



Increasing Faculty Engagement in Intercultural Communication and Internationalization on Campus

Guest post by Lisa K. Childress

How can faculty members promote intercultural dialogue on campus? That is what those of us who are advocates for intercultural communication (ICC) and internationalization seek to encourage on a daily basis. Many faculty members on campus may already see *interdisciplinary* dialogue as an avenue through which to gain a more holistic understanding of their subject matter. In other words, many of our colleagues already believe in the value of looking at research and teaching through more than one disciplinary lens as a way to provide a more complex, comprehensive point of view. The question thus becomes: *How can we use the already held value of interdisciplinarity as a springboard to promote the value of ICC and internationalization?*

Let's look at this conundrum through a series of questions:

As faculty members, we seek to develop our students' global competencies.

(1) What is the foundation for developing our students' global competencies?

Answer: The internationalization of our curricula.

(2) What is at the heart of internationalizing our curricula?

Answer: Our faculty.

(3) With what do faculty primarily concern themselves?

Answer: Their department's goals and values and their individual teaching and research agendas.

(4) How can we shift our university's academic departments towards a more intercultural and international focus?

Answer: Customizing ICC and internationalization to unique disciplinary priorities.

So, how can we move the ball forward? Since faculty members live within their academic disciplines, that is where the conversations and the impetus for increasing faculty engagement in ICC and internationalization need to begin. I propose the following seven strategies to purposefully break down these seemingly gargantuan goals into manageable steps:

(1) Develop a clearly articulated vision for what ICC and internationalization mean for each academic department. Engage in discussions about *“What does this department ‘look like’ as an internationalized and intercultural department?”* Reflect as a department on the scope and the nature of the programs offered, the department’s vision and priorities, what type of faculty should be recruited to best fulfill the vision and priorities, and how all these factors relate to faculty engagement in ICC and internationalization.

(2) Create explicit links between the department’s academic goals, ICC, and internationalization. Departments can work to develop consensus on how ICC and internationalization can and should advance the department’s core academic activities. A key question for the department to consider is: *How can ICC and internationalization advance students’ critical thinking within the discipline?*

(3) Develop clearly articulated global learning outcomes for each academic department. Integrating intercultural learning outcomes is crucial for internationalizing teaching and learning. This process requires consensus on the question: *What intercultural and international knowledge, skills, and attitudes will help each department’s graduates succeed in their fields?*

(4) Develop specific strategies for faculty engagement in ICC and internationalization within each academic department. It is useful to undertake efforts to connect ICC and internationalization to faculty members’ scholarly interests. Moreover, it may be constructive to draw explicit links to how the following initiatives to integrate international and intercultural perspectives into faculty members’ curricula could advance individual teaching and research agendas: (a) incorporate one to two weeks of study abroad into on-campus courses; (b) use technology to connect with classrooms or peers overseas in on-campus courses; (c) infuse on-campus courses with international examples, cases, and perspectives; (d) link new international learning outcomes to existing assignments; (e) arrange for students to work in small groups with diverse backgrounds; (f) utilize or create your institution’s International Speakers Bureau (ISB) (e.g., international students, local international business leaders, or local/regional community leaders who can participate in class panel discussions or provide formal presentations on topics related to their home countries and cultures; and (g) join an international scholar program (e.g., Fulbright scholar program (<https://www.cies.org/programs>), or DAAD faculty program (<https://www.daad.org/en/find-funding/faculty/>)).

(5) Create departmental support for faculty engagement in ICC and internationalization. Here, it is valuable for the institution’s senior international officer (SIO) and campus-wide internationalization committee to articulate the institution’s intentions for ICC and

internationalization. The following steps are useful for advancing the initiative: (a) develop an institutional definition for what counts as an “internationalized course;” (b) encourage faculty to consider how their courses are connected to global issues; (c) develop a rubric to assess whether and to what extent a course is internationalized; and (d) provide examples of internationalized syllabi. In particular, it may be valuable to create an intercultural faculty seminar (e.g., through the center for teaching and learning) integrating faculty members from various disciplines to aid gaining a broad understanding of a variety of relevant teaching styles, the range of learning styles and experiences of students from various countries and cultures across an entire campus, and increasing faculty with implementing culturally-conscious teaching practices, (e.g., using a variety of intercultural simulations and critical incident developments). For an example, see Kent State University’s Intercultural Faculty Scholar Program (<https://www.kent.edu/ctl/intercultural-faculty-scholars>).

(6) Develop global learning outcome assessments. To do so, it is useful for the Provost or SIO to ask departments to outline desired global learning outcomes (e.g., knowledge, skills, and attitudes) specific to their disciplines. Assessment methods might include a capstone essay demonstrating mastery of global learning, global learning portfolio that demonstrates intercultural and international learning throughout semesters, or a capstone global learning inventory. These validated, widely used mechanisms may be helpful to consult: Global Perspective Inventory (<http://www.gpi.hs.iastate.edu/>), Cross-cultural Adaptability Inventory (<https://idiinventory.com/>), Intercultural Development Inventory (<https://idiinventory.com/>), and Belief, Events, and Values Inventory (<http://thebevi.com/>).

(7) Develop faculty engagement in ICC and internationalization assessments. Here, it is advantageous to ask departments to quantify and assess faculty levels of engagement. In particular, this assessment can measure how faculty members incorporate intercultural and international content, perspectives, and experiences into their courses and syllabi. For such assessment, it may be helpful to develop a rubric that includes (a) the department’s vision and goals for ICC and internationalization (e.g., shared vision, verifiable objectives, and improvement-oriented evaluations); (b) the department’s global learning outcomes (e.g., intended learning outcomes, student assessment, and graduate achievement); and (c) the department’s curriculum internationalization (e.g., curriculum and teaching methods).

In sum, by working collaboratively with your university’s senior leaders, internationalization committee, and faculty departmental liaisons, you can proactively enrich your institution’s and departments’ academic missions through ICC and internationalization. The key is to develop mechanisms and channels to motivate individual faculty members to engage in ICC and internationalize. The foundation of such motivation is located where faculty live, that is, within their disciplines, and therefore, within their academic departments.

For further information, consult *The Twenty-first Century University: Developing Faculty Engagement in Internationalization* (2018, Peter Lang, 2nd ed.). Dr. Childress may be contacted with questions via email (LKChildress@gmail.com).

To cite this article, use this format:

Childress, Lisa K. (5 August 2019). Guest post: Increasing faculty engagement in intercultural communication and internationalization on campus. Center for Intercultural Dialogue. Available from: <https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org/2019/08/05/lisa-childress-increasing-faculty-engagement-in-icc-internationalization-on-campus/>



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