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**Creating Global Students: Opportunities, challenges and experiences of internationalising the  
Geography curriculum in Higher Education**

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**Introduction**

Killick (2015) defines university internationalisation as an institution's "response to the globalisation of our world" which can be viewed as a process of changing the student experience in response to changes in the wider world. Internationalisation has become an important feature of universities, stimulated by the generation of fees from international students, the promotion of international 'branding', reputation and prestige (in international league tables), and to address the need for graduates to compete in an increasingly global workplace due to globalisation (Haigh, 2002). The internationalisation of institutions by attracting foreign students to study has received the most attention, and the opportunities and issues have been well documented (Ryan, 2013). However, the internationalisation of curricula is becoming more important for maintaining the quality and competitiveness of Higher Education in an increasingly globalised neoliberalised market (Harris, 2008) and the desire for branding a s a 'Global University' (Clifford & Montgomery, 2011), the increasing diversity of student and staff, and the need broaden the relevance and appeal of higher education to wider society (Kenna, 2017).

The internationalisation of the curriculum incorporates international, intercultural, and/or global dimensions into the learning outcomes, content, teaching methods and assessment (Leask, 2015). The outcome of an internationalised curriculum are students who have changed perspectives on the world and their relationship to it. Leask (2015) views an internationalised curriculum as one that strives for that facilitating of "the development of in all students of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will equip them as graduates, professionals, and citizens of the world to live and work effectively in a rapidly changing and increasingly connected global society" (p.12). Killick (2015)

views higher education as a process of empowerment, and that developing an awareness of the self and one's relationship with the world is integral to internationalising the curriculum, leading to a maturing as a 'global citizen' and devising a 'worldly' pedagogy (Fanghanel & Cousin, 2012). Killick (2015) describes 'global students' as students who "can emerge from their university life better equipped to dwell more effectively, ethically and comfortably amidst the turmoils of a globalizing world" to take a role in the future of global society. Clifford & Montgomery (2011) view global citizenship as a counterhegemonic educational process which challenges current course content and pedagogies, but has the potential for transformative learning. Through global citizenship they argue tutors have a moral duty to raise awareness and empathy for commonality in the world, the ethics of social justice, awareness (and response to) inequality, recognising the interconnectedness in the world, and the links between the local and global. However, within the context of the internationalisation of the curriculum, the term 'global student' is preferred here to 'global citizen' because of the contested nature of the concept of 'global citizenship' due to its 'good feel' connotations, its fit with capitalist society and neo-liberal discourses, and its perception as a Western-colonial concept (Clifford & Montgomery, 2014).

By its very nature, geography should adopt a global perspective, but these may not necessarily be international. Building on Harvey's (1976) geographic concepts and global perspectives, which included (i) perspective consciousness, (ii) awareness of the 'state of the planet', (iii) cross-cultural awareness, (iv) knowledge of global dynamics and (v) awareness of human species, Klein et al. (2014) add (vi) thinking geographically and (vii) personal action. There is an important and subtle difference between 'global' and 'international', although the two terms are often used synonymously and interchangeably. Global implies without borders, whilst international better refers to differences between places which may have an inherent geopolitical dimension. Geography as a discipline is naturally already internationalised and lends itself more easily to internationalisation the curriculum than many subjects and so should be well placed to address the needs of employers and societal needs for global citizens.

### **Designing an internationalised curriculum**

Thus there is little doubt about the *need* to internationalise the curriculum, but it is important to consider the *nature* of its implementation. Leask's (2015) conceptual framework portrays various 'layers of context' which interact and influence the others, with disciplinary knowledge influenced by societal paradigms (such as a Western perspective) and by institutional policies (for example stipulating global citizenship as a desired graduate attribute), and permeating into local, national and

global contexts through teaching, learning and opportunities (such as international fieldwork). This Symposium provides examples of how internationalisation of the curriculum can be achieved at different levels, from top-down approaches enacting the rhetoric of government and national policy (Stensaker et al., 2008), institutional strategies through learning principles and graduate attributes, and establishing international networks for research to facilitate student and staff exchanges, to bottom-up approaches whereby appropriate learning and teaching strategies are developed within courses and modules.

Traditionally, internationalisation of the curriculum has been associated with outbound mobility of students and staff, for instance on international fieldtrips, study exchanges (facilitated in Europe by the Bologna Protocol) and, more recently, work and voluntary placements. However, the assumption that students will return more 'internationalised' from their experienced is often contested (Trede et al., 2013; Leask, 2015), particularly for encounters of short duration.

Transnational Education (TNE) is increasingly common, particularly where universities establish satellite campuses in other countries. However, the curriculum of one country is applied to a curriculum in another country, adapting local examples, and often using 'flying faculty' to intensively teach sections of the course (Smith, 2014). Commentators such as Khoo (2011) and Leask (2013) argue that the neoliberalism may result in "a homogenized 'globalized' curriculum that privileges and strengthens already dominant groups and knowledge" (Leask, 2013, p.12), particularly when Western universities transplant their campuses and ideologies in non-Western countries and English becomes the language of delivery (Svensson & Wihlborg, 2010). Any networks need to be inclusive, avoiding asymmetric relationships and addressing inequalities of technological or social access (Shepherd et al., 2000).

More recently, there has been recognition of 'internationalisation at home', which takes place indirectly through the curriculum (involving the integration of global perspectives and case studies into the curriculum), through interaction with international students, or through innovative approaches using new technologies such as international video conferencing (Harrison, 2015). Having international students on a course is often seen as a driver for internalising the curriculum and viewed as 'cultural capital' (Jones & Brown, 2007; Sawir, 2013). However, the challenges of integrating and utilising international students is well documented (Spiro 2014), including linguistic and pastoral support through pre-sessional programmes and beyond, and accommodating differing cultural traditions and learning styles (Fortuijn, 2002; Carroll & Appleton, 2007; Turner, 2013). The use of the terms 'international' and 'domestic' student may inadvertently lead to further polarisation within class and faculty (Leask, 2015) but participative pedagogies may address these issues (Elliott & Reynolds, 2014; Spiro, 2014).

Any attempt to create 'Global Students' through the design and implementation of an internationalised curriculum brings a wide range of opportunities and challenges. The internationalisation of the curriculum lies at the intersection of policy and practice (Leask, 2015). Governments and university managers need to consider what roles and responsibilities universities have in the 'Western' world in the developing of interconnected global education networks and the desire to establish international teaching and research collaborations. At lower levels, academics have a pivotal role in designing and delivering effective curricula. There may be new ways of designing and delivering curriculum, for instance through transcultural and transnational programmes and partnerships, and new ways of teaching, learning and assessing. Resources and technologies also need to be used effectively to create 'global students' such as student and staff mobility, joint curriculum development, distance learning, international field courses and placements. For instance, Solem et al. (2003) and Conway-Gómez & Palacios (2011) describe international collaborative learning using the internet and its potential for working in multinational teams.

Within our institutions, the internationalisation of the curriculum can be achieved through the integration of global perspectives and international issues in modules and courses, intercultural dialogue, and development of socially responsible or global citizenship, and empathy for others and their life situations in differing environments and societies. It is clear that the internationalisation of the curriculum is not solely about content, but also involves changes to styles of teaching, learning and assessment. Kenna (2017) recognises that developing global students through the teaching but also through the learning of students, getting them to examine new perspectives, which ultimately comes down to identifying and designing desired learning outcomes and assessment. This necessitates a shift towards developing a learning-centred paradigm, whereby students develop critical thinking and critique skills (Denson & Zhang, 2010), rather than passive learning through instruction, with the abilities to recognise difference and inequality, and to adopt global perspectives (Kenna, 2017). There are many ways in which these learning skills can be gained, including learning journals (Kenna, 2017), discussion and debate stimulated by film, or directly encountering other societies and cultures as part of exchange or fieldtrip. However, international opportunities are often criticised; for instance, international fieldwork is often viewed as a form of 'academic tourism' whilst international voluntary work placements, particularly those of short duration, offer limited encounters. However, Killick (2007; 2013) argues that internationalisation can start at 'home' and the ethos of 'global' citizenship can be meaningfully put into practice through local community work experiences which may be extra-curricular or offered as part of the course.

Tutors are themselves intercultural learners (Leask, 2007) and play a crucial role in facilitating change within their teaching and institution (Clifford & Montgomery, 2011). However, staff should become aware of the issues and pitfalls of what and how they teach, which may require new ways of thinking and acting for both staff and students. There are planned and unplanned experiences that occur within the formal and informal curricula, but we also need to be aware of the hidden curriculum (Cotton et al., 2013; Leask, 2015) particularly when dealing with international students or with geopolitical situations beyond our immediate experience. Thus tutors need to manage their own positionality, and also that of their students, when undertaking intercultural learning (Leask, 2007). Education in the Anglophone world is taught through a Western or Eurocentric lens (Jackson, 2003; Joseph, 2008; Clifford & Montgomery, 2014). Kenna (2017) highlights the prevalence of western examples and indeed western perspectives in our teaching, typically using 'home' examples which are familiar and close to the tutors' experiences, and forgetting to acknowledge the diversity globally. However, there are many opportunities for improving internationalisation of the curriculum including engaging international students who are taking our modules to talk about their countries and backgrounds, linking internationalisation of the curriculum and with co-production by getting students to find and research and present international issues as examples in class, could be given different themes and told to find specific international examples and link to theory or issue (Kenna, 2017). Thus, as tutors, we must avoid the dangers of devising a 'new imperialism', become aware of possible unintended outcomes, and promote pluralism and diversity within our courses (Shepherd et al. 2000).

Encouraging our students to make reflective journeys is important. The use of learning journals has the potential to make students more aware of global citizenship (Kenna, 2017) and their place as a (global) student through the reflection on the student's own place in the world, reflecting and empathy for the inequality and unevenness, confrontation with diversity, whether different languages or nationalities within the classroom (Ryan, 2013) or recognising different cultural and social backgrounds either directly through fieldtrips to 'exotic' destinations (McGuinness & Simm, 2005; Simm & Marvell, 2013) or indirectly through background reading. Students can also develop a more nuanced awareness of even recognising the dominance of western examples in western literature (Kenna, 2017). Thus new perspectives, such as awareness and empathy through encountering others and reflecting on experiences, will be encountered. Haigh (2002) identifies graduate qualities of an openness to, understanding and respect of 'otherness', and to become more self-aware of the student's relationship between 'self' and 'other' lifeworlds.

## **The Symposium papers**

This Symposium grew out of a paper session at the Royal Geographical Society's annual conference held in Exeter from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015. Sponsored by the Higher Education Research Group (HERG), the 'Creating Global Students: Internationalisation of Curricula in Higher Education' session explored the nature of and new developments in the internationalising of curricula in universities with particular focus on the experiences of staff and students. The papers in this Symposium consider the latest developments of the internationalisation of the curriculum in Geography. The structure of this Symposium starts with the large-scale, national perspective (Arrowsmith & Mandla, 2017), collaborations between countries (Clark & Wilson, 2017) and institutional strategies (Hudson and Hinman, 2017), in particular the use of visiting academics (Churski et al, 2017; Szkornik, 2017), to student exchanges (Loynes and Gurholt) to curriculum design (Churski et al., 2017; Hay, 2017).

Insights into national planning of the internationalising the curriculum are provided by **Colin Arrowsmith and Venkata Ravibabu Mandla's** paper on how national policy has been implemented amongst all educational levels in Australia, and how one Australia university has implemented the policy. The authors review how Australia has successfully exported education to south-east Asia and Pacific islands (particularly through scholarships) coupled with moves to increase widening participation of generally disadvantaged sections of home and indigenous society. This has led to the widening of the ethnic diversity of students within universities. The authors argue that, for successful internationalisation to happen, "thinking in an intercultural manner rather than learning about cultural diversity is imperative". The creation of a 'culturally inclusive' curriculum appears to be a two-way process of dialogue and mutual learning that may be facilitated through networking, collaboration and exchange of and students and staff from institutions indifferent countries. Students and staff can broaden their intercultural perspective through international campuses, study exchanges, study tours collaborating with institutions from other nations, and short-term postings as adjunct professors overseas. Significantly, the authors argue that the inclusion of non-Western cultures (in particular Australian Indigenous perspectives) provides valuable alternative points of view and should form an integral party of any curriculum. They conclude that internationalisation can be implemented at different levels, from national educational policy by government, to institutional strategy, to the design of more culturally-inclusive curriculum and appropriate learning and teaching methods.

The theme of international partnerships is examined further by **Clark and Wilson's** paper on utilising They argue that the use of online pedagogies has "great potential to bring together students and teachers from widely differing backgrounds, cultures and locations to combine global perspectives

and local relevance” within the interdisciplinary framework that Geography can provide. There are benefits of intercultural communication and international networking for professional development and research. However, the authors note that the number of international collaborations that are teaching-focused are limited. They examine the issues and challenges often encountered through international collaboration, identifying institutional fears and concerns over mutual (economical or reputational) benefit and failings attributed to bureaucratic administration and cultural barriers due to a lack of familiarity with different educational systems or cultures. However, the authors argue that the use of online technologies provides a cost-effective means of establishing a platform for international collaboration as well as offering wider geographical coverage but recognise that issues of inequality in the availability and quality of technological infrastructure remain when linking to developing countries. Nonetheless in an increasingly globalised world, there is growing potential for new and innovative ways of providing and supporting online learning through international collaborations, and the authors suggest ways in which these may be achieved.

**Paweł Churski, Paweł Motek, Tadeusz Stryjakiewicz and Agnieszka Cybal-Michalska** consider the strategies in which universities in Poland, as a post-socialist state with new links as a member state of the European Union, strive to internationalise in a globalizing world. Using a case study, the authors explore how establishing and using a network of experts and institutions can help the development of the curriculum and enrich the internationalisation dimension. Their course makes use of invited visiting or adjunct professors and practitioners from different European countries, coupled with an intensive placement in another European country. The importance of tapping into expertise from within the European Union is valued, but issues such as finding a common language (most often English) are flagged which will have implications for learning accessibility, but also an opportunity for development. The importance of research networks allowing teaching initiatives to develop is highlighted. As with previous papers in this Symposium, the authors recognise the importance of studying the local alongside the global perspectives in order to facilitate an intercultural education. Whilst the paper by Churski et al considered the benefits of visiting staff to the host institution, **Katie Szkornik**’s paper offers timely and interesting insights of Transnational Education (TNE), specifically ‘flying faculty’ whereby staff undertake short-term and intensive teaching postings at an outlier university campus in an often distant country. She provides an insightful critique of the opportunities and challenges of TNE through critical reflection of her own experiences that range from overcoming cultural differences to challenging preconceptions. The awareness and challenge of the tutor’s Western and Eurocentric perspective is amplified, an issue which is also raised by Hudson & Hinman (2017) (this Symposium). However, despite the demands and challenges of ‘flying faculty’ it is evident that there is considerable opportunity for mutual



learning of staff and students, particularly if a student-centred approach to learning is adopted, which in turn the international experiences can enhance the tutor's own professional practice at home, not only in terms of personal development but also teaching materials and case studies.

Challenging the epistemology of traditional strategies of internationalisation, **Chris Loynes and Kirsti Pedersen Gurholt** offer an influential paper on an innovative Erasmus scheme whereby a mixed group of European students rotate as a cohort to spend a semester studying in each of the participant universities. The authors consider how the pedagogy of the journey and the 'student as traveller' provides a transcultural lens that addresses some of the issues of 'otherness' even within Eurocentric contexts and enriches the internationalisation of their studies. The student cohort develop both personally and academically through cultural and social interactions, their collaborative experiences and personal reflections leading to intercultural learning, a sense of self and community and ultimately transformative learning. Similarly, tutors are also affected by the process, in particular learning from the students through the sharing of their experiences.

**Paul Hudson & Sarah Hinman** consider how Geography is well positioned to integrate the internationalisation agenda in Higher Education, particularly within a liberal arts setting. The authors argue that internationalisation can stimulate interdisciplinarity, and such an "interdisciplinary landscape is familiar to Geographers" particularly within a liberal arts environment. The distinction between global (borderless perspective) and international (which implies physical and socioeconomic between locations which is inherently political) is stressed, and so the authors espouse that more careful thought and planning is needed to avoid region-specific schema or examples in order to integrate such global and international perspectives. Thus Geographers have an important role to play in internationalising the curriculum not within their own subject, but in other subjects. Although the Eurocentric nature of exchanges (often to a limited number of European countries) and the Anglophone and continental nature of academic conferences, such study abroad opportunities are seen as important to the development of internationalisation in Higher Education.

Finally **Iain Hay** (Flinders University, Australia) challenges the use of ethnography for the purposes of internationalisation. He provides an example of how auto-ethnographic documentary films can be utilised as a pedagogic tool for effective teaching of ideas and themes pertinent to internationalisation. Students are challenged by the subject and content of the film, heightening awareness of difference and inequality, and fostering awareness of different perspectives and develop empathy. Further, students are challenged by the nature of the medium, their own positionality, and this can be readily applied to different contexts of internationalisation.

## **Concluding thoughts**

In conclusion, internationalisation of the curriculum is a multi-faceted topic, involving intercultural and transcultural dialogues, global and international perspectives. The collection of papers in this Symposium offers common themes as well as insights into different aspects and scales of internationalisation of the curriculum. Within our institutions, it is clear that Geographers have an important role to play in developing and teaching an internationalised curriculum. A recurrent theme is the need to consider both the local with the global perspectives in intercultural education. Intercultural awareness starts at home within our own institutions and classrooms; Geographers teaching in universities are well placed to integrate examples and case studies with global (without borders) as well as international (differences between places which may have an inherent geopolitical dimension). The interdisciplinary nature of Geography also makes us well placed to influence and even contribute to the curriculum of other subjects in our institution, for instance in institution's embracing a liberal arts agenda. These papers show that positive changes can be made by individuals and departments acting within the national and/or institutional structures. But Geography also offers opportunities through fieldtrips and exchanges to explore transcultural aspects. It is clear that internationalisation of the curriculum involves networking and collaboration, notably that research links may develop into teaching projects and new opportunities to internationalise the curriculum as well as embedding research-led teaching or, in some situations, develop student-centred learning. Another key theme in these papers is that the use of adjunct professors, exchanges between universities, and the importance of establishing research networks to yield collaborations. The bringing in of external expertise, either as invited adjunct professors or flying faculty, is a first step in sharing organisational practice but cross-fertilisation of teaching ideas. Also students can benefit from increased mobility through exchanges. There are challenges and issues, most commonly the need for awareness and challenging western and Eurocentric views. So we should strive we network and collaborate with institutions and organisations at destinations to make the internationalisation of the curriculum more meaningful and informed by reality rather than secondary sources. The papers in this Symposium have highlighted the ways in which communication and awareness of positionality leads to a process of challenging preconceptions and adapting our practices through reflection and review of our curricula (Leask, 2015). It is clear that the internationalisation of the curriculum cannot be generic but a platform for change and potentially act as stimulus for transformative learning of staff and students to create more culturally and ethically aware Global Students living and working in an increasingly globalised world.

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### **Editor's note: PROPOSED ORDER OF PAPERS IN SYMPOSIUM**

1. Simm, D. & Marvell (2017) Introduction - Creating Global Students: Opportunities, challenges and experiences of internationalising the Geography curriculum in Higher Education.
2. Arrowsmith, C. & Mandla, V.R. (2017) Institutional approaches for building intercultural understanding into the curriculum: an Australian perspective.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2017.1337733>
3. Clark, CH. & Wilson, B.P. (2017) The potential for university collaboration and online learning to internationalise geography education. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2017.1337087>
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