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# The missing link in internationalisation: Developing the skills of lecturers

#### **Abstract**

This article explores the development of skills of lecturers for internationalisation at home. It discusses backgrounds and the current situation, but also suggests ways forward. These suggestions are made mainly on the basis of experiences in The Netherlands, one of the few countries outside the English-speaking world, where a body of literature is emerging that discusses the implementation of internationalisation at home. The insights generated by this research may benefit universities in other countries in continental Europe, where English is not the standard language of instruction.

#### Keywords

Internationalisation at home, professional development, teaching and learning, learning outcomes, The Netherlands

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### 1 Internationalisation at home in Europe: a fragmented field

During the 1990's, student mobility developed into the dominant tool in internationalisation of European higher education. However, this resulted in only a minority of students benefitting from an international experience. This limited impact of mobility explains to a large extent the emergence, in the late 1990's, of internationalisation at home, which aimed to provide internationalisation to all students. At a European level, internationalisation at home has commanded increasing attention which culminated in its inclusion in the educational policies of the European Union (2013). Its importance was also acknowledged in the European Parliament Study (DE WIT et al., 2015). That study reaffirms the shift from input to outcomes in international higher education and therefore stresses the importance of the internationalisation of learning outcomes. A revised definition of internationalisation at home, published in the same year similarly stresses the purposefulness of the international and intercultural dimensions of the curriculum as well as the focus on all students: "Internationalisation at home is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments" (BEELEN & JONES, 2015, p. 76).

#### 1.1 Different reception in European countries

While internationalisation at home found its way into European Union policies, it has been received quite differently in European countries. It was embraced at an early stage by the Nordic countries, The Netherlands and Flanders, with their relatively small populations and languages that are not widely spoken in a global comparison. By contrast, the concept was absorbed more slowly in countries with widely spoken languages, such as Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom and Ireland. The same is true for countries with minor languages in central Europe.

Differences with regard to internationalisation at home exist not only between but also within European countries. Belgium is a case in point. Universities in Dutch speaking Flanders were among the first to explore the possibilities of internationalisation at home, resulting in a conference as early as 2001. Universities in French speaking Wallonia have so far not developed an engagement with internationalisation at home. Even within cities, differences in engagement can be found. In Brussels, where European educational policies are made, the Dutch speaking universities are engaging with internationalisation at home while the French speaking do this to a much lesser degree.

The European Association for International Education (EAIE) has been instrumental in keeping internationalisation at home on the European agenda, through an expert community and a range of activities such as training courses, conference sessions and publications. However, participation in these activities varies considerably across Europe, which, again, reflects differences in engagement with internationalisation at home in European countries.

#### 1.2 Three indicators for The Netherlands

How participation in internationalisation at home differs across European countries, becomes visible in the case of The Netherlands. Three indicators will be discussed here. The first is the training courses for internationalisation at home that EAIE offers. While these are aimed at international officers and not at lecturers, it may be still argued that they indicate the interest in the topic in a particular country. Participants in the nine training courses that EAIE delivered between 2006 and 2014 (n=144), included 37 Dutch versus 3 German international officers (BEELEN, 2017, p, 125).

A second indicator for the different uptake of internationalisation between European countries with a major or minor language is the percentage of English Taught Programmes (ETP), although it should be remarked that delivery of education in English does not guarantee internationality. In 2014, The Netherlands delivered the highest number of programmes in English outside the United Kingdom and Ireland (1,078) closely followed by Germany (1,034) (WÄCHTER & MAIWORM, 2014, p. 6). This constituted 29.9% of Dutch higher education programmes versus a mere 1.5% of the total German offer.

A third factor demonstrates how practices in Europe differ from country to country. The Dutch context stands out as exceptional because of the professorships of internationalisation in universities of applied sciences. Currently, The Hague University of Applied Sciences, Stenden University of Applied Sciences, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences and Zuyd University of Applied Sciences have professorships and research groups focused on internationalisation. The Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences had such a professorship until 2014.

These professorships have generated a considerable body of research into the practice of internationalisation over a considerable number of years, with regard to supporting internationalisation, employability of graduates and the involvement of lecturers (e.g. DE WIT & BEELEN, 2012; WALENKAMP, 2010; COELEN, 2013). Other European countries do not seem, until now, to have developed initiatives similar to the Dutch.

#### 1.3 National policies for internationalisation at home

While some European countries have been engaging with internationalisation at home for over fifteen years, misconceptions are still found in their national policies. The policy of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2014) perceives internationalisation at home as an alternative for mobility and suggests that non-mobile students participate in an international classroom. The misconception here is first that, by considering participation in an international classroom equivalent to internationalisation at home, the international dimension is limited to a single semester instead of considering it an integral element of the entire curriculum. Second, the number of available international classrooms would simply not be enough to enable all students to have this experience.

A similar view can be found in Sweden, where internationalisation at home originated in 1999. There, the appointment of an advisor to boost internationalisation was motivated by the view that employability of graduates is enhanced through internationalisation, but that the low percentage of mobile students is problematic and needs to increase. This proliferates the view that internationalisation is primarily about mobility and that employability skills can best be learned abroad. Like in The Netherlands, internationalisation at home is considered primarily an alternative for those who cannot study abroad (MYKLEBUST, 2017).

These examples show how deeply rooted the association between internationalisation and mobility is. Mobility is still considered the norm, while we know it constitutes the exception. Conversely, we still fail to take the curriculum for all students as the starting point and consider mobility an extra option.

In addition to national governments, national agencies are also engaging with internationalisation at home. Nuffic in The Netherlands, DAAD in Germany, OEAD in Austria, SIU in Norway and CMEPIUS in Slovenia, have all undertaken activities to stimulate internationalisation at home, varying from doing research, delivering training sessions for lecturers and delivering seminars to producing guides for the implementation of internationalisation at home.

It is difficult to keep track of organisations and individual universities that are getting involved in internationalisation at home, but in the case of Germany, we see increasing activity through the Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (2017) but also through individual Universities such as the University of Göttingen and the Technische Universität Berlin.

#### 1.4 Related concepts and developments outside Europe

Internationalisation at home developed alongside concepts that are related to it or even show a large degree of overlap with it, such as internationalisation of the curriculum, global learning, education for global citizenship and campus internationalisation. Some of these are prominent in the United Kingdom, The United States, Canada and Australia, as discussed by BEELEN & JONES (2015). Internationali-

sation at home has also gained traction in South Africa and is increasing in Latin America, while it is largely absent in Asia. The fragmented field that is found in Europe thus reflects a fragmented field worldwide.

## 2 Shifting stakeholders in the implementation of internationalisation at home

The discourse on the internationalisation of the home curriculum has raised the question who, within universities, the key stakeholders in the implementation process are. Since internationalisation at home involves the formal and informal curriculum as well as incoming mobility and services, a wide range of stakeholders can be identified.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Global Survey reveals that 46% of the respondents consider the university's leadership the main internal driver of internationalisation while 28% considers that international officers mainly drive the process. Only 10% of the respondents assign the role of key drivers to lecturers (EGRON-POLAK & HUDSON, 2014, p. 55, Fig. C.7). This is in itself not remarkable since only 1% of the respondents in the survey were lecturers. Also, the question on internal drivers in the 4<sup>th</sup> Global survey related to internationalisation in general and was not specifically aimed at internationalisation at home. Yet, it is enlightening to review the roles of these three key stakeholders: leadership, international officers and lecturers, from the perspective of internationalisation at home.

#### 2.1 Leadership at work

The leadership of universities have seen the relevance of internationalisation at home. The majority of universities in The Netherlands have now included internationalisation at home in their policies. However, they have hardly developed strategies to implement or monitor these policies (VAN GAALEN & GIELESEN, 2016, p. 154). This can to some extent be explained by the fact that internationalisation of

teaching and learning is strongly determined by the discipline and needs to be developed within individual programmes of study.

However, a bottom up development not only requires top down policies but also top down support measures, such as structured professional development for the internationalisation of teaching and learning. While including internationalisation at home in university policies is quick and does not require resources, the same cannot be said about the development of structured support, which needs a clear vision on internationalisation at home, the availability of resources, the development of expertise and connection between relevant stakeholders.

#### 2.2 The international office: a traditional stakeholder

In many continental European Universities, international offices deal with a broad range of aspects of internationalisation in addition to mobility, such as policies, strategies and projects. At these universities, international officers have emerged as key actors in internationalisation at home, either because they themselves felt responsible for its implementation or because others expected them to take the lead. "Anything with the word international in it comes to us, so also internationalisation at home", as an international officer remarked.

A study of business programmes in Dutch universities of applied sciences (BEELEN, 2017) reveals that international officers are key players in stimulating internationalisation at home and keeping the topic on the agenda. These international officers, mostly operating at faculty level, are familiar with the concept, have resources and constantly explore possibilities to stimulate internationalisation at home with leaders, managers and lecturers. All this takes place in a situation in which the formal responsibility for internationalisation rests with individual programmes, since it is a component of the overall quality they need to demonstrate in order to be accredited.

At universities in the English-speaking world the situation is often different. There, the international office is mostly charged with mobility and recruitments task. In that setting, internationalisation of the curriculum has become the task of educa-

tional specialists, for example in teaching and learning centres or of others that work on educational development and innovation. However, even when educational specialists are involved, this does not mean that success is insured or that the process of internationalising learning outcomes for the home curriculum is smooth, as at least one public case demonstrates (BAMFORD, 2015).

#### 2.3 The ultimate stakeholders: lecturers

The prominent role of lecturers in internationalisation of home has been acknowledged for a considerable period of time (see e.g. VAN DER WENDE, 1997, 54). However, key obstacles to lecturers assuming their role have also been consistently mentioned for just as long. In 2008, Sanderson already called for internationalisation of the 'academic self'. The 4<sup>th</sup> Global survey (EGRON-POLAK & HUDSON, 2014) still identified the lack of involvement, expertise and skills of lecturers as the key obstacles to internationalisation, second only to lack of resources.

While this issue with the skills of lecturers is unmistakable, universities have been slow to develop strategies to address it. When professional development for internationalisation is available, this mostly focuses developing foreign language proficiency or creating intercultural awareness.

#### 2.4 Reconfiguring stakeholders

An unmistakable shift is taking place from mobility of students to the home curriculum and from input focused internationalisation to outcomes based approaches. But this shift is only slowly changing the involvement of stakeholders in universities. International officers, the traditional protagonists of mobility are, by default, also considered the key actors in internationalisation at home. On the other hand, educational developers, the specialists in curriculum development have hardly been involved in the internationalisation process. Involving them in internationalisation can be a decisive step in preparing and supporting lecturers. Rather than working themselves with a limited number of lecturers, international officers should focus

on developing training that benefits all lecturers and involves educational developers (see BEELEN, 2017b).

## 3 Current practices in developing the skills of lecturers for internationalisation

Professional development for internationalisation of teaching and learning is an emerging topic in the literature. Brewer and Leask (2012, p. 251) stress that its effectiveness depends on a deliberate process of staff development. They discuss a number of ways in which the skills of lecturers for internationalisation of the curriculum can be developed. First, lecturers can learn from international students or from home students who return from study abroad experiences. Second, they can become mobile themselves, study or teach abroad or travel with students. Third, they can participate in workshops and seminars that enable them to reflect.

#### 3.1 Relying on traditional instruments

Brewer and Leask consider mobility of lecturers an instrument to develop their skills for internationalisation of home curricula. The *Erasmus impact study* support this view. It considered the "star impact" of the Erasmus programme the effect of mobility of lecturers on internationalisation at home (EUROPEAN UNION, 2014, p. 148). The study reports that lecturers learn skills for internationalisation at home through mobility, but the respondents were the mobile lecturers themselves, which constitutes considerable bias. The study does not comment on the generally small volume of mobility. In Dutch universities of applied sciences, less than 1% of lecturers may be mobile through the Erasmus programme (BEELEN, 2017, p. 131).

Internationalisation at home received but little attention in the midterm evaluation of Erasmus+ for The Netherlands (VAN BEEK et al., 2017). That midterm evaluation is partly based on a survey, in which the respondents (the learners) indicated that they did not see a significant improvement in the quality of teachers through

Erasmus+. The corresponding item scored 2,77 on a scale of 5. Innovation in courses and teaching methods as a consequence of Erasmus+ scored slightly higher at 3,27 (p. 62, Table 9.7).

In addition to these indications of the limited impact of mobility of lecturers, a survey by the European Association of Universities, even revealed a negative aspect of it, namely, the creation of a division between mobile and non-mobile lecturers (SURSOCK, 2015, p. 72). This may refer to the fact that some lecturers are frequently mobile while others are not at all.

Therefore, there is little evidence that mobility of lecturers contributes in a meaningful way to the development of the skills of lecturers to internationalise teaching and learning.

#### 3.2 Missed opportunities

It may be argued that internationalisation still relies strongly on traditional mobility, while it is well known that mobility tends to set mobile 'elites' apart from the non-mobile majority, both for students and lecturers. At the same time, opportunities to reach these majorities remain unused.

This applies to the opportunity to integrate internationalisation of teaching and learning into existing professional development. The Dutch education system includes a provision for the structured professional development of the teaching skills of lecturers: The Basic Teaching Qualification Programme, which is compulsory for all lecturers in universities of applied sciences. The Programme aims to provide lecturers with the skills to design modules, teach them and assess student learning. The Programme includes a separate certificate on assessment, since that is considered the cornerstone of quality.

However, the Basic Teaching Qualification Programme hardly contributes to the development of lecturers' skills for internationalisation since that topic is largely absent in the Programme. Moreover, although English medium versions have been

developed for lecturers teaching in international classrooms, the teaching methodology taught do not address relevant aspects of international classrooms.

The Basic Teaching Qualification Programme, the only compulsory element of professional development, therefore fails to contribute to the skills of lecturers with regard to internationalisation. This is to a large extent determined by the fact that the educational specialists teaching the Basic Teaching Qualification Programme are participating in the educational discourse but have not been included in the debate about internationalisation of teaching and learning.

The reliance on mobility and failure to integrate internationalisation into existing training for teaching indicate that professional development for lecturers is not meeting the needs that have been generated by institutional policies for internationalisation of home curricula.

### 4 Ways forward in developing skills of lecturers

## 4.1 Emerging practices for professional development of lecturers

There are some examples of universities that have created dedicated professional development options for internationalisation. In The Netherlands, The Hague University of Applied Sciences stands out by developing a comprehensive programme.

The development of this programme has been fueled by an articulate and ambitious institutional policy for internationalisation, which aims to make The Hague University of Applied Sciences the most international university of applied sciences. This strong central policy provided the leverage for developing strategies and shows that top down university policies can make a difference. The active agent has been the department of external relations that aims to include its offer of pro-

fessional development in the regular structures of the university's teaching and learning centre, that so far has hardly been involved with internationalisation.

The professional development programme includes training for a range of stake-holders in internationalisation, including exchange coordinators and managers. The latter are assisted in developing a vision on internationalisation as well as policies and strategies for their programme. They are also encouraged to enroll their programme in the 'pop up clinic' for internationalisation. This consists of an integrated scan of the international and intercultural dimensions of the programme, including the way in which the programme prepares its students as global citizens. The clinic involves specialists analysing documents, interviewing stakeholders and providing recommendations, including suggestions for staff members to participate in the range of professional development options for internationalisation.

Professional development for lecturers in the programme is characterised by delivery in the context of individual programmes of study rather than having lecturers participate in training delivered at central level. Delivery of professional development within departments and programmes aims to stimulate discussion on programme specific internationalisation among lecturers and other stakeholders. This conforms to the 'imagination phase' in the framework of internationalisation of the curriculum, developed by LEASK (2012, 2015). Ultimately, the success of these options for professional development will depend on managers resourcing teams of lecturers to participate in them.

Within the training programme at The Hague University of Applied Sciences, a specific focus is emerging to train educational developers and the facilitators of the Basic Teaching Qualification Programme, as a way to ultimately reach all lecturers. This focus includes knowledge of the opportunities of the Erasmus+ programme for mobility of lecturers, particularly facilitating visits of incoming lecturers. However, the main area of attention is integrating internationalisation into learning outcomes and their assessment.

The Hague University of Applied Sciences is not the only university of applied sciences in The Netherlands that has developed structured professional develop-

ment options for internationalisation. Hanze University of Applied Sciences has developed an Advanced Qualification for Internationalisation, aiming to equip lecturers with the skills for internationalising their teaching. This approach is based on a matrix of lecturers' competences for internationalisation (VAN DER WERF, 2012).

Professional development of lecturers has opened up new avenues of collaboration between Dutch universities of applied sciences which has caused them to establish a Centre of Expertise for Global Learning, based on the professorships in internationalisation of education. The Centre aims to assist universities in building professional development options for internationalisation and to research the effectiveness of options.

#### 4.2 Other approaches

The approach at The Hague University of Applied Sciences is partly based on forming disciplinary spaces in which the international and intercultural dimensions of a programme of studies are developed with lecturers in an action research setting. This approach evolved both in Australia (LEASK & BRIDGE, 2013; GREEN & WHITSED, 2013) and in The Netherlands (DE WIT & BEELEN, 2012), in close collaboration between researchers and facilitators, who frequently found themselves in both roles.

Building on these experiences, it was subsequently found that in the context of Dutch universities of applied sciences, progress could be made by action research with lecturers, starting with a discussion of transversal skills of graduates and including the articulation of internationalised learning outcomes (BEELEN, 2017a, p. 231). Lecturers found this approach useful in overcoming semantic discussions on the meaning of internationalisation and instead focusing on its anticipated outcome: globally competent students. However, lecturers were found not to be familiar with looking at their programme in the light of transversal or employability skills and also experienced difficulties in articulating learning outcomes. Subsequent action research with lecturers therefore focused on these two issues.

The contribution by BULNES & DE LOUW, elsewhere in this volume, sheds further light on this process.

Another approach, that generated good results at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences was benchmarking learning outcomes with an international partner programme. Although this required careful preparation and intensive facilitation of the process, this intensive benchmarking led to increased insights into the learning outcomes of the programme and its modules (BEELEN, 2017a, pp. 165-168).

## 5 Key strategies to develop the skills of lecturers

In the first place, universities should develop a curriculum design culture (see CARROLL, 2015, pp. 103-104; BEELEN, 2017a, p. 63) that considers internationalisation of curricula as curriculum development, with lecturers as the key agents. This means connecting lecturers with two other key stakeholders: educational specialists and specialists in internationalisation. This implies a two-way process: involving teaching and learning specialists in the discussion on internationalisation of teaching and learning but also involving international officers as a partner in curriculum development. Programme managers, heads of departments and deans can be instrumental in connecting these stakeholders. A concrete and effective way to achieve this would be to make international officers and educational specialists full members of curriculum committees or curriculum advisory boards.

When universities want to stimulate the internationalisation of home curricula, they should focus on strategies that stimulate bottom up actions within individual programmes of study. This means that professional development should be offered within the context of individual programmes. Instead of sending lecturers away to a central training unit at the university, professional development should come to the programmes, where the 'imagining' (LEASK, 2012, 2015) will take place that will contextualise internationalisation and give it meaning within the discipline.

Programmes should benefit from the opportunity to benchmark the internationalisation of their learning outcomes with their international partners. This benchmark should go beyond the superficial comparisons that sometimes take place for accreditations. The key players in such a 'deep' benchmark should be lecturers, supported by educational developers and quality assurance officers. Such a benchmark can be the start of a continuous process of benchmarking by individual lecturers which then also serves to give added relevance to mobility of lecturers.

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