Internationalisation at Home: Enhancing Intercultural Capabilities of Business and Health Teachers, Students and Curricula (ALTC PP10-1810)

Project Aim

The project aims to enhance the intercultural capabilities of tertiary teachers and students in Business and Health, and develop adaptable curriculum resources for upskilling international and local students to be culturally competent in increasingly multicultural educational and work settings.

Background

For all students, real-life opportunities for intercultural interactions in increasingly culturally diverse Australian campuses could facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for interculturally competent professional practice.

It is crucial for Health graduates and students completing placements to have well-developed intercultural communication skills in order to provide safe and effective caring in a multicultural society (Lester, 1998).

Widespread concern also exists among stakeholders about the low level of generic skills (including communication skills) demonstrated by current Business graduates in Australia (Freeman, Hancock, Simpson, & Sykes, 2008).

One strategic approach is to provide teachers with professional development to enhance their intercultural capability to create a class-room climate that values learning about different cultures and promotes quality intercultural contact (Ho et al., 2004, & Ward 2006).

Evidence-based training resources such as the EXCELL Intercultural Skills Program (Mak, Westwood, Barker, & Ishiyama, 1998) have been used successfully in multicultural classes and workplace transition programs in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the UK (Ho et al., 2004).

Outcomes and Outputs

Enhanced national approaches to intercultural competency development within Business and Health curricula through:

1. Development and dissemination of adaptable curriculum resources involving integration of stakeholder-generated scenarios with existing intercultural competency tools;
2. Capacity-building of course convenors and placement supervisors to embed intercultural skills into curricula;
3. Upskilling international and local students to be culturally competent in educational and work environments;
4. Research reports and publications.

The EXCELL Intercultural Skills Program

EXCELL is an evidence-based, generic intercultural resource built on an integrated model of social cognitive and experiential learning (Mak, Westwood, Ishiyama, & Barker, 1999). The schematic, skills-based professional development resource is built around the teaching of six generic social competencies listed below.

1. Making Social Contact
2. Seeking Help
3. Participating in a Group
4. Refusing a Request
5. Expressing Disagreement
6. Giving Feedback

These generic competencies are fundamental to effective social interactions in culturally diverse classrooms and workplaces.

Team Leaders

Prof. Anita Mak—University of Canberra
Prof. Michelle Barker—Griffith University

Project Team Members

University of Canberra
Assoc. Prof. Laurie Greatish
Prof. Anne Daly
Dr. James Neil

Griffith University
Prof. Nick Buys
Assoc. Prof. Saras Henderson
Dr. Peter Woods

Reference Group Members

Prof. Amanda Henderson (GU)
Assoc. Prof. Mark Freeman (USYD)
Assoc. Prof. Betty Leask (UniSA)
Prof. Coralie McCormack (UC)
Prof. Lorelle Frazer (GU)
Prof. Stephen Billett (GU)
Assoc. Prof. Valerie Clifford (Oxford-Brookes Uni, UK)
Drs. Hanneke Teekens (NUFIC, The Netherlands)

Project Manager (Contact for Information)
Dr Sylvia Alston at sylvia.alston@canberra.edu.au