

Internationalisation of the Curriculum in Action

Case Study - Journalism

This case study was developed as part of an ALTC National Teaching Fellowship, *Internationalisation of the Curriculum in Action* in 2010-2011. One of the outputs of the fellowship was a process model of internationalisation of the curriculum. The model identifies five-stages of internationalisation of the curriculum:

- Review and Reflect
- Imagine
- Revise and Plan
- Act
- Evaluate

More details of the process model and supporting resources are available from www.ioc.net.au or from the Fellow, Associate Professor Betty Leask betty.leask@unisa.edu.au .

As you read through this case study think about the following questions:

1. What are the enabling factors within the institutional context?
2. What does the case study tell you about the process of IoC?
3. What does it tell you about the product, an internationalised curriculum?
4. What questions does it raise for you?

Institutional context

The university's approach to internationalisation is embedded in its policies and mission. University policy documents describe a comprehensive approach to internationalisation of the curriculum.

Recognition and reward for staff actions in internationalisation is specifically addressed in documentation, primary responsibility for which is born by the Deputy Vice Chancellor International. The DVCI emphasises the University's commitment to internationalising the curriculum for all students. The University demonstrates this commitment in various ways, including by promoting and supporting opportunities for students to acquire international experience and develop inclusive perspectives.

University documentation describes a multi-level approach to internationalisation, encompassing elements such as joint degrees involving collaboration with international partner institutions; recognising and rewarding student endeavours in internationalisation; finding ways to facilitate quality interaction between international and domestic students in both academic and non-academic settings; as well as committing to an ongoing process of internationalising the curriculum to produce graduates with the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for living and working in a globalizing society.

The university offers students the opportunity to study a foreign language concurrently with their degree program and a Diploma in Global Issues, which can be taken concurrently with any degree program.

Background

The parent school has an intake of 400-500 students per year across a number of undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The undergraduate Journalism program is by far the more popular. The multi-faculty Bachelor of Communication contains the majors Public Relations, Professional Communication and Mass Communication and is scheduled for growth. Both the journalism and the communication majors fall under the heading of professional or strategic communication.

The undergraduate student cohort is largely domestic (dominated by the privately schooled), while the postgraduate cohort is largely international (and overwhelmingly Asian). There are no offshore campuses.

In the past internationalisation of the curriculum had been associated with feelings of frustration. At the commencement of this case study the team reported that much of the curriculum content already draws upon international examples, much of the theoretical basis is drawn from international thought, and much of their research is published in international journals. Involvement in this cycle of internationalisation of the curriculum helped the teaching team to move beyond their frustration and identify new directions for the internationalisation of the program.

The process of IoC

Reviewing and reflecting

Four members of the teaching team (including the Program Director and Associate Head of School) met with two external facilitators to discuss the Questionnaire on Internationalisation of the Curriculum (QIC). They concluded that, despite the assumption that the curriculum was already significantly internationalised, their curriculum was quite narrowly focussed. They found themselves asking where non-Western practice was recognised, and where the non-Western examples were in the curriculum.

This led to them defining internationalisation of the curriculum in the context of their programs as 'de-Westernization'. This approach was supported by the scholarly literature, for example a South African study which observed that non-Western journalism academics often find themselves confronted with the unacceptable choice of either remaining relevant to the local conditions of journalism practice, or completely abandoning this in favour of the dominant paradigm which is largely unconnected to their situation (Wasserman & de Beer, 2009).

Another reason for the focus on de-Westernization was identified as the US dominance of the International Communication Association, the key international professional body, in terms of practice, theories and ways of being. This dominance of Western thought and the English language tends to produce a homogeneous perspective, from which non-Western experience is excluded. It is perpetuated by the same journals, the same associations and the same theories being applied

What has been taken for granted in journalism is, however, increasingly being challenged by changes in the way technology is employed and increasingly diverse ways of 'being a journalist'. From this

point on de-Westernization was used as the lens through which to understand and enact internationalisation of the curriculum.

Prompted by questions in the QIC, the team undertook a quick, informal audit of what the curriculum offered in terms of internationalisation. They already had two courses that were fully focused on international and intercultural context: *International Journalism* and *Culture and Communication*. They also noted that there were a number of areas on the curriculum which draw upon non-Western practice, theories and assessment. However, it was noted that despite regular school planning days and activities, the many different ways in which international perspectives were presented in and developed by the existing curriculum had never been appreciated as a whole. It was also noted that while at a program level internationalisation was at an early stage of the IoC process cycle, individual courses and activities were distributed all around the cycle. Significant benefit could be gained from building connections between different courses, exploiting and developing knowledge or skills developed in earlier courses later in the program. Building these connections was identified as a priority for further work.

In particular, the two courses *International Journalism* and *Culture and Communication*, had so far been left to function as free-standing courses. The skills students were learning in these courses were not incorporated into other courses, despite the huge potential they provided. *Culture and Communication*, for example, focused on multicultural group work: these skills could be drawn on for very practical reasons in other courses. Another advantage of having an overview of the various internationalisation (or de-Westernization) activities in the curriculum was that this enabled the sharing of such activities across the teaching team: novel approaches to assessment were discovered and their potential for incorporation into other courses was identified. The potential value included informal knowledge about how to implement diverse assessment practices.

The teaching team also acknowledged that while they had worked hard to interpret the graduate attributes in terms of professional content, in the end they may still not have gone far enough in thinking about what they actually mean. Being global, ethical, accountable, responsive to change are all worthy objectives, but what does it actually mean to be global, or ethical? They realized they needed to look at the words they had used, and focus on what these things actually meant in depth.

Finally, the teaching team realised the need to approach the global through the local. They recognised that some of their programs were quite parochial in focus. This situation had developed because graduates were mostly employed locally. However, it was acknowledged that even graduates working locally needed to be able to understand their work in an international and even global context. An awareness of indigenous issues also needed to be embedded in a similar way.

Imagining

The team began to imagine what de-Westernization might mean for what they taught, how they taught it, how they supported learning and how they assessed learning. This prompted them to revisit, and in some cases read for the first time, scholarly literature from within and beyond the discipline. They concluded that de-Westernization means challenging the normative model by which they judge and assess, and understanding local environments within global perspectives. This means not treating other journalisms as marginal and not locating them in an isolated and optional course on how things are done in other countries. It also means being aware as teachers and professionals of the cultural construction of knowledge in the discipline that has resulted in the dominance of

Western paradigms, which assume certain norms, and that are not be as universal as they claim to be.

While these issues are still very much on the table in the program team they have also been discussed beyond the core group involved in teaching the program, in various groups and committees, including the School's Teaching and Learning Committee, which is attended by all course coordinators. . This has resulted in raising awareness of issues associated with IoC more broadly across the school.

Revising and planning

A number of possible changes to the way in which graduate attributes are described in the context of the disciplines of journalism and communication have been discussed. In the words of one team member these graduate attributes aim to 'promote a transformative experience' and develop 'reflective practitioners', capable of 'positioning their approaches within the global land local contexts' and of 'reasoning that is mindful of diversity and changing sociocultural settings'.

Changes to courses have been proposed. In the *International Journalism* course one assessment item will encourage students to step back from a purely Anglo-Saxon view of foreign news reporting and appreciate it from the point of view of other cultures. It will entail analysing the reporting of an event in three Australian and three overseas newspapers (Western and non-Western).

In the *Culture and Communication* course students will be required to write reflectively on a cultural event that they attend during the semester from the point of view of non-members of that particular culture.

A number of changes to the content and assessment of other courses are also planned. These include inviting international higher degree research students from various cultural backgrounds to present in courses, as well as enabling international students to present case studies in class from their own cultures.

Opportunities for students to undertake practical or service learning in overseas organisations (FAO, UNESCO), or on international issues with Australian development organisations will also be introduced.

The process to this point took around 12 months and is ongoing.