Integration:
What are we trying to achieve?

Helen Spencer-Oatey
Taking stock ...

“There has been too much emphasis in the past on [...] ‘wishing and hoping . . . and dreaming’ that benefits will flow from cultural diversity on campus.”

Leask and Carroll 2011: 648
• Lots of activities
• BUT are we clear what we want to achieve?
What are we aiming at?

Commonly identified Aim (in University Vision Statements)

“The development of a multicultural community of students and staff.” (Glasgow)
A sociocultural mix?

One interpretation of integration

Oxford/Longman “To integrate” =

1. To combine separate elements so they become a harmonious, interrelated whole.
A sociocultural mix?
A sociocultural mix?

- Activities to promote interaction & ‘mixing’.
- Success often ‘measured’ by number of participants of different backgrounds.
- Focus on meaningful, sustained interaction.

**BUT** integration can mean more than this ...
Other aims ...

Commonly identified Aim (in University Vision Statements)

“Graduates and alumni who are independent, creative thinkers with problem-solving skills who can operate effectively in, and are prized by, the international jobs market.” (Bath)
Other aims ...

Less Commonly identified Aim (in University Vision Statements)

“A diverse student body from multiple cultures and societies, which enriches our intellectual environment.” (Bristol)

“Cross-fertilisation of ideas and experiences (Edinburgh Napier)
Engagement with Difference

Another interpretation of integration

Oxford/Longman “To integrate” =

2. *Spend time with members of other groups and develop habits like theirs.*
   - Implies engagement and change
Concepts of Integration

Berry 2005

Evanoff 2006

Bennett 1986
Exploring Difference
Exploring Difference

Why explore difference?

- Encountering difference can be stressful
  - For ourselves
  - For others
- Dealing with difference can help develop greater
  - Resilience
  - Empathy
Exploring Difference

Why explore difference?

• Reflecting on difference can result in creativity and innovation

• Dealing with difference can help develop intercultural competence
Exploring Difference

What kinds of difference?

Visible

Invisible

In different domains
- Daily Life
- Social Life
- Academic Life
- Language
Exploring Difference

Example from Academic Life

Lectures and seminars/tutorials:

Observable ...

- Different ‘events’ on the timetable
- Different behaviours in lectures and seminars (e.g. asking questions, participating in discussions)
Exploring Difference

Example from Academic Life
Lectures and seminars/tutorials:
*Hidden* ...

Pedagogic rationale for holding lectures and seminars;
Beliefs about value of group discussion.
# Exploring Difference

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Exploring Difference

Need to explore surface & deep differences ...

Visible

... but not necessarily all domains to the same extent and to the same depth.

Invisible
Responding to Difference
Responding to Difference

Transformation

“Transformation should be seen not simply in terms of individuals changing themselves to fit into their host cultures but also as the process by which host cultures transform themselves to accommodate the presence of sojourners.”

Evanoff 2006: 423-4
Responding to Difference

Openness to change

• How open are we to change?
  – How open are university management and academics to change?
  – How open are student unions to change?
  – How open are students to change?

• In what aspects “should” we change?

• How deeply “should” we change?
Responding to Difference

e.g. How suitable is the Percentage Scale Marking Scheme for students from diverse backgrounds?

e.g. What are our beliefs about ‘active learning’ and ‘memorisation’? How willing are we to modify our beliefs?
Engaging with Difference

Mix culturally

↓

Explore difference
(surface and deep)

+ 

Respond to difference
(surface and deep)

↓

Road to development and growth
References


