

Internationalising Psychology Education at Home: Teaching Intercultural Competencies Within the Social Psychology Curriculum

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Background

- Need to prepare psychology graduates for global citizenship & employment in culturally diverse and globalised workforce (Cranney, Botwood & Morris, 2012).
- Relatively low numbers of international students in psychology.
- Increasingly, Australian domestic students & general population from culturally diverse backgrounds.

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Internationalisation at Home (IaH)

- Crowther et al. (2001): IaH action plans directed towards developing curricula that cultivate international & intercultural perspectives without study-related travel.
- How can students' intercultural learning be enhanced in psychology education in a domestic context?

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OLT Project (PP10-1810)

Internationalisation at Home (IaH): Enhancing Intercultural Capabilities of Business and Health Teachers, Students and Curricula

Project Teams at
University of Canberra (Leader: Prof Anita Mak)
and
Griffith University (Leader: Prof Michelle Barker)

IaH Project Aim

To internationalise the learning and teaching practices of Business and Health (Nursing, Pharmacy, & Psychology) higher education through

- intercultural capacity-building of teachers, placement supervisors, international students, and local students; and
- the development and dissemination of adaptable, evidence-based intercultural competency curriculum resources

Project Focus on Intercultural Competency Development

- "Intercultural" perspectives and skills hard to grasp, but fundamental to an internationalised curriculum (Leask, 2008).
- Freeman et al (2009): Lack of literature on "how to". Recommended use of existing practical resources for actively developing IC, such as EXCELL.



- The Excellence in Cultural Experiential Learning and Leadership Program is a **structured intercultural training system** initially developed for providing learning support for international students (Mak, Westwood, Barker, & Ishiyama, 1998).
- Theoretical framework - an integrated model incorporating cultural experiential learning (Mak et al., 1999).



- The **Alliance Building** tool aims to validate the diverse backgrounds among group members, and build safety and encourage sharing about cross-cultural experiences in the group.



- The **Cultural Mapping** tool provides a schematic framework for describing a sequence of verbal and nonverbal micro-behaviours that model ways of interacting effectively in a specified social scenario and cultural context.
- E.g., students learn the underlying values and behaviours that constitute a “map” of how to give peer feedback in a manner that will be evaluated as culturally and professionally appropriate.

Implementation in a Social Psychology Course

- Curriculum includes topics relevant to intercultural learning including self-concept formation, group identity and helping behaviour.
- Useful platform for implementation of intercultural learning activities.

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Research Participants

- 48 domestic undergraduate students enrolled in a third year Social Psychology course.
 - 81% female.
 - 77% Australian born.
 - 83% Anglo-Australian or European.

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Curriculum Innovation

Tutorial 1: Alliance Building Via Name Game

Aims:

- Raise awareness of culture
- Validate participants' original culture
- Encourage communication within group

Tutorial 1 Activity Description

- In pairs, students interviewed each other regarding their names, what they meant and their history, with an emphasis on any cultural influences or meanings.
- Students then introduced their partner to the rest of the group and told the 'story' of their name.

Tutorial 2: Cultural Variables in Helping

Aims:

- Develop knowledge and experiential skills for developing effective behaviour in cross cultural contexts.
- Understand the process of cultural mapping.
- Explore cultural (and other) barriers to asking for help and cultural values underlying helping behaviour.

Tutorial 2: Mapping Helping Behaviours in Cultural Contexts

- In groups of 4, students were given two scenarios;
 - imagine you are an international student in Australia asking for help in locating a reference in the library
 - Imagine you are in another country requesting help to find accommodation.
- Students then role-played the stages of the scenario for another group.

Measures

- After each tutorial activity, students completed entries in a reflective learning journal.
- At end of course, students completed a 13 item measure of *cultural learning* (MacNab & Worthley, 2012; Mak, 2012).
- 37 students also enrolled in another third year course (Motivation & Emotion) also completed the measure with respect to that course.

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Students' Learnings from Alliance Building

"This tutorial put me at ease with my fellow students and began to build a cohesive group through the discovery of shared interests, cultural background and history."

"I found it interesting hearing about other people's names and saw how a name and its origins helped shaped and form that person's sense of self and identity."

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Student Learnings from Cultural Mapping

"I found it really interesting and amazing to see how many verbal and non verbal cues when communicating with someone have cultural values underpinning them. It must be really scary coming to Australia from cultures very different to our own."

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Student Learnings

“The cultural mapping exercise was the activity for me that particularly revealed things from another’s perspective. Discussing how it would be for an international student in Australia trying to get research help initially sounded straightforward, but when we broke it down into the individual steps of the interaction it showed how difficult it could potentially be for this person in an environment different to their cultural ways.”

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Student Evaluation

- Students rated their cultural learning as significantly greater in Social Psychology ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 0.70$) compared to another 3rd year course ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 1.05$), $t(36) = -6.63$, $p < .001$. (large effect size, Cohen’s $d = -1.27$)

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Reflections on Teaching Intercultural Competencies in Social Psychology

- Activities could readily be incorporated into the curriculum – highlighted the influence of culture on the self and helping but also applied to understanding prejudice and stereotyping.
- Students’ reflections demonstrated engagement with the tasks. Many made connections between the activities, the curriculum and their own lived experiences of culture.

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One Year on...

- Both Alliance Building and Cultural Mapping activities have been retained.
- More background information provided re: cultural mapping to highlight importance of cultural competencies as a graduate attribute for psychology degree.

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Reflections Among Psychology Educators

- Resonates the successful trials in adapting the EXCELL tools in 4th year Health Psych (Mak, 2012), and Psych 101 (Knott, Mak, & Neill, 2013) at UC.
- HE sector moving towards flexible learning, preparing domestic students in the Asian Century, & recruitment of more international students.
- Opportunities at all year levels, including new foundational unit.

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Further Information & Acknowledgement

- IaH project website
<https://sites.google.com/site/internationalisationathome/>

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