Chapter 3
Internationalization and Intercultural Learning:
A Mixed Methods Study

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents the findings of a mixed-method study that sought to measure upper level students' intercultural development and their perceptions of intercultural learning in academic settings. Quantitative data was provided by participants (n=178) completing the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) and was analyzed to determine which demographic variables influenced IDI scores. Focus groups provided qualitative data to understand students' experiences learning in multicultural, academic environments. The results show significant overestimation of intercultural competence in the sample, which taken together with the student voice, provide a snapshot of intercultural learning and development across the disciplines. The findings clearly indicate a need for intentional pedagogy and curricular revision in order to prepare graduates as professionals and citizens in increasingly multicultural and globalized contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Educational scholarship increasingly calls for the development of interculturally competent graduates (Brustien, 2007; Deardorff, 2006; Jones & Killick, 2013; Lee, Poch, Shaw, & Williams, 2012; Seifert, Goodman, King & Baxter Magolda, 2010). A growing number of Canadian institutions include internationalization as a strategic priority and 84% claim that graduating internationally knowledgeable and interculturally competent students as a primary goal (Universities Canada, 2014); yet, there does not appear to be standard assessment or evidence of such outcomes. Within this milieu, we cannot be certain that students are gaining critical competencies related to intercultural learning. Moreover, given the mixed approaches and understandings of what constitutes intercultural learning, outcomes are likely ambiguous, irregular, and potentially inequitable.

For more than a decade many institutional approaches to internationalization have been guided by Knight's (2004) definition of internationalization. At the same time, scholars of internationalization have raised warnings that a focus on the outputs and activities of internationalization has possibly overshadowed goals of student learning (Brandeburg & deWit, 2010; Knight, 2011). These concerns led European scholars to conduct a Delphi panel with internationalization experts around the globe resulting in an enhanced definition which focuses on being inclusive and intentional in addressing learning outcomes for all students:

The intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society (de Wit, Hunter, Howard, & Egron-Polak, 2015, emphasis in original)

Perhaps this new definition will guide educators toward more intentional approaches and consideration of intercultural learning outcomes; however, it will also require serious collaboration in our institutions between administrators, those who market internationalization, and those responsible for curriculum and teaching.

Although institutional rhetoric claiming intercultural learning is often present on websites and in promotional materials, learning outcomes with these foci may not be the reality of all students' educational experiences. Champions of internationalization may claim that increased campus diversity leads to increased global mindedness among students; however, substantive intercultural learning does not result from being in the proximity of cultural difference (Arkoudis et al., 2012; Bennett, 2012; Knight, 2011; Leask, 2010; Lee et al., 2012). To the contrary, there is ample evidence framed by intergroup contact theory, indicating that without guidance and

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