Embedding the Development of Intercultural Competence in the Psychology Curriculum

APS National Conference in Canberra, Oct 4 -7, 2011

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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 boundries

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 4 (Aug 11 to Aug 12 – Business, Mar to Aug 12 - Health): Learning circles, implementation, and teacher outcomes.

- Phase 5 (Nov 11 to Sept 12): Evaluation of student experience and learning.

- 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

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