

Internationalisation at Home:

**Building cross-cultural understanding
among local and international students
through enhanced teaching and learning practices
in the Faculty of Commerce,
Victoria University of Wellington,
Wellington, NZ**

Project Report

VUW Learning and Teaching Development Fund 2011

Karen Commons, Vicky Mabin, Xiaodan Gao (authors)

Val Lindsay, Simon Park, Jan Stewart, John Brocklesby, David Crick, and
Adrienne McGovern-Wilson (other project team members)

Simon Park, Val Lindsay, Yang Yu, Geoff Plimmer, David Crick
(classroom collaborators)

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Summary

In response to our Business School's requirement to deliver on our agreed learning goals (and consequently the Victoria graduate attributes), a year-long Teaching and Learning-funded project explored ways to develop learning goals relating to the development of cross-cultural and international perspectives. The project was co-led by the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) within the Faculty of Commerce, and a Senior Learning Adviser from the University's Student Learning Support Service. A survey of Commerce students in 2010 had revealed extensive cultural diversity on campus, and the project team intended using this diversity as a classroom resource.

An earlier conceptual model from Mabin and Brocklesby (2010) was modified to incorporate current research from Caruana and Hanstock (2008) suggesting that 'relational participation' in the classroom was a way forward as opposed to more traditional 'technical participation'. In addition, the project team recognised the need to adopt an interlocked approach as outlined by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB, 2010) in their 'Globalisation of Management Education' task force report.

The project began with a professional development workshop from Australian expert, Shanton Chang. This workshop included a presentation of relevant research in Australia, identification of existing good practice in the Faculty of Commerce, and a brainstorm of ways to move forward. The workshop led to two key teaching and learning interventions: creating safe and inclusive learning community in first year tutorials and undertaking experiential learning activities in second and third year lectures. Participants at the workshop decided that all newly created resources be stored in a repository from where they would be shared throughout the university.

End-of-year evaluations of the year's interventions showed positive results. It was found that effective tutor training could lead to increased participation in learning among first-year students as well as perceptions among these students of a comfortable learning environment. It was also found that experiential learning interventions in classrooms provided learning opportunities for students. However, these interventions needed to be perceived of as relevant.

The project concludes that tutorials are useful environments in which to create safe, inclusive learning communities and that experiential learning interventions can be used for affective and possibly transformative learning. However, if students are to develop cross-cultural and international perspectives, considerable thought and planning needs to go into systematic

curriculum development so that such learning is scaffolded appropriately and any interventions fit into a framework that maximises their success in terms of learning outcomes. Learning community refers to all members of an academic institution, and reflective practice is important for all, students and staff alike. Reflection and good practice need to be shared in a way that increases the capacity of the entire learning community to develop cross-cultural understanding.

A spinoff from the project is the employment of two summer research students who are currently researching how best to implement effective group work. The results from this research will be added to the Commerce Faculty's repository of resources. The project team for the overall project will ensure that this summer research as well as all other resources created during the project will be disseminated at Victoria. They will do this by working in conjunction with the Centre for Academic Development. They will also present at national and international conferences during 2012.

Project Team

Karen Commons and Vicky Mabin (co-leaders)

Karen Commons, Xiaodan Gao, Jan Stewart (SLSS)

Vicky Mabin, Val Lindsay, David Crick, Simon Park, John Brocklesby, Adrienne McGovern-Wilson (Commerce Faculty)

The project proposal is attached as Appendix 1.

Introduction and relevant literature

An understanding of globalisation and its impacts is essential for business students in today's tertiary institutions. Business schools are realising that curricula need to reflect this theme, and they are also reflecting on ways to prepare their graduates to do business in a culturally diverse workplace once they complete their qualifications. In short, one of the key challenges in teaching and learning in today's business schools is how to develop international and cross-cultural perspectives and understandings among students.

Educators believe that the development of such multi-cultural perspectives will be facilitated by what is often labelled as 'the internationalisation' of our institutions. Knight (2004) defines this 'internationalisation' as 'a process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education'. Caruana and Hanstock (2008) have given thought to the current state of internationalisation of teaching and learning in our tertiary institutions. They state that institutions can be placed along a development continuum that stretches from 'technical observance' to 'relational participation'. They show how institutions move from technically observing internationalisation in terms of bringing in international students and staff, and what they call 'add-on' activities, such as extra-curricular clubs and activities—to 'relational participation', where institution members begin to build true relationships with each other and realise that there is something to be gained for all from the internationalisation drive. Their key question, however, is **how** do institutions move to best practice in relational participation. Caruana (2010) believes that the curriculum has a significant role to play. She believes that the three key principles of the internationalised curriculum are inclusion, understanding of multiple perspectives, and development of cross-cultural capability.

Other authors also point out that internationalisation of the curriculum is more than simply learning about other cultures or responding to global conditions. Leask (2010) believes that the curriculum should provide local students with the opportunity to reflect on their own identity. She states that internationalisation of the curriculum is related to knowledge of ourselves and our own culture as much as to our knowledge of other cultures. Leask, together with colleagues at several Australian universities, through an Australian Learning and Teaching Council-funded project, has developed a set of resources (see Freeman, et al, 2009), including a chart depicting the development of inter-cultural capability for an individual (see Appendix 2). This chart provides a useful schematic of the development of knowledge, attitudes, and skills, on one dimension, and from awareness through understanding to autonomous behaviour on a second dimension. Bourne (2011) takes this discussion a stage further and reflects on what should happen at institutional level. Bourne believes institutions need to think hard about what a global institution is. She cites Tormey's 2006 work which states that institutions should not impose their own views, lifestyles, and forms of knowledge, but should create spaces where others can examine the local values and priorities in a safe, enjoyable, equal, and productive relationship. Leask, Bourne and Tormey have clearly moved beyond the technical observance stage and are exploring how Caruana and Hanstock's 'relational participation' might look.

Some authors discuss types of interventions that are most suitable for effective internationalisation of the curriculum. Leask and Carroll (2011) believe institutions need to implement 'strategic and informed interventions' in order to improve inclusion and engagement and enable all students to

benefit from the diversity on their campuses. They state that institutions need to 'align the informal and the formal curriculum', to 'focus on task design and management', and to find 'new approaches to professional development' for academic staff. They also stress the need for ongoing reflection on the effectiveness of interventions. Thom (2010, cited in Leask, 2010), believes that thoughtful internationalisation of the curriculum will bring about transformation among its members. This transformation takes place where difference is tolerated and respected in institutional culture and where individuals are required to think and act outside their comfort zone in a supportive environment. Two Australian academics, Anita Mak and Michelle Barker, currently have an Australian Teaching and Learning Council grant (ALTC, 2010) to investigate how best to 'internationalise at home' using interventions in learning that are drawn from their research-validated 'Excell: Excellence in experiential learning and leadership' programme. 'ExcelL' is a programme that teaches cross-cultural communication. It uses experiential learning techniques and encourages international students to step outside their familiar way of behaving in order to learn the communication competencies necessary for success in a new environment. Mak and Barker's Excell programme has been taught at Victoria University of Wellington for six years and evaluations show that students who participate (international as well as local students) gain increased confidence. International students who participate report that their interaction with people from different cultures increases (Commons & Gao, 2011).

Arkoudis, Yu, Baik, Borland, Chang, Lang, Lang, Pearce and Watty (2010) have spent two years reflecting on how to implement (in the classroom) something like the 'relational participation' that Caruana and Hancock (2008) suggest. Their project, also funded by an Australian Learning and Teaching Council grant, involved extensive research in Australian university teaching and learning environments to find ways of enhancing interaction between domestic and international students. They identified that interaction between students of different cultures—and subsequent cross-cultural learning—does not happen naturally. They found that the classroom was the ideal place for diverse students to find common ground. They identified a need for a 'pedagogical approach that facilitates and promotes peer interaction for learning across cultural groups to capitalise on diversity, sustain social, emotional and cognitive conditions for learning and optimise learning through diverse inputs and interactions' (Arkoudis et al, 2010). Arkoudis et al (2010) developed a six-dimension conceptual framework to be used in such a pedagogical approach. Their dimensions are:

1. planning interaction
2. creating environments for interaction
3. supporting interaction
4. engaging with subject knowledge
5. developing reflexive processes
6. fostering communities of learners (Arkoudis et al, 2010)

These dimensions seem to provide a basis on which to develop 'relational participation' in teaching and learning.

Victoria initiatives that provided background to the project

In early 2010, Vicky Mabin, Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning, and John Brocklesby, Deputy Dean, from the Faculty of Commerce at Victoria, became interested in exploring how to develop global/ multi-cultural perspectives in their commerce curricula. Cognisant of the barriers to sending students abroad, and postulating that a considerable diversity existed within their student and staff bodies, they decided to explore whether they could harness such existing diversity in order to develop international and multi-cultural perspectives. They knew from enrolment data that approximately 25% of Victoria's students were international students. They also knew anecdotally that among the remaining 75%, many were permanent residents from overseas or well-travelled New Zealanders. On realising this extensive level of diversity on campus, Mabin and Brocklesby postulated that this potential could be utilised in teaching and learning activities as well as in extra-curricula activities to develop multi-cultural perspectives among students. They created the concept model presented in Figure 1 below. This model postulates that staff and student diversity could be harnessed to inform activities in and beyond the curriculum and to provide opportunities for the development of multi-cultural perspectives and understandings. They realised that if both staff and students could participate in such activities and then reflect on learning gained, a cycle of continuous enhancement of the international experience would be created.

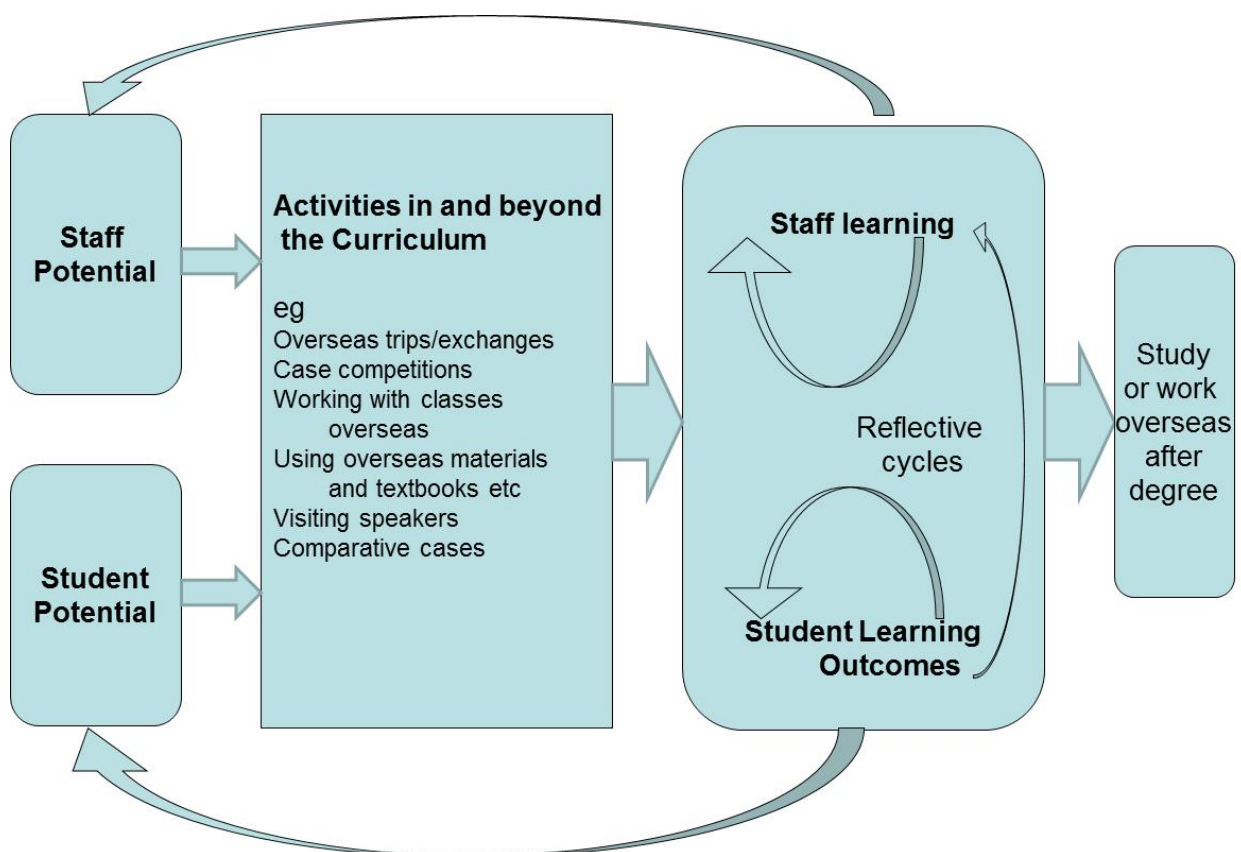


Figure 1: Developing a substantive international experience—concept model (Mabin and Brocklesby 2010a)

Mabin and Brocklesby began their exploration by developing surveys for students and staff in their faculty in order to gain a clearer idea of international experience and background (Mabin and

Brocklesby, 2010b). The student survey was administered to 300-level students in December 2010, and the staff survey was administered in May 2011. The survey results confirmed the level of diversity they had expected. Of the 501 student respondents to their survey, they found that 45% had lived in another country at some time in their lives, and fewer than 5% had never travelled overseas. A total of 28% were born outside New Zealand and 51% had close family from abroad. Among staff respondents, 62.5% were born overseas and more than 50% had studied abroad. Interestingly, students surveyed showed positive attitudes to further development of international and multi-cultural perspectives. In terms of how these perspectives might be developed, however, students and staff disagreed. A repeat survey of students in December 2011 gave very similar results to the December 2010 survey. Details of the survey design together with preliminary results are provided in Mabin (2012).

The surveys revealed that the level of internationalisation potential was actually higher than had been appreciated, the level of usage of the 20 or so learning-related activities listed in the survey was good, and overall, the level of perceived effectiveness of these activities was encouraging. The corroboration of student and staff views provided confirmation of the effectiveness and prevalence of relatively simple strategies such as discussing how concepts apply in other countries, and using examples from a variety of countries. The perceived effectiveness, coupled with the rareness, of study, travel, and living abroad were all as expected — students returning from such exchanges typically provide glowing accounts, but very few students get to go on exchanges. However, the response from students regarding some of the other activities was instructive; in particular, student responses on groupwork showed a sizable difference between frequency of use (high) and perceived effectiveness (low). The comparison of student and staff responses provided further insight into differences between staff and student views. For example, there was a significant mismatch between staff and student views on the effectiveness of group work and international textbooks. In both cases, staff felt the activities were very useful but students found them much less so (Mabin, 2012). A summary table of results is provided in Appendix 3, and open-ended comments in Appendix 4.

In May 2010, a search of the international literature on good practice in this area identified Excell (mentioned earlier) as a useful programme for developing multi-cultural understanding on campus. As a result of this finding, the Commerce Faculty gave five of its academic staff the opportunity to do a three-day training programme in Excell in late 2010. The outcome of this training was a decision to trial Excell in Commerce classrooms.

The project

In 2011, a team co-led by Vicky Mabin and Karen Commons from Student Learning Support Service at Victoria gained a Learning and Teaching Development Fund grant to take this work further and to perform action research to find out which interventions might be useful as a means of harnessing the existing diversity on campus and using it as a resource to develop multi-cultural perspectives. The project was entitled *Building cross-cultural understanding among local and international students through enhanced teaching and learning practices in the Commerce Faculty*, and the successful proposal is attached in Appendix 1. The project team consisted of representatives from

Faculty of Commerce and Student Learning Support Service. The project would be underpinned by Mabin and Brocklesby’s conceptual model (Figure 1). However, for the purposes of the project, the model would be somewhat modified. The second part of the model, ‘staff/student activities’, would incorporate ‘relational’ activities as well as the more ‘technical’ activities already mentioned there. The new model would have a stronger focus on using the existing diversity as a resource in our classrooms, and on building relationships among members as part of a learning community. Figure 2 below shows the revised model.

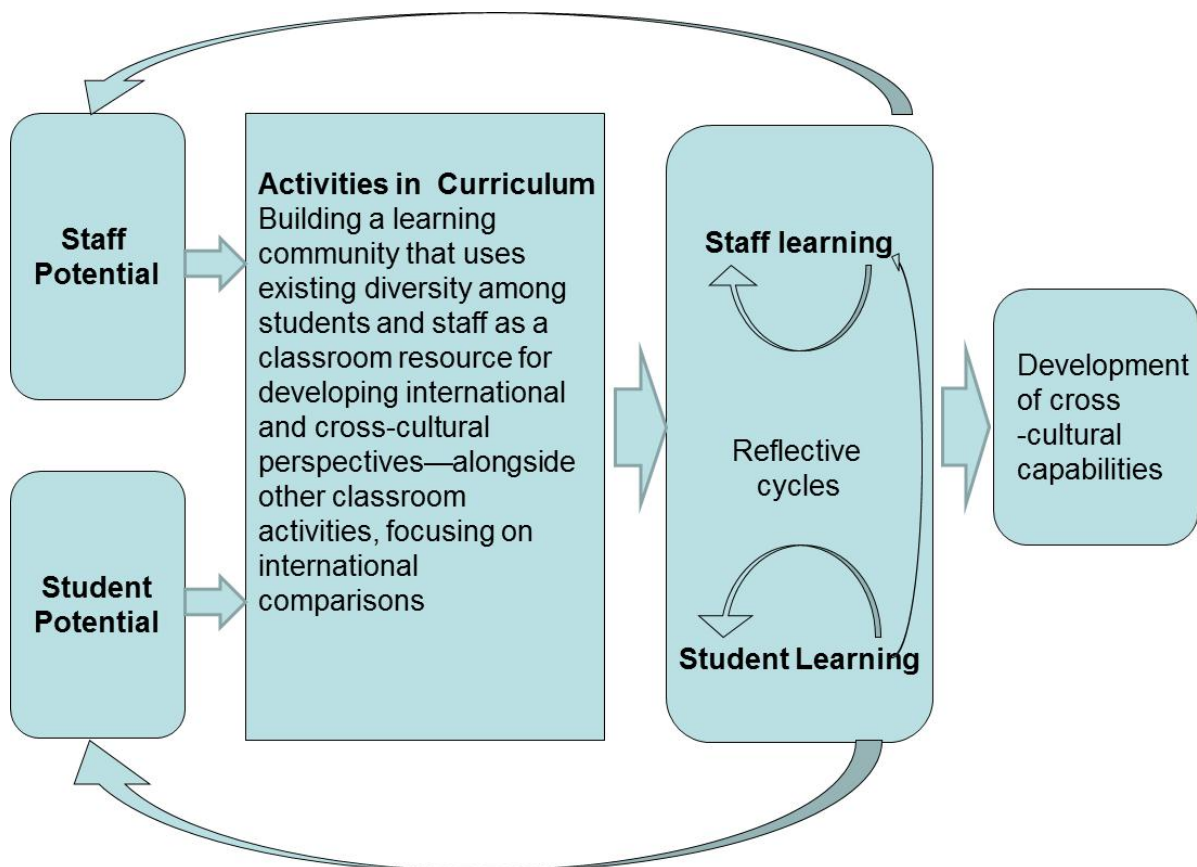


Figure 2: Developing a substantive international experience—revised concept model

Stage one of the project: working with an expert in the field

The first major initiative of the project was to bring to Victoria one of the key academics involved in Arkoudis et al (2010)’s ‘Finding Common Ground’, Dr Shanton Chang from Melbourne University. Shanton facilitated a one-day workshop, attended by approximately 45 staff. These staff members included Faculty of Commerce teaching staff; tutorial coordinators; and non-Faculty of Commerce staff with expertise and interest in internationalisation, student learning and academic staff development. In the first part of his workshop, Shanton presented a summary of the ‘Finding Common Ground’ project. In the second part, he conducted brainstorming sessions with Victoria’s

Commerce staff on how they could build on existing good practice and further develop multi-cultural perspectives.

In the first part of the day, Shanton explained the results of the 'Finding Common Ground' project. He explained the six-dimensional 'Interaction for Learning Framework' discussed earlier in the literature section of this paper. He suggested that one of the most appropriate pedagogical approaches was classroom group work. It is here that students can work together and learn from each other. However, he warned that group work requires significant effort to set up, support, and assess. He believed that much of the group work currently used in Australasian classrooms relied more on the stapler than on a concerted group effort where all members collaborated and cooperated to produce a product that could not be produced by an individual. This latter sort of group work takes much planning and expertise on the part of academic staff. Students also need training and support if they are to have a successful learning experience. Shanton's focus on group work was particularly relevant for us, given that the findings of our student and staff surveys had identified group work as a problem.

In the second part of the day, the group revisited the rationale for the workshop by doing a brief situational analysis of where Victoria currently stands in relation to internationalisation. The group reflected on the results of the Commerce surveys and the picture they gave of what students and staff perceived was already happening and what students felt was most effective. Vicky Mabin had also collected data from a second-year course assessment activity and this was also considered in the discussion (summary attached as Appendix 5). Shanton helped the group collate a picture of what initiatives and practices were already underway in relation to the theme of internationalisation (see Appendix 6). This picture was organised in lists according to 'operational', 'structural' and 'strategic' initiatives. (These lists would be used after the workshops to request initiative summaries from faculty staff involved.)

The final part of the day involved a catch-all brainstorm of 'obstacles' and 'corresponding actions' (see Appendix 7). We, the project leaders, were satisfied with this list and saw it as a very useful outcome of the day. The workshop evaluations showed that participants appreciated Shanton's contribution enormously. In general, the workshop provided a good springboard for our action research.

Stage two: identifying key actions for the project

From the full list of actions (see Appendix 7), the project team chose those which were most doable and impactful. A series of meetings with the project team as well as one meeting with faculty course coordinators identified the actions to focus on. They were to:

- implement more tutor training (using Student Learning Support staff and Centre for Academic Development staff) for first year course tutors so that first-year tutors

could create inclusive learning environments where all students would feel safe and comfortable and able to participate freely and share different perspectives

- use early tutorials in first year to develop cultural awareness, understanding, and cross-cultural communication skills
- run interventions in second and third year classes where students could begin to understand their own cultural identity as well as gain awareness and knowledge about other cultural behaviours and values.
- use Victoria International Leadership Programme students, post-grad students, interns, contract staff to help run co-curricular activities
- create a repository of best practice (ask staff to write 50-60 word summaries of successful initiatives, practices; put these summaries on Commerce website)
- hold lunch-time meetings to showcase and discuss initiatives and best practice: what, why, how
- get the Faculty's 7 core 100-level courses working more closely together
- frame this initiative for students as valuable, relevant for jobs and life; tell them they will become globally competent
- promote recognition through reporting good practice (eg, in Vic News, on Commerce Faculty website)

This list can be divided into three types of action:

- teaching initiatives/interventions in classes
- creating a repository of best teaching and learning practice
- staff development and reflection

Stage three: undertaking teaching and learning initiatives/interventions—and evaluating them

The key teaching and learning ideas implemented during the course of the project were:

1. extra tutor training in first-year core papers to enable tutors to create safe, inclusive learning communities
2. interventions in second and third-year classes using ExcelL-based experiential learning techniques.

1. Extra tutor training

Course Coordinators in Information Systems (INFO), Economics, and Management agreed to Student Learning Support Service running a 2-hour extra tutor training session for their tutors in trimester two. Sixteen students attended: seven in INFO, three in Management, six in Economics. Coordinators in INFO and Economics agreed to Student Learning Support Service monitoring and evaluating the subsequent tutorials.

The key objective of this extra tutor training was to discuss and plan with tutors how to develop international perspectives among students—during tutorial sessions. We told tutors about our project and then brainstormed with them how best to develop cross-cultural and international perspectives among students. We told them we wanted to hear their ideas and encouraged them to

be as creative as possible. (We also knew that they were more likely to try different activities if they had created them.) We brainstormed together these questions:

- How can we ensure that everyone in our tutorial knows each other?
- How can we ensure people are comfortable and see the environment as safe?
- How can we ensure participation from everyone, and at the same time maintain relevance to course content (all the while achieving our aim of international perspectives)?

The tutors came up with excellent ideas, which we subsequently distributed. Examples of ideas from INFO tutors were to:

- give participation marks to groups rather than individuals
- encourage spontaneous Google /YouTube reports in class—relating to topics discussed (*People have ipods, laptops, cell phones in class and we may as well use this technology—we're INFO tutors after all.*)
- use speed dating to pass on content summaries.

As the trimester progressed, tutors tried out the activities they had decided on. Student Learning Support advisers visited tutorials and gave encouragement.

Students were not graded on their group work performance *per se* but received marks for their tutorial preparation and participation.

Extra materials used

We gave tutors a handout from Finding Common Ground (Arkoudis et al, 2010). See Appendix 8 for this handout. We suggested tutors might want to use this handout in their tutorials to stimulate a discussion among students about the value of gaining international perspectives and increasing interaction among diverse groups.

Evaluation of this initiative

At the end of the trimester, we sent a Qualtrix survey to INFO 101 tutors and students to try to find out whether our intervention in tutorials had made a difference. We chose to survey students and tutors in INFO 101 as this was the course where we had worked most closely with tutors. Their coordinator had endorsed the training, and we had been able to visit a number of their tutorials. For the student part of the survey, 148 of 562 students responded, approximately a quarter of the class.

Results from the student survey show that objectives were met in terms of students feeling comfortable and participating fully. When asked how comfortable the tutorial environment was, 86% of students gave ratings of either 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant 'not at all' and 5 meant 'very comfortable'. And when asked how much they participated, 39% replied 'more than usual'. Tables showing these results are presented below.

Table 1: INFO students' responses to the question, 'How comfortable was the tutorial environment?' (scale 1-5, not at all-very)




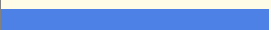



| # | Answer | | Response | % |
|---|----------------------|---|----------|------|
| 1 | 1 - Not at All | | 0 | 0% |
| 2 | 2 |  | 7 | 5% |
| 3 | 3 |  | 13 | 9% |
| 4 | 4 |  | 45 | 30% |
| 5 | 5 - Very comfortable |  | 84 | 56% |
| | Total | | 149 | 100% |

Table 2: INFO students' responses to the question, 'How much did you participate?'

| # | Answer | | Response | % |
|---|-----------------|---|----------|------|
| 1 | Less than usual |  | 3 | 2% |
| 2 | Usual |  | 88 | 59% |
| 3 | More than Usual |  | 57 | 39% |
| | Total | | 148 | 100% |

An interesting result related to the importance of group work in helping students feel comfortable. In answer to the question, 'What helped you feel comfortable?', the second most frequent answer (after 'friendly tutor') was 'being in groups'. Students made comments such as:

- *we were in the same groups for the duration of the course, so each tutorial we all got to know each other better and it made for a really comfortable working and group environment*
- *having the same groups each week was good as I got to know people in the class and made me feel more comfortable contributing*
- *the fact that group work was encouraged and feedback was required allowed us to learn through each other and from the tutor.*

It seems that students enjoyed the group activities in these tutorials and that the 'group' element of the learning environment was a significant factor in students feeling comfortable as well as in getting to know each other. It would seem possible that the 'group' element of the tutorial environment could be a key in attaining the outcome of 'sharing cross-cultural and international perspectives'. Indeed, when asked 'Did you get to know new people?', 94% of students replied that they did. And when asked if they got to know anyone from another culture, 36% answered that they did.

However, despite success in creating diverse groups where students got to know each other, the student survey found that only 32% of students felt they had had opportunities to learn about other

cultural perspectives. Some students indicated that there wasn't enough diversity in some of the tutorials; maybe the course content did not lend itself to discussion which usefully exploited this diversity.

Results from the tutor survey (where four out of eight tutors responded) show that tutors found the extra training helped them achieve the objectives relating to comfortable environment and participation levels. However, in the main, tutors reported that the extra training did not help them to get students sharing cultural perspectives. Only one of the four tutors reported that the training had helped them achieve this objective. One tutor responded that some classes had fewer international students. The same tutor commented that success in this area also depended on discussion questions set by the course coordinator. A further finding was that tutors found it hard to reliably assign marks for tutorial participation with up to 20 students per tutorial.

These results are on one hand encouraging, and on the other, disappointing. We seem to have achieved an environment in INFO tutorials where students felt comfortable and where they participated freely. However, we did not succeed in creating a learning experience where students actually shared and gained cross-cultural / international perspectives. Our results seem to indicate that we managed to create a heightened sense of learning community. Endorsement from the course coordinator was possibly an important factor in this, though we do not have evidence to prove this. The course coordinator is a migrant himself and he visited the extra training to tell of his own experience and to show a PowerPoint he had created relating to stereotyping. His sharing of his personal story seemed to create a sense of relatedness within the tutor/coordinator team and possibly contributed to the learning community within his course.

It is possible that although we did not achieve all our objectives, we are still on the right track. Caruana (2010) gives three principles of the internationalised curriculum. She states that first teachers need to create environments where students feel included and only after this criterion has been met, can students begin to share multiple perspectives and develop cross-cultural capability. It is possible that if we create safe and inclusive learning community at first year, students will be more likely to share multiple perspectives and develop cross-cultural capability as they progress through second and third year. Another possible reason for our failure to develop cross-cultural/international perspectives might be curriculum content. Tutors can only instigate discussion within the confines of the curriculum content and if the curriculum does not lend itself to such discussion, such sharing of perspectives is compromised. As we continue to work on internationalisation of the curriculum, and as our curriculum mapping incorporates this principle, tutors will have more opportunity to provide such discussion.

2. Interventions in second and third-year classes using experiential learning techniques

In second and third year classes, Student Learning Support advisers worked alongside several academic staff members to run experiential learning activities designed to develop cross-cultural awareness and international perspectives. These activities were based on The Excell (Excellence in Experiential learning and leadership) Programme .

Intervention in a third-year Human Resource Management class

Objectives of this intervention were:

- to help students identify and analyse their own cultural perspectives and behaviours relating to performance issues and pay rise requests
- to provide awareness and some understanding of different cultural perspectives relating to performance issues and pay rise requests

Student Learning Support Service advisers worked with the lecturer of this course to create a 2-hour session where students (approx 80) engaged in experiential learning related to seeking a pay rise. The class was discussing gender and cultural barriers to pay equity. First, the lecturer gave a 20-minute presentation on gender and culture and how these relate to employment issues. Next, we put students into co-national groups. Each group was told to create a roleplay of an employee asking for a pay rise. Students were asked to consider cultural values as they created their roleplay. Next, representative groups presented their roleplays to the class and students filled out 'cultural map' templates, stating words used, body language and underlying values. These cultural map templates are used in the above-mentioned Excell programme. After each roleplay, the class questioned the representative group about behaviours, values, etc, in order to understand how and why people in different cultures behave the way they do.

As the class was mostly made up of local students, we recruited other nationalities to come along to the class and help with the activity. We mostly recruited from the Victoria International Leadership Programme. We did this recruitment in advance of the session, and managed to bring in students from Cambodia, Malaysia, Africa, Germany, and Russia. We had an American in the class.

Outcomes

The lecturer commented that:

The session helped build connections amongst class members, and linked theory to practice. Unfortunately many international students were absent that day, and it did not build engagement with those students as planned. It did bring cross-cultural material to life.

Course evaluations relating to the intervention were mixed, some emphatically saying drop it, others saying they liked it. Some of the favourable comments were:

- *In HRIR306, I found the exercise extremely interesting and useful. It helped me learn the differences and similarities in interactions between countries and cultures. If I travel overseas with HR, I will surely remember the exercise!*
- *The fact that we had people from those countries get up in front of the class and talk and also how we had to get into groups ourselves and really think about how New Zealand culture works. It was hands on and I like that sort of learning—it was easy to relate to.*
- *the extent of the differences between the cultures, the subtleties and the interpretations of different words/ actions and what is and isn't appropriate in other countries. Doing this in HRIR306 is the only time in 3yrs at Victoria University that something has been done to encourage interaction and understanding regarding international and domestic students. The rest of the interaction I have had with international students is because I seek them out to have them in group projects, and to speak with them in tutorials/lectures. I think they need to be welcomed more by the domestic students, and made to feel at home, not like outsiders as they sometimes do.*

Intervention in a second-year International Business class

Objectives here were:

- to help students identify and analyse their own cultural perspectives and behaviours relating to business practice
- to provide awareness and some understanding of different cultural perspectives relating to business practice
- to help students begin to value other cultural ways of doing things.

Student Learning Support Service advisers ran an experiential learning activity during a 50-minute lecture slot with a class of 120–130 students. Two lecturers helped facilitate this activity. The course is an introduction to international business, and the course coordinator was keen to develop some awareness and understanding of cultural difference early on in his course. This intervention took place in week 4.

We divided the class into four large groups, ensuring that each large group had at least two pairs of students from countries other than New Zealand. Each facilitator took one of these large groups away to a booked space. Once in the designated space, students were asked to pair up with a co-national and prepare a role play according to scenario cards. (These scenario cards involved refusing an invitation to meet and discuss a proposed business collaboration.) Students then presented these roleplays to the group. The group filled out cultural maps and questioned those roleplaying in order to understand fully the different cultural behaviours and values relating to this scenario. The group asked questions such as:

- 'Why did you do...?'
- 'What cultural values are you possibly adhering to?'
- 'Do you think your behaviour is representative of your culture?'

Finally the whole group did a quick pair-share and feedback to the group on 'What I learned from this activity'.

Outcomes

The course coordinator reported that:

The activity gave students a personal experience in confronting different cultures. Although a few students, like those international students may have had similar experience previously, their understanding in this respect could be intuitive and implicit, and I believe the well-organised activity helped them to further the knowledge of cross-cultural literacy. For instance, students from the US and Europe said that they did not realise how 'quiet and shy' some New Zealand students were, and one Kiwi student who lived in the US for years noticed himself as a combination of both cultures. There were also many other interesting examples from the Asian-Kiwi cultural groups. Importantly, I noticed that students tried to explain the different behaviours by applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions—something they learned in lectures. This was great from the learning point of view.

Overall, for a 50-minute activity, I think it was well organised and executed. There is no doubt that it enhanced students' understanding of cultural difference and encouraged students how they perhaps should respond to the differences.

The other course lecturer added that:

My group of students in the exercise really enjoyed it and seemed to appreciate the opportunity to learn about others' cultures and behaviours. They took an active and intelligent interest.

On the day, students commented that they liked the active learning and change to routine. Hopefully students gained some awareness of their own cultural behaviours and values, and they should have gained awareness of marked cultural differences in relation to refusing requests. We told the students that we were hoping to make them aware of the fact that people from different cultures often did things differently, and that there was no right or wrong, just different. The experiential nature of the activity should have helped students gain this understanding at a deeper level than would have been possible had students been given this information in a lecture. The intervention in the HR class (discussed above) fed into an assessment activity, but this one did not.

Intervention in a third-year International Business class

Objectives of this intervention were:

- to provide active, experiential learning about cross-cultural communication
- to create an integrated community of learners
- to use international students as resources in the classroom as an attempt to internationalise our curriculum

Student Learning Support Service learning advisers ran an interactive session in a third-year International Business class of about 40 students. Students were working on GEE: Global Enterprise Experience (<http://www.geebiz.org/>). In order to prepare them for their role as leaders in their GEE teams, the lecturer thought it would be good to raise awareness of cultural differences towards leadership and teamwork. At the start of the session, we told students we were going to do an activity that would help them become more aware of cultural differences in team behaviour. We asked them to try to take off their cultural blinkers or lenses and be open to what they were to observe. We brought in pairs of students from several cultures and used some of the international students in the class. We asked our different cultural pairs to roleplay a scenario relating to giving feedback. The scenario related to a noisy neighbour and a request for less noise at night in order to sleep well.

After the series of roleplays, we asked students what they'd noticed. We elicited information for a continuum that we put on the whiteboard—showing individualistic behaviours at one end and collectivist behaviours at the other. Next we asked students to brainstorm challenges these cultural differences might pose for the leadership role in the GEE programme. Finally we had students brainstorm solutions to these challenges.

Outcomes

The international students who participated in the roleplays said they had learned a lot. The staff member present at the session said that the intervention *forced the students to interact and this is something that some were uncomfortable with; moreover, the way the interaction took place added a cross-cultural perspective*. The course coordinator reported that the feedback from the students was positive. They particularly valued the exercise when it came to their direct experiences with multicultural groups in the GEE.

Evaluations of these three interventions

We did not formally evaluate these interventions, so we do not have evidence of their efficacy in terms of student learning. However, we did ask the staff involved what they thought about their usefulness. All four staff replied. Some of their answers are included in the above summaries. Two of these staff members commented that students were interacting in useful ways and that cross-cultural perspectives were being shared. One had no doubt that it enhanced students' understanding of cultural difference and helped students see possible ways to respond to the differences. Another said that the groups of students really enjoyed it and seemed to appreciate the opportunity to learn about others' cultures and behaviours. They took an active and intelligent interest. The third-year International Business students particularly valued the exercise when it came to their direct experiences with multicultural groups in the GEE.

One staff member referred to the fact that some students were uncomfortable. This possibly shows that the intervention took students outside their comfort zone and provided opportunities for transformative learning of the type mentioned by Thom (2010, cited in Leask, 2010). The student responses that we did collect were mixed. It is possible that some of the negative responses were

related to lack of comfort in participating in new and experiential learning activities. Caruana, Clegg, Ploner, Stevenson, & Wood (2011) advise that to create resilient thinkers of the future, we need to take students outside of their 'comfort zones of learning' and put them into 'contact zones of learning'. It seems that students might not realise the value of such learning, however, and given that such activities might feel uncomfortable they might evaluate them negatively. Given that our objective is to create an integrated community of learners, we should be using evaluation techniques that measure attitudinal and behavioural change rather than simple evaluation forms that request a tick against 'like' or 'dislike' the activity.

One staff member commented on the strong need to maintain relevance to the curriculum and to ensure students understood the purpose of such activities. The intervention in his class was followed by an essay where students needed to consider the impact of cross-cultural difference on human resource management.

In one of the third-year classes, we noticed that not all students were immediately engaged. For such activities to work well, students need to know and trust each other. The environment needs to be safe and comfortable. Caruana (2010) says that internationalised curriculum needs elements relating to 'inclusion', 'understanding of multiple perspectives', and 'development of cross-cultural capability'. In this third-year class we had jumped straight to 'understanding of multiple perspectives' and did little prior work on creating an inclusive environment. Given that we are working on creating such an environment from first year (in our tutorial intervention already outlined), future third-year classes might be more responsive.

In the same third-year class, we also omitted another crucial step. We did not give students the opportunity to reflect on their own cultural behaviours before we presented the new perspectives from international students. As stated earlier in this paper, Leask (2010) believes we should provide local students with the opportunity to reflect on their own identity. She states that internationalisation of the curriculum is related to knowledge of ourselves and our own culture as much as to our knowledge of other cultures. Our own conceptual model also postulates the need to reflect on activities and experiences.

These interventions seem to have had varying levels of success. A key factor to consider in future is the creation of a safe and inclusive learning community where students can begin to identify the characteristics of their own cultural behaviours and values as well as those of their peers and other members of their institution. All interventions must have perceived relevance in line with the curriculum, and preferably be directly linked to assessment. More formal pre- and post-assessment for attitudinal and behavioural learning would give a clearer indication of usefulness of such interventions.

Reflection and learning

The final part of the conceptual model behind this project relates to staff and student reflection. As Leask and Carroll (2011) state earlier, institutions need to find new approaches to professional development for staff, and staff need to reflect ongoingly on the effectiveness of their interventions. This paper has already reported on student and staff reflection. Both key interventions—extra tutor training and classroom interventions using Excell—asked students and staff to reflect on what they had learned. In both interventions, tutors and staff were asked what they would do differently next time. And throughout this project, we have requested best practice reports from staff who are already implementing activities of their own that are related to internationalisation of the curriculum. We have asked these staff members:

- What they did
- Why they did it
- How they did it
- Effect/result
- How they might vary this if they did it again.

We have loaded these reports into the Commerce Faculty's Teaching Matters website. We will share this good practice at lunch-time seminars within the Faculty and eventually with the broader community of academics at Victoria. One resource completed with project funds is a 5-minute short film showing how to develop a learning community in first-year tutorials. This film will be used as a resource for academics (and in particular, course coordinators) as well as for future tutors. This film incorporates reflective practice. It shows how tutor training required incoming tutors to reflect on their past experience in order to plan how best to run their tutorials and create a safe learning community within their tutorials. The film shows students' reflections on their experience in these tutorials, and it also shows tutors reflecting on what they have done.

Although our year is up, our project continues over the summer in the hands of two student interns. They are investigating how staff can best incorporate group work in their classrooms and also how best to develop professional skills among staff—skills relating to teaching and learning that helps students develop international and cross-cultural perspectives. The interns are creating a pair of resource kits for staff and students.

An important learning

As part of the project, Karen Commons had the opportunity to attend a symposium in Brisbane hosted by Griffith University. The theme was 'internationalisation of the curriculum' and the keynote presenter was Viv Caruana, already cited in this paper. One of the key learnings Karen brought back from this symposium was from a lunch-time conversation with Stephen Drew from Griffith's Institute for Higher Education. Stephen warned that the method of dissemination of best practice was very important. He said that if staff are to become interested in using new teaching strategies they need to be shown clearly how they can implement these strategies. They need practical demonstration and clear perception of efficacy in terms of student learning. Effective dissemination

is the key area for us to focus on now. It is one thing for us to try new interventions and to prove that they work, but it is another to achieve concrete and lasting changes to teaching and learning practice throughout the faculty.

Recommendations

- Continue work on creating inclusive and safe learning communities at first year
- Moderate the amount of curriculum content in order to make time for students to share cross-cultural and international perspectives in classrooms
- Include curriculum content that calls for discussion of cross-cultural and international perspectives
- Scaffold development of cross-cultural capability: first year, develop a safe and inclusive community that encourages participation and enables students to identify their own cultural behaviours and values, second year develop understanding of multiple perspectives, third year develop behavioural cross-cultural competence (this can be done parallel with group work in classrooms)
- Use evaluation methods that test attitudinal and behavioural change
- Introduce rubrics to enable assurance of learning
- Use innovative and varied methods to share best practice among academic staff
- Get buy-in from students before doing interventions in tutorials and lectures
- Make links to course content transparent for students
- Link interventions to assessment
- Introduce much more group work that works, especially at second and third years
- Develop a training programme and provide resources for students performing group work
- Continue to bring more faculty staff on board
- Build in reflective exercises
- Recognise, consolidate and build on where we already are.

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Appendix 1: Project proposal

Building cross-cultural understanding among local and international students through enhanced teaching and learning practices in the Commerce Faculty

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Leader: | Vicky Mabin/Karen Commons—co-leaders |
| People involved: | Karen Commons, Xiaodan Gao, Jan Stewart (SLSS) Vicky Mabin, Val Lindsay, David Crick, Simon Park, John Brocklesby, Adrienne McGovern-Wilson (Commerce Faculty) |
| Approved by: | Bob Buckle, PVC of Commerce; Pam Thorburn, Director of Student Academic Services |

Objectives

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time Bound</p> | <p>Specific: This project relates to an initiative to produce students who can function effectively as leaders in a global community. Specifically, this project aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build support for this initiative among Commerce staff and an alliance of staff actively involved • write a strategy document for this initiative • trial and evaluate several interventions • create resources for all staff on campus. <p>Measurable: We will measure by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • numbers of staff on board at end of project and over the following year(s) • achievement of student learning outcomes assessed using FCom rubrics • student feedback at end of project and ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ from student reps ○ from a repeat of the FCom student survey (annually) ○ graduate destinations survey results (annually) • resources created at the end of the project and added to over time. <p>Achievable: The above activities are achievable as per the timeline later.</p> <p>Relevant: Our initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fits with Faculty’s mission of ‘providing stakeholders with a global perspective’ • fits with Victoria’s Student Experience Strategy, 2010–2014, which states that Victoria will ‘engage students as active and lifelong members of an inclusive and supportive community of higher learning...[equipping] them to make a significant contribution to local, national, and international communities’ <p>Timebound: We expect to see significant results this year, and would expect further progress to accrue over time with repeated and ongoing endeavours in this.</p> |
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| <p>Description</p> <p>Background and implementation</p> <p>Why is this project needed and useful to Victoria and our students?</p> | <p>Background</p> <p>In 2010 the Commerce Faculty identified a need to develop the international experience of its students in order to deliver on its mission of providing its stakeholders with a global perspective. A search of the international literature has revealed that many universities worldwide are struggling with these same issues. Recent research suggests an integrated ‘interlock’ approach is needed (Recommendations to AACSB International from the Globalization of Management Education Task Force, 2011).</p> <p>Students enrolled in the Commerce Faculty’s 300-level papers were surveyed to ascertain their cultural backgrounds, their exposure to international travel and study to date, their experiences of internationalisation in the classroom, and their future aspirations for international travel and study. The results indicate that the Faculty’s students have a diversity of international experiences and backgrounds. However it was clear that little use is made of this diversity in the classrooms to ‘develop a global perspective’. Bringing more international examples into the classroom should not be too difficult. The main challenge is expected to be raising staff and student multi-cultural awareness, knowledge and ability to communicate meaningfully across cultural boundaries. Students tend to stick with their own cultural groups unless forced to mix, so there is a need for staff to devise effective interactive activities. However it is not easy for staff or students to step outside their comfort zones and make these interactions happen and achieve the desired learning outcomes. Staff need support and advice in using teaching techniques and strategies designed to foster effective internationalisation of the classroom.</p> <p>Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We survey Commerce staff to find out their existing thoughts and practice • We analyse results of this survey and create a preliminary report. • We hold a workshop led by Australian expert, Dr Shanton Chang. (This workshop will continue alliance building process, give us know-how and enable us to brainstorm ideas for what might work in the Commerce Faculty at Vic.) • We do an updated literature search. • We work with key people involved in this initiative to plan and write up our strategy • We trial interventions/good practice and evaluate them against our student outcomes. (Examples of such interventions are extra tutorials at first year designed to create inclusive, safe groups where everyone participates, or carefully designed group activities within large-scale lectures) • We create resources as we go and modify/polish resources that work well at the end <p>Why is this project needed and useful to Victoria and our students?</p> <p>The goal of our initiative is to produce students who can function effectively as leaders in a global community, by developing their appreciation of other people’s perspectives. Our initiative relates strongly to Objective 5 of the Teaching and Learning action plan (and in particular to 5.7). We plan to achieve greater levels of interaction and inclusiveness in classes (in effect creating learning communities), using experiential and active learning techniques. New classroom and extra-curricular activities will be used to build a greater sense of community, harnessing diversity among students and staff to enrich multi-cultural, global awareness and understanding for both domestic and international students. The results will be of interest to other universities seeking to meet similar challenges.</p> |
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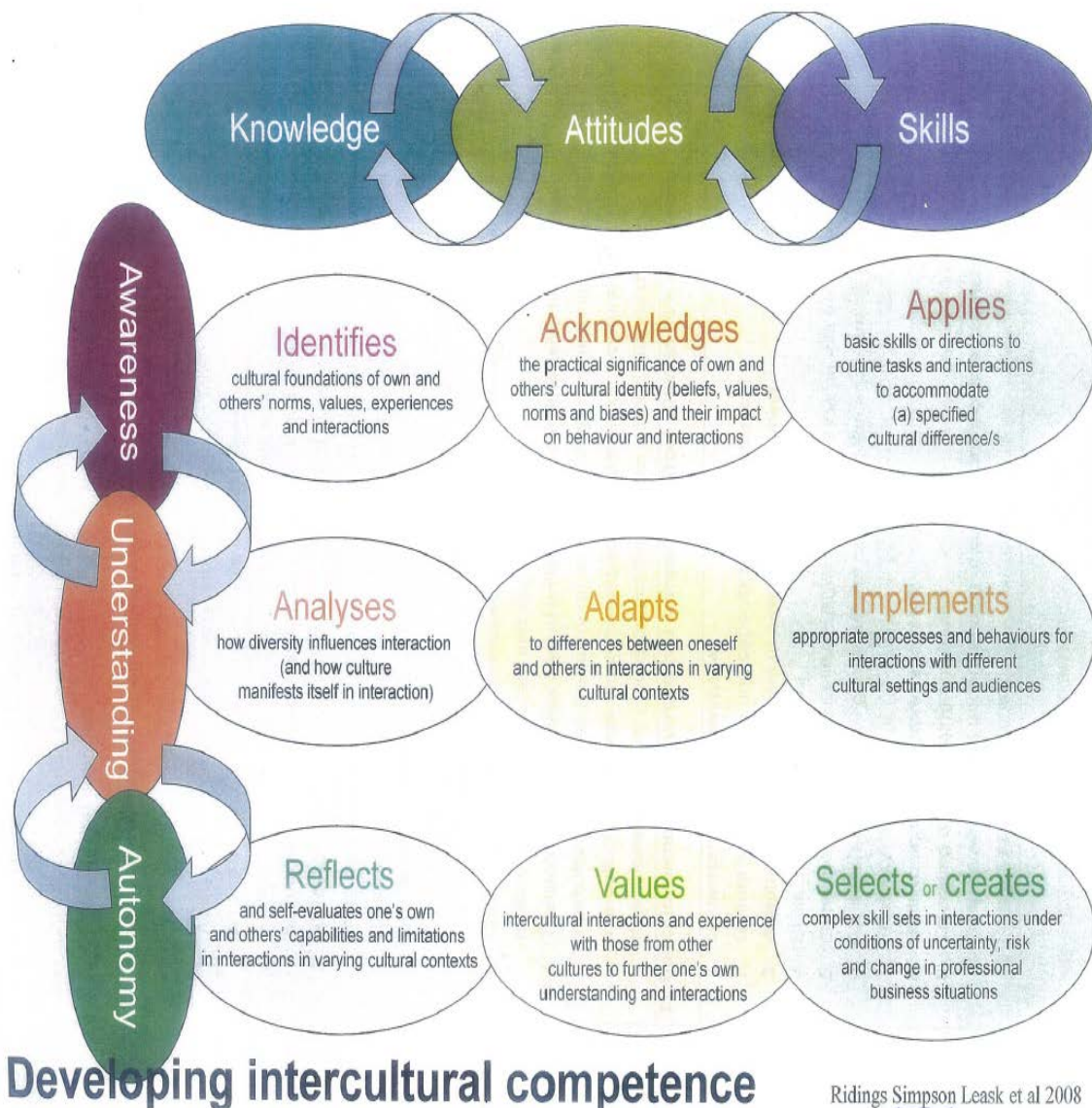
Outcomes

| | |
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| <p>What will the benefits be and how will they inform practice?</p> <p>How will the project outcomes be sustained and able to be extended without additional funding?</p> | <p>Benefits for staff will be knowledge of and skills in teaching and learning practice that internationalises the student learning experience. We will also create opportunities for faculty staff to share and practise new teaching methods.</p> <p>Students will be developing their skills at interacting with their peers from different cultures, which will help them inform their own practice. Feedback from students will further allow us to develop and enhance materials over time.</p> <p>This project will inform practice in the Commerce Faculty and the broader university because we will create staff and tutor training resources that can be stored in general repositories at UTDC, The Faculty and online. These resources can be used both in face-to-face staff training and as on-line resources for staff to access in their own time.</p> |
| <p>How will the results be disseminated?</p> <p>What will be the outcome for students?</p> | <p>At the end of the project, we will write a report evaluating our project and recommending future strategy and action. This report will be disseminated among the VUW teaching and learning community.</p> <p>Students will develop cross-cultural communication skills in an active, experiential manner, across communities of learning, using relevant scenarios from the discipline areas to build student awareness and competencies. They will become more comfortable and proficient at working with students from other cultures on course-related and extracurricular activities. They will gain greater awareness and experience leading to better student learning outcomes on global/multi-cultural awareness and understanding, cross-cultural communications and their relevance to commerce globally. This relates directly to the Commerce Faculty's mission of 'providing stakeholders with a global perspective' and the embedded learning goals of the Faculty's programmes.</p> <p>All students on campus will ultimately benefit from our sharing of good practice and creation of generic resources.</p> <p>The greater sense of community created through this initiative will enhance the learning environment and enable better student learning outcomes. Staff will benefit too. In time we will create an inclusive campus community that truly values and celebrates its diversity.</p> |

Project Timetable/Milestones

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|---------------------------------|---|
| <p>Start date and end date.</p> | <p>April/ May— Survey staff</p> <p>May/June— Analyse results, write preliminary report</p> <p>June— Conduct workshop with Dr Shanton Chang</p> <p>July– October — trials in classes to commence Trimester 2</p> <p>November— analysis and report writing</p> <p>November/December - Planning for 2012</p> |
|---------------------------------|---|

Appendix 2: Developing intercultural competence, Ridings, Simpson, Leask, et al 2008



From Freeman, M., Treleaven, L., Ramburuth, P., Leask, B., Caulfield, N., Simpson, L., Ridings, S., Sykes, C. (2009). *Embedding the development of intercultural competence in Business education*. The University of Sydney. Retrieved from <http://www.olt.gov.au/project-embedding-development-intercultural-sydney-2006>. p 26 (Support for the original work was provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.)

Appendix 3: Summary table of results from student and staff surveys

| Activity | Student responses | | | | Staff responses | | | | Rank difference between student and staff view on usefulness |
|---|----------------------------------|------|--|------|----------------------------------|------|--|------|--|
| | Perceived usefulness of activity | | Perceived frequency of use of activity | | Perceived usefulness of activity | | Perceived frequency of use of activity | | |
| | Mean Score □ | Rank | Mean Score □ | Rank | Mean Score □ | Rank | Mean Score □ | Rank | |
| Work Overseas | 3.66 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Travel overseas | 3.60 | 2 | 2.01 | 11 | | | | | |
| Study overseas | 3.59 | 3 | 1.34 | 16 | | | | | |
| Discuss how concepts apply in other countries | 3.31 | 4 | 3.64 | 1 | 3.71 | 1 | 4.26 | 2 | 3 |
| Discuss examples from outside NZ in class | 3.28 | 5 | 3.60 | 2 | 3.69 | 2 | 4.25 | 3 | 3 |
| Work with students/companies based overseas | 3.24 | 6 | 1.52 | 13 | 2.98 | 12= | 2.16 | 12 | -6 |
| Get to know international students | 3.14 | 7 | 3.04 | 6 | | | | | |
| Conduct research into overseas experience □ | 3.13 | 8 | | | 3.30 | 6 | 2.40 | 9 | 2 |
| Hear visiting international academics or business people speak in class | 3.07 | 9 | 2.53 | 7 | 3.02 | 11 | 2.34 | 10 | -2 |
| Undertake joint projects with students in overseas universities | 2.99 | 10 | 1.50 | 14 | | | | | |
| Take part in discussion groups comprising international and domestic students | 2.98 | 11= | 3.22 | 4= | 3.52 | 4 | 3.87 | 4 | 7 |
| Work with others in class to discuss international experiences | 2.98 | 11= | 2.18 | 10 | 3.17 | 8 | 2.80 | 7 | 3 |
| Use international textbooks, materials, etc. | 2.96 | 13= | 3.54 | 3 | 3.35 | 5 | 4.30 | 1 | 8 |
| Workshops with people from other countries | 2.96 | 13= | 2.24 | 9 | 3.10 | 9 | 2.26 | 11 | 4 |
| Participate in international case competitions | 2.93 | 15 | 1.29 | 17 | 2.51 | 16 | 1.49 | 14= | -1 |
| Work with international students in class or on assignments/projects | 2.91 | 16= | 3.22 | 4= | 3.23 | 7 | 3.83 | 5 | 9 |
| Meet people from outside NZ through formal programmes related to VUW, e.g., ANZSOG or visiting scholars | 2.91 | 16= | 1.69 | 12 | 3.05 | 10 | 2.71 | 8 | 6 |
| Hear presentations from international students | 2.78 | 18 | 2.52 | 8 | 2.98 | 12= | 3.17 | 6 | 6 |
| Interact with overseas classes via web-based technologies | 2.70 | 19 | 1.36 | 15 | 2.59 | 15 | 1.49 | 14= | 4 |
| Domestic and International students work together in class | | | | | 3.57 | 3 | | | |
| Work with visiting international academics | | | | | 2.84 | 14 | 2.02 | 13 | |

Respondents rated the statements on a Likert scale from 'Not at all' (rated 1.0), 'Limited' (2.0), 'Useful' (3.0), 'Very useful' (4.0). Frequency was scored on a scale of 'Never' (1.0) through to 'Very Often' (5.0). Participants could choose 'Do not know' but these were not included in the weighted mean. Rank is the order of weighted means, with highest mean accorded the highest rank.

Blank cells denote questions not asked in that particular survey.

Source: Mabin, V. (2012) *A Survey to Assess the Level of Internationalisation of the Student Experience*. Proceedings of the 41st Annual Conference of the Western Decision Sciences Institute, Waikoloa, Hawaii, April 3-6.

Appendix 4: Student Survey Results: Responses from open-ended questions

Class activities

Students suggested many activities to augment those we listed in the survey, including:

- *use cooperative learning activities and interactions, a variety of exercises*
- *use both local and overseas students' experience*
- *showcase good overseas student speakers*
- *make use of lectures to compare how the subject being discussed varies in different countries*
- *use tutorials well; make lecturers and tutors aware*
- *use mentors, buddies etc*
- *discuss how the NZ context relates to different contexts in different countries (eg how to do business in China from an NZ company, things to watch out for, good and bad points etc)*
- *discussion groups with international students would be more useful especially in early courses than mixed project groups for assignments*
- *draw out different viewpoints, avoid stereotypes: be careful not to categorise viewpoints solely by international borders*
- *ask for international perspective and experience to be shared in class*
- *good to use mixed assignment groups but takes time, energy, courage*
- *balance content with interpersonal skills*
- *mix tutorial groups*
- *acknowledge that approaches that work for some cultures don't work for others*
- *international business simulations like GEE, TOPSIM*
- *not too much emphasis on NZ No 8 wire.*

“International students bring a lot of different perspectives to education and that is very important especially in this ever (sic) global economy” Overseas-born student

Communication Skills

Almost all of the comments on communications barriers came from NZ born students:

- *language barriers make it difficult for communication to be natural - can feel forced, awkward, lead to mis-interpretation*
- *international students lack confidence speaking, can seem shy*
- *language barriers restrict effective work and speed on projects... while collaborating with different worldly experiences could be useful, perhaps discussion groups with international students would be more useful*
- *joint projects pose challenges of shared understanding and quality of written English.*

“Although I find it useful to interact with overseas students, I don't always find it beneficial to work with them such as on group projects as I often find that I have to explain things a lot more, they often can't understand what the domestic students are doing and we often have to overlook all their work, due to their difficulties in constructing well written English sentences. Although I understand that it is a lot more difficult for overseas students with English being their second language, I often feel that I would rather be working with domestic students as I find I gain more from working with them.” NZ-born student

"I don't support working with international students on assignments ... due to language barriers restricting effective work and speed. However I do understand from collaborating with different worldly experiences could be useful, perhaps discussion groups with international students would be more useful." NZ-born student

"On occasion, I have worked with a student who has had very limited English, to an extent that it could have affected my overall grade. This is the only downside I have ever experienced, but on the whole, I have enjoyed working with international students and learning about other cultures." NZ-born student

Interestingly the only comment from an overseas-born student was the following:

"All students should have to learn a second language for the BCA" Overseas-born student

Social Cultural

- *encourage local students to be welcoming, not cliquish*
- *social events to get to know a variety of people in a relaxed and fun situation*
- *cultural events, festivals, trips, parties*
- *reps from international companies*

Calls for social events were the main request from overseas born students, but there were about an equal number of similarly enthusiastic comments from local students.

"Have events designed to facilitate friendships with international students and perhaps reps from international companies." Overseas-born student.

"Hold some functions to invite both domestic and international students to participate." Overseas-born student

"I think there is a lot of benefit in developing friendships and working relationships with international students and that it can open up many doors throughout the world, as well as give an irreplaceable opportunity to have an understanding of foreign cultures and how the global community works" NZ-born student

"I am thinking of a cultural night or a camping that mix the local and the overseas students. It would be good!" Overseas-born student.

Support for learners of different cultures

- *Buddies, volunteers, mentors, welcoming/peer system with international students as a way to meet and share cultures; a buddy for each international student in the class to assist and allow for new communication lines*
- *Engage with international students*
- *acknowledge importance of building relationships for Asian people*

Admin arrangements

- *make more of Asia - NZ foundation;*
- *make it easier to undertake study abroad;*
- *value both domestic and International students*

Appendix 5: Sample of student suggestions to enhance groupwork (compiled from a second-year Management course assignment)

Group formation

- *Offer means and incentives for students to form balanced study groups, eg
 - *Students required to pick groups that include students of different ethnic backgrounds*
 - *Predetermine students' interests first and put students into mixed cultural groups of students with similar interests**
- *Students have to change their own self-selected teams regularly*
- *Group activities such as tutorial exercises are performed before groups are made for assignments. With different combinations staff are able to tell which students work together the best as well as being able to make them multicultural*
- *Staff arrange groups using what they know of who would get on well, and staff make themselves available to guide students when/if issues arise*

Group Cohesion

Step away from the task at hand and talk about common interests

- *Meet in different locations a number of times; Play icebreaker games; Get people to introduce themselves*
- *Lots of activities such as ice-breakers and non-assessed group activities throughout courses prior to team formation so students get to know other students that they might not otherwise have got to know*
- *Talk about multi-cultural/cross-cultural principles eg collective vs individual*
- *Avoid slang, acknowledge non-verbal communications*

Support

- *Assign mentors to groups to provide support with team work challenges; have buddies; volunteer translators*
- *Seating plans in lectures, different cultures would begin to mix with other cultures and make new friends*
- *Have out-of-class activities so students can make friends with students outside of university and learn to work well with everybody*
- *Provide team work and cross-cultural skills component in course work*
- *Teachers give students time management tips*

Group task

- *Set challenging tasks to make use of more effective team work; Make the assignment with a large cultural element*
- *Provide assignment questions in different languages*
- *Add international issues as key part of the course*

Background

- *Culturally diverse seating plan in classes so students become familiar and friendly with each other from the start*
- *Students are taught in advance (prior to commencing projects) the theory of how to work with other cultures (to increase likelihood of cooperation when they attempt such cross-cultural activities)*
- *Run team building and leadership courses to teach students to succeed in working with people they're not familiar with*
- *Have a method for resolving conflict*
- *Each student should make himself/herself aware of the culture of other students in their group and the implications this has on communication*

Design/philosophy

- *Incentivise formation of multi-cultural teams by marking more easily*
- *Create 8th core paper or mandatory free paper to discuss cross-cultural awareness and communication; use 3 of the first tutorials to educate students about other cultures and cross-cultural communication skills needed for the workplace*
- *Educate students to show benefits of being in multicultural teams (eg it creates a global perspective)*
- *Make the challenge of working with new and unfamiliar peers a part of course requirements*
- *In third year, focus heavily on academic skills required for workforce; in first and second years, focus heavily on multi-cultural experience*

Appendix 6: What we're already doing in the Commerce Faculty—to enhance cross-cultural understanding among local and international students

From 'Building cross-cultural understanding' Workshop, Friday, June 10, 2011.

| Operational | Structural | Strategic |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive activities in class, such as academic speed dating, icebreakers • Facebook activities (INFO 101) • Social activities outside class (INFO 101) • Guest lecturers (INFO 101) • Mixed group work (IBUS) • Excell roleplays in class (IBUS) • Case studies (SIM) • Solar decathlon (VMS) • International music at beginning of class (VMS tourism) • Experiential learning in classes (IBUS) • Incorporating Excell in classes (IBUS) • Pot-luck dinner with national flags (SIM) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International student seminars and networking to provide NZ context for study (SOG) • Blackboard group to support students with understanding of NZ context (SOG) • Extra tutorials for international students (IBUS) • Incorporating international content into courses (SOG, INFO 101) • Scaffolding of assessment tasks (to build student confidence) • Peer-to-peer tutoring for Maori, Pacific Island and International students (INFO 101) • Global leadership experience in 'Global Enterprise Experience' programme (IBUS) • Vic OE, VILP, Excell • Tutor training on cross-cultural awareness (INFO 101, SIM) • Case study competition in the Commerce Faculty • Marks for contribution in tutorials (promotes student to student engagement) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internationalisation of content in the Commerce Faculty • Maori Business minor in the Commerce Faculty • International exchange of staff and students |

Appendix 7: Obstacles—and possible actions to resolve obstacles

From 'Building cross-cultural understanding' Workshop, Friday, June 10, 2011.

| Obstacles | Actions |
|--|---|
| Resourcing, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time • expertise/skills • money | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a repository of best practice (ask staff to write 50-60 word summaries of successful initiatives, practices; put these summaries on Commerce website) • hold lunch-time meetings to showcase and discuss initiatives and best practice: what, why, how • provide faculty-central training, using principles of 'Finding Common Ground', expertise from UTDC, Excell • incentivise staff development • find leadership from school management to facilitate resourcing • use VILP students, post-grad students, interns, contract staff to help run co-curricular activities • use SLSS staff to help plan and run classes / learning activities • use UTDC and SLSS to train tutors on group work and cross-cultural interaction principles • have student first-year ambassadors in faculty (extension of campus coaches programme or similar) • get more teaching and learning grants |
| Cultural Understanding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide Excell training for staff as professional development requirement (make it incentivised from Teaching and Learning grants) • provide support for international staff • use early tutorials in first year to develop cultural awareness, understanding, and cross-cultural communication skills • know names of all students and know how to pronounce them |
| Processes / Practices, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment • content • curriculum development • structural issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have UTDC (Amanda Gilbert) run workshops to help staff write course outlines that adequately reflect graduate attribute of 'global perspectives' • send clear messages from the Commerce Faculty to staff about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - programme cohesion - importance of curriculum mapping - integrated curriculum and assessment for higher order learning - curriculum being a live document linked to |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>student-centred approaches and understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage peer observation and teaching circles • incorporate existing co-curricula (GEE, case study competition) into more courses • hold lunchtime meetings (as mentioned above) to discuss good practice in assessment, content, curriculum development • showcase teaching and learning outcomes at Ako Victoria • get 7 core courses working closely together |
| <p>Buy-in from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students • staff /admin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get employers / careers advisers into classes to help students understand importance of having global perspectives • for 3rd year students, focus on skills and applications relevant to first employment • frame this initiative for students as valuable, relevant for jobs and life. Tell them they will become globally competent. • make teaching and cross-cultural management matter in staff performance and evaluation: make all this more visible • build in rewards and acknowledgements for students (eg VILP, Vic Plus leadership awards) and staff (eg accreditation) • create champions within faculty to enthuse and pass message to staff • promote co-curricular activities to students once they are underway with their study (mid-way through first year) • promote recognition through reporting good practice (eg, in Vic News, on the Commerce Faculty website) • capitalise on schools' competitiveness (eg league tables, university challenge) • develop teaching excellence awards with categories (like Oscars) • promote importance of first-year courses (these courses need to be valued) • link this work to pan-uni FYHE (first year of higher education) strategy |

Appendix 8: 'Finding Common Ground' handout, from Arkoudis et al (2010)



Part of getting the most out of your time at university is making connections with people and interacting with students from different cultural and language backgrounds.

Why is this important?

"In our course it is always good to get a different point of view. Everyone has so many different ideas ... Getting opinions and listening to people talk and think ... helps me to develop my own ideas." (student)

"Interaction with international students does help with learning. It helps that when you go to a workplace there will be other cultures there and it will help you communicate better because you have that experience. You learn to explain things in a way that everyone else understands as well." (student)

To feel connected

We know from research that students today spend less time on campus than they did in the past. Increased numbers of university students spend less time on campus. They are less likely to be involved in activities around campus and seem to keep more to themselves at university. Therefore, it would seem that the classroom is an important place to make connections with fellow students, using your studies as a common reference point for discussions.

For learning

Students have different educational experiences that inform their view of the material that is being taught. Through discussion with fellow students, you can discover the extent to which your perceptions, assumptions and general understandings differ from those of your peers. This enhances your own knowledge and thinking processes, which supports learning.

For developing skills

Employers want graduates who can communicate effectively with people from diverse language and cultural backgrounds. There are many opportunities for you to develop these skills at university.

What can I do?

Here are a few suggestions:

- Try to move outside your own cultural and language group in classes
- When forming groups to discuss work, try to include students who may offer different perspectives based on their diverse cultural/language background
- Respect the views of other students and listen to what they have to say before offering an alternative view
- Ask for clarification, if you are unsure of the points that have been made
- Reflect on the value of interacting with diverse students for your own learning

