Chapter 1
Translating Internationalization Initiatives From the Macro to the Micro:
A Grassroots Experience

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ABSTRACT

Internationalization of higher education is a phenomenon affecting universities around the world in their effort to prepare students to interact in international and intercultural environments. This chapter presents a three-phased, professor-led, grassroots study aimed at, first, characterizing the state of internationalization at a particular Latin American university; second, defining what international and intercultural competences (IICs) should be adopted as the institutional goal for all students; and lastly, piloting pedagogical strategies and activities to bring the IICs into the classroom. Ultimately, this chapter hopes to serve as an example for how institutions can translate internationalization initiatives from the macro-level into the micro-level (the classroom) in a more inclusive way that better impacts student learning within the realm of internationalization at home. Likewise, this experience aims to help fill the current gap in the theory and practice of internationalization in Latin America.

INTRODUCTION

Internationalization of higher education is a phenomenon affecting universities around the world in their effort to prepare students to interact in international and intercultural environments (Leask, 2012). While the concept of internationalization has many definitions, one of the most widely used is that of de Wit, Hunter, Howard, and Egron-Polak (2015): "the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or 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" (p. 29). Given cultural and economic concerns, especially in Latin America, many universities have turned their attention towards internationalization at home (IaH). According to Beelen and Jones (2015a), IaH is the "purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for *all* students within domestic learning environments" (original authors' emphasis, p. 8). This definition emphasizes the importance that all students have the opportunity to develop international and intercultural competences (IICs) through the curriculum, one of the main aims of internationalization (Wen & Qin, 2016), without relying solely on international mobility. However, while IaH is very common in Europe and Australia, it is just beginning in regions such as South Africa and Latin America (Beelen & Jones, 2015b).

In spite of all of the well-meaning intentions of internationalization at home, the goal of developing IICs in **all** students is often unrealistic since the majority of the decisions regarding internationalization are made by institutional authorities (top-down) rather than co-constructed by the academic community. This disconnect between the academic community and policy makers stems from a lack of clarity in terms of the expected outcomes of internationalization of higher education. Similar to what Gann (2016) has observed, there is often a gap between internationalization aims at the institutional (macro-) level and the implementation and practice at the curricular (micro-) level. One of the main purposes of higher education institutions (HEIs) is to educate students, and much of the rhetoric on internationalization, in both the literature and practice, has focused on the macro-processes of internationalization that can be measured through numerical data rather than on student learning and development. As Garson (2016) states, placing "the focus on outputs in terms of numbers of activities rather than outcomes for learning may be detrimental" (p. 21). This same idea has been argued by Svensson and Wihlborg (2010), who call for internationalization to impact teaching and learning practice in a systematic way, not limited to random, disconnected initiatives. Therefore, the classroom, where much of the development of competences of students occurs, should be at the core of this process, highlighting the essential role that professors have in internationalizing their classroom.

Besides this issue, another challenge relates to the definition of specific IICs that should be included in the curriculum. This task can be daunting because of the number of competences that authors have proposed in the literature (see Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2004), and defining these IICs should not be made without the input of the academic department and professors.

In this way, the chapter will highlight not only the professor-led, grassroots, process of characterizing the state of internationalization at a particular Latin American higher education institution but will also describe how this informed the creation of a proposal for translating internationalization at home at the macro-level into internationalization at the micro-level (the classroom). Additionally, the chapter will present an analysis of the reflections of professors who piloted classroom applications using specific IICs, demonstrating their applicability across different academic fields. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the findings as a way to inform local and global understanding of how professor-led

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