Comparing internationalisation of the curriculum in action across disciplines: theoretical and practical perspectives

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Comparing internationalisation of the curriculum in action across disciplines: theoretical and practical perspectives

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Internationalisation and internationalisation of the curriculum in higher education are not new concepts, but they are much debated and diversely interpreted. Studies of the higher education curriculum have been scarce. Studies of internationalisation of the curriculum in higher education are even rarer and, with a few exceptions, are focused on a single institution and/or a single discipline. This paper presents a conceptual framework for internationalisation of the curriculum that explains the foundations of alternative constructions of an internationalised curriculum and presents three case studies of internationalisation of the curriculum in three disciplines and universities in Australia. The framework is based on research that engaged academic staff in the process of exploring and making explicit the meaning of internationalisation of the curriculum in their programmes. It highlights the full complexity of internationalisation of the curriculum in context, prompts consideration of alternative paradigms, accommodates and legitimates different perspectives and provides gateways into alternative futures.

Keywords: internationalisation of the curriculum; higher education; disciplinary approaches to internationalisation; framework of internationalisation of the curriculum

Introduction

Internationalisation is not a new concept in higher education but it is a much debated and diversely interpreted one. Multiple definitions of internationalisation in higher education have been developed and elaborated (see, for example, Hamilton 1998; Knight 1994; Knight and de Wit 1995; Teichler 2004; van der Wende 1997). Common elements have emerged over time. A widely used definition of the internationalisation of higher education suggests that the internationalisation of higher education is connected to globalisation, will have broad-ranging impact and will be integrated into the core functions of institutions:

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> the process of integrating an international, intercultural and/or global dimension into the purpose, functions (teaching, research and service) and delivery of higher education. (Knight 2004, as cited in Knight 2006, 13)

The relationship between internationalisation in higher education and globalisation is complex and unpredictable, rather than simple and formulaic. Universities contribute to globalisation through the role they play in the rapid creation and somewhat haphazard circulation of knowledge and ideas (Appadurai 1990, 296). They also have a responsibility to respond to the requirements and challenges associated with the globalisation of societies, economy and labour markets (Killick 2006, 5; van der Wende 1997, 19). This is where the connection with the curriculum and with teaching and learning is most obvious. The concepts of 'global citizenship' and 'the global citizen' and the role of universities in preparing students for 'global citizenship' are frequently linked with the internationalisation agenda (Beelen 2007; Bourn 2010; Jones and Killick 2007; Leask 2001, 2009; Zimitat 2008) but the meaning of these terms is contested (Rizvi and Lingard 2010). Nevertheless, institutions have made increasingly bold statements about the skills, knowledge and attitudes all of their graduates will bring to their lives and work in a globalised, interconnected world through internationalisation of the curriculum. However, while the rhetoric has been strong, internationalisation of the curriculum has been a low priority in the past and is poorly understood (Knight 2006). Approaches have been piece-meal and reactive rather than coherent and holistic (Barnett and Coate 2005) and have primarily been based on constructions of citizens as mere consumers of policy rather than critical and reflexive agents of change. The implications of these critiques are important to our collective future because the curriculum is linked to broader issues of social power nationally, internationally and globally (Bernstein 1971, as cited in Rizvi and Lingard 2010, 93). What it means today and what it might mean in the future to be a 'global citizen' has implications for what is taught and how it is taught. This is where the concepts of internationalisation and globalisation directly intersect with and influence student learning through the curriculum. To what extent should local and national issues and perspectives influence the curriculum in this globalised world? Given the rapid rate of change, how can we ensure that the curriculum of today will prepare graduates for the world of tomorrow? These are important questions.

Teaching teams are the primary architects of much of the curriculum; they define its formal aspects – they select content and design and manage teaching, learning and assessment arrangements. It is vital that they are engaged in the process of internationalisation of the curriculum (Childress 2010, 135; Egron-Polak and Hudson 2010, 149; Leask and Beelen 2009, 12). Yet many academic staff either are uncertain what internationalisation of the curriculum means or do not think it has anything to do with them (Knight 2006; Stohl

2007). Some are puzzled as to how to connect institutional internationalisation goals with their disciplinary research agenda (Childress 2010). Openness to internationalisation of the curriculum varies across disciplines, representatives of 'hard, pure' disciplines being less open to it than their colleagues in 'softer' or more 'applied' disciplines (Clifford 2009).

Studies of the higher education curriculum have been scarce (Barnett and Coate 2005, 70). Studies of internationalisation of the curriculum in higher education are even rarer and, with a few exceptions, are focused on a single institution and/or a single discipline. Thus while various definitions have been posed, there is no existing conceptual framework that transcends disciplinary boundaries. Individual examples across disciplines and institutions appear to lack coherence. Internationalisation of the curriculum may mean different things in different disciplines because the international perspectives required by different professions vary (Leask 2011, 13). There is no frame of reference or guide to understanding how they fit into the bigger picture, for critiquing their validity or, at a more concrete level, for determining how they might better prepare students to rise to the challenge of 'being human' as well as 'being productive workers' in a complex, globalised world.

This paper reports on research undertaken over a two-year period, prompted by frustration at the slow rate of progress in achieving curriculum internationalisation goals (see, for example, Egron-Polak and Hudson 2010; Leask and Carroll 2011). The research engaged academic staff in the process of exploring and making explicit the meaning of internationalisation of the curriculum in their disciplines and imagining new ways of thinking and directions for change. These conceptualisations, together with the literature, were used to inform the development of a conceptual framework of internationalisation of the curriculum.

Defining internationalisation of the curriculum

In this study internationalisation of the curriculum was defined as:

> the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning arrangements and support services of a program of study. (Leask 2009, 209)

This definition reflects a broad conceptualisation of curriculum (Barnett 2000). It is inclusive of all aspects of the learning/teaching situation and the student experience – the formal curriculum, the informal curriculum and the hidden curriculum. The formal curriculum is the planned and sequenced programme of teaching and learning activities organised around defined content areas and assessed in various ways. The informal curriculum includes the various extra-curricular activities that take place on campus. It is an important part of the landscape in which the formal curriculum is enacted. The 'hidden'

curriculum is also important but is frequently overlooked. The incidental lessons that are learned about power and authority, and about what and whose knowledge is valued and not valued, are important elements of the hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum includes the processes by which academics select and order content, decide on and describe intended learning outcomes, organise learning activities and assess learner achievement.

The research project

The central role of academic staff in internationalisation of the university through the curriculum, and the challenges associated with getting them involved, the complexity of the process of internationalisation itself and the dearth of cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional studies in the area were the stimulus for the research (Childress 2010; Egron-Polak and Hudson 2010; Knight 2006; Leask and Beelen 2009; Stohl 2007). The project was designed to take account of 'the differing cultures among different scholarly fields with respect to internationalisation' (Stohl 2007, 368) and the increasing focus on internationalisation of the curriculum as the vehicle for preparing university graduates for life in a globalised world.

The researcher acted as a facilitator of the process of internationalisation of the curriculum in teaching teams from different disciplines in universities across Australia, an informed outsider whose role was to assist the disciplinary experts and curriculum coordinators to clarify the meaning and practice of internationalisation of the curriculum in their degree programme. The participants undertook the work voluntarily and with the approval of their universities over an initial period of around 12 months. The research question was: How do academics working in different institutional and disciplinary contexts interpret the concept of internationalisation of the curriculum?

The approach was to involve academic staff across Australia with each other in exploring the meaning of internationalisation of the curriculum and to use this work to inform the development of a conceptual framework of internationalisation of the curriculum. The action research methodology involved a literature review, institutional document and policy review and meetings with university managers, programme and course leaders, coordinators and professional development lecturers to develop cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional case studies of internationalisation of the curriculum in action. The selection of disciplines covered by the case studies was neither comprehensive nor representative, rather it was pragmatic. Curriculum review is 'dynamic and fluid', it is influenced by a range of factors that shape and drive a lengthy and multi-dimensional process (Barnett and Coate 2005, 71). The case studies presented here are located in multiple institutions with different histories, cultures and missions. They provide an indication of the range of understandings of internationalisation across disciplines and programmes.

The review process usually (but not always) commenced with the discussion of a 'Questionnaire on Internationalisation of the Curriculum' (QIC), which prompted team members to evaluate how internationalised their programme was. The intention of the questionnaire was not to gather quantitative data, measure or 'audit' achievement, but rather to stimulate reflection about what had already been achieved and speculation about the possibilities for further internationalisation. Following discussion of the items on the questionnaire, each team identified goals and strategies to achieve these. A five-stage 'process of internationalisation of the curriculum' and resources to support staff at each stage were developed and made available to all participants via workshops, meetings and a website. The researcher maintained contact with the teams through email and telephone, as well as through site visits. Testimony was gathered via progress reports, informal commentary and formal presentations by participants at a symposium towards the end of the project. Testimony occurred in the context of open-ended reflection, rather than in response to specific questions.

In total, 58 lectures, workshops and meetings involving more than 1700 participants were held in 15 universities. Intensive work commenced, and in some cases continues, in the disciplines of accounting, applied science, art, journalism, law, medicine, nursing, public relations, management and social sciences in nine universities across Australia. The researchers engaged with academic staff, literature, university managers and researchers in other countries in both the developed and the developing world before and during the research process in an attempt to ensure broader perspectives were incorporated. Nevertheless it is acknowledged that there are limitations to research undertaken in this field in one developed country and comparative international research is needed.

Throughout the project the researchers consulted with an external evaluator, an internationally recognised scholar in the field of globalisation, internationalisation and higher education, and with an international reference group. The reference group provided feedback on various aspects of the framework and the research methodology, thereby ensuring the integrity of the final version.

The conceptual framework makes a unique contribution to the field. Important conclusions concerning future directions for research and practice have resulted from the study.

In this paper we describe the framework and its theoretical foundations with reference to the case studies. The relationship between the case studies and the framework is more complex than one simply representing the stimulus for, or an illustration of, the other. The framework was developed with reference to the literature on internationalisation, used in the case studies and informed by them as part of an iterative development process.

The conceptual framework for internationalisation of the curriculum in higher education

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) situates the disciplines, and therefore the disciplinary teams who construct the curriculum, at the centre of the internationalisation process. It represents the conjunction of contexts influencing decisions on internationalisation of the curriculum. It explains and legitimates variation in interpretations of its meaning in different disciplines and institutions within the same national and regional context. It highlights the dominant features of the different 'layers of context', the unique, situation-specific combination of which ultimately determines how academic staff conceptualise and enact internationalisation of the curriculum. Each layer of context directly and indirectly interacts with and influences the others, creating a complex set of conditions influencing the design of an internationalised curriculum. The framework reflects the 'supercomplex' world in which we live – one in which the very frameworks by which we orient ourselves to the world are themselves changing and contested (Barnett 2000, 257). This world requires regular review and reconstituting of the curriculum as priorities in the different layers of context shift and change, interdependently.
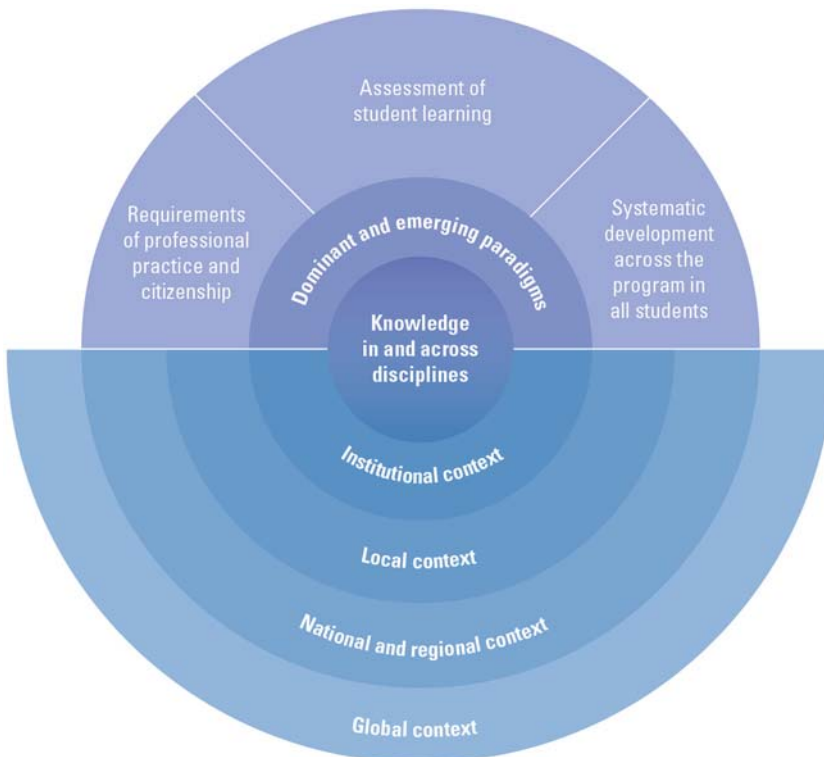

Figure 1.   A conceptual framework of internationalisation of the curriculum.

The *top half of the framework* is concerned with *curriculum design*. The *bottom half of the framework* is concerned with the *layers of context*, which have a variable influence on the decisions academic staff make in relation to internationalisation of the curriculum. Each dimension of the framework is described in more detail below.

The framework explained

Knowledge in and across disciplines is at the *centre of the framework*. Disciplinarity exerts enormous power and influence over the organization and production of knowledge (Klein 1993). The disciplines are the foundation of knowledge, the 'life-blood of higher education' (Becher 1994, 151) providing both an organisational focus for the university and the curriculum and a social framework. Independent categorising of disciplines has resulted in significant consensus about 'what counts as a discipline and what does not' (152) as well as some defining characteristics of different disciplinary groups. Disciplinary groups have been described as the equivalent of academic tribes, exclusive global communities, each with a distinctive culture, their own 'set of intellectual values and their own patch of cognitive territory' (153), their own way of seeing the world, understanding the world, shaping the world and coping with the world. These tribal disciplinary cultures transcend institutional and national boundaries (Becher 1994). The evolution of some disciplines has, however, perpetuated a relatively narrow focus, 'impoverished by an absence of intercultural and international perspectives, conceptualizations and data' (Bartell 2003, 49).

The problems faced by the world and its communities, however, require 'problem-defining and solving perspectives that cross disciplinary and cultural boundaries' (Hudzik 2004, 1). Increasingly, intellectual, practical and social problems are exerting a cross-disciplinary pull, requiring interdisciplinary approaches to finding solutions. Hence 'boundary work', the 'crossing, deconstructing, and reconstructing of boundaries' (Klein 1993, 186) between the disciplines is increasingly important. Knowledge production across the disciplines is at least as important as knowledge production within the disciplines.

The top half of the framework identifies three key elements of designing an internationalised curriculum: the international and intercultural requirements of professional practice and citizenship and the systematic development and assessment of intercultural and international knowledge, skills and attitudes across the programme. These curriculum design elements are seen through the lens of dominant, and sometimes, but less often, the lens of emerging paradigms.

Dominant and emerging paradigms

Curriculum decisions are not value free. They are usually influenced by the dominant paradigms within disciplines. But while a paradigm or school of

thought may dominate a particular discipline at a particular time, disciplines are not static, isolated entities. They are influenced by points of view, methods and ideas from other related disciplines (Klein 1993, 186). From time to time, when dominant examples of practice, laws, theories and taken-for-granted ways of thinking are challenged by anomalies, new problems or changing conditions, there will be a paradigm shift (Kuhn 1962). While this seems to occur quite suddenly, the evidence or need for a shift has always been gathering for some time. Following Mestenhauser (1998), internationalisation of the curriculum requires that we challenge the paradigms on which the curriculum is based (21). Maringe (2010) argues that we need to move away from the sole use of Western models as the basis for our understanding of internationalisation and globalisation. This requires examination of the assumptions underlying dominant paradigms, consideration of the changing conditions, challenging the 'taken-for-granted' and an openness to alternative ways of viewing the world beyond the obvious and the dominant.

Discipline communities are to some degree constricted in thought and action by the paradigms within which they work. Thus, critical decisions about what to include in the curriculum, how to teach and assess learning are often decided with little if any consideration being given to alternative models and ways of developing and disseminating knowledge, practising a profession or viewing the world.

An important part of the process of internationalisation of the curriculum is to think beyond dominant paradigms, to explore emerging paradigms and imagine new possibilities and new ways of thinking and doing. This is an intellectually challenging task. Academic staff have been socialised into their discipline, prepared for membership of their community through the study and acceptance of the dominant schools of thought and models of best practice (Becher and Trowler 2001). Through that process, they have developed a sense of identity and personal commitment to the shared values and associated ways of doing, thinking and being that are embedded within the dominant paradigms of their discipline communities.

The three elements of curriculum design reflected in the top half of the framework – the requirements of professional practice and citizenship, assessment of student learning and systematic development of knowledge, skills and attitudes across a programme – apply to any curriculum design process. How they apply specifically, and the key areas for consideration in each element when the focus is internationalisation of the curriculum, are described briefly below with reference to the literature.

Requirements of professional practice and citizenship

Internationalisation of the curriculum is concerned with preparation for citizenship as well as professional practice. It should not just be about training

for the performance demands of professional practice in a globalised world (Barnett 2000; Mestenhauser 1998; Rizvi and Lingard 2010). It should also prepare students to be ethical and responsible citizens and human beings in this globalised world. When the programme is accredited by an external professional body, the requirements of professional practice may to some extent already be specified. Decisions around how to develop in students an understanding of and capacity to meet the moral responsibilities that come with local, national and global citizenship are also important in the process of planning and enacting an internationalised curriculum. They may be more difficult to determine in some programmes than in others.

Assessment of student learning

A central consideration in curriculum design is what students can be expected to know and be able to do, as well as who they will 'be' at the end of a programme and as graduates. A globalised 'supercomplex' world requires multiple dimensions of human being and requires a curriculum that addresses epistemological (knowing), praxis (action) and ontological (self-identity) elements (Barnett 2000; Rizvi and Lingard 2010). In an internationalised curriculum, it is important to provide specific feedback on, and assess student achievement of, clearly articulated international and intercultural learning goals related to their lives as citizens and professionals in a globalised world.

Systematic development across the programme

The development of international and intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes in an internationalised curriculum across a programme is a complex task. The development of skills such as language capability and intercultural competence may need to be embedded in a number of courses at different levels. A range of strategies to assist all students to achieve desired learning outcomes by the end of the programme may be required. These might include strategies that mobilise and utilise student services and the informal curriculum in supporting the work undertaken in the formal curriculum.

The layers of context represented in the bottom half of the framework will have a variable influence on the decisions academic staff make in relation to internationalisation of the curriculum.

Institutional context

Universities are always under pressure to adapt their policies, priorities and focus in response to, 'rapidly changing social, technological, economic and political forces emanating from the immediate as well as from the broader post-industrial external environment' (Bartell 2003, 43). This includes the need to prepare students with knowledge and skills needed in a job market

'which is increasingly global in character' (44; see also Mestenhauser 1998, 2011). Since the early 2000s, there has been a focus on the development of a range of graduate attributes in the policies of universities around the world (Barrie 2006). Described as the knowledge, skills and attitudes that university students should develop during their time with the institution (Bowden et al. 2000), the ways in which universities have implemented them have varied. Some have focused on a few 'generic' attributes, others on a broader range of more specific attributes, defined with reference to the discipline and pro- gramme of study. References to the development of international and intercul- tural perspectives in students and the development of global citizens are common in statements of intent in universities across the world. These gradu- ate attributes are frequently linked with internationalisation of the curriculum.

Institutional mission, ethos, policies and priorities in relation to other matters will also influence approaches taken to internationalisation of the curriculum. For example, the range of international partnerships and activi- ties an institution is engaged in will have an impact on the options available for collaboration in research and teaching.

Local context

Developing students' abilities to be ethical and responsible local citizens who appreciate the connections between the local, the national and the glo- bal is critically important in a globalised world (Rizvi and Lingard 2010, 201). The local context includes social, cultural, political and economic con- ditions. All may provide opportunities and challenges for internationalisation of the curriculum. For example, there may be opportunities for students to develop enabling intercultural skills, knowledge and attitudes through engagement with diversity in the local community. Local accreditation requirements for registration in a chosen profession may require a focus on local legislation and policy. However, the local context is reciprocally con- nected to national and global contexts. Developing all students' understand- ing of these connections is an important part of the process of developing their ability to be critical and reflexive social and cultural as well as eco- nomic beings in the local context.

National and regional context

Cross, Mhlanga, and Ojo (2011) argue that 'the university is simultaneously global/universal, local, and regional', operating at 'the interface of the global and the local' (77). Indeed, different national and regional contexts will determine to some extent the options available to internationalise the curric- ulum. Four factors shape the strategic options available to internationalise a university: 'the economic strength of the country, the international status of the home country language, the academic reputation of the national system

of higher education and the size of the country' (Teichler 2004, 21). In different regions and within different countries within a region, these factors interact in unique ways to drive and shape internationalisation goals. Hence, approaches to internationalisation are both similar and different across different nations and regions.

Regional and national matters and related government policies around internationalisation are the background against which institutions formulate policy and academic staff do or do not engage in internationalisation of the curriculum. The similarities and the differences in the context and conditions faced in nations and regions have resulted in a range of contrasting and complementary ideas and practices in internationalisation across the world.

Global context

World society is not one in which global resources and power are shared equally – 'globalisation is being experienced as a discriminatory and even oppressive force in many places' (Soudien 2005, 501). It has contributed to increasing the gap between the rich and the poor of the world and the exploitation of the 'South' by the 'North'. This domination is not only economic. It is also intellectual, the dominance of Western educational models defining 'what is knowledge and who is qualified to understand and apply that knowledge' (Goodman 1984, 13), what research questions are asked, who will investigate them and if and how the results will be applied (Carter 2008). Globalisation has contributed to the dominance of Western educational models (Marginson 2004).

The hegemony of Western perspectives and the export/import of Western conceptions of higher education have not gone unnoticed or unchallenged. Some have cautioned against re-colonisation and a continuation of oppression through the reproduction of Western policies and practices in higher education (Mok 2007). Others have seen the need to pursue and create new and unique bodies of knowledge within their own society (Sinlarat 2005, as cited in Mok 2007, 449). Cross, Mhlanga, and Ojo (2011) note the focus on, 'legitimizing universalising concepts and approaches to internationalisation emanating from the experiences of West European and North American countries, which are unproblematically accepted as globally established truths' (76) and argue that this needs to change. Soudien argues that Africans need to make critical decisions about:

> how much or how little of that which we imagine to be distinctly ours … we wish to have at the core of the education our children ought to receive; or, alternately, how strongly we wish them to be assimilated into that which has become the dominant culture. (Soudien 2005, 502)

These commentators highlight the need for those working in education in both the developed and the developing world to be aware of the consequences for individuals and world society of delivering a curriculum that presents only one view of the world – especially if this view of the world does not challenge the neo-liberal construction of globalisation and produces graduates in the dominant developed world who, in pursuing their own economic goals, create even greater inequality in the economically less developed world.

In the process of internationalisation of the curriculum, it is therefore important to consider the kind of world we currently live in and the kind of world we would want to create through graduates. The answers to these questions will have an impact on what is taught (whose knowledge), what sort of experiences are incorporated into the curriculum and what sort of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) are developed in graduates.

The conceptual framework was developed concurrently with case studies in internationalisation of the curriculum across different disciplines and institutions. Three of these are discussed below.

The case studies

The academics involved in these case studies participated on the condition of anonymity. Therefore, references to them or their institutions are limited in this document. However, some relevant background information has been provided.

Accounting

The accounting discipline is often seen as highly jurisdiction-specific and, thus, a difficult case for internationalisation. Typically, national professional accreditation bodies place significant restrictions on the curriculum. However, the literature on internationalisation of the accounting curriculum goes back some 40 years (Cobbin and Lee 2002). One rationale for internationalisation is that accounting reporting occurs increasingly across national boundaries *within* multinational corporations. Additionally, in a globalised world, 'a large number of graduates will be employed in international jurisdictions' or working for local branches of international organisations that report internationally (64). These professional conditions are typically interpreted to mean that the accounting curriculum should prepare graduates to think, communicate and act beyond their home jurisdiction. Another rationale has been high demand for accounting degrees from international students studying outside their home country. However, it has been observed that 'accounting education has failed to equip students with the requisite set of generic competencies required by the profession' (Lee and Bisman 2006,

5) and that there is 'a perception among academics that development of graduate attributes is not their responsibility' (Evans et al. 2009, 597).

The accounting team involved in this project was located in one of Australia's oldest universities, with around 27,000 students, around one fifth of whom are international students. Internationalisation of the curriculum is an institutional priority and a senior member of staff was recently appointed to stimulate activity in this area. The accounting team leader incorporated a review of internationalisation of the curriculum within a general review of graduate attributes efficacy. In this university, graduate attributes include operating on a body of knowledge, communication and problem-solving skills, intercultural competence, social responsibility and a global perspective. This last graduate attribute was the sole focus of internationalisation initiatives and the approach was uni-dimensional, the focus being on knowledge/content rather than skills development. After reviewing what was currently done and being challenged to think differently about other aspects of internationalisation, a new approach to internationalisation of the curriculum was described by the team leader:

> Throughout all our graduate attributes we've incorporated internationalisation. Under 'Knowledge' we want to see how our students are able to apply knowledge in an international context as well as in an Australian context. Under 'Communication' we want to see how our students can articulate a message to culturally and linguistically diverse groups. Under problem solving we want to make sure our students are actually doing research with an international context, looking at international research. Under 'social responsibility', because we're talking about business, we want to see how our students are considering the impact their decisions will have on different countries, on culturally diverse peoples. (Testimony of academic, University A, 2011)

Course/unit-specific articulation of these graduate attributes was linked directly to an assessment item, thus allowing for student achievement of the internationalised learning outcomes to be measured and traced across the programme. The importance of the informal curriculum, particularly as it relates to student interaction on campus, was affirmed as an area requiring future work. Professional development for teaching staff was also identified as a priority:

> Staff need to be comfortable with the pedagogical aspects of internationalisation, that is, with the internationalisation of the curriculum in action. Intercultural competence is a particular priority. (Testimony of academic, University A, 2011)

For academic staff in this programme, at this university, elements of the global, national and institutional contexts interacted to influence the decisions taken. The dominant aspects of the global context were the dominance of large multinational accounting firms and the cross-border flow of accounting

information within multinational companies. Nationally there was increasing diversity in the workplace resulting from globalisation and, in the local context the requirements of national accreditation bodies dominated. In the institutional context the adoption of graduate qualities as a policy and the recent adoption of internationalisation of the curriculum as an institutional priority influenced the decisions that were made and highlighted the need to provide appropriate support and development opportunities for staff in areas such as developing and assessing intercultural skills in students.

Despite a global approach to accounting education that was essentially content-based, a national approach that was somewhat restricted due to accreditation requirements and an institutional internationalisation context that was generally supportive but still evolving, the accounting team were able to articulate new conceptualisations of internationalisation that included intercultural and ethical considerations relevant to the discipline. The process of internationalisation of the curriculum broadened the curriculum beyond local professional accreditation restrictions and constructions. The university's graduate attributes policy was used to re-focus the degree on preparing graduates for professional practice in a *globalised* world while still meeting local professional accreditation requirements. Leadership at the local team level was a critical factor driving change.

Journalism

The journalism team was located in a traditional research-intensive university, with around 45,000 students, one quarter being international students. The university had a well developed and articulated approach to internationalisation embedded in its policies and mission and supported by professional development activities. Prior to their engagement in the research project, a comprehensive university-wide review and report on internationalisation of the curriculum had been completed. In policy, University B includes recognition and reward for staff for undertaking internationalisation initiatives and commits to internationalising the curriculum for all students, with the aim that they develop not just international but inclusive perspectives (University B policy documents, 2010–2011).

Following initial discussion of their responses to questions on the QIC, the core team of four academics, all from different cultural backgrounds, identified two courses that were fully focused on international and intercultural content: International Journalism and Cultural Communication. However, these courses were optional and disconnected from the rest of the programme. Discussions involving the team and two 'outsiders' from different disciplinary backgrounds (a professional development lecturer and the researcher) led them to conclude that the programme as a whole did not develop students' 'understanding about what it means to work in a globalized or international context' and that, furthermore, 'just because they would

be working locally didn't mean they didn't need to understand these things as well' (Testimony of a journalism academic, 2011). This led to concern about:

> the dominant mode of journalism and professional communication that has been established and is perpetuated by the same journals, the same associations, the same relevant theories being applied, without a sense of why? What else is out there? (Testimony of a journalism academic, 2011)

Journalism academics have become increasingly aware of the role of journalism in perpetuating dominant political orders, in particular the possibility of it playing a complicit role in reinforcing unequal power relationships, in both local and global settings. Journalism scholars have begun to contest the North American dominance of both professional and educational practice. Wasserman and de Beer (2009) describe a 'global "political realignment"' that has 'led to a questioning of the link between journalism and a particular form of political organization, opening the way for a definition of journalism that is more inclusive of global political differences'; they call for 'critical journalism studies [which] would also turn the gaze upon itself and the normative assumptions underlying comparative work, by locating comparative studies within global power relations both epistemologically and politically' (Wasserman and de Beer 2009, 428–429).

Papoutsaki (2007) likewise identifies a need to:

> create journalism/communication curricula that promote awareness of the social and cultural significance of local knowledge that has been taken … for granted or dismissed as irrelevant in a modern and increasingly globalized world. (10)

The journalism team in University B noted the overwhelming dominance of Western – mainly North American – approaches to the discipline in published teaching materials. In this context, they made the decision to approach internationalisation of the curriculum through the lens of de-westernisation. What this might mean was explained by one member of the team:

> What does de-westernisation mean for journalism and communication at [University B]? It means reflecting on the standing of our students, where they're from, where they're going and what they need; it means challenging the normative model by which we judge and assess; it means understanding local environments in global perspectives; it means not treating other journalisms as alternate or alternative and locating these within a boutique course on how they do things in other countries, which is the danger of discrete courses; it means understanding localised practices and where technology has enabled interconnections with wider potential audiences but also other less technologically driven environments. … It also means taking seriously what others may

have been taking seriously themselves for some time, that we from a Western perspective have been working in a paradigm which assumes a dominance, which assumes a norm, whereas others haven't, but no one has been that interested. It means being reflexive and with differences in approach and practice. We need to be adapting in relation to the student cohort, but also to where the professions are going at this point. And it means embedding this in all areas of the curriculum. (Testimony of a journalism academic, 2011)

The team set out to create an awareness of the dominance of Western paradigms in journalism practice – through the introduction of comparative assessment items – as well as a reflective approach to understanding alternative approaches to journalism. They decided to embed this within and across different units in the degree programme, rather than to add on discrete, optional units.

For academic staff in this programme, at this university, the most important aspects of the global context were the domination of the Western paradigm of journalism and challenges to this domination in the literature. The relevance to their programme of this emerging way of thinking about journalism education had hitherto not been considered. In the national context, journalism degrees have been focused on ensuring graduates are able to face the challenges associated with the digital environment and national as well as international law. While graduate attributes were an important part of the institutional context, the teaching team acknowledged the need to interpret these more comprehensively within the context of the discipline, rather than 'glossing over' them. The process was assisted by the fact that the academic team was itself multicultural and multilingual and leadership was strong and consultative, with an emphasis on negotiation of meaning and outcome throughout the process.

This team benefited from an institutional context in which internationalisation of the curriculum was obviously and tangibly valued and supported. There was strong leadership at university and disciplinary level and the teaching team was culturally and linguistically diverse. The disciplinary context, characterised by some contestation of the prevailing hegemonic professional paradigm, assisted the formulation of a broad understanding of internationalisation in terms of de-westernisation.

Public relations

The public relations (PR) team was located in a more recently established, research-intensive university. University C had 18,000 students, including around 2000 international students. It had recently established an internationalisation policy, quite broad, though limited to a certain extent by resourcing issues. The university had a number of graduate attributes, of which 'global citizenship' was one (University C documentation, 2010–2011). The PR team had 'worked with generic graduate attributes of global

perspectives and social justice' but they were not sure 'how we assess these things … and we want to embed intercultural competence as a specific learning outcome in the public relations degree' (Testimony of a University C public relations academic, 2011). The teaching context for the team was complex: they taught several offshore programmes in very diverse locations and issues of consistency in delivery and assessment across onshore and off-shore programmes were prominent. The core team of three staff involved in the project had previously engaged in internationalisation of the curriculum, focused mainly on adapting the curriculum to suit the needs of international students, onshore and offshore. This had resulted in the inclusion in most core units of scholarship from a range of countries and academic papers and case studies from the various countries where the programme was taught.

Like journalism, public relations is a profession undergoing rapid trans-formation, due in part to technology-driven changes in communication prac-tices, such as increased use of blogging and social media networks. Ten years ago, Taylor (2001) noted a growing 'desire for competency in the skills necessary for the successful execution of international public relations' emanating from industry, which she attributes to the technology-driven glob-alisation of communications (73). More recently, Archer (2009) reports on an internationalisation initiative developed in response to a, 'dearth of skills … found from practitioners working internationally and the increasing demand of global companies and agencies for professionals with interna-tional/intercultural experiences' (3). Not surprisingly, therefore, this public relations team viewed internationalisation through the lens of industry stake-holders. Following intensive discussion of the programme using the QIC as a stimulus, they decided to conduct interviews with employers of their grad-uates. The aim was to gain better understanding of the specific international knowledge, skills and attitudes valued by industry. A range of key attributes of 'internationalised' public relations practitioners were identified. The results highlighted the relevance of intercultural competence to public rela-tions practice and identified specific desirable attributes such as 'innate curi-osity', a willingness to question the status quo and communication skills focusing on the ability to consult and engage. Sensitivity towards Indige-nous cultures in Australia was also identified as important (Testimony of a University C public relations academic, 2011).

The global context for this public relations programme was one in which a rapidly globalising profession was reassessing its criteria for what makes an effective practitioner. Both global and national contexts were dominated by a western model of practice, but there was recognition amongst the aca-demic community of the need to challenge this. Ultimately industry and aca-demic concerns were addressed through the introduction of a new unit exploring the theory and practice of public relations through the lenses of globalisation and culture. The sociocultural approach of the new unit repre-sented:

a shift away from the functional and normative understandings of public rela-
tions, which historically – and until recently – have dominated the field.
Rather than viewing public relations as an organisational or management func-
tion, this unit explores public relations as a cultural activity influenced by
social, political and cultural contexts, and actively involved in the construction
of meaning. (Extract from the unit description)

In this case study, the approach to curriculum internationalisation was signif-
icantly informed and driven by industry perspectives. The curriculum
response focused on how to develop intercultural skills, knowledge and atti-
tudes relevant to a variety of workplaces in the Australasian region in which
graduates were most likely to be employed. The dominance of a US profes-
sional paradigm was acknowledged and addressed through the introduction
of a new course. In this way the team balanced the need to work with
potential employers of graduates and meet their needs, while simultaneously
engaging in the important academic work associated with encouraging and
nurturing the emergence of new paradigms. It is interesting to note the very
different approaches to the process of internationalisation of the curriculum
in the journalism and the public relations teams given that public relations
and journalism are 'interacting professions' facing similar issues in profes-
sional practice (Breit 2011, xix). This suggests that approaches to interna-
tionalisation of the curriculum are not entirely determined by the nature of
the discipline. Other factors are also at play.

Discussion

While there are distinctive differences between these case studies, some con-
clusions about the process of internationalisation can also be drawn from
them.

First, the process is complex, multi-faceted and context-dependent and it
needs to be understood and nurtured in situ, with consideration being given
to the unique interactions between disciplinary, institutional, national and
global contexts. These interactions produced similar concerns but different
priorities for immediate action.

Second, the multiple allegiances of academic staff (to their discipline
community, their university, industry and professional groups) and the com-
plex roles played by universities on the local, national and global stage, cre-
ate conflicting and competing demands on the curriculum. Choices must be
made and some of these involve critical questions of balance. To what
extent will the focus of the curriculum at a programme level be on
performativity in an industry/workplace setting and to what extent will it be
on the human qualities of being and identity in tomorrow's world? These
are big questions that cannot be resolved at a programme/discipline level by
individuals teaching isolated courses.

Third, while the core work involved in the process of internationalising the curriculum must occur in disciplinary teams, interaction with 'outsiders' from different discipline communities is also critical. At different times and in different ways this stimulated, sustained and informed the process and the outcome as the 'taken-for-granted' was challenged. The conceptual framework provided a mechanism for disturbance and questioning of dominant paradigms, focused attention on the relationship of the programme with the professions and with other disciplines and stimulated creative uncertainty.

Fourth, while internationalisation of the curriculum was clearly to some extent discipline-dependent, disciplinary culture and tradition did not account on their own for the different approaches. Rather, a complex range of interacting factors influenced each team and the individuals within it as they worked through the process of internationalisation of the curriculum.

The reciprocal and uneven relationship between the multiple contexts within which curricula were formulated and enacted in the case studies resulted in a variety of interpretations of internationalisation of the curriculum. Flexibility in interpretation is a good thing in a rapidly changing world. Narrow definitions and interpretations of internationalisation neither allow for nor encourage the emergence of dynamic, innovative or imaginative responses to changes in institutional, national, regional and world contexts. An important part of the process of internationalisation is inviting, accommodating and nurturing new rationales, alternative paradigms and interpretations of internationalisation of the curriculum that legitimate hitherto hidden or ignored perspectives and provide gateways into alternative futures.

The research also highlighted the need for further research. Studies of the actual impact on the 'mindset, skillset and heartset' (Bennett 2008, 13) of students who engage in the modified curricula would provide valuable evidence of the impact on student learning of an internationalised curriculum. Furthermore, this research was limited to one country. Similar research undertaken in different contexts (regional, national, institutional and disciplinary) would also provide further insights into the way in which the various layers of the conceptual framework influence constructions of what internationalisation of the curriculum means in action in different contexts.

Conclusion

This research has provided some insights into the reasons for different interpretations of internationalisation of the curriculum within and across disciplines and highlighted the importance of constantly challenging existing interpretations and revisiting meaning.

The curriculum in higher education is subject to a range of external influences and competing demands. Globalisation poses multiple challenges. Those involved in internationalising the curriculum must balance the competing demands of employers, society more generally and their discipline

communities in state-based, national universities operating in a globalised and increasingly connected and interactive world.

We have provided and illustrated a multi-dimensional conceptual framework of internationalisation of the curriculum, which situates the disciplines and the disciplinary teams who construct the curriculum at the centre of the internationalisation process. The complexity of the interactions between the various contextual layers within which internationalisation of the curriculum operates resulted in different interpretations of its meaning within the same national and regional context. Such variation is inevitable and desirable.

The conceptual framework acknowledges the complexity of the interactions between the different layers of context within which the curriculum is planned and realised. The framework usefully highlights the importance of acknowledging and responding to critical social and ethical questions related to globalisation in discipline-specific curricula. It prompts consideration of alternative paradigms, accommodates and legitimates different perspectives and provides gateways into alternative futures.

Interpretations and enactments of internationalisation of the curriculum in context require critical reflection, imagination and careful nurturing. Taken together the conceptual framework and the case studies highlight the possibilities and complexities of internationalisation of the curriculum.

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