Embedding the Development of Intercultural Competence in the Psychology Curriculum

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Rationale

- APS Code of Ethics: Requires culturally competent psychological practice
- Increase in psychology students + Australian population from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- Preparation of ALL (international + domestic) students to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries
Pilot Canberra Project: “Internationalising the Student Experience”

Positive student responses to curricular changes to a Health Psychology unit

- group discussion on cultural factors & processes in chronic diseases
- tutorial activity on reducing potential for stress: making effective intercultural social contact
- intercultural health communication activity on seeking medical information
ALTC Priority Project (2011 - 2012)
Internationalisation at Home:
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

- “Internationalisation” a priority for Australian universities, but interpretations are variable among Australian academic staff (Stella & Liston, 2008).
- “Intercultural” perspectives and skills are particularly hard to grasp, but fundamental to an internationalised curriculum (Leask, 2008).
Development of Intercultural Competence (Freeman et al., 2009)

- Lack of literature on “how to”.
- Cognitive understanding insufficient for enhancing academics’ and students’ attitudes and skills.
- One existing practical resource for actively developing IC is EXCELL.
Academics’ Need for Professional Development

- Multiple challenges in teaching diverse students and engaging multicultural classes (Ho et al., 2004).
- Teachers can benefit from strategic training and support, including the development of diversity KAS (knowledge, attitudes and skills) – to reflect on and internationalise their outlooks (Kulik & Roberson, 2008).
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).
• Targets the development of 6 generic social competencies that many find challenging in accessing and negotiating across cultures:
  - Seeking information or help
  - Making social contact
  - Participation in a group
  - Refusing a request
  - Expressing disagreement
  - Giving feedback
The Alliance Building tool (a strategic approach to facilitating a multicultural group) aims to validate participants’ original culture and build safety and encourage sharing 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.

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.
Project Plan 2011 and 2012

- Guided by an action research cycle framework of Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting.
- Phase 1 (Dec 10 to Feb 11): Planning.
- Phase 2 (Mar to June 11): Stakeholder consultations and analyses.
- Phase 3 (June to Sept 11 – Business, Dec 11 to Mar 12 – Health): Design, conduct, and evaluation of professional development for teachers.
Project Plan (cont.)

- Phase 6 (Mar to Nov 12): Documentation of pedagogy and curriculum resources.
- Ongoing dissemination and Phase 7 (Oct 12 to Jan 13): Showcases on project completion.
Findings to Date

- Regardless of disciplinary area and whether educational or practice setting, the development of key generic social competencies is important for communicating across cultures.
- Applied psychology curriculum as a natural setting for embedding intercultural competency development.
For Further Information

- Contact Anita.Mak@canberra.edu.au
References


References (cont.)

