

Chapter 15

Intercultural Teaching Competence in the Disciplines: Teaching Strategies for Intercultural Learning

Nanda Dimitrov

Western University, Canada

Aisha Haque

Western University, Canada

ABSTRACT

As universities continue to internationalize their curricula and recruit a growing number of international students, instructors facilitate learning in increasingly diverse classrooms. This chapter explores the application of Intercultural Teaching Competence (ITC) by faculty members across the disciplines at a large Canadian research university. Based on focus group interviews with instructors in eighteen disciplines, it provides varied and concrete examples of how instructors mobilize intercultural teaching competence to navigate diverse classrooms, promote perspective-taking and global learning goals among students, practice culturally relevant teaching, and validate different ways of knowing and communicating among students through assessment practices. Placing disciplines at the centre of the discussion in this way elucidates the extent to which ITC may be adapted to fit the contours of the academic field and allows readers to explore best practices for facilitating the development of intercultural competence among students in their disciplines. Finally, the implications of disciplinary differences in ITC are discussed for faculty development and curriculum support.

INTRODUCTION

Faculty members at Canadian, US, and European universities facilitate learning in diverse classrooms and prepare students to participate meaningfully and responsibly in a global society after graduation (Leask & Bridge, 2013). Many of these universities identify global engagement, intercultural fluency, or

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-9279-2.ch015

knowledge of international perspectives as intended outcomes of undergraduate education and encourage instructors in all disciplines, from civil engineering through biochemistry to international relations, to contribute towards the achievement of global learning outcomes (Kahn & Agnew, 2015).

Very few faculty members have had any formal preparation for facilitating intercultural learning or dialogue across cultures, even if they are involved in international education or study abroad initiatives (Paige & Goode, 2009). The few exceptions to this are instructors who teach in disciplines that explore race, diversity, intersectionality, cultural difference, power, or privilege as a focus of their research in fields such as sociology, social work, postcolonial literature, women's studies, anthropology, or international education, to name a few. Faculty in these fields already have discipline-specific theoretical frameworks and strategies at their fingertips for facilitating dialogue about identity involving issues such as social justice, whiteness, or value differences across cultures (Fong, 2009). Instructors in other disciplines, however, typically discover effective ways of supporting diverse learners as part of a student-centered approach to teaching or while working to increase student engagement in their classes (Hermida, 2010).

Developing teaching tools for faculty working in diverse academic settings has been an important driving force behind the development of the Intercultural Teaching Competence (ITC) model (Dimitrov & Haque, 2016). This chapter represents a critical next step in the evolution of this model which identifies the key skills that faculty need in order to facilitate learning across cultures in a variety of disciplines. Discovering how teaching strategies for intercultural learning differ across the disciplines and mapping what approaches may align best with the needs of students in science, engineering, or arts and humanities will better enable faculty members to reflect on their practice and expand their repertoire of facilitation techniques and further enable faculty developers to create programs and resources that match the needs of students and faculty in these disciplinary groups.

Previous literature on the skills of interculturally competent faculty focuses primarily on: the needs of instructors in social science classrooms (Deardorff, 2009) and social justice courses (Bell & Griffin, 2007), explores the preparation of future elementary and secondary teachers (Coole, Dunn & Kirova, 2005; Cushner & Mahon, 2009), or identifies basic concepts and theories of intercultural learning needed for faculty and staff who lead study abroad and international education programs (Bennett, 2011; Paige & Goode, 2009). There is limited literature on the actual practices of instructors in science or engineering classrooms, although there is some recent literature on the intercultural skills that engineers need after graduation (Deardorff & Deardorff, 2016).

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the Intercultural Teaching Competence model before exploring the variation that exists across the current literature about intercultural skills that are valued in both professional practice and in academia. It describes how approaches to internationalization have adapted to match the skills valued in each of these contexts. Finally, based on focus group interviews with faculty from eighteen disciplines in nine faculties, this chapter illustrates how instructors use components of intercultural teaching competence in their respective fields.

WHAT IS INTERCULTURAL TEACHING COMPETENCE?

ITC refers to an instructor's ability "to interact with students in a way that supports the learning of students who are linguistically, culturally, socially, or in other ways different from the instructor or from each other" (Dimitrov, Dawson, Olsen, & Meadows, 2014, p. 89). It further includes the ability to facilitate dialogue about difference in the classroom and engage students in learning activities that promote global

22 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/intercultural-teaching-competence-in-the-disciplines/231351

Related Content

How Does Fiction Inform Working Lives?: An Exploration of Empathy and Social Sustainability

P. Matthijs Bal, Inge Brokerhofand Edina Dóci (2021). *International Journal of Public Sociology and Sociotherapy* (pp. 1-11).

www.irma-international.org/article/how-does-fiction-inform-working-lives/269513

Flying Away: Electronic Dance Music, Dance Culture, Psytrance, and New Sounds in Portugal

Paula Guerra (2015). *Exploring Psychedelic Trance and Electronic Dance Music in Modern Culture* (pp. 307-336).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/flying-away/134685

Raising Authentic Children in the Modern World

Sakire Ocak Karabayand Sena Arici (2020). *Sociological Perspectives on Educating Children in Contemporary Society* (pp. 159-184).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/raising-authentic-children-in-the-modern-world/243573

Conceptualizing the Knowledge of Traditional and Indigenous Communities Using Informetrics Approaches

Patrick Ngulubeand Omwoyo Bosire Onyancha (2020). *Indigenous Studies: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice* (pp. 362-388).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/conceptualizing-the-knowledge-of-traditional-and-indigenous-communities-using-informetrics-approaches/239769

Volunteerism in Saudi Arabia: Profiles, Motivations and Perceptions of Volunteer Club Members

Gilbert Macalanda Talaue, Faris Saleh M Al-Turki, Abdulrahman Al-Zahrani, Mohammed Al-Aberiand Saad Al-Malki (2018). *International Journal of Civic Engagement and Social Change* (pp. 1-15).

www.irma-international.org/article/volunteerism-in-saudi-arabia/221138