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Reinventing and Innovating Internationalization of the Curriculum

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The global knowledge society we live in has placed the internationalization of higher education at the forefront.

International organizations, national governments, higher education leaders, students and faculty are advocating the development of global engagement, global networking and global citizenship as cornerstones for internationalization in general and internationalization of the curriculum and learning outcomes in particular.

Can we reinvent and innovate internationalization such that not only in words but also in practice we create global networks and citizens?
The notion of ‘internationalization of higher education’ dates from the 1990’s.

- Before, there existed already a tradition of international dimensions of higher education, in general under the term ‘international education’.

- It is not clear when the transition took place from ‘international education’ to ‘internationalization of (higher) education’.

- But only in the 1990s there emerges a systematic and conceptual approach to internationalization in higher education.
Internationalization as a Concept

This shift is a reflection of the increasing importance of the international dimensions in higher education and of the related transfer from a marginal set of programs and activities to a more comprehensive process.

The process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education

(Knight, 2003)

It is this process oriented view on internationalization of higher education that can be accredited mostly for the shift from the more static term ‘international education’ into ‘internationalisation’, even though the reality not always confirms this shift.
From the 1990s to the current situation

- There is an increasingly more competitive higher education environment and that competitive environment is more diverse and global than ever before.

- The role of cross-border delivery of education is becoming an alternative for student mobility.

- Skilled immigration: competition for skilled labour in the global knowledge economy between developed countries and emerging economies is becoming more driving.

- Outcomes and competences: a move from input and output to outcomes and competences.
‘Over the last two decades, the concept of the internationalization of higher education is moved from the fringe of institutional interest to the very core.’

(The End of Internationalization, Brandenburg and De Wit, 2011)

This process is also described in Europe as Mainstreaming of Internationalization.

And recently more general in the US as Comprehensive Internationalization.

Basically labels that re-emphasize the integrative and process component in the definition of internationalization by Jane Knight.
Internationalisation though

- Is still largely embedded in institutional, national and regional cultures and systems

- Expresses itself in specific ways by disciplines and their relation to society

- As well as by levels and type of education

- And changes over time in response to political, societal and academic developments
Internationalization has become a rather broad concept, combining many different and even contradictive elements and activities.

Internationalization has moved from innovation to tradition.

In other words: Internationalization requires a new innovative approach and incorporate non-traditional ideas, primarily coming from the developing countries and emerging economies in the world.
Internationalisation can be seen as to consist of two components:

*Internationalisation at Home*: activities that help students develop international understanding and intercultural skills

*Internationalisation Abroad*: all forms of education crossing borders, mobility of students, teachers, scholars, programmes, courses, curriculum, projects

(Knight, 2006)

The primary attention at (inter)national level and in most institutions is still at the Abroad component, but a shift to the At Home component is noticable.
Emerging notions and terms

We see a shift from abroad to at home and as a result current internationalization increasingly is related to terms and concepts such as

- Intercultural,
- International and
- Global,

without clearly defining them and distinguishing between them and increasingly labelling them under vague notions, such as:

- Global competence, global citizenship and global engagement, as well as:

- Globally Networked Learning, an innovative way of internationalization.
Global Engagement

- Global Citizens

- Global Professionals

- The personal development (citizenship) and the employability dimension (professionalization) are two related aspects of global engagement and should together be central to the internationalization process in higher education.
A process of **rethinking of internationalization** is taking place currently, in response to:

- The changing environment for higher education and its international dimensions in the global knowledge economy,
- The broader scope of the notion of internationalization, and
- The lack of innovative response to the challenges resulting from them

- The NAFSA Action Plan ‘Comprehensive Internationalization’, and the IAU Call for Action ‘Rethinking Internationalization’ have to be seen in that perspective, and
- The SAGE Handbook of International Education as a guide in that process.
Call for Action by the International Association of Universities (IAU)

- Affirming Academic Values in Internationalization of Higher Education

“Acknowledges the substantial benefits of the internationalization of higher education but also draws attention to potentially adverse unintended consequences, with a view to alerting higher education institutions to the need to act to ensure that the outcomes of internationalization are positive and of reciprocal benefit to the higher education institutions and the countries concerned.”

It addresses internationalization as an evolving process, changing in the context of globalization, with potentially adverse consequences, risks, uneven benefits and asymmetrical power relations, which have to be mitigated and where possible avoided.

- www.iau-aui.net
Rationales for Rethinking Internationalization

1. The discourse of internationalization does not seem to meet always the reality, in which internationalization is still more a synonym of international education.

2. The further development of globalization, the increase of commodification in higher education and of the notion of a global knowledge society and economy, has also resulted in a new range of forms, providers and products, such as branch campuses, franchises, trade in education services.

And as a consequence new, sometimes even conflicting dimensions, views and elements are emerging in the discourse of internationalization.
3. The discourse on internationalization is too much dominated by a small group of stakeholders: higher education leaders, governments and international bodies. Other stakeholders, such as the professional field, and in particular the faculty and the student voice are far less heard, and by that the discourse is insufficiently influenced by those who should be impacted most by it.

4. Too much of the discourse is oriented to the national and institutional level with little attention for the program level: Research, the curriculum, and the teaching and learning process, which should be more at the core of internationalization, as expressed by movements such as ‘Internationalization at Home’.
Rationales for Rethinking

5. There has also been in the discourse too little attention on norms, values, ethics of internationalization practice. The approach has been too pragmatically oriented to reaching targets without a debate on the potential risks and ethical consequences.

6. There is an increased awareness that the notion of ‘internationalization’ should not only be related to the relation between nations, but even more to the relation between cultures and between the global and local.

7. Internationalization is too much input/output focused, a quantitative approach on numbers instead of an outcome based approach.
8. The international higher education context is rapidly changing. Was until recently ‘internationalization’ like ‘international education’ predominantly a Western phenomenon, in which the developing countries only played a reactive role, the emerging economies and the higher education community in other parts of the world alter the landscape of internationalization.

Moving away from a western, neo-colonial concept, as several educators perceive ‘internationalization’, it has to incorporate these emerging other views.
“Not only is internationalization a means rather than an end, but the ends may vary from institution to institution and the particular approach to internationalization chosen is dependent on the ends being pursued.” (Comprehensive Internationalization, NAFSA)

- We consider internationalization of higher education too much as a goal in itself instead of as a means to an end.

- Internationalization is not more and less than a way to enhance the quality of education and research and their service to society. That objective is too much forgotten in the strive for quantitative goals.

- The Call for Action of IAU as well as the Commitment to Comprehensive Internationalization of NAFSA, more than an attempt to redefine the still young concept of internationalization, have to be seen as a call to bring the core values and objectives of internationalisation back to the forefront, as a start for further enhancement of its contribution to higher education.
We have to go back to the fundamental question: Why?

- In the future, that question requires different answers and related approaches and strategies than in the previous decades, in the light of the global knowledge society, and moving away from the misconceptions of the past years.

- It also might require different answers in the emerging economies and developing countries than the Western concept that dominates the discourse so far.

- At the same time, the foundation remains the same: internationalization is not a goal in itself but a way to enhance the quality of education and research and their contribution to society.
The Incorporation of an International and Intercultural and Global Dimension into the Content of the Curriculum, the Learning Outcomes as well as the Teaching and Learning Arrangements and Support Services of a Program of Study (adapted from Leask, 2009)
A conceptual framework of internationalisation of the curriculum

- Assessment of student learning
- Systematic development across the program in all students
- Requirements of professional practice and citizenship

Knowledge in and across disciplines

- Institutional context
- Local context
- National and regional context
- Global context
The role of the facilitator in the process of IoC is critical to ensuring the success of the process. One of the most important skills is that of negotiation.
Internationalizing the Curriculum and Learning Outcomes

- Is an Ongoing Reflective and Cyclical Process

- The Role and Engagement of the Academic Staff in it is critical

- Identification of Blockers and Enablers to staff involvement is essential

- One has to identify both the Formal, Informal and Hidden aspects of the curriculum
Innovative Options to Internationalize the Curriculum

- Massive Online Open Courseware (MOOCs)
- Virtual Mobility
- Collaborative Online International Learning

These in different ways and forms are the new prospects how to combine the abroad and at home dimension more innovative and interactive into comprehensive internationalization.
Thank You

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