Developing Intercultural Competence in University Staff:

Augmenting Internationalisation

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Abstract

The primary aim of this research was to consider the benefit of providing professional development in intercultural competence for general staff at Deakin University. While the question arose from a disparity identified in the University policies, the importance of this consideration was highlighted in an impending audit to be conducted by AUQA, in which internationalisation was a key theme.

In this pilot study, a range of professional staff members across Deakin University was interviewed to identify their strengths, weaknesses, aspirations and expectations on professional development in intercultural competence. Some recommendations were made about how to offer such training.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In 2011, Deakin was one of several universities preparing for their Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) Cycle 2 audit. Internationalisation was one of two specific themes selected by AUQA for in depth review during this audit. This research was focussed on one specific aspect of internationalisation - the importance of intercultural awareness and competence in university staff.

In response to the impending audit, critical self-reviews were conducted across the University. During these reviews, an hiatus in the provision of staff development in intercultural communication became evident. One of Deakin's core commitments was to have "an international outlook" (Deakin University, 2011a, p.3), and one of the strategies to achieve this goal was to provide "professional development programs for staff to enhance their ability to work in an international environment" (Deakin University, 2011a, p.18). This is where the gap emerged because it was found that there was no identified training offered to staff in the area of intercultural competence. Hence, during the self-reviews, the question "Are appropriate training and development programs in place (for general and teaching staff) on cultural inclusivity, sensitivity and diversity?" was highlighted for review, and became an identified gap in the achievement of Deakin's strategic goals.

Thus, the investigation into providing targeted professional development in the area of intercultural competence to support the University's goals in relations to internationalisation was the basis for this research. This study sought to ascertain whether such a program should be offered, how it should be offered and whether the staff of the University perceived the need for such a program.

The scope of the research was limited to general staff; and the study was confined to the aspect of internationalisation that concerns intercultural competence. The research posed the following questions:

- What views were held by general staff on the nature of an adequate professional development program in intercultural communication that would be relevant to developing the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes required by University staff?

- What issues bear on the question of whether such a program should be compulsory for staff across the University?

1.2   Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this research was to consider the benefit of providing professional development in intercultural communication for general staff at Deakin University. While the question rose from a disparity identified in the University policies, the importance of this consideration was highlighted in the impending audit to be conducted by AUQA, in which internationalisation was a key theme.

The study began with a review of the research into internationalisation in the higher education sector. It examined Deakin's commitment to internationalisation and "an international outlook", and considered the need for a professional development program in intercultural competence to be introduced for offer across the University for all general staff. Discussion incorporated the findings of a two-month research project surveying the attitudes of general staff across the Divisions and Faculties at Deakin University to ascertain their perspectives on internationalisation and whether such a program should be established.

The key objective of this research was to address the identified gap in Deakin's internationalisation strategies in relation to intercultural competence. The research would identify and provide a recommendation for a program of professional development to be offered that would equip staff with skills in practical culturally pluralist forms of interaction.

In order to allow a deeper examination into participants' understanding of the research questions, and to gauge the importance they placed on the issue of training in intercultural competence, the following questions were extrapolated from the key objectives and formed the interview questions:

- What is the meaning of internationalisation?

- What are the University policies around Internationalisation at Deakin?

- What training programs in intercultural communication are currently provided for University staff at Deakin?

- In what sense is a training program actually required to develop intercultural communication skills in university staff?

- What views are held by general staff on the nature of an adequate professional development program in intercultural communication that would be relevant to developing the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes required by University staff?

- What issues bear on the question of whether such a program should be compulsory for staff across the University?

2   DEFINING INTERNATIONALISATION

Knight (2004, p.9) proposed a broad working definition for the internationalisation of higher education as "the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution."

This definition implies an important link between the international and intercultural, and suggests that they are important aspects of a whole institution approach to internationalisation. Many other definitions similarly connect the international/intercultural aspects, bringing together the functions of the university to encompass a whole, binding culture, or purpose. For example, Yang (2002, p.83) states:

> "internationalisation means the awareness and operation of interactions within and between cultures through its teaching, research and service functions, with the ultimate aim of achieving mutual understanding across cultural borders."

In recent years, the concept of internationalisation has been firmly embedded in higher education institutions. Today, one has only to examine myriad of university web pages to understand the way internationalisation has become deeply embedded in university policies, which feature international, intercultural and global aspects. The following are examples of statements that appear on a random selection of university websites:

Monash University (2008) is committed "to providing curricula and assessments that foster understanding of national and global perspectives." The University of Southern Queensland (USQ) (2009) states that internationalisation "involves the integration of global perspectives into the design, development and evaluation of programs and courses". USQ also draws in the importance of curriculum design embedding "values, culture and intercultural understandings" and states that both domestic and international students "are encouraged to develop the skills to engage globally."

Macquarie University (2011) makes the international/global link by providing internships across all faculties allowing students "to study and experience global issues from multidisciplinary perspectives", in order to prepare them for life as a "global citizen". Curtin University (2010) refers to "seeking to prepare staff and students for life in the global community" and to integrate "an international and intercultural perspective into all activities, including research and development, teaching and learning, and management policies and systems." And, Flinders University (2009) promotes "expanding opportunities and benefits for students, staff and our communities to engage in a global society."

Similar goals are demonstrated in all of these statements. They draw together the international (global) and the intercultural into a curriculum that prepares students to be global citizens. They aim to create an awareness of diversity, culture and an intercultural outlook with the inclusion of international experiences for students. There is no doubt that universities have made the link between the international and the intercultural.

However, while the statements do relate very strongly to Knight's definition, broadly embedding an international and intercultural dimension into all aspects of university life, the one thing that appears to be missing is professional development for staff in the area of intercultural awareness. The reason why it is crucial in this setting is because there is nowhere in the university where anyone does not interact with people from other cultures.

Programs are required to broaden staff socio-cultural consciousness, and affirm positive views of students from diverse backgrounds. They should aim to train staff to adapt their communicative style and identify barriers to successful communication; to understanding cultural differences and systems. Emert & Pearson (2007, p.68) empahsise this in the following statement:

> "Intercultural competence is a key goal of internationalisation because it indicates an awareness and understanding of culturally diverse others and situations, as well as the presence of behaviours that promote productive and effective communication among and across cultures."

3   AN INTERNATIONALISED UNIVERSITY

Foremost in the considerations of many Universities when formulating their policies around internationalisation is undeniably the important link between the international, the intercultural and the global. However, many researchers agree that there is no consensus on a definition for the term. While Yang (2002, p.81) identifies internationalisation as an "emerging as a research area of its own," Knight & de Wit (1995, p5) state that there is no "simple, unique or all-encompassing definition" of internationalisation. Yang (2002, p.81) continues that "it has mostly occurred in a rather *ad hoc* and incremental fashion, with policy and reflection often occurring after the fact." This has been noted in

the varying definitions of internationalisation put forward by universities.

There is much conjecture on the lack of understanding about the term, or a common definition, but the rapid movements in globalisation, the extraordinary increase in international student numbers over the last decade and the focus of AUQA have created much activity in universities.   As noted earlier, most universities include statements about services for international students; an internationalised curriculum; research partnerships; transnational programs; promotion of student exchange, internship and language programs in their strategies for internationalisation.

Briguglio (2006, p.1) cites research that there are 'weak' views of internationalisation which are aligned mainly with marketing and recruitment of international students. Or, as Yang (2002, p.82) proposes, the term is generally understood in terms of "categories or types of activities". Briguglio (2006, p.2) also cites a 'strong' view, that is linked to internationalising the curriculum.   This research has shown that it is narrow to state that activities such as marketing and recruitment of international students; international partnerships; transnational programs and other such programs are "weak" because taken together as a whole approach, they contribute to internationalisation and to universities providing a world class education and being recognized and participating in the international arena. The result of these activities equips and enhances the experience of students and prepares them to be global citizens.   A further benefit is the cultural enrichment that can be shared between the international and domestic students and staff when they bring their culture and experiences with them and share.

Internationalisation should be understood as a "culture" embedded into the institution where all the services , programs, research and teaching come together in all functions of the university. An internationalised curriculum has a duty of care not only for students, but also for the staff. All of the activities are equally important to provide an education and the knowledge on how to operate in a globalised world for domestic and international students; to the academics who teach them, and to the professional staff who have dealings with them.

Rizvi & Walsh (1998, p.10) highlight the importance of intercultural communication as a key indicator of the success of universities' internationalisation strategies in the following statement:

> "One of the ways in which it is possible to determine the manner in which Australian universities conceptualise the idea of internationalised curriculum is to look at their professional development programs, designed to enable staff to explore the issues of diversity and intercultural relations."

So the gap in all of these activities is in the development of skills of intercultural competence, for all staff and all students. This is the key to an internationalised curriculum, drawing all activities together.

3.1   Drawing it all together: the need for a comprehensive approach

Through internationalisation**,** universities must embed an international and intercultural perspective

into their structures and functions.   Leask (2007) pointed out that an internationalised curriculum must include:

> "A campus environment and culture which obviously motivates and rewards interaction across culture for all students and development of skills and attitudes in all students and staff that facilitate cross-cultural communication both inside and outside class
>
> - Through the curriculum
>
> - Through extra-curricular activities
>
> - Through services
>
> - Through staff development
>
> - Through leadership"

The intercultural/international element is clearly visible in internationalisation strategies. For students, the intercultural elements could be the enrichment of cross cultural understanding for both international and domestic students by encouraging interaction between them. Intercultural elements for staff include links with overseas institutions and with culturally diverse colleagues and students to share views, and enrich workplace experiences. Cross cultural awareness can be embedded into the curriculum through language and culture programs, overseas experiences and within graduate attributes. Research can include international conferences, workshops and seminars with cross cultural and international themes; international research partnerships and collaborations and hosting international delegations.

4   METHODOLOGY

Seventeen people were interviewed for this pilot research. Given the nature of the research, only a relatively small number of people were qualified to be interviewed, the aim was to have representation from the faculties and each of the divisions. As such, purposeful selection rather than random sampling was most appropriate (Peräkylä, 2008). Such non-random interviewing depends on networks, connections and recommendations from pre-known individuals to others relevant to the research in order to capture the key complexities of each local situation (Odendahl & Shaw, 2001).

Participation was voluntary and interviews were conducted during February and March 2011 at the Melbourne and Geelong campuses.   Participants were drawn from the following areas of the University: Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Rural and Regional); Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International and Development); Division of Student Life; Division of Student Administration;

Marketing; Faculty of Arts and Education (Schools and Divisions). Three (3) staff who participated had studied at Deakin – one (1) domestic and two (2) international.

It was seen as important to engage a wide range of general staff even if they were not directly working with international students. Their roles could instead require preparation of written communications or course material, dealing with telephone enquiries, meeting overseas visitors or corresponding with overseas partners. These and many more scenarios would require knowledge of the basic tenets of intercultural communication. It was also considered important that staff often move within and across Universities and different positions have different levels of requirement in cross cultural settings.

The benefit of this research to staff was that they had input into recommendations about an issue that directly affected them. Since the staff had self-nominated, it was clear that they had a common interest in the discussion, and exploration of their knowledge, background and experiences would be key to the next steps in the research.

5   EMERGING THEMES

Internationalisation

Awareness of the University's goals in relation to internationalisation appeared to have become more prominent in the minds of staff across the University because of the impending AUQA audit. While respondents may not have been aware of the exact wording of the University's goals, they were informed about the activities around Internationalisation at the University, whether through their own roles or through general interest.

However, whether Deakin, or any university, has addressed what it is that attracts international students, and what are their needs was forcefully argued by one participant who suggested that they are being provided with what is perceived as their need. This interviewee suggested that "their interpretations of our goodwill could be quite offensive", and further that:

> "What we've lacked in Australian education here is we haven't addressed the product – the person themselves. We've gone about all the niceties about how we should be anti-racist and this is how we should talk to people and address their names, but a lot of it is that we don't know much about where these students are actually coming from and what they're wanting to gain. Sometimes it's not education, hence in support areas staff have a very different approach because they have seen and heard so much, probably lecturers too……. it's not a culture thing, it is a concept of expectations".

> "We've come from a society which has had no wars here in Australia, we're very comfortable and we don't even think about what they've come from, and we expect them to think like us. We've

had it easy and we assume everyone else has had it relatively easy".

Professional Development

There was consensus during the interviews that apart from the Graduate Certificate of Higher Education (GCHE) and the Professional Development Program for Casual Academic Staff (PDCAS), there is nothing offered in relation to professional development for any staff member in the area of intercultural competence.   Interviewees were very motivated to undertake professional development in this area, and to encourage their staff (where applicable) to undertake it. The strength of positive opinion in relation to training is unquestionable and supported with the suggestions made that it should be part of the Performance Planning Review (PPR) process.

It was generally recognised that a progressive, internationally focussed university will need to ensure that staff are interculturally competent. The other implication around the activities around internationalisation is that they need to evolve and mature in order to meet the needs of the university, students and staff in the changing world.

Should all staff undertake PD in intercultural communication?

The strongest response to the question "should all staff undertake professional development in intercultural communication" was:

> "If we're going to meet the university goal, we need to do it [professional development in intercultural competence] and do it regularly."

There were participants who suggested that there should be a compulsory module introduced into the Induction program that is undertaken by all new staff members, and then there should be specific, relevant programs available to staff in particular areas. A recommendation from AUQA during the Cycle 1 audits regarding "embedding cultural awareness in staff induction and career development programs" concurs with this suggestion. (Stella & Liston 2008, p.55).

> "I think induction should include a mandatory base level [training], we all want to be working together. After that, specific programs available to people in specific areas. Also to bear in mind that people at this University sometimes people move from one area to another, it should be ongoing training, every couple of years, a bit of an upgrade, freshen your thinking."

Staff were all keen to have some professional development provided in the area of intercultural competence, but there was underlying agreement that it should be relevant and appropriate to their areas. As one participant noted, "I don't just want to talk about one culture or another, I see culture as being not specific culture, but all cultures and opening up our minds to the differences and possibilities, and removing judgments."

Another commented that training "teaches you to very quickly identify where you are making assumptions and to then go and validate those; and that is the critical thing in intercultural interaction." This statement concurs with the research about culture that people bring their preconceptions to an interaction, which then strongly influences the outcome of that meeting.

One participant noted insightfully that it is difficult to identify those "things that are culturally bound in oneself when they are innate, but when you start to have an experience that is different, that can help you to start to identify those things in yourself". This was a direct link to the research that people are encultured into their frames of reference.

Should the training be compulsory?

Whether or not the program should be compulsory was a contentious issue. Some participants who were in managerial roles were strongly in favour of training and incorporation into PPRs. Others did not see it in the same way, believing that there should be some training, but more focused on their needs.

The word "compulsory" was treated with caution by a few participants who expressed the view that an online introduction would be useful, with the modules available to be done at any time by staff. Their view was that only staff that have significant contact with international students should have targeted workshops where people could share their experiences, and maybe even involve students.

There was agreement that staff needs would differ, and targeted programs across the divisions and faculties would be more beneficial. This could be done by bringing in external facilitators, and as one participant noted:

> "I think it should be something that is done compulsorily, but better to be done on a local level where you are working with your team. If it was run within DSL [Division of Student Life] we would get more value out of it if it was tailored to our needs. Because what we do is very different to faculties, what DSA [Division of Student Administration] does is very administratively focused, we are more about the holistic experience of the students so I think that yes, it needs to be done. Blended works, but face-to-face is the best, and doing it at a local level where it is tailored for your group is much more beneficial than leaving it up to the individual."

It was noted that while Deakin International Student Advisors accessed training externally, and that this is beneficial as it provides them with the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and skills by connecting with staff from other Universities who may have different viewpoints and experiences. However, it was considered that it would be of benefit for the University to offer some basic training, even to bring in facilitators for their teams.

Should the professional development be face-to-face, online or blended?

"Online courses – it is just you and a set of questions. You lose so much, no tone, no gestures."

There was very strong consensus that this kind of training requires a face-to-face approach and that it is more meaningful having discussions in a group session "it broadens peoples' minds." The general feeling from the interviews was that the participants favoured face-to-face interactions where they could discuss and debate some of the issues that tend to be contested in the community.

Participant responses also indicated scepticism that online resources would be valuable as a single resource without any other training being provided, and there was doubt that staff would look for, value or use the resource. In group sessions people can discuss experiences, share knowledge and establish skills in communication to become more aware of issues that play a part in cultural value systems and learn how to interpret situations and consider cross cultural encounters in a more informed way.

Should the program be widely advertised?

The responses indicated that training modules should be tailored for the needs of various staff. However, it would benefit the University's profile if the online induction program and other online resources could be updated and advertised widely.

6   RECOMMENDATIONS

A summary of the suggestions put forward by the participants is shown in Table 1 below. While they did not recommend a single module or program, the variety of ideas reflected the varying needs of staff across the university that would be relevant to their roles. The recommendations also highlighted the need to continue to identify various ways to incorporate training in intercultural awareness into training modules, and the interest of the staff to undertake any training that might be made available.

Table 1

Suggested course/module	Content	Who will deliver?	Compulsory? Yes or No?	Who should undertake it?
Induction module for all new staff, academic and general	Profile of Deakin staff and student population; overview of Australian culture	Human Resources Division, add-on to the current induction	Yes	All new staff – academic and general
Online program	Extension of the Induction Program. Can include: information on culturally inclusive practices, discrimination, culture shock and specific information on various religions. Will require regular updating.	Access and Equity	No, but well promoted by Access and Equity	Available for anyone who wishes to undertake it. Should be promoted during Induction.
Basic greetings in Asian Languages	Culturally appropriate greetings including forms of address; politeness strategies; pauses, gaps and silence. Could be extended to include other languages.	Human Resources Division similar to the "Working with Asian Names" course	No, but well advertised by Human Resources Division	All staff, but particularly useful for staff in Library, Customer Service, Student Support, student Life and Deakin International
International and Domestic Students views on their experiences	Interviews with international students to ask about their expectations and general experiences. Similar views to be collected from domestic students. Could be included in the online program.	Access and Equity	No, but well advertised by Access and Equity	Available for anyone who wishes to undertake it. Should be promoted during Induction.
Programs delivered for staff in Faculties and Divisions.	Tailored to the needs of the area.	Access and Equity, external sources	Yes. Some participants thought it was important enough to be included PPRs.	Should be delivered regularly for staff in Schools and Divisions.
International Experiences for General Staff	More opportunities for funding for general staff to access relevant international study experiences	Funding will be required, but source was not discussed.	N/A, but opportunities do need to be made available.	Staff who can propose a worthwhile activity that contributes to the aims of internationalisation.

7   DISCUSSION

The most salient aspect of this research was that the University formally identified, in its AUQA Performance Portfolio, that there was a gap in the provision of professional development in intercultural competence to staff.

The literature and the results of the staff interviews concur that effective intercultural communication is critical as the world becomes more globalised and universities continue to expand their international populations. The provision of an intercultural program for general staff is important to enhance their ability to work in an international environment by developing:

- a more evolved sense of their own culture, and how it affects their thinking and actions

- a deeper understanding of cultural diversity, social justice, understanding and respect

- competence to interact appropriately and effectively with people from other cultures

- the skills to become self-aware, reflective and have a readiness to accept and adapt to cultural differences

The link between the international and intercultural dimension which featured in Knight's definition emerged strongly in the participants' responses. Equally important was the aspect of international and domestic students learning from each other and preparation of a curriculum that teaches students that Australia is not isolated, and that it has a place in the world and a responsibility to the global community. Some comments included:

 "Internationalisation is an attitude, a set of behaviours recognising the global community and the different cultures, attitudes and perspectives are in that. So it covers everything, not just recruitment, welfare services. It is driving a global perspective in terms of our graduands and to some extent underpinning Australia's role in the community of nations."

"[for] international students, internationalisation is about being able to study in Australia and apply their degree globally. For domestic students it is having a good understanding of global and cultural issues. Curriculum that is focused so that they can take up opportunities anywhere in the world. "

There was resounding focus on the global dimension of internationalisation in the statements below which referred to students being able to "apply their degrees globally, "and to have an understanding of conventions in other cultures."

"Internationalisation is an organisation opening itself up to an understanding of the people that are within its body and coming to an understanding of what that group needs, how we relate, breaking down the barriers borders for a greater awareness of who is around us and what is happening around us. Internationalisation is

opening us up to how we can better cater for our place in the world in terms of our understanding of how other processes, people and cultures work."

"It is not just about [international] students, but about the whole world. People from other cultures being treated in an equitable manner. Increasing interactions and collaborations between countries."

The research identified that there are resources available at the University, but that there is no specific professional development offered for staff to equip them with the required skills, or to assess if and where it may be required.

While staff at Universities live in a multicultural country and interact in a diverse social setting, it does not follow that they embrace, or completely understand the ideals of multiculturalism. When expanding the meaning of multiculturalism beyond the descriptive sense, not everyone can be forced to accept, tolerate or understand others. Those who were interviewed will most certainly be ambassadors in their areas for intercultural competence training. However, the impetus, or the push has to come from somewhere. Participants agreed strongly that the "push" should come from the University, and indeed pointed out that intercultural communication is key to the University's internationalisation goals because it:

"makes us more aware, it is going right back to the actual basics, if we don't get it about others around us and those we are teaching you are not starting off from a very good base. By having that awareness, you can cut through a lot of the issues that don't need to come up, you are making yourself more open to seeing someone else's perspective. I think it's more just being in a better place to be able to work with or teaching with the people you are with, as opposed to be surprised as to why they answer or don't answer in a certain way."

"Even in our day-to-day dealings where we have visitors from other cultures, it is being aware of their culture and being able to respond and act in a way that is appropriate to their culture. That is a gap because sometimes we don't know that."

There is no doubt that Deakin is committed to an "international outlook" but it has been established that to be effective, internationalisation approaches must include an intercultural component. If the goals of the University are to prepare global citizens, and to be responsive to local and global challenges, then implementation of training in intercultural communication and understanding is one way to address these issues. It can foster cooperation and improve the international profile of the institution, expand income generation, and collaboration in teaching and research. As Rizvi and Lingard (2010, p.173) state "in a global economy, cultural understanding and an "international outlook" are important for all – not just students."

Staff, both general and academic, need to remain engaged with global issues in order to provide a current, relevant and responsive curriculum. Internships, study tours, exchange are as important for staff as they are for students to promote cross-cultural awareness and understanding.

Internationalisation is not simply providing a service for international students.   Their increased numbers certainly provide the impetus for the creation of an inclusive and intercultural curriculum; but it is critical that all staff have the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge to contribute to this learning.

The world is changing and moving rapidly and the importance of universities responding through an internationalised curriculum is paramount because that is where learning and the acquisition of knowledge occur. In the future there will be more demand for graduates who can interact with people from different cultures and be aware and respectful of their social conventions, norms and values. The graduates who will be in demand are those who are knowledgeable about world events; and whose cultural intelligence is sophisticated enough to transcend the cultural capital they carry with them. As one of the participants noted, many people make "unconscious common assumptions thinking that your view is universally true."

In conclusion, a pertinent and telling comment from one of the participants is probably the strongest reinforcement for a professional development program to be offered:

> "it is ironic and it is a big gap because all universities say that we need to encourage students to assimilate into the local culture at the university, which is fine, it is a good thing because students tend to sometimes congregate in their own cultural groups and then they don't necessarily learn to mix with other cultures and the local environment, but at the same time we are asking students to do that but we ourselves the people who work here don't necessarily understand their culture, so perhaps in trying to assimilate students we are not actually doing it in the right way, or we're not actually thinking about the issues that are important, like even in the way that they study and write and learn is quite different culturally to domestic students".

The point of the statement is that staff need training to be able to understand the needs of students, but interestingly proves its own point with the misuse of the word "assimilation". International students, or staff are not expected to "assimilate", a direct antithesis to multiculturalism where people are absorbed into a dominant culture. This is certainly not the view that Australia promotes to international visitors. The expectation is that students and staff are "encultured" into Australian life to enable them to understand the Australian way of life, the language and the values, so that they may participate fully as citizens. The bonus for all is learning about and sharing the rich experiences of others.

8   FURTHER RESEARCH

While the theory behind the value of a professional development program has been discussed at length, some staff may question the value of training for themselves, and they will all have different views and needs on the type of training they require, if any. It may relate to the amount of contact they have with international students, or to the belief that they already possess the relevant skills, or

that the external programs they attend are more relevant and beneficial. The interviews brought forth some interesting perspectives on these questions, and further, broader research would certainly be worthwhile.

Universities must continually question how they can prepare students to be global citizens. Some of this may be through visiting overseas universities to discuss and contrast their interpretations and understandings of internationalisation. They might investigate how overseas universities view international experiences and what their interpretations of a "global citizen" might be. De Wit (2011) has recently argued that:

> "the global knowledge economy will force more attention to be focused on the internationalisation of the curriculum, as the knowledge and skills of all our graduates have to reflect that they are able to operate in a more connected world."

So how will intercultural and international competencies be defined for students? These are all starting points for further research.

In the meantime, a good starting point in relation to the research presented in this paper would be to conduct the research again on a broader scale across the University to gain further views from general and academic staff.

Alternatively, there could be an attempt to conduct an action research, bringing together some of the participants in the interviews, and also other interested staff for a more in depth investigation of the responses. As McTaggart (1989, p.12) points out:

> "Participatory action research *starts small* by working on minor changes which individuals can manage and control, and working towards more extensive patterns of change. These might include critiques of ideas of institutions which might lead to ideas for the general reforms of projects, programmes or system-wide policies and practices"

The first *small* step has been completed in this pilot research. There is clearly the need for further investigation and more work can be done to investigate professional development that can be offered for staff. The results clearly indicate that there are staff who are willing and interested in further discussion.

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