Developing the

Aren't universities already international?
Christine Shiel claims that true internationalisation lies
in developing our students to be global citizens.

What do we really mean by internationalisation and how do we ensure that 'internationalising' is an activity that not only transforms the student experience, but is a positive force for change? I would like to suggest that rather than focusing solely on how we 'internationalise', we would achieve more with an approach that embeds internationalisation within the broader context of global perspectives and global citizenship. Developing a global perspective alerts students to how their experiences are connected to the experiences of people throughout the world (the global in the local connection) and also serves to better prepare students for work, in a society where cross-cultural capability is essential to employment.

However we define 'internationalisation', what is certain is that everyone seems to be doing it, which is no surprise, given that the overseas student market is predicted to rise to £20 billion by 2020. An economic rationale has undoubtedly served as the biggest push factor for internationalisation in UK higher education institutions, closely followed by enhancing the institution's status and esteem. Subsequent negative feedback about international students' experiences in the UK and "problems of integration" has more recently given internationalisation a slightly different thrust, extending concerns to areas beyond the remit of international recruitment and international offices. An academic rationale for internationalisation has, unfortunately, been less evident.

One might assume that with so many universities being, or aiming to be, 'world-class', that we are already international. One might also assume that with the rise of international student numbers we already have the 'international classroom', so why the fuss? International is integral to everything we do! But is that really the case and is it quite so simple? How many universities can claim that an international ethos is embedded in every aspect of university life? How many have achieved "integrated internationalism"? One suspects very few, and even where we might think we have made progress, students and staff may not perceive our endeavours in quite the same way.

In a recent survey at Bournemouth University, students were asked whether they perceived their institution as 'international'. Many students responded "Yes, because of the presence of international students." However, comments also included: "Pity I did not get to know any of them", and despite the presence of international students, most respondents did not "feel part of an international network". Further, students identified distinct "ghettos" between overseas, EU and UK students with opportunities missed for cross-cultural learning and enriching perspectives. UK students said that if any event carried 'international' or 'diversity' in its title, they did not attend, since they perceived such events as targeted at overseas students, and therefore not relevant. Overseas students drew attention to a number of incidents that reflected a negative experience in the learning environment.

A survey of staff revealed that many do not fully see the importance of the international dimension, nor fully appreciate the extent to which an international curriculum, experience and cross-cultural learning enrich the learning process.

Such responses reflect that more needs to be done and change is

global citizen

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overdue, particularly given that the UK policy context provides a clear 'push' factor, highlighting the importance of developing 'global citizens'.

"Developing and maintaining a world-class system begins with understanding the world in which we live: the values and cultures of different societies; the ways in which we are increasingly dependent on one another; and the ways in which we all, as global citizens, can influence and shape the changes in the global economy, environment and society of which we are part." (Rt Hon Charles Clarke, MP, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, 2004, *Putting the World into World-Class Education*)

The policy context also underscores the link between global citizenship and sustainable development. Have we addressed these concerns within the HE curriculum?

"We need to look at sustainable development as a whole – how to use our resources without wasting them; how to teach and learn about sustainable development; how to generate the skills, knowledge and understanding to allow us to fulfil our duty as global citizens."

(Rt Hon Charles Clarke, *Sustainable development action plan for Education and Skills*)

If this were not a substantial driver, the employability context provides the 'pull factor' for change. Recruiters require graduates who have a "broader world view" and "the ability to deal sensitively with cross-cultural diversity". They need to be "cross-culturally aware", with international experience (Archer 2005; Shiel et al 2005) and able to "understand the world in its global context", seeing "the local in the global".

So what are the implications for learning and teaching? Is it sufficient to say that because we have international students, learners will come to understand diversity? Do we expect cross-cultural learning to happen by osmosis?

A more proactive response would be to strive to develop 'global citizens', who understand the need for sustainable development, have a critical appreciation of global issues and global processes and are sensitive to cultural diversity.

An initial step would be articulating what is involved in developing a global perspective and identifying the learning outcomes for a global citizen.

The global citizen is someone who:
- is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen
- respects and values diversity
- has an understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and environmentally
- challenges social injustice
- participates in and contributes to the community at a range of levels from the local to the global
- is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place
- takes responsibility for their actions.

(Oxfam, *A curriculum for Global Citizenship*)

In this model, internationalisation contributes to the development of the global citizen through curricula and extra-curricular initiatives. An international curriculum, opportunities for language learning and international exchange and the development of cross-cultural competence, integrated with an institution's more corporate international activities, create a vibrant international community where learning is enhanced for both UK and international students.

What does this look like in terms of an approach to learning and teaching? It is suggested that examining a subject or issue through a global perspective means to take a broader approach to that subject that:
- values methodologies, techniques and academic analysis from other cultures
- challenges and discards prejudice
- considers with sensitivity the effect of our actions on others, locally and globally, both now and in the future
- questions Eurocentric, rich world, restricted perspectives and takes into account viewpoints and circumstances from all regions of the world
- presents learners with the capacity to calculate the risks of decision-making
- acknowledges the global forces that affect us all and promotes justice and equality
- empowers learners to bring about change

- provides an international curriculum and seeks opportunitites to develop students' international awareness and competence.

Developing a global perspective is essentially about broadening curricula and incorporating pedagogic approaches that empower students to develop as critical beings, who are able to challenge orthodoxy and bring about change. It involves a shift in approach, rather than a radical change of content.

The shift may well require us to challenge our 'Western template' of knowledge and pedagogy but could result in an environment where diversity is celebrated, learning is enriched and students are better prepared to contribute to a global society. If UK higher education is to be deemed 'world-class' then we need to be global not only in outlook but in our courses and the learning experience we provide. If we retain the status quo and adopt a limited interpretation of internationalisation, then we are short-changing our students.

Christine SHIEL is Head of Learning and Teaching in the Institute of Business and Law, Bournemouth University and is a Leadership Foundation Fellow. She chairs the Development Education Association's HE Committee.

Further information
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Articles from the University of Bournemouth's Graduates as Global Citizens Conference are available at: http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/about/the_global_dimension/global_perspectives/citizens_conference_2005.html
Information on the Development Education Association's (DEA) HE work on global perspectives is at www.dea.org.uk