Title: Developing a cross-disciplinary intercultural engagement toolkit as a component of internationalising the curriculum

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Understand the rationale for a focus on intercultural engagement in approaches to internationalising the curriculum.

- Have related the idea of intercultural engagement to their own practice, and/or their institution's approach to internationalising the curriculum

- Have participated in a formative exercise contributing to the development of the toolkit

- Provided critical feedback on the project for the development team

Session Outline

Successful Internationalisation of the curriculum must be underpinned by a level of intercultural engagement from academic staff and students. This session will present the University of Brighton's ongoing development of an intercultural engagement toolkit for teaching staff across the disciplines. This toolkit will aim to support staff to engage, and to engage their students, by providing a range of practical resources and activities. Attendees will be asked to draw on their own experience around embedding intercultural learning as a means to contribute to a discussion designed to inform the on-going development of the toolkit.

Higher Education in the UK is continuing to grapple with two aspects of an internationalising sector: increased number of non-UK students (HESA, 2015) and the need to prepare students for a globalised society (Guimaraes-Iosif, 2011). Academic staff are not always sure about how to engage with these forces in their curriculum (Barker, Hibbins, & Farrelly, 2011). While they have different levels of awareness of issues and theories relating to internationalisation of the curriculum, this is often accompanied by uncertainty as to how to implement effective changes to curriculum content (Svensson and Wihlborg 2010). Ryan (2011) points to 'the lack of work that moves beyond theory and proselytising'. Due to this the UoB has set out to

begin piloting a practical toolkit to support academic staff through an ongoing process of curriculum internationalisation. The aim of the resources will be to support universal processes of cultural negotiation (Holliday 2013) in the context of programme teams and class groups.

The session will explore how internationalisation can be based on values of openness, respect, and equity, which has led the UoB to focus on fostering intercultural engagement in the curriculum (Rasi, Hautakangas and Vayryrnen, 2015; Leask, 2009).

In particular it will consider the challenges of supporting staff to embed intercultural engagement in their teaching; and the benefits and risks involved in creating a cross-disciplinary toolkit, encompassing theory, creative and practice-based disciplines. The toolkit aims to support reflection both within the classroom and within programme teams.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The outline of the workshop is a follows;

Introduce the reasons for focussing on intercultural engagement. Including the theoretical underpinnings as well as practical aspects and challenges of implementation. Such challenges include engaging teaching staff with different levels of understanding of intercultural engagement, from different academic fields. Discuss initial feedback from staff on this. (15 min total)

Attendees will be broken into two groups and asked to reflect on specific questions, in the context of sample resources from the toolkit. Each group will be facilitated by one of the co-presenters and asked to consider the following: (25 minutes)

- Does your university and school/department foster intercultural engagement? If so, how does it do this? What are the strengths of this approach?

- What are the challenges of intercultural engagement you face at your institution? How do you work to overcome them?

- How would you engage with these resources in your own practice? Are there other resources that would be useful?

- What opportunities or barriers do you see to (a) staff and students developing their intercultural engagement and (b) to using a practical toolkit approach? Do you have any, comments and or suggestions around this project? (15 minute group discussion)

A rapporteur from each group will be asked to present their feedback, and facilitate a dialogue about how to further develop this toolkit as something for use across the sector: (10 min feedback and discussion – 5 minutes per group)

The co presenters will summarise the key points of the discussion.   (5 mins)

References

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