Internationalisation: towards a position statement/vision for languages, multicultural education, and the internationalisation of education

SASPA and DECD
Adelaide, 21 June 2017

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Here I am chasing all the butterflies in the paddocks and at that time I could tell summer was here.
Outline

1. Changing global dynamics
2. Understanding international education
3. The work of MELC: a ‘position paper’ / vision → synergies across three areas of focus
4. International education and intercultural capability
Changing global dynamics

• Diversity and high speed change
• Increasing mobility of people, both physical and virtual
  – global movement of people, ideas/knowledge, products, images, messages, technologies (Appadurai 2001:5)
  – global interdependence: Pauwels (2000: 2)
    “Many more societies around the world have become multicultural and multilingual in their make-up as a result of increased temporary or voluntary or forced immigration movements, new alliances and economic developments. Consequently, many peoples’ daily lives are made up of a series of intercultural encounters i.e. people of different cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds are interacting with each other.
  – instantaneous communication
    → international flows i.e. ever-changing/a complex view of globalisation → homogenisation and localisation
    → transcultural flows (Pennycook 2007)
    → the bilingual/bicultural person is the norm
    → recognising linguistic, cultural, epistemic, faith-based diversities as global realities
Changing global dynamics

- New vocabulary to explain change:
  Super-diversity (Vertovec 2007)
  Complex diversity (Kraus 2012)
- Recognition of the multilingual turn (May 2014)
  21st century as a time of multilingualism
- And in education: notions of ‘global mindedness’, ‘global citizenship’, etc.

Question:
What does this mean for education, learning and school and learner identities?
Understanding international education

- Seen as a range of purposes, rationales, perspectives, strategies and discourses involved in integrating ‘international dimensions’ in education as a response to cultural and economic globalisation → but ‘international dimensions’ undefined
- Knight (2004) has identified the need to address the problem of how to “deal” with the intersect of the ‘international’ and ‘intercultural’ in education
- Recognition that people need to be interculturally capable, that is, to be able to negotiate meanings across languages and cultures (Crichton & Scarino 2007).

→ Often understood as supplementary structures, systems, methods – i.e. an additive process (e.g. adding a case study, a study-abroad experience)
→ Involves changing all aspects of education understood as structures and organisation, ‘whole of institution’ as well as views about learning and achievement
→ The curriculum as an expression of the school’s identity
→ Valuing knowledge drawn from other cultures and capitalising on the different perspectives students bring to the classroom to create new knowledge and understanding
The place of languages and cultures in internationalisation

- As obvious in international education.
- But… it depends on how we understand international education/the internationalisation of education.
- Various constructions of “the cultural” in international education: (1) as content; (2) as communication skills; (3) as relocation, (4) as diversity; and (5) as intercultural (Crichton & Scarino, 2007).
  - language(s) and culture(s) are not just “a given” in international education
  - international education needs to be understood as “intercultural” … and understandings of this needs to be explored/problematised

Some questions:
How is ‘international education’ understood by school communities?
Who is involved in ‘international education’ in schools?
The Ministerial Advisory Committee: Multicultural Education and Languages (MELC) provides advice to the Minister for Education and Child Development on three interrelated areas:

- languages education
- multicultural education
- internationalisation of education.

→ MELC works collaboratively with educational and community organisations on the value of engagement with linguistic and cultural diversity in education.
The work of MELC - 2

1. Comprehensive work plan
   policy advice; projects/programs/grants; educational/advocacy role through public lectures/roundtables; community engagement

2. 2016 – preparation of an external scoping paper: *Towards the development of a position statement and strategy* in relation to the three focal areas

3. Feb 2017 – Minister requested that MELC prepare a ‘positioning statement’ to provide a common vision for the state in relation to education for and in linguistic and cultural diversity (by end July 2017!) DECD is developing a Languages strategy.

4. It supports the South Australian Education Vision for the Independent, Catholic and Government sectors, specifically,
   ‘Our schools and early childhood settings will be/are places where students learn to live together with civility and respect for difference and commonalities, and demonstrating intercultural and ethical understanding’

→ need for development and renewal in these areas
Scope of the positioning statement

• recognition of the distinctiveness and interrelationship among the three areas

• all pertain to ‘working comfortably in/with linguistic and cultural diversity but differences in relation to (1) the histories of these areas in education, and (2) the students and communities that are perceived to be involved (e.g. NESB, CALD, ‘international students’ and (3) equity and opportunities to learn

→ Need enhanced understanding of the synergies
→ Need a new narrative around education for and in diversity that promotes the value of prosperity of the individual and the state.
Process of development

- project planning
- strategic input from sector heads, principals’ associations (SASPA, SAPPA), professional associations
- generative forum 1 – experts forum
- generative forum 2 – youth forum
- drafting
- targeted consultation
- finalisation

→ Use?
Some formulations - 1

• ‘the intercultural capability’
• ‘concept of looking outward in order to look inward’
• ‘need to unpack the term – global citizenship – ’
• ‘should have a strong connection to identity and belonging’
• ‘need a transnational paradigm’
• ‘need to shift from exotic other to relational self and other’
• ‘a capability for knowing, interacting and being in linguistic and cultural diversity’
• ‘needs to acknowledge the complexity of linguistic and cultural diversity across the spectrum and within individual communities; Aboriginal SA is diverse and complex, each with their own values and beliefs with respect to language and culture’
• ‘remember discontinuity, displacement, disruption are causing rifts in the social fabric’
• ‘the three areas are focusing on who we want to be, how we want to live our lives, how we see ourselves, how we want to act, how we think we should act in the world → focus on the learner citizen’

[From the Experts’ Forum]
Some formulations - 2

• ‘words matter – communication is what we need to resolve world issues’
• ‘our country needs to grow in respect and love’
• ‘we can be open-minded, learn new things and understand other people’
• ‘we need to recognise similarities and differences, like a box of crayons’
• ‘don’t be afraid of being different’
• ‘we all see other people differently’
• ‘we learn a lot from others’
• ‘diversity is respecting different peoples’ ideas and respecting people’
• ‘need to fight for equality’
• ‘knowing other cultures allows us to gain understanding of others’ and of our own culture’
• ‘Aboriginal culture must be for all’
• ‘everyone needs to feel welcome’
• ‘it is more than tolerance’
• ‘diversity is accepting different ways of being’
• ‘diversity brings awareness and knowledge’
• ‘an integral part of me’
• ‘ability to tell your own story’

[From the Youth’ Forum]
International education as intercultural learning – 1

• A number of studies undertaken by the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures Education where internationalisation is understood as intercultural (and interlinguistic)

• In this framing we recognise that:
  – All learning across all disciplines (including Languages) is a social, linguistic and cultural act that involves interaction, inter-change, dialogue (i.e. intercultural learning) and reflectivity and reflexivity

  – Learning entails constructing knowledge through social interaction, understanding knowledge acquisition, recognising different ways of knowing, developing multiple perspectives and using multiple sources of knowledge, mediating knowledge, applying knowledge in different cultural contexts, and recognising that the ethics of the application of knowledge all involve the use of language to interpret and create meaning, in the context of dialogue within and across cultures
    (Crichton, Scarino, Papademetre, Barker, Lushington, Woods, 2006)

  – The intercultural is not additive but constitutive

  – Language, culture, learning and knowledge, knowing, and the person (knower) are foregrounded in particular ways
International education as intercultural learning – 2

- The concepts of Language, Culture and Learning are central to international education, understood as intercultural learning.

- These concepts need to be re-examined.

- The challenge raised by intercultural learning for students is that of interaction with others, recognising that their identity in the other culture is not based on shared cultural assumptions but is interculturally shaped in interaction through the reflective and reflexive interplay of the students’ own and other cultures – students decentre from their own cultural perspective to engage with others → constant questioning that yields further learning.
International education as intercultural learning – 3

• Need to recognise that structures and systems are ‘peopled’ (Candlin 1999) by individuals who bring their own interpretive stance to any process of change (Crichton & Scarino 2009)

• Need to understand internationalisation within and across areas of learning as intercultural learning, which may be characterised as:
  - changing understandings/creating new knowledge through dialogue, understood as a process through which to negotiate the interpretation and construction of meaning, i.e. more than disciplinary content
  - recognising that interpretation is carried out by people
  - recognising that people (self and other) are situated in their own linguistic, cultural, historical (experiential) context – meanings and values originate in the language, culture, history to which people belong and this provides the basis for new learning → need to question positions, assumptions, origins
  - recognising the processes of learning as reciprocal
Reconceptualising Language, Culture and Learning

In relation to *language*, what is needed is a view of language that not only recognises that it is a structural, grammatical system, one that foregrounds language in use, but also that it *is always subject to the variable interpretation of participants* in interaction.

In relation to *culture*, what is needed is a view of culture that not only recognises facts about or ways of doing things in diverse cultures, but also that *culture informs the way people understand themselves and others*.

In relation to *learning*, what is needed is a view of learning that not only recognises the need to acquire new knowledge and to participate in communities of users of that knowledge, but that *learners are always interpreters*

→ students come to question assumptions, preconceptions and the bases of their own values and judgments, which are central to how they make sense of the world and their own identity → this is central to both education and the *educational rationale* for language learning
Relationship between language, culture and learning and why it matters for learning

“When children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one kind of learning among many: rather, they are learning the foundation of learning itself. The distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of meaning making – semiotic process.” (Halliday, 1993)

→ It is through language that teachers and students and students – in their linguistic and cultural diversity – interact to exchange knowledge, perspectives, to connect ideas, explain, elaborate and make sense.

→ Learning is mediated through the lenses of the language and culture of ones’ primary socialisation.
Learning as intercultural

Learning as socially mediated through language and culture

(interpersonal/intercultural) +

critical analysis (comparative) +

interpretive, reflective, reflexive (intrapersonal/intracultural)

→ participation, engagement in diversity
→ analysis of role of language and culture in the creation and exchange of meanings; consideration of own /other knowledge systems
→ consideration of assumptions reactions, responses + comparisons + reflection on self + others, i.e. own knowledge, perceptions, values in relation to others in order to re-examine their own position, ways of knowing and seeing
→ reciprocal learning
SAY IT IN CHINESE: A student from the Nairobi Confucius Institute displaying her calligraphy during a language competition in the Kenyan capital on Wednesday.

New Straits Times, June 16, 2007
Reflections and some questions

- What kind of internationalisation do we envisage for education? Why does it matter? How do we attend to the life worlds of all learners?
- How do we imagine the synergies among languages, ‘multicultural education’ and internationalisation?
- What are the elements of a strategy/a framework?
- How is a strategy best developed in order to engender uptake, impact and change? How do we engender ongoing learning?
- What are the challenges and how do we address them?
References


References


