Internationalisation:

How to do it guide

This booklet is designed to assist you with developing an international orientation in your unit. It follows from the introductory fact sheet (available at [http://intranet.ecu.edu.au/learning/for-academic-staff/guides-handbooks-and-tip-sheets/academic-factsheets](http://intranet.ecu.edu.au/learning/for-academic-staff/guides-handbooks-and-tip-sheets/academic-factsheets)) and is an ideal complement to the continuing professional development efforts occurring in this area.

Background - What is it about?

This is a brief summary of our fact sheet and we recommend reading the sheet in full.

The OECD (1996) defines an internationalised curriculum as:

“A curriculum with an international orientation in content and/or form, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally/socially) in an international and multicultural context and designed for domestic and/or foreign students.”

We need to design units that encompass the cultural and linguistic diversity of ECU students and provide opportunities to learn with and from each other in order to prepare students for an internationally competitive workplace.
It is about enabling all our students to acquire a global outlook. This is important because a competitive international labour market requires graduates who have:

- a capacity to engage with language and cultural difference;
- the ability to live and work harmoniously and effectively with and in different cultures; and
- the capacity to draw on and engage with the global diversity of knowledge.
- an openness to their own local and indigenous cultures, and cultures of other communities;
- an openness to intercultural differences;

Key features of an Internationalised Unit

- culturally sensitive and accessible to a wide spectrum of diverse learners and teachers;
- includes explicit references to both international and local subject matter, through the use of examples and case studies from other countries and from culturally and linguistically diverse groups;
- sets tasks that require students to discuss, analyse or evaluate information from a range of international sources;
- challenges accepted orthodoxies and dominant cultural views; and
- involves assessment tasks that require students to explore and analyse cultural similarities, differences and perspectives in their enquiry processes.

Unit Design to Incorporate Internationalisation

Learning activities for units could include those that develop discipline knowledge and enable students to develop a global perspective and an openness to other cultures.

Units can be designed with learning strategies that might involve:

- students learning intercultural differences;
- students engaging with the global diversity of knowledge;
- students learning cultural and language differences; and/or
- research that informs an ability to live and work harmoniously and effectively with and in different culture.

Units need to be developed with regard to the overall course so that the course is an holistic, coherent learning journey that maps students’ experiences with internationalisation progressively and developmentally across year levels.
Internationalisation can form part of the assessment processes in a unit. Both students and lecturers can co-produce knowledge in inquiry-based settings – both within units and across courses on this topic. Learning activities can be designed around contemporary research issues.

Learning and teaching strategies should be culturally inclusive, support diverse modes of learning and engage local students appropriately with international students.

For example:

- set tasks that require students to discuss, analyse or evaluate information from a range of international sources;
- use the experiences of international students as a tool to inform learning of all students in the class;
- set group tasks where members are from different cultures / nationalities, and which draw on their different backgrounds and differing values;
- include authentic enquiry-based assignments involving contact and communication (face-to-face or electronically mediated) with people from different cultural backgrounds and/or located in other countries; and
- organise lectures and presentations from guest lecturers to showcase international experience and expertise.

How to embed Internationalisation in a unit

There are probably five main stages in this process. They are:

1. Resources and materials
2. Decide upon the general approach
3. Write an outcome for the unit that encompasses internationalisation
4. Design learning activities to achieve that outcome
5. Design assessment

Each of these is now explained below together with concrete steps that can lead to embedding.

1. Resources and Materials

In our factsheet the point is made that to realise Internationalisation, instructional materials, media and resources should have diverse authorship and cultural origin and, where appropriate, optimise the development of global perspectives.

Resources could, where appropriate:

- promote diverse cultural and international perspectives;
• challenge accepted orthodoxies and dominant cultural views;
• be reviewed before adoption to identify and eliminate cultural stereotypes and biases;
• relate to international professional best practice standards where they have been developed;
• include accounts of the historical background to current international practices;
• explore how knowledge may be constructed differently from culture to culture; and
• include learning materials that have an international perspective, e.g. use electronic resources to accompany local resources.

2. Decide upon general approach

(a) Examine your course and map specifically where you may already attend to this important area, possibly while accomplishing other outcomes. The fact sheet is invaluable at this time. Specifically highlight where in the course “It will be evident in the learning and teaching strategies, resources and materials and assessment strategies” (from the policy) that the following any or all of the following are be being taught:

• an openness to their own local and indigenous cultures, and cultures of other communities;
• an openness to intercultural differences;
• a capacity to engage with language and cultural difference;
• the ability to live and work harmoniously and effectively with and in different cultures; and
• the capacity to draw on and engage with the global diversity of knowledge.

(b) Decide which of the above are missing or not attended to adequately in your course

(c) Now decide in which unit(s) you will develop these elements.

Now decide in general how you will approach the teaching of these elements. For most of us this will through an activity or set of activities.

Example

A unit coordinator in Engineering wants his students to implement evidence-based approaches as part of their normal practice after they graduate, he wants them to be familiar with current discipline content but realises that their capacity to engage with language and cultural difference is not well developed. There are many overseas students in the course. After mapping the course he decides that a first year unit is the logical place to start developing this attribute. is revising a unit.

Currently the unit is very teacher focussed – a traditional approach using lectures and tutorials but he wishes to make the unit more student centred. He wants students to ne engaged, to be participants in their learning and to work on authentic engineering problems.
His general approach is

*Students are given an engineering problem to work on. Working in teams they have to find, examine and discuss current research about the problem with peers. Students have to then demonstrate how a different culture would propose and develop a solution and describe what solution this different culture might propose – and why. So they have to develop a solution from another cultural perspective. They have to propose and develop a solution to the problem and present their solution to peers and lecturer in a public forum. Four weeks are allocated to this activity and it is part of the assessment schedule. As part of their assessment they have to get feedback about their cultural solution somehow, in some form, from some representative of this culture.*

Happy?

Then proceed below.

Not happy?

Repeat the above. Consult more widely amongst colleagues. Contact CLD for some outside input.

3. Write an outcome for the unit that encompasses Internationalisation

Having now decided upon the general approach then existing unit outcomes may have to be modified to incorporate internationalisation or a new outcome may have to be written.

There are many resources available from CLD about writing outcomes. See our fact sheet ([http://intranet.ecu.edu.au/learning/for-academic-staff/guides-handbooks-and-tip-sheets/academic-factsheets](http://intranet.ecu.edu.au/learning/for-academic-staff/guides-handbooks-and-tip-sheets/academic-factsheets)).

From the Fact Sheet:

*Learning outcome statements should be general enough to capture important learning, but clear and specific enough to be assessable.*

- **Think about:**
  - the information or content you want students to learn;
  - what you want them to do with that information;
  - the skills they would need in order to do that;
the levels of thinking you want them to engage in; and

how you want them to be able to articulate or demonstrate their learning.

Learning outcome statements should specify an observable behaviour. Each outcome statement should contain:

- an action word that identifies the performance to be demonstrated;
- a description of the learning; and
- a broad statement indicating the standard of performance.

Bearing all the above in mind the lecturer generated the following additional outcome for his unit:

Students find, examine and discuss current research about cultural influences on choice of building materials for dwellings.

Specifically, working in teams students propose a culturally appropriate solution to the task of developing of selecting material for the walls and/or roof of a dwelling that houses six people. The solution has to be sustainable by the culture, affordable by the culture, be of sufficient strength last a culturally appropriate time, be able to be constructed in culturally appropriate ways and be aesthetically acceptable to the culture.

4. Design learning activities to achieve the outcome

Please read the section above that deals generally with resources and materials before commencing designing your activity.

a. The Activity

In our example the lecturer had decided on a research-based approach. He then designed three activities (to be delivered over three weeks) aimed at developing solutions to the posed problem and a fourth that was dedicated to presenting results.

- The first activity related to forming teams, understanding the problem, choosing the culture, organising tasks and locating resources;
- The second related to gathering data and formulating possible solutions;
- The third was about finalising the solution, preparing the presentation and justifying that cultural specific nature of the solution; and
- The fourth week was taken up with student presentation. A peer evaluation process was part of this week’s activity.

These three weeks’ activity effectively built students’ skills. In the first week time was spent on students choosing and researching a particular culture and then working out what they need to know about that culture in order to make informed decisions. This guided their data gathering work in week two.

These activities culminated in an assignment presented in the fourth week that required student teams to combine each separate activity into a coherent document that presented a defensible solution. This assignment allowed the lecturer to assess whether the outcome had been achieved.
5. Assessment

One purpose of writing a clear outcome is that it allows the outcome to be reliably and validly assessed. In the assessment scheme for your unit there should be a clear link between the objective written and the assessment conducted. In addition the outcome, activity and assessment should all be aligned to form a cohesive learning package.

Students propose a culturally appropriate solution to the task of developing of selecting material for the walls and/or roof of a dwelling that houses six people.

This outcome was assessed on as to whether the proposed solution was:

- sustainable by the culture;
- affordable by the culture;
- of sufficient strength last a culturally appropriate time;
- able to be constructed in culturally appropriate ways; and
- aesthetically acceptable to the culture.

To help himself make judgements and to focus students effort a rubric specifying various levels of achievement on each of these five criteria was constructed and distributed to students. Time was spent in the first week of the activity in explain the rubric. Students then had a clear understanding of what was meant by phrases like “culturally appropriate ways” and were able to self assess their work as they developed their solution.

Other comments

Implicit in the design task above is that the teacher will only design tasks for which adequate resources are available. This means that there is adequate time, equipment and that both teacher and student have the requisite skills to experience success with the task.

Task design is a subset of learning design, a topic that has its own research and intellectual traditions. Learning design is an interesting and involved subject so if you are interested in really developing your unit into a fully learning designed unit then please contact any of the learning designers within CLD (cld@ecu.edu.au) They will assist you in developing your unit in accordance with any of the well known learning design models, all of which involve outcomes, tasks, resources and assessment – as well as many other elements.

Please visit and use the resources available from the RIT community site. What is presented here is a terse summary and as you discover more about this topic and the advantages of incorporating RIT into teaching then the resources at the site will become even more relevant.

Please contact CLD for any assistance (cld@ecu.edu.au)