Internationalisation of the Curriculum: designing inclusive education for a small world

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ABSTRACT  Responding to the globalisation of commerce and communication and driven by competition in the multi-billion dollar international market for higher education, many universities are seeking to market their educational provision internationally. Feedback from some disappointed ‘customers’ has created pressure for change in the way that instruction is designed and delivered. This pressure is beginning to affect teachers in subjects perceived as international in perspective. This paper reviews the strategies suggested by Western universities to achieve internationalisation of the curriculum. Internationalisation is a major project that affects all aspects of a university’s provision, including its priorities for staff development and career rewards. The challenge for course developers is to design a curriculum that serves global rather than national priorities, which does not rely on prior knowledge of local provenance, where students from all sources share equal opportunities for advancement in an inclusive learning environment, and which serves to introduce stay-at-home students to the demands of an increasingly multinational world of work.

KEYWORDS  Internationalisation, multicultural, inclusive education, curriculum change, teaching strategies.

Introduction

One of the functions of JGHE is to promote the discussion of current issues that affect all those engaged in teaching geography in higher education. Geography is a subject that is uniquely associated with teaching about the world, its nations and its environment. However, while geography’s teaching has long addressed matters international, the way geography is taught has not (cf. Healey et al., 2000). Much human geography is taught within national or local contexts, while many geography curricula promote relatively narrow national agendas. Proof of this can be seen in most of the introductory textbooks that are used. They emerge from Western traditions and they reflect those same world-views, including their social, economic and environmental priorities (cf. Haigh, 1984).
This paper describes the external processes that will soon drive many geographers towards making their teaching methods and curricula more multicultural and inclusive. It continues to discuss what internationalisation of a curriculum actually means, why it is important, what it involves and describes some of the work being undertaken to accomplish internationalisation.

Background

Currently, many universities are investigating ways of integrating international and multicultural dimensions into their teaching, research and service functions (Back et al., 1996, p. 1; van der Wende, 1997, p. 54; De Wit, 1999, p. 1). This work has two motivations, the first of which is income. Many universities would like larger numbers of international students because they offer a source of revenue whose supply is not restricted by local quotas or demography (Warwick, 1999). Already, many universities operate across national boundaries; they sport campuses in several nations and market their courses electronically across the Internet (Fielden, 1998; Lemke & Ritter, 2000; McBurne, 2000, p. 69). Additionally, they compete for a share of the—maybe—more than 1.5 million students who travel abroad for their higher education (cf. CBIE, 1999). This traffic is set to increase. Blight (2001) suggests that between 1995 and 2010, Asia’s demand for international university places will increase by 800 000 and, he hopes, a large proportion will go to Australia. However, at present 32 per cent (0.5 million in 1999) of all international students travel to the USA (cf. UK: 16 per cent; Germany: 13 per cent; France: 11 per cent; Australia: 8 per cent (Feder, 2001; Koh, 2001)). Their impact is considerable. In the UK, 10 per cent of all students are ‘international’ (cf. Austria 13 per cent, Australia 8 per cent (CEC-UKCOSA, 2000; Anon, 2001; Feder, 2001)). In New Zealand, international education generates 3.5 times as much foreign exchange as the wine industry (Pickering, 2001). In the USA, HE is reputed to be the USA’s fifth largest earner of service income worth US$12.3 billion (1999) (Lenn, 1996; Koh, 2001). Around 10 per cent of US (cf. 31 per cent of Austrian) undergraduates undertake some kind of study-abroad programme (Peterson et al., 2000; Anon, 2001).

International students are big business and this is why, today, universities are concerned to create a favourable ‘brand’ image in the international education market (CVCP, 2000; McBurne, 2000, p. 71; Pickering, 2001). In the process, they have become sensitive to the negative reactions expressed by some returning student ‘customers’, who felt that they had been poorly served by their destination university and that the university’s interest in them had been mainly financial (Altbach, 1999).

Of course, geography still has a relatively small involvement in the international student trade. For example, in the UK (1998–99), 2.5 per cent of geography undergraduates (but 38.4 per cent of postgraduates) were international students. A large proportion of these international students originated from other European union nations, 64 per cent undergraduate, 29 per cent postgraduate (HESA, 2000). But, simply, outside GIS, the skills geography offers do not provide the economic promise of those offered by schools of business, medicine, law, computer science or engineering, so fewer students travel abroad for a geographical education (cf. Koh, 2001). However, there are other very good reasons for geographers to be involved, although one argument may be based more on how geography is perceived from outside than upon the beast that actually exists. Geography may have strong links with international studies and area studies. In North America, its survival may be perched on courses that include world regional geography (cf. Aspaas, 1998). Indeed, in many nations, geography remains
Internationalisation of the Curriculum

Internationalisation of the Curriculum is synonymous with education about the world we live in, its environments, societies and economies.

The second major motivation for internationalisation in universities is the globalisation of business and communication patterns, the emergence of a “new knowledge economy” (Peterson et al., 2000, p. 1). Universities and many departments aim to enable all their graduates to compete in an increasingly global world of work (Ledwith & Seymour, 2001). In Europe, this argument supplements those connected with enhancing European integration (RKS, 1997; Einem et al., 1999). These ambitions include the creation of a Pan-European higher education area, where qualifications are transferable and standards comparable, “together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space” as proclaimed in the Bologna Declaration of June, 1999 (Einem, et al., 1999).

Geography’s ‘purpose’ has long been “to prepare people to take their place on the world stage” (Lidstone, 2001, p. 2; citing James Fairgrieve (1926) “the world’s first university post-holder in Geography and Education”). Stoltman (1997) represents part of “the first message to policy makers” of 1992’s International Charter on Geographical Education (published in 20 languages by the IGU’s Commission on Geographical Education), as being that the teaching and learning of geography is important to a country’s capacity to function in a global age.

Belatedly, these issues are being handed down to front-line teaching staff, geographers included. Our role will be, first, to educate more international students; to convert our administrators’ money-centred approach to international students into one centred on meeting their educational needs (cf. Sadiki, 1998). Second, it will be to equip all students, especially our local students, the ‘stay-at-homes’, to compete in an increasingly international world of work, which they will probably have to face whether they travel abroad to work or remain in their home nation. Several universities have undertaken major workshops on these topics and, if their contributors agree on little else, they agree that these will be major undertakings (e.g. Numan, 1999; Morris, 1996).

What Does “Internationalisation of the Curriculum” Mean?

Internationalisation of the curriculum is the process of designing a curriculum that meets the needs of an international student body (cf. Callan, 2000). Ultimately, the process is about ‘fair play’. The ideal international curriculum provides equably for the learning ambitions of all students, irrespective of their national, ethnic, cultural, social class/caste or gender identities. It values social inclusion, cultural pluralism and ‘world citizenship’ ahead of partisan links with any smaller geographical, cultural or social unit (Surian, 1996). It contains the belief that a university should grant an equal opportunity for success to every student that it enrols and not prejudice the advancement of any individual by granting an innate competitive advantage to students from any particular social group or tradition. Hence, at a deep level, internationalisation is about universal suffrage and this is why, it is to be hoped, geographers would wish to be involved.

However, internationalisation is not an issue for all universities. There are many that self-consciously conceive their role in national, religious and/or gender-specific terms. These see themselves as the bastions and defenders of the culture and traditions of a particular social group (Kozma & Radasci, 2000). By contrast, there are also universities that self-consciously serve the international community (cf. United Nations University, Tokyo) ahead of any particular geographical or cultural identity (e.g. University of the South Pacific—a regional university serving 12 or so nations) (cf. Callan, 2000, p. 21).
These universities assume that all students are ‘international students’—even if they are not (e.g. United States International University—Africa, and Sofia University, Tokyo). However, internationalisation is a major dilemma for those universities that just happen to teach some international students. Many of these universities like to conceive themselves as being of international significance, but they define their role more in terms of the traditions of their host region. It is these hybrid institutions that present the greatest problem. Their glossy recruitment brochures may attempt to portray an image that is friendly to international students. However, their academic practices are overwhelmingly embedded in local traditions. Arguably, these universities, the majority, retain a moral responsibility to ensure that, when they accept a non-traditional student, they are certain that this student will be able to meet the challenges imposed by their course. They retain the obligation to ensure that such students do not suffer serious competitive disadvantage, vis-à-vis their traditional students, simply because of their particular origins.

In some instances, this is taken very seriously—witness the furious activity in Australia, where by 1996, 30/35 universities were said to have some strategy for internationalisation in place (Back et al., 1996). In others, not least Europe and the USA, there is complacency (e.g. Tran, 2000). One reason is that, in most universities, international students remain a minority. Even Monash, which calls itself ‘Australia’s International University’ and which won a national prize in 1994 for its work on internationalisation of the curriculum, had less than one in six of its student population classified as ‘international’ (Back et al., 1996). This is why, all too often, at least outside Australia (Back et al., 1996), the teaching of international students is treated as a sideline or bolt-on extra by staff who have been neither trained nor even encouraged to think about the special problems faced by this diverse student constituency. One outcome of this is that failure rates for international students can become very high (Ultsch & Rust, 2001; Ultsch, 2002). Ultsch and Rust (2001) add that, in many ways, this is as much the responsibility of the university as it is that of the student (cf. Apple, 2001).

What is the Educational Purpose of ‘Internationalisation of the Curriculum’?

“Beyond the provision of equal opportunities for learning and advancement, the ambition of most internationalised curricula is to create graduates who are capable of engaging in a culture of communication and work that is becoming increasingly global” (Peterson et al., 2000). These graduates need new skills. They must be “able to adapt to an unfamiliar culture and operate in a socially and culturally diverse environment; appreciate differences in gender, culture and customs; and be able to work effectively and sensitively within the (national) and international community” (QUT, 1997, p. 1.3). They must have the skills needed to operate in an international and multicultural context (Table I).

How Can We Achieve ‘Internationalisation of the Curriculum’?

To generate such graduates, many educators may need to change their ways. Internationalisation requires a shift in the content and style of teaching and learning (Delors, 1998a). The trick seems to be to design the whole curriculum with the needs of international students in mind (cf. Ryan, 2000). This is easy to write and very hard to do. The term ‘international student’ lumps together individuals with a huge diversity of prior experiences, skills and expectations. Cynics protest that this implies teaching to the lowest common denominator. In reality, it means raising the standard of teaching above
TABLE I. Graduate qualities targets for international curricula.

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<tr>
<th>Graduate qualities indicator (motif)</th>
<th>Generic indicators of graduate quality in an international curriculum</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Open to ‘Otherness’</td>
<td>A willingness to think globally and inclusively, able to consider issues from a variety of perspectives and worldviews</td>
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<td>2. International perspective</td>
<td>Awareness of the implications of local decisions and actions for international contexts and communities and of international developments, decisions and actions for local communities and contexts</td>
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<td>3. Self-aware</td>
<td>Awareness of own cultural tradition and its perspectives in relation to other cultures and their perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Aware of international professional contexts</td>
<td>Appreciates the relation between his/her field of study locally and professional traditions elsewhere</td>
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<td>5. Respects ‘Otherness’</td>
<td>Appreciates the importance of multicultural diversity to professional practice and citizenship</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Understands ‘Otherness’</td>
<td>Understands the basic tenets of different world-views</td>
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Source: Adapted from Leask (1999, p. 6).

the parapet of a narrow local agenda. The situation creates opportunities to build on a wider range of student life-experience and skills (Bean et al., 1995). For example, there is great scope for social geographers to embrace multiculturalism and to celebrate ‘otherness’, especially in the context of a multicultural society like the UK (cf. Waddington, 2001).

Problems and Some Solutions

Nevertheless, the diversity of the international student experience does pose a challenge in classroom teaching. Even more than ‘stay-at-home’ students, international students are better treated as individuals. This can be hard on old-fashioned lecturers, who see their role as imparting wisdom from the front desk and who define the student’s role as learning to think in their way. The truth is that most instructors, not least in geography, have a limited cross-cultural range and a personal ignorance of the societies that source many international students. Given such limitations, humility might suggest a less didactic approach and the adoption of the (JGHE-popularised) model of the instructor as facilitator of student learning and development. Thankfully, geography is not often straitjacketed by the set curricula that constrain many professional disciplines, although Lidstone (2001, p. 2) argues that we may need to find “new ways of conceptualising places, regions and nations which … require a common global approach to democracy and citizenship”. Meanwhile, the only barrier to the creation of a curriculum, flexible enough to allow any student to meet his/her own personally tailored learning needs, is the creative imagination of its teachers.
This said, staff development and training is vital to the internationalisation process (Back et al., 1996). Few geography educators have taught outside their own national context. They have never lived as ‘a foreigner’ or a ‘social minority’. They may find it hard to see their own society from the viewpoint of an outsider, although this ability has been called the first basis for intercultural understanding (Bodycott & Walker, 2000, p. 92). They may be ignorant of even the educational traditions that produced the new students they try to teach. Internationalisation means more than increased knowledge, empathy for and understanding of other social groups: it also requires an emotional, perceptual and cognitive shift in the personal response to ‘otherness’ (cf. Monk, 2000). It requires developing the perceptual skill of recognising the character and quirks of one’s own traditions sufficiently to be able to represent and preserve its integrity in multicultural situations and to understand outsiders’ reactions to it (cf. Morris, 1996). As anthropologists have long advocated, these skills are most easily acquired by direct experience. Finland’s Centre for International Mobility’s checklist for the implementation of internationalisation ranks the development of the staff’s international interactions as a high priority (Snellman, 1995).

Meanwhile, the fact is that most universities serve a function that is defined in narrow national or sectional terms. John Kelly, University College Dublin, writes:

By their very name, derived from the Latin universitas, and by tradition over the centuries, universities have always been international institutions with a commitment to the promotion of universal knowledge…. Every academic [so] … justifies … international travel to conferences, sabbaticals, network meetings, research visits etc… a university’s status is determined by the international reputations of its professors …. And yet in most instances, universities have been established as regional institutions, created and continually funded by local or national governments with the clear priority and responsibility to meet the immediate educational requirements of its locality. (Kelly, 2000, p. 1)

Tensions between universal aspiration and local actualities inhibit internationalisation. They are also one reason why, in Britain as elsewhere, many curricula are unconsciously saturated with local traditions and values (cf. Craft et al., 1998; Shepherd et al., 2000, p. 286). Monash University reports that it “recognised early that a curriculum with an Australian focus did not constitute a competitive export product” (Back et al., 1996, p. CS4–2). However, even the Open University, Britain’s largest and most inclusive university, worries that its “curriculum is widely perceived as predominantly white and Eurocentric” and as such fails even “to represent the diversity of cultures and experiences in modern Britain” (OUPCMG, 2000, p. 8). Most British universities build upon an assumed knowledge base of English traditions, history, geography, art, music, popular culture and literature: “a shared body of texts that are given canonical status within the community” (Lidstone, 2001, p. 3). They assume prior knowledge of subject matter and also of the conventions and methods of teaching and learning that are contained by the standard British entry requirements. Their first-year programmes are designed, primarily, to assist the cultural adjustment from English (public or state) school to university study. They struggle to cater for the adjustment needs of even local ‘non-traditional’ students, such as mature students (Maguire, 2001). In fact, the phrase ‘non-traditional’ says it all. Finally, the teaching assumes that students will be native British-English speakers with a thorough understanding of local accents and colloquialisms. This is why internationalisation of the curriculum involves rethinking the presumptions of course design, the
character of course content and the language used in its delivery (Back et al., 1996; Ledwith & Seymour, 2001).

Chauvinism is a related problem. This may also be inadvertent and ingrained within the educational tradition. UNESCO’s Delors Commission (1998b) regrets that: “people have a natural tendency to overestimate their own abilities or those of the group to which they belong and to entertain prejudices against other people”. Current practices that ignore the works and practices of all but a small group of Western nations demonstrate an intrinsic assumption of the superiority of one particular tradition and world-view (Coulby, 1997).

Rooting out this bias would, immediately, send an enormous number of our geography textbooks and reading lists to the reject bin (Haigh, 1984). However, once students are allowed to believe that the traditions, beliefs and academic products of Asia, Africa, South America and even Eastern Europe are ‘obscure’ or ‘exotic’, then, already, the curriculum has disenfranchised most of humanity. Radical geographers have long struggled against the hegemony of the “Northern White Empire” run by “middle-class, white, Anglo-Saxon males” (Stott & Sullivan, 2000). True, those same geographers have also tended to rely, almost exclusively, on the written authority of those same “Northern, middle-class, white, Anglo-Saxon males”, so reinforcing the hegemony (Stott & Sullivan, 2000, pp. 12–14). However, the call to action deserves attention.

In teaching, a closely related problem is the consequential academic and social exclusion of the disenfranchised and now ‘disadvantaged’ international students by those from the dominant group in the university (Ledwith et al., 1998). Diane Seymour (2002), who surveyed 150 students through 3 years, confirmed earlier reports that international students found local students “unwelcoming, unfriendly and that they excluded them from group processes” (see also Ledwith & Seymour, 2001). This included academic team project work, which is a harbinger of major problems for developing the kind of teamwork skills so often commended by this journal. The problem arises because being ‘international’ became linked, in ‘stay-at-home’ students’ minds, with under-performance and, this is the key, with skills and knowledge irrelevant to the curriculum. The situation also helped ‘stay-at-home’ students remain unconvinced of the benefits of building skills in cross-cultural awareness for their future careers. Such situations reinforce negative stereotypes to the disadvantage of both international and ‘stay-at-home’ students.

The Delors Commission stresses that merely bringing people of different groups together, especially in an environment that exacerbates differences through competitive stress, which they regard as a defect in Western education systems, merely makes matters worse (Delors, 1998a; Peterson et al., 2000, p. 3). They emphasise that contact should be organised ‘in an egalitarian setting’ where ‘common aims and projects are pursued’ and this is a challenge curriculum developers should address (cf. Haigh, 1995; Cook, 2000; Peterson et al., 2000).

Possible Routes Ahead

Very few have ventured as far as fathoming the question of rethinking the curriculum as an essential prerequisite for transcending the threshold of parochially national, as opposed to openly global, education. (Sadiki, 1998, p. 2)

Those who try to make their curricula less parochial adopt, by and large, one of five
main strategies (Table II). Initially, these derive from experience of multicultural education in the USA’s public school system (Morey, 2000).

One quickly concludes, however, that there is no panacea. Each approach has its disadvantages. However, Strategy 5: Multicultural Education and, for logistic reasons, Strategy 4: Bicultural Education, seem the least problematic. Strategy 4 allows the possibility that the curriculum can be tailored to meet, equally, the educational needs of just two source traditions—e.g. Japanese and British—rather than a larger array. Strategy 5 requires a curriculum heavily based in cross-cultural team and project work. The phrase ‘international student’ smudges a gigantic diversity. Merely teaching, generally, about multicultural matters risks stereotyping (cf. Adler, 1987). Even a curriculum that scopes a multitude of traditions must be tailored to the needs of its target audience. The greater the diversity, the harder this is to effect. This implies that universities may have to temper their desire for international student dollars with a realistic appraisal of the degree of diversity that their own programmes can handle. Of course, it is widely believed that universities can resist many things better than the offer of money (Anon, 1999).

Internationalising the Curriculum: trials and errors

The process of internationalisation requires a major institutional change. Back et al. (1996), providing an Australian ‘best practice model’ from Curtin University of Technology, comment ruefully that “old habits, a multitude of competing agendas and the difficult, expensive logistics involved in a full-blooded internationalisation strategy required a total re-orientation of the institution” (Back et al., 1996, p. CS12–1). Those who have embarked on this venture try to effect and manage change at five levels: the class, the course, the staff, the department and the university.

In the Classroom

Whether or not a university is productively engaged in meeting the needs of international students, much can be done within the context of an individual class or course (Cook, 2000; Haigh, 1995). A useful example comes from Maquarie University where two Middle East Politics courses were internationalised with the help of the Internet. Here, students use the Internet to simulate international diplomatic negotiations, through links with universities in the USA, Egypt, New Zealand and Australia. Student teams are allocated the role of a prominent political, religious or social leader in the Middle East, Europe or the United States. They research the role profile. They are then given a scenario—an invasion or insurrection in the Middle East. The teams communicate by email and teleconferencing, trying to develop the situation to their political advantage. The simulation is concluded by a formal and assessed teleconference to which all parties contribute (Back et al., 1996). Hardwick (2000) explores other uses of the Internet in her discussion of the ‘Step Up to Geography’ distance learning project, which includes modules on world regional geography for K–12 teachers. Gold et al. (1996) show how cinema may be used as a vehicle to promote a greater appreciation of plurality. Their exercise asks students to explore ‘different ways of seeing’ in coursework that requires students to interpret the Dust-Bowl ‘message’ in the movie Grapes of Wrath from a number of different perspectives. Gold et al. (1993) also apply a similar approach in the context of a field study day-trip. Here, students role-play teams of journalists preparing a field report on a Welsh mining town from a perspective defined by one amongst an
### Table II. Five models of curriculum internationalisation.

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<th>Model</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>1. Bringing the foreigners up to speed</td>
<td>Individuals are given remedial work, often including language training, to bring them up to speed with the dominant tradition. For example, the Institute of Foreign Students (Sofia) takes incoming students for one year. It teaches them Bulgarian language, culture, and also some technical background so that they are able to continue their studies in the normal Bulgarian university system. In Oxford, the many private English language schools serve a similar function in equipping students for British universities. Some universities try to incorporate such training within the normal degree structure but this isolates such students for long hours in remedial classes. It helps create us-and-them divisions between the ‘special’ students and ‘normal’ students (Lundy Dobbert, 1996, p. 3). It also signals that the local tradition is considered unquestionably normal in the context of the education provided and restricts the intrusion of multicultural skills into the system at large.</td>
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<td>2. Education about cultural pluralism</td>
<td>The university provides courses that grant all students the opportunity to learn about different cultures and study their ideas and values. Large universities espousing this model create centres for Asian, African, or Celtic Culture. Lundy Dobbert (1996, p. 4) writes that students attend isolated classes that examine different traditions like ‘butterflies in a collector’s case’. Inevitably, the approach implies that the dominant tradition is ‘normal’ and above such analysis.</td>
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<td>3. Benevolent multicultural segregation—separate development</td>
<td>Intending to preserve diversity and pluralism, different traditions, often associated with minority groups, are taught as separate but equal alternatives to the dominant. Again, the result emerges as minority programmes, most famously ‘Black Studies’ but the same is seen in Welsh education. Commonly, rivalry between the two systems results in conflict as the minority group strives to assert its own values and identity. However, the model is thought more attractive when viewed on the global scale. Sadiki (1998) argues that international education must be customised for particular needs and presumably target groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Bicultural education</td>
<td>All students build competence in at least two traditions: the locally dominant and another that is strongly represented amongst the student body. The approach is popular in the USA, where the problem of reconciling Anglo and Hispanic traditions trouble many states. The approach may, in some way, support the status quo. However, bicultural individuals are thought to be more tolerant of ‘otherness’ than monocultural individuals (Lundy Dobbert, 1996). Naturally, the approach is most suited to circumstances where two clearly defined communities coexist (e.g. Roma/Slav (E. Europe), Hindu/Islamic (S. Asia)).</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Multicultural education</td>
<td>Hofstede (1993) points out that everyone is multicultural, operating in domestic, work or leisure contexts and that these skills are not learnt in the education system. Anthropologists know that cultural competence can be developed only by sustained and intense interaction with another cultural group. This is also the best route to ‘the lower level skill of cultural understanding’. The approach is echoed by Delors’s (1998a) advice that the answer is to have members of different groups working together on shared projects of collective concern. However, personal experience shows that, in this case, unless cross-cultural understanding is an explicit part of the equation, the material demands of the project will take precedence. Participants do no more than build a neutral working relationship that lies inoffensively between different not-understood norms. The risk of trying to teach multicultural skills directly is that of stereotyping. It may be better to develop generic skills, designed to enable students to adapt to whatever social milieu they encounter (e.g. Haigh, 1995; Seymour, 2002).</td>
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Source: After Gibson (1977); Lundy Dobbert (1996); Morey (2000).
array of foreign and local news magazines. At Utah State University, Aspaas (1998) used news media to frame an exploration of African world-views that required students as individuals and discussion teams to analyse critically media portrayals of African affairs and events. The exercise enhanced deep learning and inclusive attitudes in the context of a Regional Geography module.

Moving down a level from classroom set-piece events (cf. Surian, 1996), or fieldwork (Nairn et al., 2000; Hill & Woodland, 2002), much can be achieved simply by a policy of inclusiveness, in which the curriculum allows opportunities for students from all social and cultural constituencies to make an input. For example, if the course concerns a history of ideas on the environment or geography, students could be encouraged to bring forward histories that have evolved in their own social or cultural traditions and place them alongside those that provide the traditional foci of the class (Bean et al., 1995). Some of the problems that can result are discussed by Shepherd et al. (2000, pp. 290–291).

Course Level

In the current environment, step 1—as with GM food—may be consumer protection by labelling (McBurne, 2000). Some courses necessarily target ‘stay-at-home’ students and local concerns or qualifications. There is no problem in this, as long as every student who registers for such a course is aware that it has this local focus, that it demands a certain level of background knowledge, and that not having an appropriate background is a serious disadvantage. The problem arises from courses that assume that every student has a prior insider’s knowledge of, for example, the political ecology of the Caledonian Forest, the historical geography of the Balkans, or the Vedic roots of Pahari social geography but do not announce this fact. In an internationally accessed programme, such courses could be appropriately labelled. Indeed, one of the policies this author most ardently commended to his own university was to establish an opt-in ‘international kite-mark’ system whereby individual courses gained the right to host international students by demonstrating how their courses granted such students equitable opportunities for success.

Step 2 is to review the teaching processes (see Ryan, 2000). Sadiki urges curriculum designers to forge “a democratically responsive learning environment founded on conjunctive and consultative processes” and to “debunk anachronistically ‘zero-sum’ curricular ‘games’ [where] what is taught is filtered through the mindset of quite often insular education providers” (Sadiki, 1998, p. 5). Perhaps we could start with our own classroom and use the personal identities and experiences of all students to help each of them better understand the world in which we live and learn (Martin, 2000; cf. Bean et al., 1995). Flexible styles of student-constructed, student-centred learning leave greater scope for pluralism than conventional didactic instruction. For example, an exercise at Brookes University asked students to interpret the same landscape development in the light of a specific alien perspective. The array of perspectives tackled by teams included some selected from minority traditions represented in the class (cf. Haigh, 1995; and student reactions in Ward & Jenkins, 1999).

Step 3 is the suggestion that students should be taught in language that they can understand (Ledwith & Seymour, 2001). This is surprisingly controversial. In some university contexts, this might mean teaching all students in international English or as if the local English were a second language. Certainly, this has implications for the nature of course delivery and the amount of written support that each class requires
Internationalisation of the Curriculum (Ullsch & Rust, 2001). However, those who have a working knowledge of a second language will appreciate how difficult it can be to follow a native speaker in full spate. Many colleagues worry that adopting this strategy would constrain their ability to communicate complex ideas to traditional students. Of course, many universities routinely teach internationally accessed courses in an international language rather than the local language—common practice in Scandinavia, The Netherlands, South and Southeast Asia—while nearly all universities set minimum language requirements for their entrants. This language requirement and the language used in instruction must be equivalent. If it is not, it Beholds instructors not to punish the students but rather to tackle the system that admitted them to the course inappropriately.

Step 4 is to adjust course content so that it does not inherently advantage ‘stay-at-home’ students. This may involve widening the scope of the curriculum, increasing the international range of case studies, and increasing the emphasis given to learning and authorities from other traditions (cf. van der Wende, 1997). “Curricular plurality, as opposed to curricular singularity, is not an unreasonable test for internationalised education” (Sadiki, 1998, p. 6). This sounds like the easiest of changes to achieve. In fact, it can prove difficult to effect because of the local nature of much human geography teaching, the reluctance of libraries to acquire books from any but a few Western publishers, and a genuine shortage of works self-consciously emanating from non-Western traditions.

Additional problems arise where students are unfamiliar with local conventional expectations of what is required. Internationally, there are substantial differences in the ways in which student roles, tasks and best practice are defined. Such problems can be reduced by providing access to annotated examples of good practice—perhaps coursework provided by high-quality students in previous years (cf. Haigh, 2001).

Step 5 concerns the ‘stay-at-home’ students. An international curriculum should provide ‘stay-at-home’ students with training in cross-cultural communication and with an appreciation of at least one alien tradition (Table II). This kind of training cannot be dealt with in a single course. It requires sustained development across a whole programme. However, some universities have invested heavily in developing multimedia course material on cross-cultural communication. (e.g. University of Wollongong—FLC, 1998).

In geography courses, much might be done in the context of foreign fieldwork or, better still, student exchange programmes (Nairn et al., 2000; Light & Phinnemore, 1998). At Brookes University, the core physical geography research module, a team-project based programme, uses fieldwork teams that combine students from the UK with counterparts from the Czech Republic. However, as Waddington (2001) demonstrates, geography students can build both international and employability skills by direct involvement in local community projects, provided there is a conducive multicultural locale. The Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi (USN) places outsiders, often student volunteers, in Kumauni community schools to facilitate the use of the USN’s own excellent environmental education workbooks (Jackson, 1999; Jackson & Pande, 2000). The students learn physical geography, communication and develop bicultural awareness through direct immersion. Surprisingly, many universities fail to ensure that all students involved in field study programmes receive either preparatory training or direct involvement with the communities they visit (Snellman, 1995).

Departmental Level

At departmental level practice should prioritise the development of international activi-
ties and experience. Ideally, international experience becomes a major positive criterion in both hiring and promotion decisions (McBurne, 2000; Spangler & Wixon, 2000). Staff development prioritises activities that increase the language skills and international experience of existing staff (Bradley, 1997). Faculty exchanges, not only for research but also to work with the educators of student source areas, are actively encouraged (Snellman, 1995). For example, the Department of Geography at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, promotes two-way faculty exchanges through its university’s Erskine Fellowship programme. It imports foreign academics to its teaching programmes for up to a year at a time and routinely sends its own to visit or work at foreign universities. Elsewhere, the year-abroad model of faculty exchange, supported by preparation and training, is often recommended (cf. Snellman, 1995).

In reality, it would benefit everyone if departments also treated all new students with the care due to foreigners. Arriving at university can be a shock for all students, even those who have stayed close to their home region (cf. Hofstede, 1993). The challenge is to find a way of helping all new students adjust to a new way of life. One key measure is to provide a welcoming and supportive environment, rather than one dominated by bureaucratic procedures and locked doors (Ryan, 2000, p. 80). Geographers at Liverpool Hope University College, UK, emphasise the importance of establishing good lines of communication and feedback, the construction of systems of self-help amongst the students, and a proactive approach to ‘plugging the gaps’ in the incomers’ understanding of academic skills and methods (Maguire, 2001). Gaskin and Hall (2002) describe a geographical ‘icebreaker’ exercise for new students that aims to introduce all incomers to both their local region and each other’s perspectives.

**University Level**

All universities delight in producing grand mission statements and directives. Internationalisation can easily become one of these. Some administrations, which launched into new learning environments in the past, failed to think the process through. The impact on stakeholders was neglected (Kelly, 2000). Messages transmitted upward from educators and the research literature went unheeded. They skimped on staff development and training, underestimated staff workloads and failed to comprehend the disruption to educational effectiveness caused by the diversion of time and energy to implementing new courses (Gibbs et al., 1995). Fortunately, Snellman (1995) has circulated an institutional checklist of the kind of university-wide targets that administrators might be encouraged to use to keep on track.

**Discussion**

Internationalisation of the curriculum is about creating equal opportunities for learning and advancement for all of the students accepted by a university. It is about creating a level playing field for those who are subject to the competitive aspects of education and assessment (Einem et al., 1999). It is also about preparing stay-at-home students to operate successfully in an increasingly international and multicultural world of work.

Internationalisation is also a major and a long-term undertaking. To do the work properly requires major investments of time, energy, resources and goodwill. It demands important changes in the ways in which teaching is constructed and delivered, in the way in which staff development is directed and supported, in the way hiring and recruitment
TABLE III. Internal barriers to progress.

| Short-term funding and planning that cannot sustain longer term initiatives |
| Conflicting tensions in strategic developments |
| Conflicting pressures on staff and limitation in staff time and resource |
| Conflicting tensions in resource flow and reward system that encourage internal competition and individualism and that discourage teamwork and collaboration |
| Lack of overall coordination—teams work in isolation with little sharing of experience |
| Lack of quantitative research to inform curriculum development |
| Lack of coordination between marketing, outreach and course teams |
| Lack of communication between schools (or faculties) and departments |
| Lack of specialised staff development programmes |
| Marginalisation of activities that are not seen as relevant to the mainstream of academic activity. |


is conducted, and in the way in which education is administered. The process has to involve everybody, many at a very deep and personal level. It is not something that offers much scope for token change. So, if internationalisation should become an issue in your department or university, there are several important questions to be asked.

The first question is, does there exist sufficient will power and resources for such a long-term process? If not, should the programme close its doors to those students whom it will, inherently, place at a disadvantage? Of course, adopting an overt policy of exclusion may also raise difficult ethical and legal questions.

Second, can the investment in internationalisation be sustained? This is not easily achieved. Internationalisation can only remain but one among many competing concerns: research, consultancy, winning external funds, and the development of new programmes and courses. At some level, such demands compete with internationalisation because the activities they demand do not overlap completely and different skills are emphasised (cf. OUCPG, 2000). Table III summarises some of the internal barriers to progress that were identified within Britain’s Open University (OUCPG, 2000, pp. 4–5). Many of the problems apply to ubiquitous academic patterns of competition, communication and cooperation across institutional levels and divisions.

The third issue concerns workloads. In an education system that has been driven to ‘increase efficiency’ over many years, gains have been made at the expense of decreased spare capacity, time for thought and reflection, and by increased operational stress. The implementation of internationalisation requires that staff have the leisure to step back from the daily treadmill, to reflect on their current practice and then invest new energy in making changes. Few departments or universities would easily accept even the short-term reduction in their efficiency that is implied by this kind of change in curriculum orientation (cf. Gibbs et al., 1995). However, merely adding more pressure to already overloaded staff guarantees the further erosion of staff goodwill and an outcome that will be token, designed simply to pass muster through whatever enforcement mechanism is created, for as long as necessary.

The fourth issue involves staff incentives. It would be unwise to build a programme that relied purely on each educator’s social conscience. To succeed, internationalisation should be pulled forward by a system of career-related incentives. Internationalisation and the development of multicultural skills have to become established as career-advancing priorities for staff. This means that universities need to agree changed priorities, ones that reduce the emphasis placed on other areas (McBurne, 2000).
The fifth concern is the cost. Costs include subsidies for staff development and overseas training—normally the kind of investments that universities find hardest to make. Throughout, this text has adopted the assumption that ‘internationalisation’ is an inherently good thing, at least for universities that believe themselves to be international players. However, it may be irrelevant to universities that conceive themselves in purely national, sectional or sectarian terms. So real decisions have to be made about whether it is better to make any particular curriculum internationally inclusive or to make it internationally exclusive and build upon the existing skills of a clearly defined target student body. The outcome of these individual decisions seems less critical than the fact that they are made self-consciously and that the outcome is communicated to would-be students.

Equally, it must be accepted that, while international education may offer gains in terms of widening the intellectual horizons and capabilities of participants, these tend to be paid for by losses in depth, especially with respect to the routine exploration of any dominant local tradition. The real risks include dumbing down towards ‘an internationally defined lowest common denominator’ and the superficiality that is implied by the word ‘globalisation’ (cf. Anon, 1999). For example, being taught in a simplified ‘international’ English, suitable for foreign students, would only benefit ‘stay-at-home’ students who found themselves having to deal with non-native speakers in other capacities, perhaps through work in one of the larger cities (cf. Waddington, 2001). Additionally, internationalisation should not imply the creation of a blandly conformist ‘globalised’ curriculum. Instead, Lidstone (2001, p. 5) envisions an “enhanced global education” where everyone benefits by learning from the experiences and skills of others.

For this writer, however, the ultimate argument for internationalisation is that it promotes greater social justice, not just for international students but also for those from the minority communities within existing nation-states. It requires that university teachers should strive to grant all students an equal opportunity to succeed. It abets the self-empowerment of those seeking an escape from poverty and oppression (Howitt, 2001). It helps celebrate plurality by encouraging the ‘polyphony’ of more world-views (McDowell, 1994). Finally, it helps help geographers cast off the burdens of history, not least imperial history, by helping us “decolonise our discipline and our students’ geographical imaginations” (Howitt, 2001, p. 148).

**Conclusion**

Geography retains a traditional interest in teaching about the world, its environments and peoples. Increasingly, it is facing up to the problem of teaching its message to students from different traditions (Haigh, 1995; Cook, 2000). This may require a substantial re-evaluation of the ways in which courses are delivered and of what is and what is not acceptable as inclusive classroom practice (cf. Cook, 2000). In essence, internationalisation of the curriculum is about giving equality of opportunity and a better educational experience to all students. Frequently, this will demand major changes in the way education is delivered (Peterson *et al.*, 2000). There seems to be no single recipe for success, although, to succeed, internationalisation must be integrated and sustained as a long-term stable priority. Beyond this, internationalisation involves a refocusing of all institutional activities, not just teaching and learning, away from the concerns of any host nation and in favour of the outside world (Sadiki, 1998). It may prove best to conceive of all students as ‘international students’ and to teach a curriculum that is designed for international students and the new global economy. Meanwhile, the greatest obstacle to
progress is ensuring that curricula that accept international recruits do not grant any innate competitive advantage to ‘native speakers’ or those imbued with particular local knowledge.

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