Distributed Leadership for Internationalization of the Curriculum: The Contribution of Professor Hiltraud Casper-Hehne

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As external members of the International Advisory Board at the University of Göttingen from 2018–2021, we were delighted to work with Professor Hiltraud Casper-Hehne and colleagues as they explored the meaning of, and strategies to implement, internationalization of the curriculum across the university. This chapter discusses the importance of leadership in this process, which was so well managed by Professor Casper-Hehne, as the former Vice President for International Affairs at the university and academic lead in the ENLIGHT European University initiative. We reflect on the key features of effective leadership in internationalization of the curriculum in universities today, based on over twenty years of research and scholarship on internationalization of the curriculum, and on how these features are evident in her work and its legacy.

Rationales for and approaches to the internationalization of an institution reflect a combination of political, economic, social-cultural, or educational drivers (cf. Knight; de Wit 1995) and are often unique to context in the way they are enacted. Geographical and geopolitical context, institutional mission, stakeholders, external drivers, and other factors all have a role to play in formulating and implementing internationalization policies and strategies. Regardless of context however, embedding internationalization into the institution's overall strategic plan emphasizes its importance as a core component of institutional identity rather than a peripheral activity. However, one of the most important and most challenging parts of the

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process of internationalizing a university is to internationalize the curriculum, because this is primarily the responsibility of academic leaders and teachers in the disciplines, supported as required by administrative staff and university leaders.

Academic leadership is critical and complex, requiring a range of advanced management and applied leadership skills in order to stimulate and support innovation, build networks and broker resources to ensure the delivery of high-quality courses to large numbers of students, and often includes monitoring the performance of staff and developing and managing colleagues. It is widely recognized that the primary allegiance of academic staff is their discipline community – within and beyond the university. This can make it challenging to engage them in university-wide initiatives that do not immediately resonate with them or their colleagues. This chapter explores the key success factors in leading and managing internationalization at a university-level, highlighting the strategic, operational, and cultural dimensions necessary for success. It also considers the learning and development needs of academic and administrative staff that may be required in order to support strategic objectives.

It has also been observed that senior leaders may focus more on articulating the vision and communicating the potential benefits and objectives of internationalization than on the more subtle complexities of senior academic leadership. Professor Casper-Hehne was not one of these leaders. She was importantly also focused on what internationalization of the curriculum meant for academic staff involved in program and course design, teaching and assessment as well as those involved in internationalization of the informal curriculum and the development of a supportive institutional learning culture. In our experience the latter is as essential as the former. Professor Casper-Hehne was highly skilled at identifying the strengths and potential of key staff to advance the institutional internationalization agenda while simultaneously building and sustaining constructive relationships with external international networks and internal actors and stakeholders (including through the composition of the International Advisory Board of which we were both members). In this way she advanced the institutional internationalization strategy of the University of Göttingen.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the meaning of internationalization of the curriculum in conceptual and practical terms, as part of a broader institutional internationalization strategy. It continues with a discussion of distributed leadership as an essential component of any institutional strategy focused on internationalizing the curriculum and concludes with a summary of some of the initiatives of Prof. Casper-Hehne that will have lasting impact on the university and its graduates.

1 Internationalization of the Curriculum

The most cited descriptions of the internationalization of higher education and its various forms (see for example Knight 1994, 2004, Hudzik 2011, de Wit; Hunter; Howard; Egron-Polak 2015) highlight the crucial importance of internationalizing the education function in the university. In the literature and in practice this may be referred to as Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC), Internationalization at Home (IaH) or indeed a combination – Internationalization of the Curriculum at Home. IaH and IoC developed, conceptually and in practice, in the early 2000s in parallel (although also at times in tandem). Their differences are largely a result of their origins. IaH grew out of concerns in Europe that both inbound and outbound mobility were insufficient to internationalize the majority of students' learning, and a pragmatic need to shift the focus of internationalization away from mobility and towards engagement with diversity in local communities. At first IaH was typically initiated and managed by administrative staff and specifically by definition excluded mobility programs. IoC on the other hand grew from the need, expressed by academic staff, to find better ways to respond to a rapid increase in the number of international students in classrooms, on campuses and in the community especially in the UK, Australia, and Canada. There were concerns about the quality of education provided to domestic and international students and the need to prepare an increasingly diverse student population for life as professionals and citizens in a rapidly globalizing world. IoC does not exclude mobility programs. However, scholars have emphasized the need to integrate the content and focus of such programs into learning at home for all students (cf. Leask; Green 2020).

In practice, the commonalities between IaH and IoC are in some part due to international discussions between scholars working in the field and the goals both shared. It is not surprising therefore that they are sometimes referred to together as IoCaH. In this chapter internationalization of the curriculum (IoC) is used to refer to a significant body of research and practice reported in the literature from the mid 1990's. By 2021 IoC had emerged as a significant field of study and practice in higher education. Prior to the turn of the century, scholarly discussion of the curriculum in higher education was rare and scientific studies of internationalization of the curriculum were even rarer. The term 'curriculum' was poorly understood in higher education outside Schools of Education where it was discussed extensively in relation to school education. The following discussion in this chapter recognizes the significant body of research focused specifically on IoC in higher education.

The concept of IoC in higher education is informed by educational philosophy and social theories including constructivism, experiential and integrative learning, progressive education, and cosmopolitanism. It is focused on the development of international and intercultural perspectives in all students to prepare them for life as citizens and professionals in a globalized world through course and program design and pedagogy, including content, teaching methods and assessment activities (cf. Leask 2009). By 2021, internationalization of the curriculum accounted for

78.6% of the total research published on international higher education (cf. Cuong; Lien; Nguyen; Giang; Lich; Nguyen 2024). Over this period studies conducted in 59 countries were published in the Scopus database, primarily in the global north, with Australia, the US, the UK, and Hong Kong being the most represented. However, research has also been conducted in the global south, in countries such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Malaysia, Mexico, Mozambique, South Africa and Vietnam. Led by scholars and practitioners in education and professional learning, research and practice has focused on course and program design and pedagogies to develop international and intercultural learning outcomes in all students in the formal and informal curriculum (in class and on campus). Leask's definition of IoC was the most cited internationally:

> Internationalization of the curriculum is the incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods, and support services of a program of study. (Leask 2015: 9)

Three important developments during this period were:

- the conceptualization of 'Internationalization of the Curriculum' (IoC) as both a process (of internationalizing the curriculum) and a product or output of that process (an internationalized curriculum) (cf. Leask 2009),
- identification and discussion of three different dimensions of the 'curriculum' – formal, informal and hidden (cf. Leask 2009, 2015),
- recognition of the internationalization of the student learning experience as an essential educational quality project of relevance to all students' development as human, social, and economic beings (cf. Leask 2023).

The importance of preparing graduates for a changing world has long been recognized, as can be seen in this quote from Webb (2005: 110):

> As part of their preparation to live and work in a globalizing world, graduates need increasingly well-developed lifelong learning skills and attitudes, including an international perspective. They need to interpret local problems within a wider and global framework and to judge the importance of global phenomena for their own lives and work. Internationalization of the curriculum therefore incorporates a range of values, including openness, tolerance and culturally inclusive behavior, which are necessary to ensure that cultural differences are heard and explored.

The body of research in IoC highlights the influence of national and institutional contexts on how the rationales and goals of IoC, such as these, influence disciplinary based interpretations of what it means to 'internationalize the curriculum'. It also

highlights that even very similar IoC goals may be 'labelled' differently and achieved in different ways, in policy and in practice, in different countries and in individual universities within a country. For example, in the US academics refer to 'internationalizing the campus' (which in other contexts may be called internationalization of the co-curriculum or informal curriculum). A range of terms are used in different universities across the world to describe their institutional commitment to the development of all graduates' professional knowledge and capabilities, generic ('soft' or transferable skills) and values required to be for example 'responsible global citizens' or display 'international perspectives as professionals and citizens'. How to do this has been the subject of research and scholarship on IoC.

The goal of 'global learning outcomes for all students' is also, almost always, presented as an indicator of the institution's commitment to providing a quality education in an interconnected, globalized world. Achieving such goals, whatever they are called, requires that faculty, teaching and learning staff, professional developers and student affairs staff will need to work together with academic staff and students across the entire university. Only in this way can it be assured that all graduates will achieve the described outcomes. In effect this means that internationalization is 'everyone's business' and cannot and should not be the sole responsibility of the international office, although that office has a significant role to play in providing support to the leaders and key actors in IoC.

Supporting those key actors across the university to contribute their full potential to IoC often requires changing traditional approaches to leadership of curriculum review and development and the? ways in which this is supported in the institution. It is often very difficult to recalibrate the way in which people have traditionally approached the internationalization of the education function of the university – away from mobility for a few, to the development in all students of the discipline and professionally-specific international and intercultural skills and knowledge needed to thrive in the world of today and to shape the world of tomorrow. It is essential that leaders of such an internationalization strategy recognize academic staff as the primary actors in the process of internationalizing the curriculum while also providing them with the support they need from other areas of the university, such as the teaching and learning unit, for example. When this happens new perspectives and possibilities rapidly unfold.

Today, new opportunities and possibilities for IoC are presented by activities such as COIL – Collaborative Online International Learning – and Virtual Exchange, enable greater access than traditional approaches to physical mobility. Increasing concerns around the creation of a global mobile elite, with only 2-3% of students on average being mobile even in wealthier countries, has seen COIL and Virtual Exchange being embraced widely in a diverse range of international contexts. These open up exciting possibilities, but also pose challenges for academics as well as support and technical staff. Examples of this kind reflect the need for leaders of internationalization across the entire university to be agile and innovative in their approach to internationalizing the curriculum and supporting experimenta-

tion and innovation. This in turn requires trust that leaders will support both; while being aware that not all experiments will work, they are still willing to support academic staff who are prepared to take and manage risk of failure.

2 Distributed Leadership for IoC

The above speaks to the need for 'distributed leadership' to be supported as part of the implementation of an institutional internationalization of education strategy. In a distributed model of leadership, decision-making and action is not the responsibility of any *one* group within the institution – whether that be the most senior leaders of the institution or staff of the International Office. Distributed leadership facilitates the delivery of an integrated form of internationalization which encompasses all aspects of the institutional mission (education, research, and service) with education being the most important if and when it is approached as a comprehensive process of quality improvement of teaching, learning and assessment across all programs of study. It is vital that this is supported by an institutional culture which expects, nurtures, and celebrates the development of international and inter-cultural perspectives across all aspects of university life; where diversity is seen as an opportunity rather than a challenge and there is a demonstrated commitment to learning, cooperation and innovation to address national and global issues, for the global and local common good.

In 2015, Leask found that in relation to curriculum internationalization, university senior leaders with responsibility for internationalization were most effective when they focused on connecting the internationalization strategy with the teaching and learning strategy and creating the internal conditions within which innovation in education could thrive. Successful strategies included, for example:

- setting the general direction and identifying leaders in different schools with the right set of skills and a commitment to internationalization,
- creating time, space, and opportunity for groups to meet, review, reflect, imagine and be creative as well as plan,
- facilitating and supporting interactions within the university and with other groups in other universities to discuss opportunities to share ideas and collaborate on IoC initiatives,
- clearly signaling their respect for and the value placed on the role of academic staff in the process of internationalizing the curriculum, through for example, recognition of successful innovation,
- establishing a communication system and processes by which the organization could learn and develop from the activity that was occurring through, for example, regular 'all staff' updates,

- demonstrating to academic staff, as well as others, that the IoC activity was valued by, for example, providing rewards in traditional 'academic' ways for their work to internationalize the curriculum, e.g., supporting research and publication in internationalization of the curriculum, sponsoring university-wide colloquia and instituting staff awards focused on achievements in internationalization of the curriculum.

3 The Importance of Professional Development

For academics, the importance of discipline teams or subject groups should not be underestimated. The primary allegiance of academic staff is most often their disciplinary tribe (cf. Clifford 2009). It is to this group that they will feel greatest loyalty and commitment. It follows therefore that the promotion and achievement of institutional goals will be largely dependent on the contributions of the disciplinary based academic staff. However, they may not understand what IoC means for their course and program design, for their teaching or for assessment. Professional development within and for individual disciplines specifically focused on internationalization of the course design, pedagogy and learning and assessment activities will have a greater likelihood of success if these allegiances are recognized through active support for distributed leadership within discipline teams.

Professional development for support and service staff across the institution will also be crucial if internationalization is to permeate all aspects of the organization. Examples of such roles include receiving international visitors, supporting curriculum delivery, working with international students, developing research partnerships and collaboration internationally, ensuring relevant Library and IT support, working with individuals who speak a range of first languages, and so on.

Programs in the informal curriculum include for example voluntary language lessons, workshops to develop student and staff intercultural skills, programs for staff to assist them in modifying their use of language for effective communication with non-native speakers, or voluntary work with refugee and migrant groups in the local community.

4 Internationalizing the Curriculum through Distributed Leadership at the University of Göttingen

An internationalization strategy which does not give sufficient attention to the leadership and development of staff is unlikely to achieve its aims (cf. Jones 2013). While international undertakings are undeniably important, so also are internal systems, processes, and strategies to internationalize the organizational culture.

In her role as University Professor of Intercultural German Studies and as Vice President for International Affairs, Professor Casper-Hehne has exemplified distributed leadership for IoC over many years. For example, she promoted pioneering research projects for the Eastern European and Asian regions. Her commitment has ranged from the initiation of the "Interkultur" project as part of the EU university program Asia-Link, to the founding of the German Chinese Institute for Intercultural German Studies and Cultural Comparison. Her achievements have been formally recognized in a number of ways including the European Association for International Education's 2015 Institutional Award to the University of Göttingen for Innovation in Internationalization. She has also been involved in various international committees, including the Board of the HERA Network, the Executive Board of the Coimbra Group, and the EU Ad-hoc Expert Group on European Universities.

Internally, within the university Professor Casper-Hehne has worked together with different faculties to develop an understanding of IoC that was both meaningful for their respective disciplinary culture and mindful of ongoing policy developments, thus resulting in a university-wide project seeking to connect IoC to research-oriented teaching, digitalization, and diversity-orientation. This project opened spaces for experimentation and learning and recognized faculty engagement with IoC. This resulted, for instance in, a Guide to IoC in the social sciences and natural and life sciences that can be used by other departments to create onboarding documents for new teachers. Other important activities and strategies include:

- ensuring that the university's Mission Statement for Teaching and Learning defines IoC in its unique context,
- implementing "Internationalisierungsbeauftragte" (persons responsible for internationalization) in the faculties as permanent positions which continue to meet as a network to discuss aspects related to internationalization. Even though their tasks and interests are quite diverse, this group continues to perform the role of champions and key actors in internationalization who actively support curriculum internationalization. This is an important strategy for ensuring the integration of IoCaH into faculties and the administration,
- lasting alliances have been formed between staff in the Student and Academic Services department, who support different approaches to IoC as part of consultation and training programs, and the International Office, Göttingen International,
- allocation of project funding for specialist staff such as an Instructional Designer in the Service for Digital Teaching and Learning group who has hours available to support virtual exchange; and a local IT developer for the University's European University Alliance that also reduces practical digital infrastructure barriers to virtual opportunities,

- the possibility for study programs to pursue a "profile criterion" to assess the internationalization of their curricula. Programs that choose this option will have discussion rounds focusing on curriculum internationalization, an internal board of evaluators from different faculties and external experts from the discipline, outside of academia as well as an external student to review the indicators.

Furthermore, Prof. Casper-Hehne has enabled a transfer from the IoC process and good practices into Göttingen's European Universities network ENLIGHT, where she is the University of Göttingen's academic lead, and the E+ ROCKET project on critical virtual exchange.

5 Conclusion

Operationalizing internationalization involves translating strategic goals into practical actions across the institution. The broad range of activities and processes involved can only be successful when leadership occurs at the relevant level and in the appropriate department, faculty, unit, or service center. Ramsden (1998: 4) argues that "leadership in universities should be by everyone from the Vice Chancellor to the casual car parking attendant, leadership is to do with how people relate to each other." As discussed above, the kind of integrated internationalization strategy outlined here means that everyone in the institution has a role to play.

Distributed leadership of this nature transcends traditional, hierarchical models by decentralizing authority and involving multiple individuals in leadership roles (cf. Spillane 2006). According to Harris; Jones; Ismail (2022), this approach underlines the multiple sources of leadership operating within any organization. It "implies a model of shared, collective, and extended leadership practice where the emphasis is upon interdependent interactions rather than individual and independent actions" (Harris et al. 2022: 439). It acknowledges that leadership tasks and responsibilities are best shared among various members of an organization and are more likely to be successful than leadership that is concentrated in the hands of a single leader or a small group of leaders (cf. Gronn 2002).

One key benefit of distributed leadership is its potential to increase engagement and motivation among staff (cf. Leithwood; Mascall; Strauss 2009). When individuals feel empowered to take on leadership responsibilities, Harris; DeFlaminis (2016) argue that they are more likely to be invested in the organization's success. Additionally, this approach can foster a more inclusive and supportive organizational culture, as it values diverse perspectives and encourages collaboration across different levels and departments (cf. Harris 2008).

Spillane (2006) identifies two aspects of distributed leadership. First 'leadership-plus' which recognizes that leading and managing can involve multiple individuals in formal leadership positions as well as non-formal. He argues that this aspect is a

critical factor in organizational change. Second, a practice-based form of leadership in which those in non-formal leadership roles contribute to overall leadership.

Working in this way, a distributed leadership model can help promote institutional internationalization strategy and a holistic, institution-wide commitment. This collaborative multi-way approach can also enhance adaptability and innovation which, it can be argued, are essential for integrating international perspectives into formal and informal curricula, research, and the institution more broadly. Distributed leadership therefore operates across departments and divisions and will feed back to institutional policy and strategy as well as framing objectives and actions for individual sections of the institution.

By decentralizing leadership roles, universities can better address the complex challenges of internationalization – such as internationalization of the curriculum, the development of cross-cultural communication, developing and maintaining global partnerships, and responding to the needs of diverse students. The work of several scholars indicates its potential here. It can:

- encourage collaborative decision-making, leveraging the diverse expertise and skills present within an organization Harris (cf. 2008),
- promote a culture of shared responsibility and collective ownership, which can enhance problem-solving and innovation (cf. Spillane 2006),
- enable organizations to become more adaptive and resilient, as multiple leaders contribute to navigating complex challenges and driving strategic initiatives (cf. Bolden 2011),
- lead to more effective and responsive organizational performance, particularly in environments that require adaptability and innovation (cf. Gronn 2002).

Leading and managing internationalization in higher education is a multifaceted endeavor that requires strategic vision, operational efficiency, and cultural sensitivity. Embracing internationalization as a powerful force enriches the learning experience for all students, enhances employability skills and provides opportunities to develop global and intercultural skills for both personal development and the world of work. By aligning internationalization efforts with institutional goals, investing in necessary resources, and fostering an inclusive campus environment, institutions can address the complexities of international education. The importance of internationalization in higher education will continue to grow, making it a critical area of focus for leaders across the institution. Professor Casper-Hehne's contributions to internationalization of the curriculum will leave a lasting legacy for the university and its students and staff for many years to come.

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