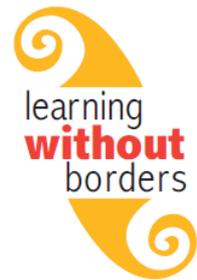


INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE CURRICULUM

Comparison and Evaluation of Definitions

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A singular and agreed definition of the term “internationalisation of the curriculum” is complicated. This is due to its use as an umbrella term for varying activities and ideas. As the activities and ideas have matured over the years, their differences have become more and more apparent. Consequently, the term is now used for different purposes and benefits dependant on which stakeholder is using the term. For example, those who focus on teaching may prefer a different definition than those who use the term for marketing or recruitment purposes. Leask (2005) explains that while one group may use the term of “internationalisation” to describe approaches towards preparing graduates for a globalised society, other groups argue that it is more concerned with the recruitment of fee-paying international students into “universities in the developed rich part of the world to the immediate and long-term detriment of universities in the developing, poorer parts of the world” [p. 1]. In more detail, Knight (2004) explains the variety of different meanings people attach:

For some people, [internationalisation] means a series of international activities such as academic mobility for students and teachers; international linkages, partnerships, and projects; and new, international academic programs and research initiatives. For others, it means the delivery of education to other countries through new types of arrangements such as branch campuses or franchises using a variety of face-to-face and distance techniques. To many, it means the inclusion of an international, intercultural, and/or global dimension into the curriculum and teaching learning process. Still others see international development projects and, alternatively, the increasing emphasis on trade in higher education as internationalization. Finally, there is frequent confusion as to the relationship of internationalization with globalization. [pp. 5-6]

An Evolution of Definitions

Knight (2004) provides an overview of the evolution of the term and concept of *internationalisation*, explaining that, in the context of education, it gained popularity during the 1980s. The first attempt at a definition was provided in the early 1990s by Arum and van de Water¹ who provided a description for activities or programs which already existed. This definition provided a label to the “activities, programs and services” which were already internationalised by nature and of their own volition. Recognising that this definition neglected the idea of promoting incorporation into existing curriculum, Knight² proposed a definition that was considered practical. This definition suggested that the internationalisation of a curriculum was a process which could allow all parts of a curriculum

¹ “[Internationalisation is the] activities, programs and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange and technical cooperation” (Arum & van de Water, 1992, cited in Knight, 2004, p. 9).

² “[Internationalisation is the] process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution” (Knight 1994, p. 7).

to be internationalised. However, both of these definitions were considered to limit the concept of internationalisation as they institutionally-based (Knight 2004).

Van der Wende³ (1997, cited in Knight, 2004) expanded the definition to allow a greater global outlook by including issues such as globalisation in relation to the important elements of “societies, economy and labour markets”. However Knight (2004) argues that this definition loses emphasis on institutions and therefore “does not context internationalization in terms of the education sector itself” (p.10).

OECD Definition (1995)

Of the numerous definitions that have been provided over the past few decades, two in particular are favoured by Australian universities. The OECD definition (Bremer & van der Wende, 1995, as cited in Caruana & Hanstock, 2003), or an adaptation of, is used in official documents by the Charles Sturt University (n.d.), Flinders University (2010), University of Queensland (Green & Mertova, 2009), University of Southern Queensland (Galligan, 2008), Victoria University (Woodley & Pearce, 2007) as well as others. The OECD envisages internationalisation of the curriculum as:

Curricula with an international orientation in content, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally/socially) in an international and multicultural context and designed for domestic students as well as foreign students (p. 4).

This definition gained preference as it described the idea of internationalisation as more than just a professional or academic concept, but also as a social one. It suggests that internationalisation should teach skills that go beyond that of a professional nature by also preparing students socially for an international stage. Furthermore, it also suggests that internationalisation is not only designed for domestic students but “foreign” students also.

However, the OECD attempt is limited by its own definition as it states that it is the *content* of the curricula that should be internationalised. This neglects to address all that goes on in an education institution outside of the curricula such as the social aspects, functions and operations of an institute. Furthermore, although multiculturalism was present in the definition, this could simply refer to using different cultures as examples in the internationalised curricula and, although beneficial, does not go as far as the concept of internationalisation could.

Knight Definition (2003)

These short-comings were addressed by the other most commonly used definition - that offered by Knight (2004). This definition is a revised effort of her previously quoted 1994 definition and can be found to be in use by the Australian Catholic University (2009), Curtin

³ “[Internationalisation is] any systematic effort aimed at making higher education responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalization of societies, economy and labour markets” (Van der Wende, 1997, cited in Knight, 2004, pp. 9-10).

University (2007) and Griffith University (2009) to name a few. Knight (2003, as cited in Knight, 2004) proposes that internationalisation is:

The process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education (p. 11).

This definition is favoured by some as it broadens the concept of internationalisation, shifting its institutional focus to a sector-wide one (Sanderson, 2009). Knight (2004) argues that, as the use of the concept is more widely adopted, so too is the variety and diversity of institutions adopting it and requiring an applicable definition. For this reason, specific terms such as *teaching*, *research* and *service functions* which were used in the older definition are replaced by the more generic terms *purpose*, *function* and *delivery* (Knight, 2004). The emphasis regarding where this occurs is changed from *the institution* in the earlier definition to the broader term of *post-secondary education* in this updated version. By replacing these specific terms, the definition can encompass and be relevant at a sector level and institutional level. Furthermore, and unlike the curricula-centric OECD definition, Knight's use of the more generic terms suggest that internationalisation should move beyond just the curricula and encapsulate wider aspects of an institution, such as the culture of an institute.

What is also included in Knight's (2003, as cited in Knight, 2004) definition is the use of the term *intercultural*, replacing the oft used *multicultural* term. Intercultural is considered more appropriate as it suggests that, rather than simply having multiple cultures examined or used as examples, they are instead combined and work together. This experience would provide students with a truly internationalised education.

Leask Definition (2009)

A definition worth noting as it may gain preference in coming years is that offered by Leask (2009):

Internationalisation of the curriculum is the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the preparation, delivery and outcomes of a program of study (p. 209).

Leask's definition is another tweak of Knight's (2003, as cited in Knight, 2004) definition though is specifically related to learning and teaching. As well as including Knight's addition of interculturalism, Leask also provides *outcomes* in her version, an aspect neglected by both the OECD and Knight. Leask (2005) argues that it is important that the internationalisation of a curriculum is not an "end to a means", developed simply to be able to claim that the curriculum is internationalised. Instead, internationalising should be "a strategy which will assist learners to become more aware of their own and others cultures". For this reason, this definition states that internationalisation should not only be integrated into the curriculum but it should also be measured in the outcomes. Then the question can be asked "have students actually gained an internationalised outlook?".

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