

This is a self-archived version of the original publication.

Reference:

Renfors, S-M., 2019

Internationalization of the Curriculum in Finnish Higher Education: Understanding Lecturers' Experiences, Journal of Studies in International Education pp. 1-17. Copyright

© [2019] DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315319888464>

Internationalization of the Curriculum in Finnish Higher Education: Understanding Lecturers' Experiences

This qualitative study presents an example of the internationalization of the curriculum (IoC) in a non-English speaking country, Finland, by including the lecturers in the debate. The topic is highly relevant, since IoC is becoming a focus area in Europe, and internationalization has been identified as an area in need of improvement in the Finnish system of higher education. The findings demonstrate that many lecturers are familiar with the meaning of IoC, but its implementation is highly dependent on the priorities at the institutional level. The lecturers can incorporate inclusive curriculum content and perspectives of the future profession in their teaching, but they do not have competencies, resources and tools to adapt their teaching styles to an international, culturally diverse teaching and learning environment. Thus, IoC in Finland calls for the establishment of a new program design culture supported by the institution with the focus on international and intercultural learning outcomes and assessment practices.

Keywords: internationalization of the curriculum, higher education, teaching practices,
Finland

Introduction

Interest in internationalizing the curriculum in terms of global citizenship education has increased in parallel with the employability agenda (Clifford & Haigh, 2018).

Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC) provides graduates with the skills, knowledge and attitudes they need as citizens and professionals in making positive and ethical contributions to their global, national and local communities (Leask, 2011). In other words, IoC has a higher purpose than the graduates' employability: it promotes the welfare of the future world and tackles its most serious problems (Clifford & Haigh, 2018).

IoC in higher education is not a new concept, but it is hard to conceptualize. It is interpreted diversely, and it is even harder to operationalize (Leask & Bridge, 2013; Ryan, 2013). An 'international' university has widely been understood in terms of the recruitment and support of international students, and little attention has been paid to what it means for curriculum development (Clifford, 2009). There is no clear vision or understanding of what the desired outcome should be like, and how this can be achieved in practice (Dunne, 2011). IoC is more often rhetoric and accidental than reality and clearly intended (Reid & Spencer-Oatey, 2013; Svensson & Wihlborg, 2010). As Whitsed and Green (2014) point out, IoC is a concept that remains poorly understood.

Lecturers control the curriculum by defining its formal aspects as architects. They select the content and design and manage teaching, learning and assessment arrangements (Leask, 2011; Leask & Bridge, 2013). They represent the group of employees most deeply affected by internationalization and are at the heart of internationalization processes (Green & Whitsed, 2015b; Tange, 2010). Therefore, they have to be among the cosmopolitans of the 21st century (Sanderson, 2008). However, the lecturers may not always understand the meaning of IoC or be able to design and deliver an internationalized curriculum. IoC is a complex, planned and systematic process, which is as much about whom and what lecturers teach as it is about how they teach (de Wit & Hunter, 2015; Haigh, 2002; Leask, 2001). Because IoC requires a shift in the content and style of teaching, the lecturers still frequently ask, 'What does it really mean for me and my classroom?' (Jones & Killick, 2007, 2013; Leask, 2013; Tange, 2010).

Additional studies are required to get a better insight of the key tenets of the curriculum as an aspect of internationalization in higher education especially from the lecturers' viewpoint. Thus, the aim of this study was to enhance understanding of IoC in higher education by including the voice of lecturers in the debate. The research question was, 'How do the lecturers experience IoC personally at the teaching practices level in higher education?'

This study presents an example of IoC in the context of professional higher education, i.e. in the universities of applied sciences (UAS) in Finland, a country, which is a full member of the European Higher Education Area. A great deal of the literature on IoC comes from Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, i.e. from countries, which have diverse, multicultural populations and significant numbers of international students. Internationalization has always been understood in different ways in different countries (Knight, 2013), and this study brings forward a perspective of a non-English speaking country in the European context. This context with its specific features poses a unique set of challenges related to IoC.

Perspectives of the Internationalization of the Curriculum

The most cited definition of internationalization is that by Knight (2004, p. 11): Internationalization is the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education. Knight (2004) noted that the terms international, intercultural and global are intentionally used as a triad, as together they reflect the breadth of internationalization. International is used in the sense of relationships between and among nations, cultures or countries, whereas intercultural is about relating to the diversity of cultures that exist within countries, communities and institutions and global is about providing the sense of a worldwide scope (Knight, 2004, p.11).

The definition of Knight (2004) has also received critique. In particular, Sanderson (2008) argues that the definition concentrates on organizational level approaches and does not include the within-institution level, i.e. the level of the individual lecturer or the level of the faculty or department. There is a gap in the literature on internationalization as it applies to lecturers in higher education settings (Sanderson, 2011). Accordingly, the organizational definitions and concepts cannot be used effectively to assist lecturers in internationalizing their personal and professional outlooks (Sanderson, 2008).

One of the first definitions of IoC was by Knight and de Wit (1995). They suggested that an internationalized curriculum with international orientation in the content is aimed at preparing the students for performing professionally and socially in an international and multicultural context, and it is designed for domestic students and/or foreign students (Knight & de Wit, 1995, p. 14). According to Clifford (2009, p. 135), IoC can be defined as curricula, pedagogies and assessments that foster 1) understanding of global perspectives and how they intersect and interact with the local and the personal, 2) intercultural capabilities in terms of actively engaging with other cultures, and 3) responsible citizenship in terms of addressing differing value systems and subsequent actions. The most widely accepted definition of IoC in higher education is that by Leask (2015, p. 9): IoC is the incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum in terms of learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and the support services of a study program.

IoC is closely connected with the body of literature on the Internationalization at Home (IaH). Knight (2004, p. 20) defined IaH as the creation of a culture or climate on campus which promotes and supports international and intercultural understanding and focuses on campus-based activities. A more recent definition by Beelen and Jones (2015, p. 69) suggests that “IaH is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into a formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments”. In other words,

IaH refers to a systematic integration of international and intercultural perspectives into a curriculum and thereby making its elements available for all students (Weimer, Hoffman, & Siivonen, 2019).

Research on IoC is still relatively underdeveloped. Studies on higher education curricula have been scarce and studies on IoC in higher education are even rarer (Leask & Bridge, 2013). The previous studies have investigated differences in the lecturers' disciplinary understanding (Clifford, 2009; Sawir, 2011) and their engagement in IoC (Green & Mertova, 2016). In particular, the studies have explored single disciplines through case studies, as according to Leask and Bridge (2013) approaches to and interpretations of IoC vary across disciplines. In most cases, the studies have presented practical examples of how the curriculum is internationalized focusing on degree programs provided by higher education institutions in English-speaking countries. Many studies have been implemented in soft sciences such as business (e.g. Crosling, Edwards, & Schoeder, 2008; Wamboye, Adekola, & Baldwin, 2014) and health education (e.g. Law & Muir, 2006; Nagarajan & McAllister, 2015). In addition, Green and Whitsed (2015a) published a wide collection of narrative accounts and critical perspectives on curriculum internationalization in the fields of business, education and health.

Further, previous research has emphasized the overall curriculum design related to IoC beginning with its goals and nature. Kitano (1997) proposes a model for course change in multicultural education with three levels of change (exclusive, inclusive and transformed) and four components (content, instructional strategies, assessment and classroom dynamics). Kitano's framework was also used by Clifford and Montgomery (2015) to explore the university lecturers' perceptions of transformative learning as well as the possibilities for moving towards a transformative approach with the goal of a global citizen in IoC.

The most comprehensive attempt to conceptualize IoC was made by Leask and Bridge (2013) who presented a conceptual framework for IoC at the discipline level. The framework

focuses on IoC as a vehicle for preparing graduates for life in a globalized world (Leask, 2015). The conceptual framework (Leask & Bridge, 2013) situates the disciplines and the team of lecturers, who construct the curriculum, at the center of the internationalization process. The bottom half of the framework is concerned with the layers of context (institutional, local, regional, national and global), which create a set of conditions influencing the design of an internationalized curriculum. The top half of the framework is concerned with curriculum design and identifies its three key elements: requirements of professional practice and citizenship, assessment of student learning and systematic development across the program with all students developing intercultural and international knowledge, skills and attitudes.

As Leask and Bridge (2013) argue, lecturers cannot make and implement decisions around IoC alone. The design and enactment of the curriculum is a social practice (Green & Whitsed, 2013). Teams must come to some agreement about what students are expected to be able to do as graduates, and team members need to know their part in assisting students to achieve these goals (Leask, 2013, p.111). It is important to consider the degree program in a holistic way and to provide support for the practical issues of IoC at the degree program level (Clifford, 2009; Leask, 2013). In addition, the institutional context influences the decisions the academic staff make in relation to IoC (Leask & Bridge, 2013).

Internationalization of the Curriculum in Finnish Higher Education

The context of this study consists of a Finnish UAS and its lecturers with their background in various disciplines. The topic is highly relevant, since the internationalization of the curriculum is becoming a focus area in Europe, and internationalization has been identified as an area in need of improvement in the Finnish system of higher education. Awareness of the significance of IoC is increasing in Finland, since the Finnish society and its labor market are becoming

more diverse and international, and Finland is engaged in a multipolar, global higher education community (cf. Weimer et al., 2019). As a result, IoC has been emphasized in the most recent international strategy for Finnish higher education and research by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017). According to this strategy “students graduating from Finnish higher education institutions should have the ability and willingness to be involved in international and multicultural environments and understand diversity, global challenges and the principles of a sustainable society” (ibid.). A current example of the increased interest in IoC is a recent study by Weimer et al. (2019), which investigates the present state of internationalization at home in Finnish higher education institutions and which was commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The significance of IoC has not been recognized in different contexts previously, i.e. in European and Finnish higher education policies and strategies for internationalization. In general, internationalization has been understood as consisting of the presence of international students on campuses, teaching in English and promoting student mobility (Laitinen, 2015; Weimer et al., 2019). This conception is partly the result of the Europeanisation of higher education (Teichler, 2004), i.e. the move to the economic and political integration by horizontal mobility and cooperation (ERASMUS), which has been one of the drivers for internationalization. Consequently, both IoC and IaH and their integration into the curriculum, degree programs and classroom practices have been left in the hands of the lecturers. In other words, higher education institutions have not emphasized their importance by providing support structures, resources, strategies and action. (Laitinen, 2015; Weimer et al., 2019)

The selected UAS has 6,000 students, of whom about 220 are international degree students and 130 international exchange students. Some English-taught programs (ETP) in health and welfare and business administration have already been running for 20 years. Recently, the strategic focus has been on establishing new English-taught programs in the fields

of engineering and services as well as the fields mentioned previously. In total, there are seven English-taught bachelor's and four English-taught master's degree programs. In addition, boosting education export and expanding in international markets are considered increasingly important.

Methodology

An interpretivist paradigm was applied in this study, since the aim of the research was to gain deep and rich understanding of the lecturers' experiences of IoC. The core premise of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is socially constructed (Thanh & Thanh, 2015), and the main aim of the paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Applied to educational research, this paradigm enables researchers to construct rich understanding of the experiences of the lecturers and of the cultures of classrooms and institutions they work in (Taylor & Medina, 2011).

Conducting unstructured interviews was considered the best method of data collection, since it enables access to and exposure of the lecturers' inner experiences, perceptions, attitudes and feelings of reality. The researcher selected the interviewees, and 10 interviews were conducted in January-March 2018. The selected interviewees included the lecturers representing various disciplines in the institution. They taught in the degree programs or courses offered in English for students from Finland and other countries worldwide. In addition, they taught in the parallel courses and degree programs offered in Finnish. Some of the selected lecturers also acted as curriculum coordinators or teacher tutors.

The interviews included the following themes related to IoC at the teaching practices level: 1) the lecturers' perceptions about IoC in their institution, 2) the lecturers' perceptions about IoC in their degree program, and 3) the lecturers' perceptions about IoC from the

perspective of their course design and delivery. The participants were given considerable control and freedom to talk and describe the meanings they related to IoC during the interviews, and some even referred to the interviews as therapy sessions. However, the researcher generated questions in response to the context and moved the conversation in a direction of interest for the researcher. The duration of each interview was about an hour. The interviews were carried out until the received information reached a saturation point, which is one of the standard criteria for qualitative data gathering.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. It is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting themes and patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, thematic analysis involved the generation of themes capturing important meanings in the data, which were related to the research question. An inductive coding approach was used for analysis to discover themes. Inductive analysis is a data-driven process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

First, the interviews were transcribed and reviewed several times. The initial codes identifying interesting features and repeated themes in the data were generated. Extracts from individual transcripts were copied, and the codes were collated in a separate computer file. The codes were then organized into potential themes, and all the relevant data extracts were collated within the themes. The following stage involved the identification of the relationships between codes, themes, and different levels of themes. The themes were reviewed and refined. The validity of individual themes was considered in relation to the data set. The essential features of the themes were defined, and the themes were named. Each theme was compared to the others to avoid overlapping. All four themes capturing an important element of the way in which lecturers experience IoC is described in the result section with further context provided by illustrative quotes from the interviews.

Findings

Four major themes describing the lecturers' personal experiences of IoC in teaching practices emerged from the data. The lecturers expressed these themes repeatedly, and they made similar statements about them. Each theme was named by using content-characteristic words as follows: 1) IoC as teaching students with different national and cultural backgrounds, 2) IoC as developing international and intercultural perspectives of the future profession, and 3) IoC as managing cultural diversity in the classroom, 4) IoC as systematic development and coordination.

IoC as Teaching Students with Different National and Cultural Backgrounds

The theme *IoC as teaching students with different national and cultural backgrounds* refers to receiving students from other countries who have various cultural backgrounds to study in the Finnish higher education institutions and offering them English-taught programs. According to the lecturers, not all international students are similar but they form highly heterogeneous groups. Their national and cultural background varies significantly, and several lecturers stated that it is difficult to define who actually is an international student. However, the interview data show that there is a consensus among the lecturers that a crucial element of IoC is the presence of students with different national and cultural backgrounds in the degree programs.

We want to get a specific number of non-Finnish students in our degree program.

We can't assume that we have only Finnish speaking students, if we want to be international. (Lecturer 1)

Each student group has students with Finnish parents who have never lived in Finland. In addition, there can be some Jing Zhangs (students with Chinese background), who were born in Finland and have lived here all their life. There are also students who have no prior ties to Finland. There is a whole spectrum of various students. (Lecturer 6)

Furthermore, the findings show clearly that the role of language is pivotal in IoC in Finnish higher education institutions, because a prerequisite for receiving students with different national and cultural backgrounds is to offer degree programs in English. However, many lecturers emphasized that simply providing a program in English is insufficient for it to be considered an internationalized curriculum. According to the lecturers, this fact was not fully understood at the institutional level, which adds challenges to their work.

International education is understood as a translation of a Finnish program into English in this organization. However, language is a minor factor and changing the language does not make the degree program international. (Lecturer 2)

It does not work that way that you just say let's change the language. Translating the content into English does not help either. This might be a bit extreme but sometimes a degree program with tuition in Finnish can include more international content than a fully English-taught degree program. (Lecturer 5)

IoC as Developing International and Intercultural Perspectives of the Future Profession

The second theme *IoC as developing international and intercultural perspectives on the future profession* refers to the incorporation of international and intercultural course content, often in cooperation with other higher education institutions, to develop the students' ability to work in international and intercultural contexts. According to the lecturers, it is essential for the students to understand the profession and its practices and context from an international and intercultural perspective. They should understand how these different aspects of the profession are structured in different countries and interpreted through the cultural lenses. The lecturers recall that the students should possess international and intercultural know-how and understand how professional knowledge is produced and utilized globally to be able to become employed in international tasks and international work settings:

The know-how should cover more than just Finnish practices. The students should be familiar with the field in other countries as well to understand that there are great differences. It is necessary to think carefully what the students are educated for and where they will be employed. (Lecturer 9)

Cultural competence should be included in all degree programs today. It is necessary for each student to understand what it means to be for example a Finn and what kind of baggage it provides you. One needs to become aware of how Finnishness works in my life. (Lecturer 7)

International cooperation and networks are an essential resource and have a significant role in incorporating international and intercultural content in the courses. For example, projects with international enterprises, case studies, online lectures, joint online courses and business simulation games are planned and implemented with international partner universities.

Furthermore, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), European Commission's Directive of Recognition of Professional Qualifications and sectoral directives in the European Union regulate education and the content of the curriculum. Their implementation is discussed in common European networks.

There exists a directive at European level on what a degree program should include. However, its interpretation varies considerably in different European countries. This interpretation is an idea of what the profession is like to which we train our students. (Lecturer 3)

There are students from three different universities from three different countries in my courses. They make assignments together online. These assignments have been developed in cooperation in our European network, and they include cases to be studied together. (Lecturer 6)

IoC as Managing Cultural Diversity in the Classroom

The theme *IoC as managing cultural diversity in the classroom* refers to addressing cultural differences in teaching and learning styles and increasing cultural understanding by effective and appropriate communication. Many lecturers recognized that students from different nationalities and cultures have a very different perception and understanding of how teaching and learning are carried out. However, they admitted that they do not adapt their teaching styles accordingly and attempt to take every student's learning style into consideration during a

course. Instead, the lecturers stressed the need to orientate the students into the teaching and learning styles used in Finland and unlearn the way they have studied before arriving:

Any international group has not defined my teaching method. The orientation must go in the way we implement tuition here. They have to be prepared. The outlook on how studying is carried out is completely different. (Lecturer 7)

Individualism (cf. Hofstede, 2001) is especially valued in the Finnish teaching and learning environment. The lecturers described studying in Finland as less structured than in many countries, since mandatory attendance is not required of the students, and higher education institutions offer self-study courses. The courses include independent studies, and the instructions on assignments are not necessarily very detailed. In addition, teaching and learning is practice-oriented, and the lecturers implement industry cases in knowledge acquisition with different stakeholders. Thus, the lecturers expect the students to be autonomous and self-directed:

People from other parts of Europe expect more lectures. In Asian countries, learning by heart is very common and practical tasks are new for Asians. It is problematic that in Finland we expect people to do a lot independently. (Lecturer 1)

Furthermore, many lecturers emphasized the role of effective and appropriate communication in intercultural situations. They called for more competencies in understanding the cultural differences in communication styles and mentioned frequently that interaction and discourse patterns vary between different cultures. One of their main concerns was how to engage students in discussion and how they express their individual thoughts and opinions, because

nationalities and cultures collide within the classroom. In fact, some lecturers had experienced conflicts between students from different nationalities and cultures. The lecturers recognized especially the conflicts occurring between the host and international students. They experienced that it is sometimes difficult particularly for the Finnish students studying in their own country to acculturate in a multicultural group of students:

Cultural differences are apparent among students. There are traits of bullying and even racism. We Finns should understand that not everyone acts in the same way as we, and that is extremely difficult. (Lecturer 9)

Some lecturers said that it is therefore necessary to engage the students in multicultural group work, which was considered as a means of providing the students with more cultural understanding and preventing conflicts. It encourages dialogue between the international and host students, and they can explore multicultural perspectives in the classroom:

It is absolutely necessary to have group discussions and group work in order to understand other cultures. (Lecturer 3).

IoC as Systematic Development and Coordination

The theme *IoC as systematic development and coordination* refers to the emphasis placed on the development and coordination of IoC in different contexts, mainly at the degree program and institutional level. Indeed, many lecturers experienced that IoC requires systematic development and coordination across the degree program. However, the lecturers highlighted

that there is discrepancy between the management's understanding of IoC as a concept and how it can be achieved in practice. For example, the instructions on curriculum development work provided by the organization do not pay attention to IoC:

I have not recognized any references to the internationalization of the degree program at the organizational level. The instructions on curriculum development are common to all degree programs, and there are no specific instructions on developing international programs. (Lecturer 6)

There is little understanding of the internationalization of the curriculum in the organization. It is not brought up in discussions in order to consider what it means from the perspective of teaching. It is well developed in the strategy but no procedures are made to consider what it means in the implementation of the curriculum and in teaching practice. (Lecturer 7)

According to the lecturers, there is no systematic development and coordination or a common insight and discussions, because the management does not provide resources to support them. Lack of resources made the lecturers describe their work as 'voluntary work' or 'charity work'. They voiced concern about limited resources, which hinder pedagogical development and experiments:

There's not much time to discuss how to design the curriculum. We have grown to internationality, but we don't have time to think about it. Consideration of contents and its relevance to the profession takes all the available time. (Lecturer 8)

There has been no time to internationalize the curriculum. So, teaching international groups is done in the same way as teaching Finnish groups. Therefore, the implementations of the courses are similar. (Lecturer 3)

Consequently, the findings demonstrate that the lecturers' understanding of and approach to IoC did not represent a shared culture at the degree program level. There was no shared understanding of IoC in the degree program as a whole, since the lecturers mainly talked about their own teaching in the interviews, i.e. designing and delivering their single courses.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed at enhancing understanding of IoC in higher education by focusing on the lecturers' personal experiences at the level of teaching practices. It adds a perspective of a non-English speaking institution and country in the European context into the research. In summary, four major themes emerged from the data: 1) IoC as teaching students with different national and cultural backgrounds, 2) IoC as developing international and intercultural perspectives of the future profession, 3) IoC as managing cultural diversity in the classroom, and 4) IoC as systematic development and coordination.

The findings show that many lecturers considered IoC to be a wider concept than simply providing an English-taught program. They incorporated course content, often in international cooperation, to develop the students' international and intercultural perspectives of the future profession. Many of them had detailed understanding of the need to address cultural differences in teaching and learning styles and to increase cultural knowledge by effective and appropriate communication in the classroom. In their opinion, systematic development and coordination of IoC is necessary and significant.

The lecturers definitely emphasize inclusive curriculum content and perspectives of the future profession in their work. They incorporate alternative perspectives through materials, readings, visiting lecturers, work-related projects and students' experience. These findings correspond with previous studies (e.g. Ferencz, Maiworm, & Mitic, 2014) according to which English-taught programs in Europe usually include tailored contents to prepare the students for international professions. This might be due to the heightened focus on facilitating employability and the standardization of study programs and degrees in Europe in order to provide equal qualifications to the European students. The emphasis on contents may also be attributed to the context of this research, as it was implemented in professional higher education with a strong work-related orientation.

In summary, the findings reveal that there are two important shortcomings in IoC in Finnish higher education. First, lack of understanding of IoC at the institutional level has a major impact on teaching practices. As Leask (2015) stressed, the development of international and intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes is influenced by institutional priorities. As it is now, IoC is more or less accidental. In other words, it is not developed systematically nor coordinated at the degree program level because of obstacles at the institutional level. This, in turn, has an effect on the purposeful and structured integration of IoC, in particular, in terms of the learning outcomes and assessment. Second, there were challenges caused by differences in teaching and learning styles. However, the lecturers did not have competencies, resources and tools to adapt their teaching styles to an international, culturally diverse teaching and learning environment, but they rather expected learners to adapt to a monocultural, inflexible environment. In spite of this, they also integrated transformative teaching methods (cf. Kitano, 1997, Clifford & Montgomery, 2015), e.g. action-oriented projects, opportunities for personal participation and methods centering on empowering the students in their courses. However, it

is likely that they use the same methods both in a monocultural and in a culturally diverse teaching and learning environment.

According to Weimer et al. (2019), the lecturers assume that IoC refers to offering degree programs in English, teaching in English, and using English material in the curriculum. The findings of this study go beyond the report of Weimer et al. (2019) and show that many lecturers in fact are aware of IoC, especially, when they work closely with international and intercultural groups of students. However, its implementation in practice depends on how its meaning is perceived at the other levels of the context.

These findings are in line with the previous findings by Leask & Bridge (2013) who concluded that different layers of the context have an essential influence on the lecturers' daily work. Most national strategies in Europe predominantly focus on mobility, which implies that far greater efforts are still needed to incorporate IoC and its learning outcomes as a means to enhance the quality of education (de Wit, Hunter, & Coelen, 2015). According to Melin et al. (2015), the mindset in the system and the institutions in Finland must be better internationalized. The findings of this research correspond with those of Weimer et al. (2019) which show that there is a lack of strategic and coherent insights, and a comprehensive approach is needed to embed IoC in strategies and practices all the way from the national level to the individual student level. In order for the higher education institutions in Finland to take advantage of the potential of IoC, it is necessary to follow the recommendations made by Weimer et al. (2019) and include IoC indicators in institutional performance agreements and financing.

As a result, one of the main challenges of IoC in the Finnish context is to move beyond the traditional approaches to internationalized learning outcomes. This analysis shows clearly that IoC calls for a direct focus on international and intercultural learning outcomes, and it should be linked to assessment practices to make it clear what competencies are measured. In practice, it is evident that planned assignments, e.g. group work are not effective in that sense

that they are not necessarily linked to assessment and learning outcomes. In line with previous studies (Leask, 2011; Leask & Bridge, 2013), the findings suggest that learning outcomes need to be well planned, managed and monitored within the degree structure in order to acquire the required skills, knowledge and attitudes progressively. The international and intercultural learning goals must be articulated clearly and the achievement of high-level learning outcomes must be supported, assessed and assured. These requirements are also supported by the recommendations for future directions in the internationalization of higher education in Europe (de Wit, Hunter, & Coelen, 2015). More attention should be paid on international and intercultural learning outcomes as important elements in the curriculum.

It is of utmost importance to redesign existing curricula to embed the elements of IoC in the learning outcomes and teaching pedagogy and to implement measurement tools to assess the international and intercultural competences at the degree program level in Finnish higher education institutions (cf. Weimer's et al. 2019). At the teaching level, as suggested also by Weimer et al. (2019), it is also important to assess the lecturers' international and intercultural competences for IoC to flourish. In order to accomplish this, the lecturers need more support and training.

In other words, careful planning is a prerequisite for the development of international and intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes in an internationalized curriculum across a program. However, lack of program design culture is a common problem (Carroll, 2015; Leask & Bridge, 2013). As suggested by Ryan and Hellmundt (2003) lack of time, tight budgets and heavy workloads are the key constraints in teaching practice when internationalizing the curriculum and pedagogy. A holistic approach to program design requires changes in pedagogy and assessment. Therefore, the establishment of a new program design culture supported by the institution could be the key in designing and delivering an internationalized curriculum and in removing the constraints.

Certainly, there were differences in understanding IoC in different disciplines. This was demonstrated especially in different ways of integrating the international and intercultural perspectives of the future profession in the content of the courses in hard and soft sciences. However, the purpose of the study was to explore how the lecturers working in a certain institution experienced IoC, regardless of their discipline. It is also important to point out that although the research was conducted in a non-English speaking country and institution, the focus was on IoC due to its increasing emphasis at the national and European level and not on English as a medium of instruction, English proficiency or language problems and policies. However, it should be acknowledged that one of the main aims of policy makers, institutions and lecturers in implementing English-taught programs is to internationalize the education on offer in their institution and country.

The results of this study are limited to a single institution in Finland. Future research at other universities might prove to be important in expanding understanding of the topic, in particular, due to the dual system in Finland. Since differences exist in objectives and functions between the universities and UAS, it would be interesting to conduct the same study in a university to explore if there are differences also about IoC. In addition, the European Higher Education Area continuously makes countries and institutions more compatible and strengthens their quality assurance mechanisms. Although national differences are great, it might be an important area for future research to perform a comparative analysis of IoC between different European countries.

References

- Beelen, J., & Jones, E. (2015). Redefining Internationalisation at Home. In Curaj, A., Matei, L., Pricopie, R., Salmi, J., & Scott, P. (Eds.), *The European higher education area: Between critical reflections and future policies* (pp. 59–72). Switzerland: Springer.

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Carroll, J. (2015). *Tools for Teaching in an Educationally Mobile World*. Abingdom: Routledge.
- Clifford, V. (2009). Engaging the disciplines in internationalising the curriculum. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 14(2), 133–143.
- Clifford, V., & Haigh, M. (2018). Internationalisation of the curriculum comes of age. *University World News*, Global. 23 Nov 2018.
- Clifford, V., & Montgomery, C. (2015). Transformative learning through internationalization of the curriculum in higher education. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 13(1), 46–64.
- Crosling, G., Edwards, R., & Schroder, B. (2008). Internationalizing the curriculum: The implementation experience in a faculty of business and economics. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 30(2), 107–121.
- de Wit, H., & Hunter, F. (2015). Understanding internationalisation of higher education in the European context. In European Parliament (Ed.), *Internationalisation of Higher Education* (pp. 41–58). Study. Policy department B: Structural and cohesion policies.
- de Wit, H., Hunter, F., & Coelen, R. (2015). Internationalisation of higher education in Europe: Future directions. In European Parliament (Ed.), *Internationalisation of Higher Education* (pp. 273–287). Study. Policy department B: Structural and cohesion policies.
- Dunne, C. (2011). Developing an intercultural curriculum within the context of the internationalisation of higher education: Terminology, typologies and power. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 30(5), 609–622.

- Ferencz, I., Maiworm, F., & Mitic, M. (2014). Traits and daily operation of ETPs. In Wächter, B., & Maiworm, F. (Eds.), *English-taught programmes in European higher education: The state of play in 2014* (pp. 63–97). Bonn: Lemmens Medien GmbH.
- Green, W., & Mertova, P. (2016). Transformalists and transactionists: Towards a more comprehensive understanding of academics' engagement with internationalisation of the curriculum. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 11(3), 229–246.
- Green, W., & Whitsed, C. (2013). Reflections on an alternative approach to continuing professional learning for internationalization of the curriculum across disciplines. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 17(2), 148–164.
- Green, W., & Whitsed, C. (Eds) (2015a). *Critical Perspectives on Internationalising the Curriculum in Disciplines: Reflective Narrative Accounts from Business, Education and Health*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Green, W., & Whitsed, C. (2015b). Introducing critical perspectives on internationalising the curriculum. In W. Green & C. Whitsed (Eds.), *Critical perspectives on internationalising the curriculum in disciplines: Reflective narrative accounts from business, education and health* (pp. 3–22). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Guba, E. & Lincoln. Y. (1989). What is This Constructivist Paradigm Anyway? in *Fourth Generation Evaluation*. London: Sage Publications, 79–90.
- Haigh, M. (2002). Internationalisation of the curriculum: Designing inclusive education for a small world. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 26(1), 49–66.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Cultures consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Jones, E., & Killick, D. (2007). Internationalisation of the curriculum. In E. Jones & S. Brown (Eds.), *Internationalising Higher Education* (pp. 109–119). Abingdon: Routledge.

- Jones, E., & Killick, D. (2013). Graduate attributes and the internationalized curriculum: Embedding a global outlook in disciplinary learning outcomes. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 17*(2), 165–182.
- Kitano, M. (1997). What a course will look like after multicultural change. In A. I. Morey & M. Kitano (Eds.), *Multicultural course transformation in higher education: A broader truth* (pp. 18–30). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization remodeled: Definition, approaches, and rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 8*(1), 5–31.
- Knight, J. (2013). The changing landscape of higher education internationalisation—for better or worse? *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education, 17*(3), 84–90.
- Knight, J., & de Wit, H. (1995). Strategies for internationalisation of higher education: historical and conceptual perspectives. In H. de Wit (Ed.), *Strategies for the Internationalisation of Higher Education. A Comparative Study of Australia, Canada, Europe and the United States of America* (pp. 5–32). Amsterdam: European Association for International Education.
- Laitinen, M. (2015). Finland. In European Parliament (Ed.), *Internationalisation of Higher Education* (pp. 85–96). Study. Policy department B: Structural and cohesion policies.
- Law, K., & Muir, N. (2006). The internationalisation of the nursing curriculum. *Nurse Education in Practice, 6*(3), 149–155.
- Leask, B. (2001). Bridging the gap: Internationalizing university curricula. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 5*(2), 100–115.
- Leask, B. (2011). Assessment, learning, teaching and internationalisation—engaging for the future. *Assessment, Teaching & Learning Journal, 11*, 5–20.
- Leask, B. (2013). Internationalizing the curriculum in the disciplines—imagining new possibilities. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 17*(2), 103–118.

- Leask, B. (2015). *Internationalizing the Curriculum*. London: Routledge.
- Leask, B., & Bridge, C. (2013). Comparing internationalisation of the curriculum in action across disciplines: Theoretical and practical perspectives. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 43(1), 79–101.
- Melin, G., Zuijdarn, F., Good, B., Angelis, J., Enberg, J., Fikkers, D. J., & Zegel, S. (2015). Towards a future proof system for higher education and research in Finland. *Publications of the Ministry on Education and Culture, Finland*, 11.
- Ministry of Education and Culture. (2017). *International strategy for higher education and research 2017–2025*. Retrieved 18.8.2019 from <https://minedu.fi/en/international-strategy-for-higher-education-and-research>
- Nagarajan, S., & McAllister, L. (2015). Integration of Practice Experiences into the Allied Health Curriculum: Curriculum and Pedagogic Considerations Before, during and after Work-Integrated Learning Experiences. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 16(4), 279–290.
- Reid, S., & Spencer-Oatey, H. (2013). Towards the global citizen. Utilising a competency framework to promote intercultural knowledge and skills in higher education students. In J. Ryan (Ed.), *Cross-Cultural Teaching and Learning for Home and International Students* (pp. 125–140). New York: Routledge.
- Ryan, J. (2013). Introduction. In J. Ryan (Ed.), *Cross-Cultural Teaching and Learning for Home and International Students* (pp. 1–12). New York: Routledge.
- Ryan, J., & Hellmundt, S. (2003). Excellence through diversity: Internationalisation of curriculum and pedagogy. In *17th IDP Australian International Education Conference* (pp. 21–24).
- Sanderson, G. (2008). A foundation for the internationalization of the academic self. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(3), 276–307.

- Sanderson, G. (2011). Internationalisation and teaching in higher education. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 30(5), 661–676.
- Sawir, E. (2011). Academic staff response to international students and internationalising the curriculum: the impact of disciplinary differences. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 16(1), 45–57.
- Svensson, L., & Wihlborg, M. (2010). Internationalising the content of higher education: the need for a curriculum perspective. *Higher Education*, 60(6), 595–613.
- Tange, H. (2010). Caught in the Tower of Babel: university lecturers' experiences with internationalisation. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 10(2), 137–149.
- Taylor, P., & Medina, M. (2011). Educational research paradigms: From positivism to pluralism. *College Research Journal*, 1(1), 1–16.
- Teichler, U. (2004). The changing debate on internationalisation of higher education. *Higher Education*, 48(1), 5–26.
- Thanh, N., & Thanh, T. (2015). The interconnection between interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods in education. *American Journal of Educational Science*, 1(2), 24–27.
- Wamboye, E., Adekola, A., & Baldwin, A. (2014). Internationalising business education curriculum in a 'flat world': the scope and constraints. *International Journal of Trade and Global Markets*, 7(2), 99–115.
- Weimer, L., Hoffman, D., & Silvonen, A. (2019). *Internationalisation at Home in Finnish Higher Education Institutions and Research Institutes*. Publications of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland 2019:21.
- Whitsed, C., & Green, W. (2014). What's in a name? A theoretical exploration of the proliferation of labels for international education across the higher education sector. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 18(2), 105–119.