Chapter 58
Reflecting on New Faculty Training:
Internationalized Learning Essentials

Semire Dikli
Georgia Gwinnett College, USA

Richard S. Rawls
Georgia Gwinnett College, USA

Brian C. Etheridge
Georgia Gwinnett College, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to describe the mandatory training program (Internationalized Learning Essentials) offered to the new faculty as part of the internationalization of the curriculum process at four-year colleges in the U.S. The chapter presents survey results regarding faculty perceptions on the training program. The results of this study suggest important implications for research in internationalization by providing further insights regarding faculty training about internationalized education.

BACKGROUND

There is no doubt that developing sensitivity toward people from other cultures and communicating effectively with them are important characteristics that every college graduate should possess in today's diverse workplace. As Leask (2009) suggested, "an internationalised curriculum (product) will purposefully develop the international and intercultural perspectives (skills, knowledge and attitudes) of all students." An ideal way to help college students gain intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative skills is to expose them to different cultures through study abroad programs. Study abroad programs have gained popularity among higher education institutions by allowing students to explore a culture in its most authentic form. However, their costly nature does not make these programs favorable for a great number of college students. Therefore, many higher education institutions have been looking

into offering classes that help students learn these skills without having them travel long distances, while simultaneously making efforts to internationalize the curriculum and provide internationalized experiences on campus. In this framework, faculty training becomes an essential component of internationalization because faculty have the power to decide whether or not to incorporate international perspectives into their classes (Green & Olson, 2003). In order to help their students appreciate diversity, faculty must become aware of the basic concepts of internationalization. Similarly, the higher-education institution discussed in this study, Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC), prioritizes the role of faculty development in the successful implementation of an internationalized curriculum. The focus of this chapter is to describe one of those training programs (Internationalized Learning Essentials (ILE) Forum), and draw upon survey results regarding faculty perceptions of this training process. This effort offers some thoughts about how one institution has used faculty development to support the internationalization of the curriculum.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The effort to internationalize the curriculum required familiarity with the literature. Since internationalizing the curriculum was part of GGC's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) – and the QEP constituted part of the basis of accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – finding the literature and theoretical bases remained a significant early task. It was recognized that while GGC hosts one of the most diverse student bodies and faculty in the southeastern United States, not all of the literature would be relevant to institutional stakeholders. Administrators and faculty quickly identified three distinct areas, broken down in this literature review as the following interrelated concepts: 1) internationalization of the curriculum; 2) intercultural competence; and 3) training university faculty in both internationalizing the curriculum and in intercultural competence.

The literature addressing internationalization of the curriculum (IOC) has expanded both in quality and scope in the last fifty years. Since internationalization itself can mean different things to different people, one of the tasks scholars have attempted to address relates to its meaning. For example, does internationalizing the curriculum suggest enlarging the faculty with higher numbers of professors from foreign countries? Does it include adding larger numbers of international students to courses? Does it involve sending students to other countries for a portion of their higher education, or even bringing branch campuses of foreign universities to one's national shores? Does it require adding international content to courses? Internationalization raises questions and provokes confusion about its relationship to globalization: are they the same thing? If not, how do they differ? As Knight observes, "This reflects the realities of today and presents new challenges in terms of developing a conceptual model that provides some clarity on meaning and principles to guide policy and practice" (2004, p. 6).

Although scholars agree that a universal definition of "internationalization" proves elusive, they also concur that arriving at a commonly held definition is important for helping an institution to understand what it is hoping to achieve. One can detect an evolution in definition since the late 1970s. In the 1980s and early 1990s, internationalization frequently intimated activities, programs, services, exchange, or even "studies" (Arum & van de Water, 1992, p. 202). As the 1990s progressed, a definition assuming a more institutional and integrative approach began. Internationalization could not just remain the preserve of a few offices on a university campus. Knight (1997) wrote at the time that "integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of the institution"

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