's research suggests that the attitudes of academic staff can be assessed on "a spectrum of acceptance of internationalising the curriculum" (Bell, 2004, p. 1). She identifies four stages in the acceptance process:

1. Internationalisation is viewed as a negative development.
2. It is considered inappropriate.
3. It is possible.
4. It is integral.

An assessment of where GCU staff can be placed on this scale is currently based on anecdotal evidence rather than actual data. It is one of this project's objectives to collect such data and analyse it with a view to suggesting targeted support measures. It aims to provide a first insight into current levels of awareness of and commitment to IoC amongst staff in all schools.

2.2 The role of academics as "internationalists"

Caruana's (2010) research discovered that academics lack confidence in their own ability to put their institutions' international strategies into practice. Leask and Carroll (2011) suggest that their uncertainty might be one of the reasons why they continue to use "largely ineffective strategies" (p.656) in a multicultural classroom despite sufficient evidence that they have little impact on the student experience.

If academics are to play a central role in the process of IoC, we need to understand what knowledge, skills and attitudes they require to do it well. Trevaskes et al (2003) define "internationalist teachers" as "academics who seek to pursue the aim of internationalisation in their teaching practices, curricula and delivery of courses". Teekens (2003) opened the debate about their qualifications when she described the "ideal profile of the lecturer in the international classroom" (p. 108). She defined specific requirements such as "knowledge of foreign education systems" and an awareness of the impact of using English as "the medium of instruction" (p.112). Sanderson (2011, p. 665-666) has since narrowed down Teekens' long list of qualifications to seven dimensions which internationalised teaching practice should encompass. He suggests the following skills and attributes:

Lecturers should
1. have some basic knowledge of educational theory
2. incorporate internationalised content into subject material
3. have a critical appreciation of their own culture and its assumptions
4. have some knowledge of other countries and cultures, but a preference for being open to and appreciating other worldviews
5. use universal teaching strategies to enhance the learning experiences of *all* students
6. understand the way one's academic discipline and its related profession (e.g. physiotherapy) are structured in a range of countries
7. understand the international labour market in relation to one's own discipline

While this list obviously describes an ideal profile which only very few colleagues will match in its entirety, it is a useful benchmark for assessing how prepared and qualified GCU staff are for implementing the process of internationalising the curriculum as required by the institution's international strategy. International staff may have a small advantage because they have personal experience of different education systems and cultures but their numbers at GCU are relatively low at 12% of the academic workforce compared to an average number of 23% at all UK universities[7].

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[7] See statistics provided by Universities UK available from
http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Documents/InternationalHigherEducationInFactsAndFiguresSummer2010.pdf

This project will be informed by Sanderson's criteria in developing an audit tool, a question framework for interviews with staff and suggestions for appropriate CPD activities.

2.3 The role of students as global citizens

There are many indicators that GCU attaches great importance to the contribution students can make to the internationalisation agenda. A new student mobility strategy has recently been approved, opportunities for students to learn foreign languages as part of their programme have been increased and our 21st century graduate attributes include '*global* citizenship'.

What needs to be done in the classroom to achieve that ambition has not been explained in any detail yet. What qualities, skills and attributes constitute global citizenship in our students? In the academic literature definitions abound. Caruana (2010) defines graduates who are global citizens as people "who are aware of world issues and are empowered to bring about change towards a more just, sustainable society". Given GCU's commitment to the common good that definition matches our mission as a university yet it still does not spell out what competencies students and graduates need in order to take on that role. The University of Warwick's Global People project fills that gap (Reid et al, 2010). It suggests a "global people competency approach" which spells out desired behaviour rather than high level ambitions. Once those behaviours are identified, curricula can be scrutinized "more rigorously in terms of their potential contribution to those outcomes" (ibid). Examples of such behaviours are presented in table 1.

Competency	Behaviour
Information gathering	• Learning about unfamiliar cultures
Flexible thinking	• Actively seek to understand unfamiliar behaviour • Avoid judging people from other cultures on the basis of stereotypes • Acknowledge that different practices are sensible and meaningful in their cultural context and can add value to their own way of thinking
Flexible behaviour	• Learn how and when to adapt by observing other people's behaviour • Build a repertoire of behaviour to suit different purposes, contexts and audiences
Language learning	• Do not rely on others' language skills • Do not feel self-conscious about your language proficiency • Do not let your language proficiency hold you back from contributing
Attentive listening	• Check and clarify rather than assuming understanding • Develop ability to anticipate and handle potential misunderstandings
Self awareness	• Use diversity as a mirror to explore your own cultural identity • Reflect on how you may be perceived by people from other backgrounds when you are behaving 'normally'
Spirit of adventure	• Be ready to deal with ambiguous situations • Develop tolerance of ambiguity • Enjoy the opportunity to work with diverse groups with different perspectives

Table 1: Selection of desired 'global' competencies; adapted from Intercultural Competency Framework, (Reid et al, 2010)

Reid et al and other authors emphasize that these behaviours do not occur 'naturally'. They have to be developed through planned interventions which are aimed at *all* students, home students and international students. Leask and Carroll's study (2011) points to the need to move beyond "wishing and hoping ...and dreaming" (p.648) in embedding internationalisation. Rather than relying on the perceived benefits that are assumed to flow automatically from a culturally diverse student body on campus they suggest a series of measures, tasks and activities universities can put in place. Students need to be taught and assessed on their intercultural skills and international knowledge in the formal curriculum**.** Only then do they take the need for them seriously. Even small adjustments to programmes can help. They suggest measures such as giving students tasks that cannot be completed satisfactorily without intercultural interaction, mentoring schemes and carefully monitored cross-cultural team working exercises.

3. Project goals

This project uses the term **GLOBAL** as shorthand for the process of developing an internationalised curriculum at GCU.

- **G**rowing awareness of international issues
- **L**earning from other cultures
- **O**bserving and reflecting on cultural differences
- **B**eing prepared to challenge oneself
- **A**voiding cultural stereotypes
- **L**istening to culturally different points of view

It will address the following goals:

Short-term goals (by June 2013)
1. Scope current practice in Internationalising the Curriculum (IoC) at GCU and map it against best practice in the sector
2. Identify key barriers to and opportunities for rolling out IoC in all schools
3. Set up a community of practice through establishing a working group on IoC which consists of academic representatives from all schools, GCUSA's Vice President Education, the International Students Convener as well as relevant support staff to facilitate cross-university collaboration, share experience, expectations and expertise
4. Provide a road map which outlines priorities and an action plan to achieve long-term goals
5. Pilot and evaluate innovative approaches to embedding IoC in collaboration with a selection of IoC 'champions' and their students in all schools
6. Provide suggestions for a staff development programme for IoC offered to all academics

Long-term goals (by June 2015)
1. Re-design learning and teaching activities in core curricula to implement the piloted solutions in a wider range of programmes in all schools
2. Evaluate the impact of the implemented interventions on the student learning experience and the professional practice of academic staff
3. Roll out an internationalised curriculum in all schools

4. Outcomes

1. Alignment of GCU programmes with the requirements of an internationalised curriculum in all schools in any given discipline through collaboration with programme teams, ADLT's and student representatives
2. Increased student and staff awareness of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to achieve GCU's graduate attribute of 'global citizenship' through learning and teaching activities that are embedded in the taught curriculum

5. Dissemination

The findings and outputs of the project will be disseminated in the following ways:

- a GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES website hosted by GCU LEAD
- GCU LEAD events for internal and external audiences
- a GCU LEARN community with a range of resources for academic staff
- regional and national dissemination in the UK HE sector through QAA Enhancement Themes workshops and presentations and the HEA Internationalisation network
- presentations at national and international conferences
- publications in academic journals and conference proceedings

6. Overview of the project phases

Activity	Timescale	Methodology	Outputs
Phase 1: Set up a working group	September 2012	E-mail invitations to Deans, ADLTQ's, AD's International, GCUSA	Working group in place
Scope current practice in IoC in all schools and identify key barriers to and opportunities for embedding it in GCU programmes; identify potential pilots	September 2012 – February 2013	Review of current programme documentation On-line survey of programme leaders, Associate Deans International, Associate Deans Learning and Teaching Interviews with Heads of Departments and international champions from each school	Report summarising main issues with recommendations how to overcome key obstacles to be presented to the university's learning and teaching committees
	January 2013	Design and disseminate support materials on IoC for programme teams to assist them in portfolio review process	'Principles of IoC' paper and related audit tool
	January 2013	Send out internal funding call to all academics calling for small project bids (between £ 500 and £ 2,000) ; total value: £ 10,000	Small projects on embedding IoC in all schools
	February 2013	Focus groups with a selection of UK and international students from key programmes in each school	Report summarising students' view of current provision and recommendations
Phase 2:			
Pilot and evaluate innovative approaches to IoC in selected modules/ programmes	September 2013 – May 2014	Identify and collaborate with innovators among academic staff Design evaluation tool	Report summarising results of the pilots to be presented at LTSC and APC
Suggest CPD activities for staff to support them in embedding IoC in their teaching practice	January – May 2014	Reflect on results from pilots to identify what support measures are required to enable staff to deliver curriculum changes	Programme of CPD activities for embedding IoC which is open to all academics
Phase 3:			
Roll out tested innovative IoC approaches across GCU Pilot and evaluate IoC CPD activities for teaching staff	From September 2013 onwards September 2013 – June 2014	Provide advice for teaching staff who act as change agents Design programme of IoC workshops	 Report on CPD pilots to be presented at LTSC and APC

Phase 4:			
Embed IoC in core programmes in all schools	Academic session 2014/15	Collaboration with academic staff in range of subject disciplines	
	April 2015	On-line survey with programme leaders to assess progress in IoC compared to the 2012 baseline	Report on survey results to be presented to relevant L&T committees

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