This is the published version:

Tran, Ly Thi 2013, Internationalising the student experience: Conceptual principles and examples of practice, in Proceedings of the 2013 Access and Equity Symposium: Social Inclusion and the Student Experience, Deakin University, Geelong, Vic.

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Internationalising the student experience: Conceptual principles and examples of practice

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

• The broader context
• Conceptual principles
  > Cosmopolitan learning and teaching
  > Field of optimal ignorance
• Examples of practice from ARC-funded research
• Key aspects of internationalising the student experience
THE BROADER CONTEXT

• over 4.3 million globally mobile students (OECD, 2013)
• the knowledge economy
• the increasing mobility of the workforce between national economies
• the demand to teach and learn in a global education context
• increasing trans-national and local diversity
• global inter-connectivity

➢ have led to the need to re-envision all students as international learners and citizens (Hellesten & Reid 2008; Singh, 2005)
GLOBAL WORKFORCE MOBILITY

- skilled migration

- eleven million Australian workers and one million Australian citizens working overseas (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2013)

- 8% of the Australian graduates are working overseas (Fazal Rizvi, 2013)

- 55.7% Australian students want to work in Australia after graduating, 24% plan to work overseas (Prospect Research, Rob Lawrence, 2013)
The ‘Asian century’ and national capacity building

• Demand for Asia relevant capabilities and global outlook


➢ Overseas employers rate Australian graduates as relatively poor in its knowledge of Asia and its languages (Australia’s Competitive Survey, 2012).
Conceptualising teaching and learning as cosmopolitan work

• ‘Students of the new millennium are global citizens who see their future opportunities beyond the boundaries of their nation, and their professional prospects outside locally defined parameters’ (Hellsten, 2008, p.83).

• The growing need to re-vision all students and their learning as being cosmopolitan links to teaching as cosmopolitan work (Hirst & Brown, 2008; Luke, 2004; Marginson & Sawir, 2011; Rizvi, 2009, Sanderson, 2008, 2011)

• Cosmopolitan learning: driven by both instrumental and humanistic perspectives:
  ➢ Instrumental: neo-liberal globalisation, commercialisation and the market economy
  ➢ Humanistic: mutual understanding, ethno-relative outlook, respect, recognition, empathy and openness towards different values, worldviews and practices
COSMOPOLITAN LEARNING

• One of the core goals of tertiary education in this changing context should be to develop students’ cosmopolitan capacity to think and act as transnational citizens and professionals (Tran, 2013).

• Rizvi (2011) sees cosmopolitan learning as the development of ‘a different perspective on knowing and interacting with others, within the changing context of the cultural exchanges produced by global flows and networks in transcultural collaborations’

• Ubuntu pedagogy and cosmopolitan learning
Field of optimal ignorance in international education

- drawing on Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital

- taking our own ignorance as teachers as a stimulus for students to use their different languages and resources to further the learning for all (Singh, 2011)
CRITICAL QUESTIONS

• What is our field of ignorance in relation to ‘Asia’ and the broader world within the subject we teach?
• Asia within Australia (given Asian students represent 85% of international student population)
• To what extent have we taken advantage of Asian resources in the classroom and on campus to enrich student experience?
• How to deliver an international experience and facilitate the development of an Asian, as well as a global, outlook for all students in on-campus settings?
Making trans-national knowledge connections

♦ Asking students to do presentation about professional practices in their home countries
♦ Engaging students in the reflective process about professional practices in different countries

Oh, I try to get them to tell me, well, I’m always asking them, how do you do it in your country?... Our timber frame, this is all unknown to them because there’s no timber frame buildings there. Most of them are brick or solid walls of some sort, mud. So I try to relate what we’re doing back to what they explain that they do in their country and then show them the differences. (Building, TAFE, VIC)
♦ Using improvisation to help students develop international vocational knowledge and skills

All the students would develop an international marketing plan. The students might be asked to pick a country - Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and told, okay, your clients wants you to sell this product that's unique for this particular country, you have a different target audience. So in that regard you could re-contextualise it. (Finance, TAFE, VIC)

♦ Designing and structure activities that require students to build on their cultural experiences

♦ Encourage students to be trainers of the day

So you sort of, or rather let the students be a trainer for a day and then, see in my home country, this is how we do it. And then everyone learns. So yeah, I think that would be good. (Hairdressing, private college, VIC)
Teaching and learning as cosmopolitan

When I’m delivering a particular competency, I familiarise myself with how it’s done in another country and then give an analysis and say, well, we do it in Australia this way. This is how it might be adapted from your country. **Not to then pass judgement as to which one’s more appropriate**, but to say how one is applied in the other context. So I think it’s crucial in teaching practice that you go beyond respecting and recognising diversity and actually contribute to diversity by saying, I may not be Chinese or Vietnamese or Indian, but I’ve taken my time to at least familiarise myself with the practices in [these] different countries. (Hospitality Management, Private College, VIC)
Intercultural approach to fostering engagement between international students and local students

I asked for volunteers and they had to speak their language. So I’d speak to them in English and they had to answer in their language. And the group had to try and figure out from their body language and tone of voice what they were actually saying to me. And then we did another little group activity where we got an Indian student and an Asian student to try and speak to each other and they both had to speak just their language, but with body language try and communicate... But what I try and make them understand that part of the reason we’re doing that, not in English, is because it’s like excluding the local students and it’s making them look like foreigners and to understand the challenge.

(Private college, VIC).
Internationalising the student experience

- engaging students in comparing and contrasting professional practices in different countries
- using Asian case studies and international examples
- designing activities to help students experience bicultural and bilingual situations
- Positioning students as co-constructors of knowledge
- De-Westernise the curriculum: not ‘Learning about how the West is done’
Key aspects related to internationalising the student experience

• Internationalising the curriculum: curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment
• Through the formal and informal curriculum
• Enhancement the interaction between domestic and international students: internationalisation at home
• How to bring internationalisation of the student experience into different disciplines and across different educational levels (undergraduate, postgraduate, HDR, diploma, etc..) as well as online environments
• Internationalisation and graduate attributes and employability
• Staff engagement and professional development for internationalising the student experience
REFERENCES


THANK YOU FOR YOUR LISTENING!

I would like to deeply thank the teachers and students who participated in this research!

I acknowledge with thanks the funding from the Australian Research Council for this project.
Teaching International Students in Vocational Education

Teaching International Students in Vocational Education: New pedagogical approaches is designed to support vocational education teachers in both addressing the distinctive learning characteristics of international students and preparing domestic students for global skills mobility in the ‘Asian Century’.

Well-grounded in theories about teaching and learning in vocational and international education, and supported by empirical data drawn from interviews with teachers and program managers, the book expounds several evidence-based, highly effective, pedagogical approaches within the context of competency-based training. These include:

- the intercultural approach
- the Ubuntu approach
- the language and vocational learning integration approach
- the perspective transformation approach
- the value-added approach
- work-based learning
- flexible and divergent pedagogy.

These approaches focus on developing the learner’s ability to consider the broader issues in an intercultural context, to capitalise on prior experience and to adapt vocational skills to workplace settings transnationally. The underpinning theory is brought to life with real-world exemplars, ‘Implications for Practice’, quotes and insights from teachers, as well as reflective questions throughout the book.

Teaching International Students in Vocational Education offers effective approaches to teaching and learning that will benefit not only international students, but also domestic students who gain from the enriched learning environment in which diverse cultural knowledge, skills and attributes are shared.

Dr Ly Thi Tran is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, Deakin University. Her research involves intercultural teaching and learning. She is working on an ARC-funded Discovery Project, addressing the learning experiences of international students and the internationalisation of vocational education and training. This book was written while she was working at RMIT University.

Australian Council for Educational Research

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Foreword by Gavin Moodie