Developing an intercultural curriculum within the context of the internationalisation of higher education: terminology, typologies and power

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Although many academics and policymakers espouse the idea of an intercultural curriculum in principle, the practical implementation of this is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, the ambiguity and uncertainty that often surrounds key concepts complicates the articulation of cogent rationales and goals. Secondly, there may be no clear vision or understanding of what the desired outcome – an 'intercultural curriculum' – should look like and, given the absence of a widely accepted model, how this can be practically achieved. Thirdly, the issue of assessing students within the context of an intercultural curriculum is a challenging one. With this in mind, this paper seeks to critically discuss the meaning of an 'intercultural curriculum' and explore its relationship with the internationalisation of higher education and the specific idea of an internationalised curriculum. It also presents several salient typologies before proposing a new approach, which puts power distribution at the centre of developing intercultural curricula.

Keywords: intercultural curriculum; internationalisation of higher education; internationalised curriculum; power

Introduction

This article is concerned with the concept of an 'intercultural curriculum' in higher education. It seeks to highlight the complexity of the concept and to discuss some of the specific challenges associated with it in order to assist individuals who in principle espouse the idea of developing an intercultural curriculum, but who may be uncertain about what this might entail. To this end, the key concepts of 'intercultural' and 'curriculum' are firstly explored. Following this, the rationale for incorporating an intercultural dimension into curricula is discussed, as is the idea of internationalisation of higher education and the ambiguity of the relationship between intercultural and internationalised curricula. Having presented several existing typologies, the author discusses an alternative approach to conceptualising an intercultural curriculum based on the idea of power distribution before drawing some final conclusions.

Interminable terminology?

Perhaps the greatest challenge associated with attempts to discuss, develop and deliver an intercultural curriculum in higher education lies in the ambiguity of terminology

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associated with this pursuit – the lack of clarity and consensus regarding terms such as *intercultural education*, *international education*, *internationalising the curriculum*, *intercultural competence* and *internationalisation of higher education*. Accordingly, our discussion commences with these often frustrating issues of terminology.

The intercultural spectrum

Let us begin with the term *intercultural*, which, according to Gareis (1995), 'denotes situations involving two or more cultures and is used mainly to refer to relationships between people from two different cultural backgrounds' (p. 3). While this is a straight-forward idea, it is, however, underpinned by the much more problematic and nebulous concept of *culture*, defined by Williams (1983; as quoted in Kidd, 2002, p. 9) as 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language'. Indeed, Keating, Martin and Szabo (2002) point out that as far back as 1952, Kroeber and Kluckhohn identified more than 160 definitions of *culture*. This absence of consensus on a defi-nition has immediate consequences not only for how *culture* may be operationalised for research purposes, but how ideas derived from *culture* – such as an intercultural curriculum – should be conceptualised, implemented and assessed. Nonetheless, despite the myriad definitions of culture, the comments of Levine, Park and Kim (2007) indicate a meeting of minds at one level at least:

> However, regardless of the specific definition adopted, it is usually agreed that culture is a collective phenomenon. It is, by definition, something that is shared among people belonging to the same socially defined and recognised group. Culture is something people have in common with some people but not with others. (p. 207)

Thus, there appears to be agreement that culture is fundamentally related to groups. In research, the grouping most commonly used to operationalise culture is 'nationality', as applying this (albeit imperfect) variable tends to be relatively uncomplicated. Accordingly, communication between individuals of different nationalities is com-monly said to be 'intercultural', while that between individuals of shared nationality it typically referred to as '*intra*cultural'.

Singer (1998), however, again muddies the conceptual waters, arguing that because each person is a member of a unique network of cultural groups, '*each person must be con-sidered to be culturally unique*' (p. 28; emphasis in original), although they do not consti-tute a culture unto themselves. Boylan (2006) supports this idea, arguing that 'since the communities we interact with are multiple, we are all multicultural, whether we realise it or not' (p. 286). This point is also evident in the comments of Kluckhohn and Murray (1948; as quoted in Smith & Bond, 1998, p. 38): 'Every man is in certain respects a) like all other men, b) like some other men, c) like no other man'. This in turn implies that if all individuals are culturally unique, 'every interpersonal communication must, to some degree, also be an intercultural communication' (Singer, 1998, p. 28). This argument is echoed by Kim (1988):

> All communication, thus, is viewed as 'intercultural' to an extent, and the degree of 'inter-culturalness' of a given communication encounter is considered to depend on the degree of heterogeneity between the experiential backgrounds of the individuals involved. (p. 13)

Thus, the notion of a strict dichotomy between intracultural (or monocultural) and intercultural becomes redundant, replaced instead by a conceptual spectrum

plotting degrees of Kim's aforementioned 'interculturalness' based on the *cultural distance*, which exists between parties, be it perceived or empirically measured according to some predetermined criteria. This concept of cultural distance can be understood as:

> [T]he distance between how different individuals interpret the same fact, situations, person, event or norm, resulting from living and experiencing them from the perspectives of the different cultures to which they belong. (Gorgorió & Planas, 2005, p. 65).

In practical terms, this perspective highlights that, in educational contexts, neither international students nor local students constitute homogeneous groups. Instead, each student enters the learning environment with diverse ideas, values, experiences and behaviours, all of which comprise their unique 'cultural capital' (Zepke & Leach, 2005). Each individual may therefore constitute what Daniel (2001) terms 'an idioculture of one' (p. 4).

Linking back to the idea of an intercultural curriculum then, once it is accepted that each individual is culturally unique and that all curricula involve informational exchanges between individuals, it can be argued that *all* curricula are inherently intercultural to a certain extent. The issue, however, may be the *degree* to which it is intercultural and the *relative dominance* within the curriculum of one cultural perspective over that of others, which may hamper inclusivity and inhibit the realisation of positive educational outcomes which cultural diversity offers, but does not guarantee. This idea will be revisited in greater detail later in the article.

The holistic curriculum

Turning attention to the concept of *curriculum*, once again there is ambiguity about its definition and parameters. Challenging perceptions that curriculum is restricted to formal course content, Daniel (2001, p. 6) proposes that a curriculum encompasses the following components: programme and content, learning objectives, teaching and learning strategies, organisation and administration, assessment methods, resources (including books, materials and equipment), learners' prior experience, language(s) and language use, the relationship between teacher and learner, inter-institutional relationships and participation of different sectors (e.g. community groups) internal and external to the learning institution. This holistic perspective, encompassing what van der Wende (1996, p. 187) labels 'formal' and 'operational' aspects of the curriculum, is similar to the conceptualisation suggested by Dunne (2008). In addition to this, Banks (2001) refers to the importance of the 'latent' or 'hidden' curriculum, as opposed to the 'manifest' curriculum:

> . . . the latent curriculum has been defined as the one that no teacher explicitly teaches but that all students learn. It is that powerful part of the school culture that communicates to students the school's attitudes towards a range of issues and problems, including how the school views them as human beings. (p. 23)

In this sense, the latent curriculum may perhaps best reflect the dominance of one cultural perspective within the curriculum and, consequently, may be an important indicator of how 'intercultural' a curriculum actually is. The implication of accepting this broad conceptualisation of curriculum is that in order for a curriculum to reflect a greater degree of 'interculturalness', changes may be required at each level of the

curriculum. This is a challenging task and, therefore, before possible approaches are discussed, is it not unreasonable to ask what rationale exists for developing such curricula.

Rationales, internationalisation and the intercultural curriculum

The rationale for intercultural curricula in higher education is closely linked with rationales for the internationalisation of higher education, which Knight (2004) defines as:

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

Although internationalisation may encompass activities unrelated to curriculum design, this definition articulates a clear link between internationalisation of higher education and the 'intercultural' dimension. Indeed, Crichton and Scarino (2007) remark that 'there is also general agreement in the literature on the need for internationalisation to include an "intercultural dimension"' (p. 1). Knight (2004), meanwhile, goes on to clarify her own understanding of the 'international, intercultural or global dimension' referred to in her definition:

> These terms are intentionally used as a triad, as together they reflect the breadth of internationalization. *International* is used in the sense of relationships between and among nations, cultures, or countries. But we know that internationalization is also about relating to the diversity of cultures that exists within countries, communities, and institutions, and so *intercultural* is used to address the aspects of internationalization at home. Finally, *global*, a very controversial and value-laden term these days, is included to provide the sense of worldwide scope. These three terms complement each other and together give richness both in breadth and depth to the process of internationalization. (p. 11)

Therefore, based on this explanation, 'intercultural' appears to relate to domestic, intra-societal diversity, a perspective which not only appears to clash with the aforementioned policy of operationalising culture based on nationality, but also supports the argument that all human interaction is to some extent intercultural.

The key point for us at this juncture, however, is that an intercultural dimension is central to the internationalisation of higher education, and so rationales for internationalisation should incorporate arguments for developing intercultural curricula. However, the specific aspect of internationalisation of higher education which relates to the curriculum is commonly referred to as 'internationalising the curriculum' and not 'interculturalising the curriculum'. Within the literature, arguments in favour of 'internationalising the curriculum' are abundant and collectively posit that internationalising the curriculum is desirable insofar as it fosters equal opportunities for all students and values social inclusion (e.g. Daniel 2001; Elkin, Devejee, & Farnsworth, 2005; Haigh, 2002; Leask, 2001), while developing attitudinal and behavioural skill-sets which prepare students to live and work effectively in a world defined by increasingly greater levels of intercultural interaction (e.g. Bartell, 2003; Crosling, Edwards, & Schroder, 2008; Deardorff, 2004; Edwards, Crosling, Petrovic-Lazaroic, & O'Neill, 2003; LeBlanc, 2007). According to Nilsson (2003), for example, an internationalised curriculum:

> … gives international and intercultural knowledge and abilities, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally, socially, emotionally) in an international and multicultural context. (p. 31)

Indeed, the regular references to an 'intercultural' dimension in conceptualisations of internationalised curricula (e.g. Appelbaum, Friedler, Ortiz, & Wolff, 2009; Edwards et al., 2003; Nilsson, 2003) raises the question as to whether or not 'intercultural curriculum' and 'internationalised curriculum' can, or should, be used as synonymous terms.

As we have seen from Knight's (2004) definition, for example, the 'intercultural' is encapsulated within the concept of internationalisation. Furthermore, it can also be argued that the 'intercultural curriculum' is either explicitly or implicitly encompassed within the 'internationalised curriculum' on the grounds that the envisaged outcomes are often extremely similar. For example, the benefits of internationalising the curriculum listed above mirror those associated with an intercultural curriculum. Additionally, one of the principal goals of an intercultural and an internationalised curriculum is for all students to develop 'intercultural competence' (Odgers, 2006). This is another popular yet abstract term, which enjoys much discussion but stubbornly evades a unified definition (Deardorff, 2004, 2006; Scarino, 2009). Among the numerous definitions of intercultural competence is that proffered by Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein and Colby (1999):

> The process of acquiring the culture-specific and cultural general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. It is a dynamic, developmental, and on-going process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviourally, and affectively. (p. 50)

This idea of compartmentalising intercultural competence according to knowledge, skills and attitudes is also evident in the work of Byram, Nichols and Stevens (2001, pp. 5–6), while Deardorff (2004) provides an extensive discussion on the characteristics/qualities of intercultural competence and again relates it to the process of internationalisation of higher education. Nonetheless, developing models or instruments to assess intercultural competence is extremely challenging. Yet regardless of this particular issue, as has been stated above, it can be argued that the overall aims of internationalised and intercultural curricula are fundamentally the same and so the idea that the two terms be used synonymously might seem viable.

Furthermore, although many scholars employ both the terms 'international' and 'intercultural', which implies they assign them discrete meanings, they do not necessarily clearly differentiate these terms, but often attach them together. Nilsson (2000), for example, refers to the 'insertion of international/intercultural elements into the curriculum' (p. 23), while Appelbaum et al. (2009) explain:

> We are following the lead of the American Council on Education (ACE) in using the term *internationalization* to denote the incorporation of an international/intercultural dimension in teaching. (p. 366)

A similar tendency is found in Abdullahi, Kajberg and Virkus's (2007) suggestion that a more recent trend in internationalisation can be defined by:

> [T]he growing imperative of HE institutions to internationalize – to integrate an international/intercultural dimension into teaching, research and community service – in order to enhance their academic excellence and the relevance of their contribution to societies. (pp. 12–13)

Others, such as Edwards et al. (2003), do refer to discrete 'international' and 'intercultural' dimensions, yet again do not clearly articulate how exactly the two differ from each other. Indeed, the tendency to use the two terms in an uninterrupted sequence can be frequently found within the literature. In a 2003 report by the International Association of Universities (IAU), for example, it is stated that 'integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the curriculum is a key thrust of internationalization' (p. 16). Thus, a critical review of the literature seems to indicate that there is a lack of clarity – or at least a lack of articulation – among many scholars as to how precisely the 'international' and 'intercultural' dimensions of the curriculum are different, yet there remains a tendency to employ both terms.

For some, however, the distinction is clear, and thus the idea of using the two synonymously is deemed invalid. Crichton, Paige, Papademetre and Scarino (2004), for example, argue that 'inter*cultural* education, as opposed to inter*national* education, is a more inclusive formulation, in that interculturality includes both international and domestic students' (p. 11), while Crichton et al. (2006) argue that 'these two terms are neither synonymous nor clearly understood (p. 3). That said, Barker and Crichton (2008) refer to the need for internationalisation and the 'intercultural' to be brought together, and advise that ongoing dialogue and collaboration between individuals with subject specific knowledge and those with intercultural expertise is needed in order to successfully integrate an intercultural dimension into a given curriculum.

Therefore, it can be argued that the merits of suggesting that the two terms be used interchangeably lies in the need for those who oppose this to clearly articulate the reasons why this is inappropriate and, in doing so, explicitly clarify the difference between the two. This in turn may help those who are faced with the task of developing such curricula, but who are uneasy with the ambiguity which enshrouds both.

Existing typologies

Aside from the challenge of defining and differentiating intercultural and internationalised curricula, within the literature several typologies can be found which are not necessarily directly comparable, but which can facilitate discussion on the topic. There is, however, no accepted unifying typology relating to an internationalised or an intercultural curriculum.

In identifying what constitutes an internationalised curriculum, van der Wende (1996) used the OECD (1996) typology consisting of nine types of curricula, outlined in Table 1.

Within this framework, van der Wende (1996) explored the degree to which specific curricula could be termed 'internationalised' based upon the level (a rating from 1–3) of 'comprehensiveness' and 'complexity' of internationalisation evident in; (1) the range of the curriculum – whether it applied to a single module or entire programme, (2) the orientation of the curriculum – whether it was mono-disciplinary or interdisciplinary, (3) the development setting – whether it was delivered nationally or internationally and (4) the target group – domestic students, foreign students or both (p. 191). This model, however, provides little insight into the practicalities of actually designing and delivering an internationalised curriculum. Leask (2001, pp. 109–113) also draws on this typology, but supplements it by offering specific teaching and learning strategies for internationalisation which promote the realisation of student outcomes articulated in the goals of the University of South Australia. Indeed, this approach of linking institutional goals and desired student qualities directly with internationalised

Table 1.   Typology of international curricula, van der Wende (1996, p. 187).

1. Curricula with an international subject
2. Curricula in which the traditional/original subject area is broadened by an internationally comparative approach
3. Curricula which prepare students for defined international professions
4. Curricula in foreign languages or linguistics which explicitly address cross-communication issues and provide training in intercultural skills
5. Interdisciplinary programmes such as regional and area studies, covering more than one country
6. Curricula leading to internationally recognised professional qualifications
7. Curricula leading to joint or double degrees
8. Curricula of which compulsory parts are offered at institution(s) abroad, taught by local lectures
9. Curricula in which the content is especially designed for foreign students

curricula represents an effective strategy in mainstreaming this approach to teaching, as it brings the internationalised curriculum from the periphery to the centre of the university's activities.

Bell (2004), meanwhile, drawing on the work of Ellingboe (1998), focuses specifically on the attitudes of academic staff to the idea of internationalising the curriculum and explores how this is reflected in their curricular design. From this, she proposes a 'spectrum of acceptance of internationalising curriculum' (p. 1), which traces attitudes and pedagogical approaches of teaching staff along four stages: (1) internationalisation would have a negative impact, (2) internationalisation is not appropriate, (3) internationalisation is possible and (4) internationalisation is integral. This study highlights the vital role of the lecturer in adapting curricula in terms of pedagogy and content and emphasises the need for genuine commitment from staff if curricular change is to come about.

Several alternative yet complementary models focus more on specific approaches to achieving an internationalised or intercultural curriculum. The Irish National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2006), although not dealing specifically with higher education curricula, suggests that an intercultural dimension can be incorporated into the curriculum on a thematic basis using the interconnected themes of: (1) identity and belonging, (2) similarity and difference, (3) human rights and responsibilities, (4) discrimination and equality and (5) conflict and conflict resolution. Edwards et al. (2003), meanwhile, propose another typology based on three levels: (1) international awareness – 'infusing the curriculum with international examples, cases and perspectives' (p. 189), (2) international competence – introducing cross-cultural interaction into students' formal and informal experience of higher education and (3) international expertise – using study abroad and international work placements to prepare students to become global professionals. It should be noted, however, that this typology was developed with business education in mind and therefore may not be readily transferable to other disciplines.

The work of Crichton and Scarino (2007), meanwhile, focuses more specifically on intercultural curricula. They identify four 'influential tendencies, ways of understanding the cultural which are routinely drawn on, textualised in and frame attempts to internationalise teaching and learning' (p. 5). These are: (1) 'the cultural' as content,

(2) communication skills, (3) relocation and (4) diversity. While each of these approaches can be useful, they argue that they are insufficient and instead proffer 'a construction of the cultural as intercultural in international education which involves five generic principles of intercultural awareness which are equally relevant to all disciplines' (p. 12). These five principles are: (1) interacting and communicating – interpersonal interaction and communication should be viewed as a process of meaning-making, (2) connecting the *intracultural* with the *intercultural* – the need for individuals to recognise their own variable cultural and linguistic identity, (3) constructing intercultural 'knowing' as social action – recognising that our knowledge, beliefs and values are based on our cultural and linguistic backgrounds, (4) reflecting and introspecting – recognising that reflecting on our own cultural identity is central to successful interaction with others and (5) assuming responsibility – an ethical stance by which we acknowledge cultural variability and accept individual responsibility for respecting multiple perspectives.

Above all, this approach by Crichton and Scarino (2007) emphasises the importance of dialogue and *interaction* in developing and delivering an intercultural curriculum and proffers 'interaction as the key principle in both the practice and development of intercultural awareness' (p. 15). Indeed, reflecting on the numerous typologies which relate to creating intercultural or internationalised curricula, it appears that curricula which are increasingly internationalised or intercultural are invariably defined by greater levels of active participation by all relevant parties (lecturer and students) and that interaction and dialogue constitute a central part of this process.

The intercultural curriculum and power distribution

Earlier in this article it was suggested that all curricula are intercultural to a certain degree, given that they involve some level of interaction between culturally unique individuals. It was also suggested that the degree to which a curriculum can be considered 'intercultural' may be related to the idea of cultural dominance within the curricular context. This is idea is now explored in greater detail.

As a starting point, it can be argued that universities and other higher education institutions have their own culture – a set of values, norms, beliefs and behaviours – which may be reflected in their mission statements, their strategic plans, the qualities they seek to instil in students, their relations with the broader community, their research activities and ethics and their approaches to teaching and learning, among other things. Liddicoat (2004), for example, remarks, 'Universities are cultural contexts and the acts of teaching, learning and communicating are cultural acts in each of the disciplines taught at the university' (p. 5). It is logical, then, that the curriculum, conceptualised in its broadest sense, constitutes a culture unto itself, in which the dominant cultural perspectives – values, norms and behaviours reflected in curriculum design, delivery and assessment – tend to be heavily informed by the lecturer and/or academic coordinator. Recalling our earlier reference to Banks (2001), this curricular culture comprises both the 'manifest' and 'latent' curriculum – the 'manifest' curriculum being visible, comprising elements such as reading lists and assessment tasks, and the 'latent' curriculum being hidden, incorporating assumptions and the valuing of certain skills and knowledge. This implies that the distribution of power within the curriculum, and the ability to change it, resides primarily with these parties, which prompts the following question: might it be useful, or viable, to conceptualise the 'intercultural curriculum' as a function of the power distribution within the curriculum, whereby power is

reflected in the relative dominance of specific cultural perspectives? In other words, if the overall structure of a curriculum – including planning, delivery, content and assessment methods – is reflective of a power distribution between those individuals who comprise the curriculum (e.g. lecturer and students), can a curriculum which is based on a relatively more equitable distribution of power among those individuals be deemed more 'intercultural' on the grounds that it incorporates inputs from multiple cultural perspectives? Having already acknowledged the complexity and ambiguity of the terminology in this area and the confusion this can create, as well as the absence of a unifying typology, it should be stated that this suggestion is not an attempt to further complicate matters, but rather an avenue which I feel may warrant further exploration.

In relation to this idea of power and intercultural contact, Shi-xu and Wilson (2001) posit that 'intercultural communication on a global level is steeped in relations of power and domination' (p. 77). Despite this, with a few exceptions, such as Orbe's (1996) co-cultural theory, it can be argued that power relations are not given sufficient attention in the field of intercultural studies. In relation to developing intercultural curricula, however, Daniel (2001) argues that 'existing hierarchies of power (relating to gender, language, ethnicity, ability etc.) need to be challenged and changed' (p. 4). Indeed, Ermenc (2005) refers to the dangers of ethnocentric curricula which privilege one cultural perspective and result in the social marginalisation of minority voices. Furthermore, Rizvi (2000) appears to support the notion of a curriculum underpinned by diverse perspectives, remarking that 'curriculum content should not arise out of a singular cultural base, but should engage critically with the global plurality of the sources of knowledge' (p. 7). Drawing on Sfard's (1998) *participation metaphor*, which conceptualises learning as the active co-creation of knowledge, Liddicoat (2004) emphasises that classrooms are not necessarily communities of shared practices and that teachers should acknowledge this by respecting diverse perspectives rather than devaluing them. This espousal of participation and co-creation is also evident in Crichton and Scarino's (2007) conceptualisation of an intercultural curriculum.

The fact that several of the aforementioned typologies associate interaction and active participation with curricula that are increasingly internationalised and/or intercultural in nature supports the argument that greater interaction and participation of parties within the curriculum is an indicator of a more equitable distribution of cultural power and, consequently, of an increasingly intercultural curriculum. The methodology Daniel (2001) employed in her study – which essentially audited the existing curriculum from multiple perspectives and then developed a new one based on inputs from staff, students and other parties – may represent a practical example of creating an intercultural curriculum through the re-distribution of power within the curriculum. As such, it can be proffered that an intercultural curriculum is one which empowers all those who comprise it to both shape and participate within it.

Central to this process of redistributing power is the lecturer. However, lecturers may be either uncomfortable with such an idea or lack the expertise to practically implement it. Odgers (2006), for example, points out that 'faculty are often expecting their students to learn and exhibit knowledge and skills that faculty themselves often do not possess' (p. 4), while Teekens (2003) argues that little attention has been given to the skill-set required by teachers to successfully manage student groups that are increasingly culturally diverse. Accordingly, she proposes eight clusters of competencies which encapsulate the profile of 'the ideal teacher'. Indeed, recalling the goal of intercultural competence and the confusion surrounding its definition, it is unsurprising that

staff may be unsure how to assess it. Either way, reluctance to change may be a significant issue which needs to be addressed. After all, despite students' diverse learning styles, lecturers may have a natural proclivity to teach in the manner which matches their own preferred learning style. As highlighted when discussing Bell's (2004) research, the attitudes of academic staff can have a strong impact on the likelihood of curricular change. To this end, Odgers (2006) proposes a training programme aimed at assisting academics in the design and delivery of intercultural curricula. However, it should be acknowledged that the incentive to invest time and effort must also come from top institutional leadership, and that this should be embedded within the broader institutional culture and the internationalisation strategy. One example could be an annual award for good practice in internationalising or interculturalising the curriculum, whereby staff are considered for an award which recognises this innovation in both financial and reputational terms.

Another challenge may be the nature of the curriculum. As Crosling et al. (2008) explain: 'Some disciplines such as management and marketing are more culturally embedded and, therefore, more amenable to curriculum internationalisation than others' (p. 110). This is echoed by Appelbaum et al. (2009) and Bell (2004). Indeed, van der Wende's (1996) study found that internationalised curricula were most prevalent in economics and business studies. Practical considerations such as class size may also create challenges, particularly if we espouse the aforementioned idea of conceptualising the process as the re-distribution of cultural power among relevant parties. However, adopting alternative approaches to teaching and assessment, such as peer assessment, self-assessment, student portfolios, cooperative learning and group work, as well as more traditional approaches, may help address this (see Byram, 1997; Crichton et al., 2004). As regards peer-assessment, Deardorff (2004, p. 71) refers to Kim's (1992, p. 372) thesis that an individual's intercultural competence should be assessed based on their 'overall capacity to facilitate the communication process between people from differing cultural groups'. This is an interesting notion, and may suggest that one's performance as a cross-cultural interlocutor, as evaluated by the other parties, could be an innovative approach to the assessment of intercultural competence. In fact, given the complexity of desired outcomes such as intercultural competence, multiple, ongoing assessments may be appropriate. This, however, must be balanced with realistic workloads for lecturers. Indeed, even if the will of academic staff is there, availability of the resources needed to change pedagogy may also represent a significant challenge (Daniel, 2001). Furthermore, students themselves, perhaps in particular those from high power-distance cultures (Hofstede, 1994), may be uncomfortable assuming greater control of the learning process. Students' language proficiency must also be seen as an important factor which can substantially affect the balance of power within the curriculum (Henderson, 2009).

Conclusion

This article has sought to stimulate discussion relating to the concept of an intercultural curriculum. It has argued that the complexity associated with the topic stems partly from the ambiguous definitions of several relevant concepts. As such, it would be useful for practitioners and scholars to clearly articulate their understanding of key concepts during any discussion, in order to increase clarity for the reader. In particular, the relationship between an 'intercultural' and 'internationalised' curriculum has been

discussed in detail, as a review of the literature suggests significant uncertainty regarding the difference between the two.

By arguing that each individual is culturally unique, it has been proposed that all curricula are by definition 'intercultural' to a certain extent. As such, the *degree* to which a curriculum can be considered intercultural has become a key concern. With this in mind, having reviewed several typologies, an alternative position has been articulated, which, viewing the curriculum as a culture, proposes that the degree to which a curriculum is 'intercultural' may be determined by examining how power is distributed among the parties who comprise the curriculum. In practical terms, this implies that curricula which may be deemed relatively more 'intercultural' are those in which: (1) the lecturer assumes the role of a facilitator in the creation of meaning, rather than simply prescribing knowledge to students (Haigh, 2002; Hanson, 2010), (2) student participation, interaction and respectful dialogue is encouraged, (3) lecturers draw on the diverse perspectives available within the overall curriculum, be it students or formal content, in order to stimulate thinking and achieve the desired learning outcomes and (4) students are viewed as unique resources and encouraged to reflect on their own identity and empowered to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for their personal and professional futures. Such a curriculum, therefore, not only involves lecturers ceding some degree of power, reflected in a greater diversity of cultural perspectives within the curriculum, but also requires a significant investment of effort in redesigning the curriculum for their particular discipline. Accordingly, it is clear that buy-in from academic staff and tangible support from institutional leaders, in the form of budgetary resources to fund staff training, is imperative if meaningful curricular transformation is to be realised. This, however, is unlikely to happen if intercultural curricula are not directly linked with core institutional objectives. With this in mind, the idea of appointing an 'intercultural curriculum coordinator' (Daniel, 2001) is also worthy of discussion. Indeed, the question of how best to motivate and incentivise academics to invest the necessary time and effort in making these curricular changes is one which warrants further exploration.

In terms of this new approach to conceptualising intercultural curricula as a function of power distribution, the intention is not to further complicate an already complicated area of discourse. However, the merits of such a conceptualisation warrant debate, including how useful (or not) it might be, and how it might be practically implemented in the form of a model which offers guidelines and enables us to assess the degree to which a curriculum is 'intercultural'. How, for example, should 'power' be operationalised and measured within such a framework? And how can students be most effectively empowered?

Amid all the ambiguity of terminology, one certainty is that designing, implementing and assessing intercultural curricula represents a significant challenge, which requires clarity of vision and articulation, detailed planning, a compelling rationale, engagement with multiple perspectives, a clear link with the overall institutional mission, visible commitment from lecturers and top management, student engagement and an ongoing review process.

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