

The Internationalization of Higher Education. Opportunities and Challenges

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The concept of internationalization

„Internationalization of higher education is the process of creating an international/intercultural environment in research, in teaching and in studying with the aim of supporting the international/intercultural interactivity of involved individuals in all above mentioned fields“ (Jane Knight 1999)

The components of the “internationalization of higher education”

- international research and publications
- student and faculty mobility
- degree mobility
- international faculty

- international students

- international curricula

Change needed

- fundamental reorientation
- rootedness in culturally coded traditions

International curricula

Chances

- broaden horizons,
- provide knowledge and reflection „beyond the plate’s rim“,
- convey multi-perspectivity and flexibility,
- educate internationally and interculturally versed graduates,
- enhance the eligibility of students for the global job market.

International curricula

Challenges

- resistance to change,
- persistence of history-rooted traditions,
- uncertainty in view of the unfamiliar,
- unease with new routines,
- „Angst“ of otherness,
- limited international knowledge and experience,
- limited intercultural skills.

Prerequisites for the creation of international curricula: an interculturalist's perspective

- 1.** Differentiation of demands and realistic estimate of the need of internationalization (*assessment of cultural difference*)
 - a.** disciplines with international components,
 - b.** disciplines universal by virtue of their contents,
 - c.** disciplines well suited for diversification of their curricula

Prerequisites for the creation of international curricula: an interculturalist's perspective

2. Knowledge of variable curriculum aspects
(areas of cultural variability)

3. Perspective change *(gaining awareness of one's own and the "other's" perspective)*

Prerequisites for the creation of international curricula: an interculturalist's perspective

4. Methods of creation of international curricula (*anecdotal vs. theory-rooted intercultural learning*)

a. Addition of international knowledge
(„Chocolate topping“)

b. Embedding of international knowledge
(„Chocolate mix“)

Prospects

“We have to throw off the veil of ignorance and ask ourselves: Why do we do certain things and what do they help in achieving the goal of quality of education and research in a globalized knowledge society? We also have to regard mobility and other activities as what they really are: activities or instruments – and therefore by definition not goals in themselves.”

(Jane Knight 2011).

References

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