

Localising involves retaining the same underlying principles and concepts while using different examples to illustrate and describe them.

Teaching Offshore: Localising curriculum

Localising the curriculum refers to the process of ensuring that the learning resources, activities and teaching processes that have been designed for the Australian context (and often Western Australia specifically) are relevant to students in a location outside Australia. Typically, local examples, case studies, research, and other instances are incorporated to make the learning meaningful and relevant. This may seem to expand the content of an already full curriculum. However, this should not simply be an add-on. Localisation involves retaining the same underlying principles and concepts while using different examples to illustrate and describe them. Some of these examples may be useful for the students in the Australian context, particularly when considering the Graduate Attribute: Cross-cultural and international outlook. They are certainly useful for students from one year to the next year; also for students in different offshore contexts.

While it is important to ensure the equivalence of standards and courses delivered on-campus and off-campus, Unit Coordinators should look for ways to localise the curriculum to meet the needs of offshore students.

There are numerous dimensions that require consideration when developing and facilitating units for teaching in off-shore contexts. These include, but are not limited to:

- Cultural dimensions: Are your examples and presentations relevant to the students' context? Have you considered possible sensitivities in relation to customs and local protocols?
- Language considerations: What level English do the students have? How will you support those with lower English levels? Are you careful to avoid Australian slang, idioms, and metaphors; and

- Local considerations: How can you encourage students and local staff to draw on their own background and prior learning? How can these be related to the unit and course context?

Unit coordinator responsibilities

As the unit coordinator, it is important that you know how your offshore teaching colleagues may be localising the curriculum so that you:

- monitor the local content and teaching processes to ensure equivalence with onshore;
- keep a record then integrate their ideas and examples for other students;
- gather the local examples as resources and place some on the Blackboard;
- know how to localise the exam; and
- become acquainted with that local context and those students' needs.

It is important to ensure that the examination suits the local context. Often, local examples make better questions than those of a generic nature. Alternative examples within questions may be a useful way of integrating local contexts appealing to a wider range of students.

You will need to guide your offshore lecturers and tutors in how you see the unit materials you have provided should be used. They should be encouraged to use local examples in lectures and workshops and send you these local examples. Some offshore teachers have previously expected that they must deliver your unit exactly how it is delivered and that they have no room to improvise or add their own thoughts and opinions. It may be useful to develop a facilitators' guide.

Supporting offshore tutors and lecturers

The offshore lecturer must have a clear understanding of what you would like him/her to do. Some guidelines you may provide him/her might be:

- Adapt lecture slides and resources to use local example;

- Make explicit the main aspects of the week that must be understood by students
- Find ways to encourage students to be actively learning;
- Ask him/her to send you local examples for you to add to the Canvas site; and
- Share his/her own comments and notes to students in a space you allocate in Canvas.
- Ensure that students can approach him/her for clarification as necessary.

An example of localising curriculum content and teaching processes

Writing the unit plan

- The unit plan is clearly laid out with a table of contents and clear headings.
- Bullet points are used to clarify crucial aspects of the unit and assessment.
- Terms are used consistently within the unit plan, the Canvas site and other resources. For example, if you refer to 'Canvas Discussion', don't refer to it as the 'Discussion Board' in other locations.
- Time is spent in class going over the vital items in the unit plan.

The following activity samples have been adapted from the offshore unit, EPA5160 *Leading Education in a Global Context*. This unit is taught by an ECU academic from Perth through a short visit in China.

Please notice how each task is broken down into parts and the keywords are in bold.

Example 1 - Assignment

All students have been provided with two readings that describe the current social climate of Australian education in regards to government policies. Chinese students are provided with the following assignment:

Assignment 2

Review the five key ideas in the two readings provided. Comment on the relevance to the situation in China today.

Your essay should include:

- **Reasons** for **similarities** and **differences** between China and Australia;
- **Relevant examples** from your own workplace; and
- **What you would like to see happen** in China to ensure it has a strong system of education that serves the best interests of the nation in a globalised world?

Example 2 – Classroom activity

The lecturer presents a case study of an Australian school to the class. Ask students to consider:

- What **factors** control how a school in **China** is **governed**?

The lecturer lists the factors as identified by the students. Clarify any language items in English and Chinese that may have been brought out in this task.

In groups, ask students to:

- **Identify** which of these elements reflect **internal controls** and which reflect **external controls**?

After discussing as a whole group, students work in groups to consider:

- How these factors **influence the operation of a school** with respect to:
- The **availability of resources**;
- **Development of curriculum**;
- **Pedagogy**; and
- **Deployment of staff**.

Ideas are fed back to whole group.

Follow up: Students are asked to respond to **one** of the factors identified on the discussion board, describing whether it is controlled internally or externally and considering how the factors influence the operation of the school.

Example 3 – Discussion activity

Students are asked to consider a topic that is directly relevant to a Chinese context:

In June 2010, the Chinese Government released a 10-year education reform blueprint for schools in China.

Part 1: In 150 words, describe:

- a) What is **one implication** for schools in China?
- b) What *strategies* will need to be *developed* and **supported** to ensure the blueprint goals can be achieved for the implication you have named (a)?

Part 2: Read other students' posts. Respond to at least one other student's post. What else could this student include?

Thank you to Graeme Lock and Keith Newton for providing these examples.