Global People
Occasional Papers

Strategic Planning for Internationalisation:

Fostering Global Graduates

through 'Global Education' Experiences

The Global Education Profiler (GEP) Student version

A Handbook

Helen Spencer-Oatey and Daniel Dauber

Contents

1. Executive summary

There is a range of reasons why institutions may wish to internationalize and one of these is to help students grow and develop personally, academically and professionally, thereby equipping them for life and work in an increasingly global world. However, such growth does not take place automatically – it needs to be planned strategically, formulated conceptually, and fostered actively through diagnosis, response planning and interventions.

This handbook explains the steps that can be taken to help achieve this, with a particular focus on Strategic Planning, Conceptual Design, Diagnosis of the current state, and Response Planning.

It introduces the ***Global Education Profiler (GEP)*** which enables higher education institutions (HEIs) to achieve the following:

  a. Benchmark their internationalisation achievements
  b. Diagnose their level of community integration (social and academic), including their strengths and weaknesses
  c. Diagnose their level of provision for developing 'global graduates', including their strengths and weaknesses

2. Strategic Planning

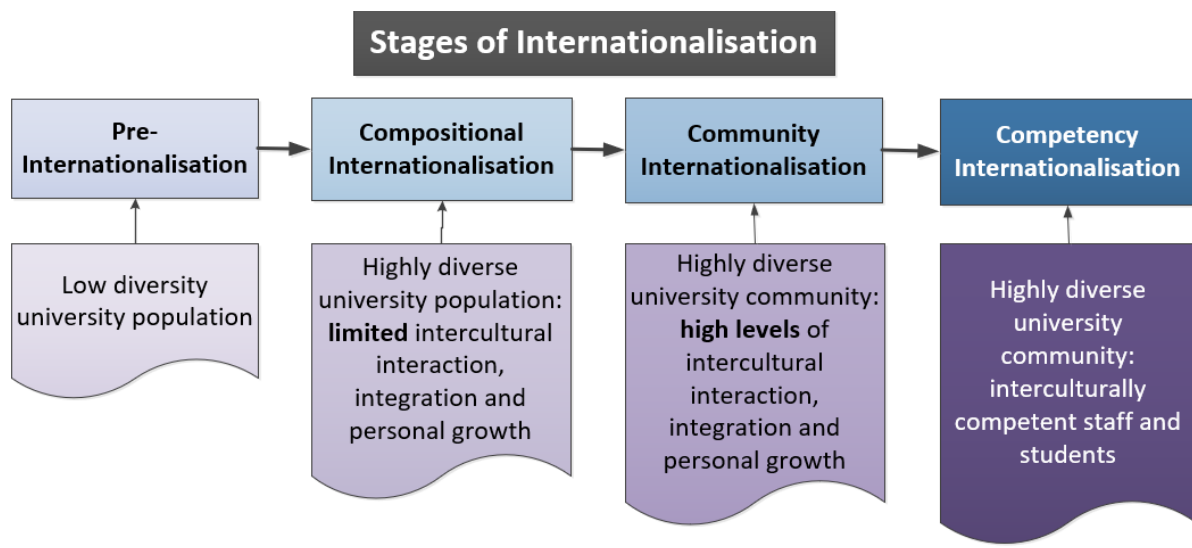Internationalisation develops in successive stages as shown in Figure 1.

Fig. 1: Developmental Stages of Internationalisation
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Compositional Internationalisation

Once institutions have started to plan strategically and have moved out of pre-internationalisation, subsequent stages of internationalisation all build on the preceding ones. Many universities worldwide are now planning strategically for demographic-type '***compositional' or 'structural' internationalisation***, referring to measures like the following:

- Increased number of international students
- Enhanced diversity of staff
- Increased percentage of students on some form of outward mobility

For example, Shanghai Jiaotong University has recently referred to the importance of providing a 'diversified multicultural experience' through the establishment of international partnerships, staff and student exchange, and the recruitment of international students.[1]

The most well-known organizations that measure internationalisation (Times Higher Education (THE) rankings, QS World rankings, and U-Multirank) use parameters that focus exclusively on structural characteristics, as Table 1 illustrates.

Parameters	Organisation		
	THE	**QS**	**U-Multirank**
Composition: international students	✓	✓	
Composition: international staff	✓	✓	✓
Composition: international diversity		✓	
Incoming & outgoing student mobility		✓	✓
International student support (religious facilities)		✓	
International joint publications	✓	✓	✓

Table 1: Parameters for ranking internationalisation

Similarly, a recent European funded project, IMPI[2] ([Indicators for Mapping and Profiling Internationalisation, 2009–2012](link)), has drawn up a detailed set of indicators that institutions can use to assess their level of internationalisation, including those that help prepare students for life and work in an intercultural and globalising world. Yet, once again, all the items are structural in nature.

Clearly, structural internationalisation is an important element of the internationalisation process, but as a recent [British Council](link)[3] report points out, they are inadequate in themselves:

> "While the benefits of a global campus are plentiful and well-publicised, they do not naturally arise due to the presence of international students; the distinction must be made that simply having a diverse student body does not mean the education or even the campus is global in nature. What comes as an essential part of a global education is the inclusion of international students in communities and classes. Integration of all students is an elemental factor in the expanding concept of internationalisation." (p.4)

This suggests that diversity is not an end in itself, but rather is merely the foundation for offering a 'global education'. Having a diverse population is an important pre-requisite for reaping these benefits, but it does not in itself ensure that they will be achieved. The next step is to move towards **Community Internationalisation.**

Community internationalisation

With Community Internationalisation, people from different backgrounds mix and interact with one other, learning new perspectives and increasing mutual understanding. As research[4] has shown and as the [British Council](link)[3] report argues, the mere existence of a diversified student body does not necessarily lead to interaction and yet, without such mixing, the development of 'global skills' will be hampered significantly.

This means that it is extremely important for universities to understand the extent to which they are achieving *Community Internationalisation:* the extent to which they are providing a 'global education' context for their students. This requires two main things for strategic planning purposes:

1. A conceptual design, so that objectives and routes for achieving them can be established;
2. An implementation plan comprising three cyclical steps: diagnosis, response planning and interventions (see Figure 2).

Fig.2: The three cyclical steps of implementation planning

We consider each of them in turn below.

3. Conceptual Design

To start moving from *Structural Internationalisation* to *Community Internationalisation*, the first step is to have a conceptual plan. The Global People Growth Model for Global Skills identifies three important elements:

- The contexts for fostering personal growth
- The development mechanisms for enhancing personal growth
- The growth outcomes being aimed at.

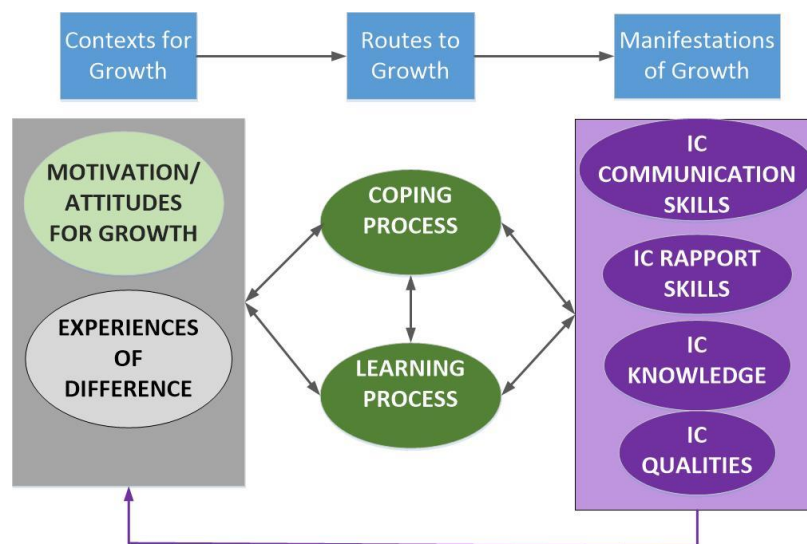These are illustrated in Figure 3.

Fig. 3: The Global People Growth Model for Global Skills

The starting point for planning purposes is Contexts for Growth – ensuring that we are providing as rich a global education context for our students as possible, both within and beyond the university, socially, academically, personally and professionally. As can be seen from Fig.3, there are two key elements to this: people's motivation or attitudes towards growth and their experiences of difference.

Positive attitudes and strong motivation are always important: students need to be curious, open and interested in differences around them. In other words, they need a 'spirit of adventure' (WorldWork, nd)[5]. This helps them move out of their comfort zones and experience the differences that can stimulate their growth. For example, mixing with people from different backgrounds, working in groups with people who have different styles of communication, and sharing accommodation with people who have different lifestyles, can not only be exciting and challenging but also an important stimulant for growth. To a greater or lesser extent, such differences can cause mental and emotional imbalance and it is this disequilibrium that stimulates growth (cf. Kim 2001)[6].

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The disequilibrium is traditionally known as culture shock and it is important that the stress is not so great that people withdraw. They need to be helped to develop coping mechanisms – to understand the nature of culture shock and acquire suitable strategies for handling it. However, it is also important to remember that they should not be cushioned too much from difference, because growth requires a certain amount of stress. The stress needs to be handled through improved coping mechanisms, not simply removed.

The anthropologist Edward Hall (1976, p.46)[7] has said "Most cross-cultural exploration begins with the annoyance of being lost." This reiterates that cultural adaptation and growth has an emotional aspect to it, but it also hints at another – the element of 'being lost'. People are typically unsure how to behave in unfamiliar contexts, and sometimes this can apply to something as simple as greetings. Other aspects, such as adopting different turn-taking styles or levels of formality, can be even more challenging. For this, people need to be helped to observe carefully, to reflect on the differences they notice, and to have the opportunity to seek advice and explanation from someone with more insider understanding. Then they will be in a better position to make appropriate adjustments to their behaviour.

The third element of the Global People Growth Model is the competencies that we want people to acquire as a result of their developmental experiences. Following the outcomes from the Global People project, we have identified four main clusters of global competencies that Global Graduates need to display: intercultural communication skills, rapport management skills, personal qualities, and intercultural knowledge. More details of these, including their sub-components and illustrative examples, can be found on the Intercultural Competency framework section of our Global People website.

In other words, the Global People Growth Model for Global Skills indicates the following elements are important for strategic planning:

a. Students' motivation or attitudes towards having a global education experience;
b. Students' opportunities for experiencing differences that can stimulate personal growth;
c. Students' resilience in coping with the stress of experiencing differences;
d. Students' opportunities for noticing, reflecting on and learning from their experiences of difference;
e. Students' understanding of the intercultural competencies they are developing through their learning experiences.

4. Implementation Planning: Diagnostic analysis through the GEP

Having considered the developmental stages of internationalisation, having decided to start moving from Structural Internationalisation towards Community Internationalisation, and having formulated a Conceptual Plan for doing so, the next Strategic Planning step is to develop an implementation plan. As explained above, this entails three cyclical steps: Diagnosis, Response Planning and Interventions. This section focuses on Diagnosis.

The Global Education Profiler (GEP) is a tool that has been developed specifically for diagnosing and benchmarking internationalisation beyond the Structural Internationalisation stage, and particularly at the Community Internationalisation stage. Drawing on the Global People Growth Model for Global Skills, the GEP has been designed to probe:

- The importance that students attach to a global education
- Students' awareness of opportunities for experiencing difference and their personal engagement with those opportunities
- Students' perceived development of Global Graduate skills

The GEP probes the above in a number of different spheres or categories, as shown in Table 2:

Category	Description
Social Integration (SI)	Social integration probes the amount of interaction and social cohesion across people from diverse backgrounds. This important measure provides insights into students' non-academic life, which can have a substantial bearing on their general well-being, which in turn can also influence their academic performance.
Academic Integration (AI)	Academic integration probes the interaction and cohesion of students from diverse backgrounds within classrooms and courses, as well as with academic and support staff in the department. This is crucial in nurturing students' professional growth and provides the foundation for the development of global graduate skills.
Communication Skills (CS)	This section of the GEP probes students' communication skills and how they use them flexibly in interacting with others. This applies to fluent and less fluent speakers alike, because an effective communicator needs to be able to adjust his/her language to the requirements of the contextual situation, including the level of fluency of other speakers. This category is less concerned with language proficiency; it focuses on the ability to recognise and adjust communication patterns to the respective context.
Foreign Language Skills (LS)	This section of the GEP probes foreign language skills and how students take advantage of opportunities to develop them. Several reports have identified this as a key global employability skill. Foreign language courses that are formally offered by HEIs are one element of this, but communication inside and outside the classroom with peers from different language backgrounds can provide important additional opportunities, which students may or may not take advantage of.
Global Opportunities and Support (GS)	The Global Opportunities and Support section of the GEP takes an employability focus. It probes understanding of the intercultural skills needed for the world of work, as well as opportunities students have for developing them. Scores in this category reflect students' perspectives of the extent to which their educational experience is preparing them for employment in a global workplace.

Table 2: Components of the GEP (student version)

Each component comprises ten items that together capture the various facets of the particular construct. This ensures higher levels of validity. The items were designed on the basis of previous research from *i-Graduate's* (*International) Student Barometer* survey (additional items were included) and they were then piloted with six higher education institutions in different countries. Cronbach alpha scores for each construct sub-scale are very high (over .8 in all cases), confirming the reliability of each of the sub-scales.

Students rate each of the ten items in two ways: 'Importance to me' and 'My actual experience'. Through this approach, the GEP addresses three important questions that every internationalizing HEI needs to keep in mind at all times:

(1) What is important to our students?

(2) What do our students experience while they are here?

(3) Are we offering them the global education experience that they feel is important to them and their career?

At the end of each category of items, students are given the opportunity to add any open comments they wish.

The GEP thus provides information on each of the following:

- How important to students is social integration, academic integration, communication skills, foreign language skills, global skills and support?
- Which are the most important elements/items to them?
- How far do students feel the experience social integration, academic integration, communication skills, foreign language skills, global skills and support?
- How big a gap is there between students' desires and their experiences?
- Where are the largest gaps?
- How close is the HEI to achieving Community Internationalisation?

We explain each of them in turn below.

Level of importance (IMP):

The importance scales reveal what is important to students – both the relative importance of the different spheres (social, academic, etc.), as well as the individual items that are particularly important to them. For example, some students might feel it is important to be academically integrated into a university, but of lesser importance to be socially integrated. For instance, one student commented as follows: *'I came here to earn a degree and not necessarily to make new friends.'* The higher the importance scores are, the greater the value that students attribute to that facet of a global education experience. According to the Global People growth model, motivation is an important foundation for personal growth, and attaching value or importance to something is one aspect of motivation. High importance scores thus indicate a positive attitude towards internationalisation.

Level of experience (EXP):

The experience scales reveal what students feel they are actually experiencing with respect to each of the five components of the GEP. According to the Global People Growth Model for Global Skills, experiences of difference are the other important foundation for personal growth, and so high experience scores are another indicator of an enriching context. The higher the experience scores are, the greater are students' opportunities for and engagement with a global education experience.

It should be noted here that high or low experience scores do not necessarily equate to high or low student satisfaction. Under certain circumstances, students may be very satisfied with not being exposed to certain experiences: they may attach low importance to, for instance, social integration and experience it very little. So if they were asked to rate social integration for satisfaction, their score would be high. It would be wrong, therefore, to argue that high satisfaction scores are indicative of students experiencing a rich global education. We recommend instead performing a gap analysis, as explained in the next section.

Gap between students' importance and experience ratings

One simple way of showing students' ratings of importance and experience, and any difference between them is through bar charts. Figure 4 below shows the data that came from the pilot studies.
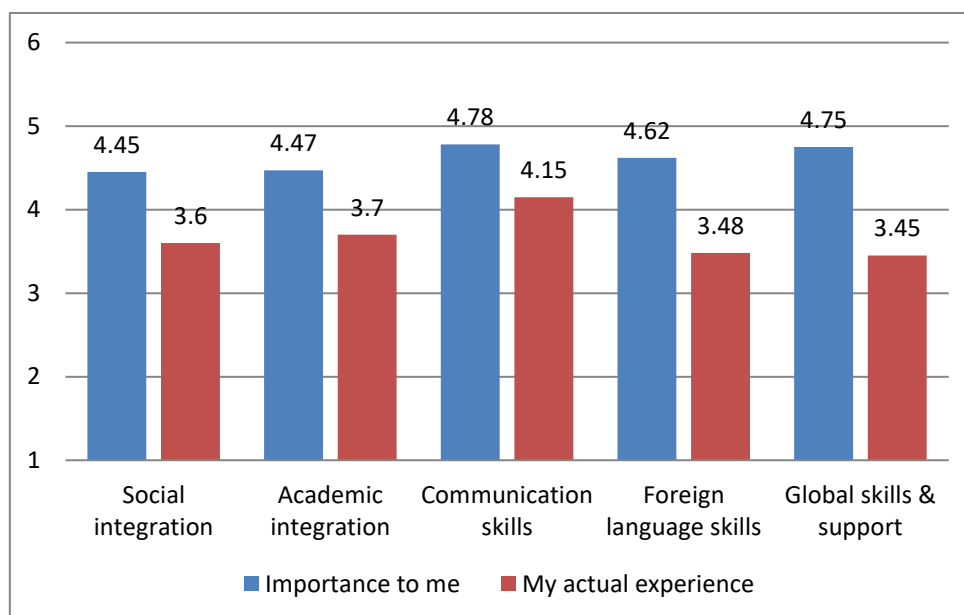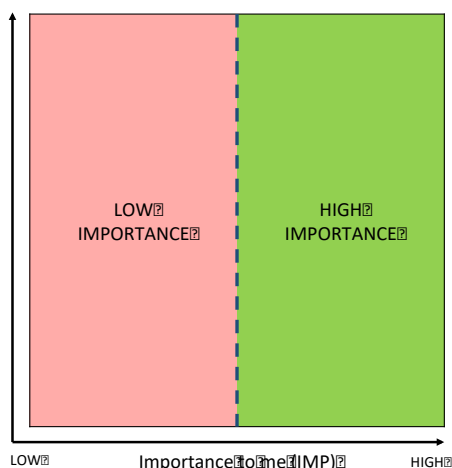

Fig.4: Sample data showing 'Importance' and 'Experience' ratings across different spheres

As can be seen be seen, all areas show a gap between importance and experience ratings, and one way of exploring this more thoroughly is through a gap analysis matrix, building on the visual representations of the two different dimensions, as shown in Figures 5 and 6.

Fig. 5: GEP: Importance to me (IMP)
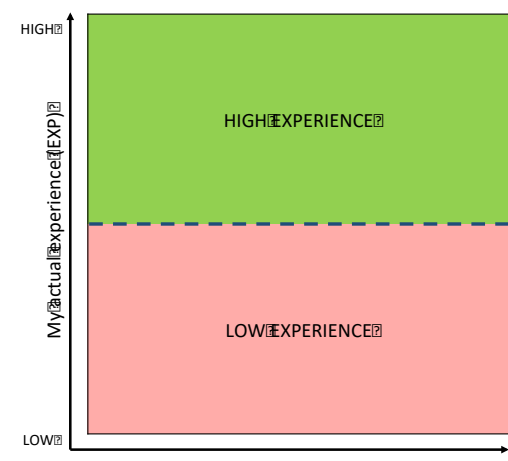
**Fig. 6: GEP: My actual experience (EXP)**

A gap can either be 'zero' (i.e. the experience score matches the corresponding importance score), 'negative' or 'positive'. When students' experiences match the importance they attach to them, one can argue that students are satisfied with the situation. A positive gap implies that universities offer more to students than they actually want, i.e. HEIs over-deliver. While students are likely to be happy that they are getting more than they want, it flags up an opportunity for strategic management to reallocate resources to areas that might need it greater attention, i.e. where negative gaps are found. A negative gap implies that students do not experience enough of what is important to them. For example, students might wish to be able to learn foreign languages, but if there are few or no opportunities to do so, this would result in a negative gap, i.e. a low satisfaction score.

It is possible to visually show the position of gaps in a matrix (see Figure 7). The diagonal dotted line that separates the green and red area from each other indicate that experiences and importance are aligned. However, this also implies that low experience and low importance would result in no gap and possibly satisfied students. Thus, the position of the gap in the matrix is as relevant as its size (i.e. positive or negative gap) and yields different recommendations for improving the situation in an HEI. Ideally, internationalising HEIs would strive for high importance and high experience in all categories of the GEP, i.e. the upper right-hand corner of the matrix.
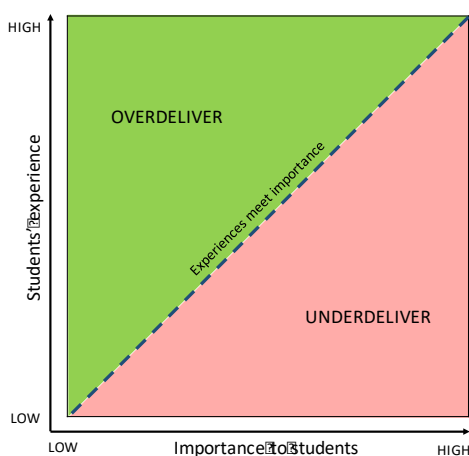
Fig. 7: Gaps and their position in the analytical matrix, i.e. the GAP-Matrix

For diagnostic and benchmarking purposes, it is best to look at the different areas of the matrix in greater detail (as shown in Figure 8), i.e. at the four possible quadrants when combining experience and importance scores in one figure. Figure 8 is similar to Figure 7 except that the matrix is split up in a different way and shows the four different experiential contexts that the GEP can capture.
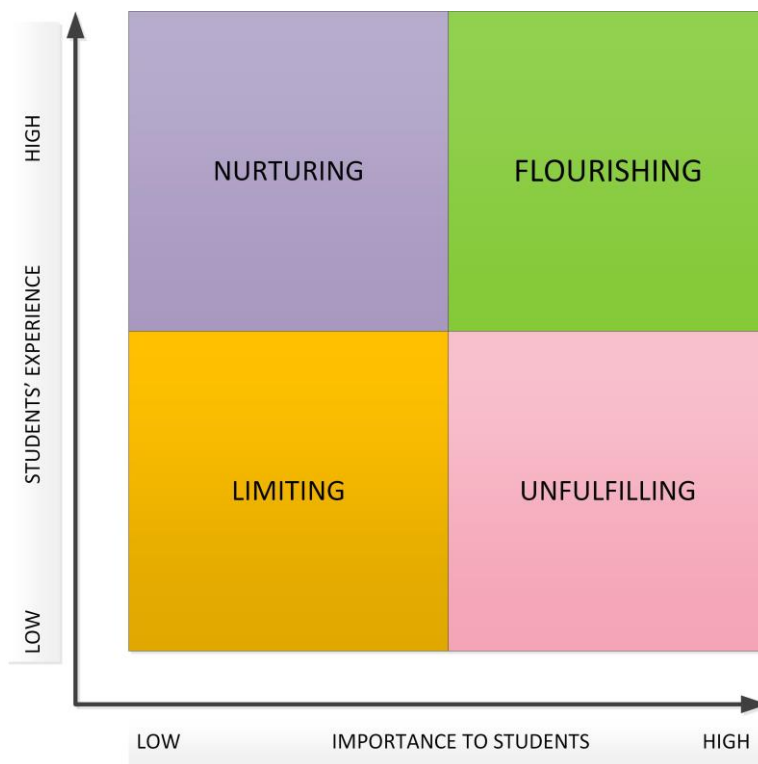
Fig. 8: The GAP-Matrix and its four quadrants

The two contexts that reflect high gap situations are 'nurturing' and 'unfulfilling'. The 'nurturing context' is positive in terms of students' actual experiences, but their desire for global graduate skills are low. The 'unfulfilling context', in contrast, is positive in terms of students' level of desire, but their actual experiences do not meet their desires, hence resulting in dissatisfaction. For these two high gap situations, HEIs need to address the weaker area, student values/desires for a 'nurturing context' and student experience for a 'unfulfilling context'.

The other two contexts, 'limiting' and 'flourishing' are positive in terms of minimal gap and hence would yield high student satisfaction ratings. However, in terms of developing 'global graduates', the 'limiting' context is highly problematic because students have low levels of desire and they also experience little that helps prepare them for working in a global environment. HEIs would need to take steps to address both aspects if they want to nurture Global Graduates and move towards greater levels of Community Internationalisation.

The 'flourishing context' is the most positive one – both importance and actual experience ratings are high. Thus the percentage of students' scores that fall into the 'flourishing' quadrant can be used as an indicator of the extent to which Community Internationalisation is being achieved.

5.   Implementation Planning: Response planning through the GEP

The GEP is a tool for supporting data-driven decision-making. Senior managers can plan their responses to the GEP data in a number of ways, including the following:

a. Benchmarking of degree of Community Internationalisation
    An HEI can benchmark its degree of Community Internationalisation by examining the percentage of student ratings that fall into the 'flourishing' quadrant, both overall and by category. They can compare their scores across categories and/or with other institutions, and set themselves targets.

b. Diagnostic analysis of degree of Community Integration
    Focusing on the Social Integration and Academic Integration data, senior managers can diagnose the level of social and academic integration among its diverse student body. They can explore their strengths and weaknesses in each of these elements for the HEI as a whole, as well as in relation to different sections of the community, such as by level of study, by department, by degree programme, by geographical region, by nationality, and so on. The open comments can offer additional rich insights.

    Social and academic integration can be particularly problematic when there are large cohorts of students of the same nationality on a particular programme, and they can also occur when there is a significant change in the programme cohort as a result of new intakes mid-stream, such as through transnational education arrangements or other reasons.

c. Diagnostic analysis of degree of Global Graduate preparation
    Focusing on Communication Skills, Foreign Language Skills and Global Opportunities and Support data, senior managers can identify the extent to which students' educational experiences are preparing them for a globalising world of work. The three components can be analysed individually, as well as in combination. For example, while they all contribute to the fostering of Global Graduates, the Global Opportunities and Support component focuses explicitly on preparation for a globalised world of work, and thus provides a valuable careers and employability perspective. As with Community Integration data, these components can be analysed for the HEI as a whole, as well as in relation to different sections of the student body, such as by level of study, by department, by degree programme, by geographical region, by nationality, and so on. Again, the open comments can offer additional rich insights.

d. Diagnostic analysis of the most critical issues for students
    As explained in the previous section, another way of analysing the GEP data is to look at (a) the items that students rate as being the most important for them, and (b) the ones that display the largest gap between importance and experience. By considering them in conjunction, HEIs can select specific issues (that could come from several of the different components) that they feel are worthy of particular focus and intervention.

e. Diagnostic analysis of the areas with the largest percentage of disaffected students

Even when the majority of students are in the 'flourishing' quadrant, it is quite possible that a noticeable percentage will be in the dissatisfaction or stagnation quadrants. This can be seen, for example, from the distribution of ratings shown in Figure 9, using our pilot study data. The red dots show the ratings given by students on postgraduate taught programmes, and as can be seen, while many of them fall into the 'flourishing' quadrant, many of them also fall into the 'unfulfilling' quadrant and a few into the 'limiting' quadrant. It is important not to overlook the ratings of the minority viewpoints. On the one hand, they can be very detrimental to an HEI's reputation, if those students share their dissatisfaction on social media. This is particularly applicable to those in the 'unfulfilling' quadrant (bottom right). On the other, those in the 'limiting' quadrant (bottom left) may be less dissatisfied in that they do not regard the issue as important, yet if they are overlooked they may be denied the opportunity to develop skills that they may realise later (e.g. when they are finding it difficult to secure a job) are important.
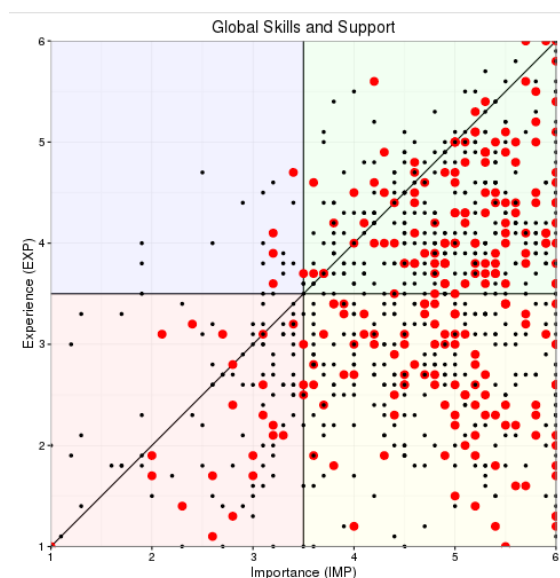

Fig. 9: Sample distribution of ratings of Global Opportunities and Support (Importance x Experience) given by postgraduate students

It should always be remembered, of course, that the GEP data simply informs. It is the decision-makers who need to decide what is strategically most appropriate for their institution at a given time. For example, if there are low scores in certain areas (e.g. lack of opportunities to learn foreign languages), they need to consider whether this is truly an issue that is strategically worthwhile for their institution or department to focus on at that time. The fine-grained information that they can obtain from all the GEP students' ratings, along with the open comments, provides them with ample evidence for considering the level of internationalisation achieved so far and the extent to which Global Graduate skills are being fostered, and hence whether or not the scarce resources are allocated suitably.

It is also useful to reiterate that what appears important or unimportant to students should also be subject to review. For example, if students feel it is not important to develop global graduate skills

and if they also experience it very little (i.e. they fall into the limiting quadrant – there is no gap, indicating that students are satisfied with the situation), we would recommend HEIs still consider addressing this situation, if they want their students to develop Global Graduate qualities.
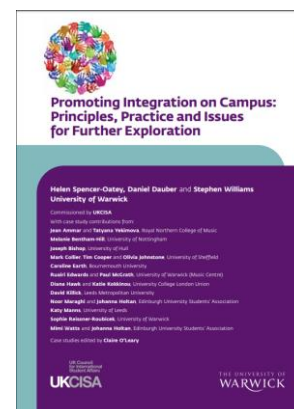
6. Implementation Planning: Interventions

The GEP is a diagnostic tool, designed for informing planning decisions. It does not offer tools or resources for interventions. However, we list here a few possibilities.

In terms of activities for promoting interaction (especially social interaction), the publication *Promoting Integration on campus* includes case studies from various British universities

The University of Warwick's Global People website also offers a number of open access resources, especially to help with the learning component of the Global People growth model. For example, it includes the following:

- Global people competency framework

- Global People 3R Reflect tool
  A tool with detailed prompts to help people note down and reflect on intercultural encounters/critical incidents.

- Global People 4S Stretch tool
  A tool with steps for adjusting behaviour, as needed, when living, studying and/or working in culturally unfamiliar contexts.

A training package, Working in Groups (e-Course with teacher's guide), is also available for purchase. It focuses particularly on helping students work more effectively in teams/groups the development of intercultural skills. Further information is available on the Global People website.

7. Implementation Planning: an Iterative Process

As we explained in Section 2, and illustrated in Figure 2, implementation planning is a cyclical process of diagnosis, response planning and intervention.

It should also be an iterative process, in that after one cycle of diagnostic analysis, response planning and intervention, the GEP ideally should be run again (e.g. in the following academic year) to evaluate the success of the first round of implementation. This iterative, cyclical process can continue on an ongoing basis, with response planning and interventions on each iteration focusing on the issues of key strategic importance at any particular juncture.

8. Further information

The GEP is licenced to *i-graduate*, the company that runs the well-known *(International) Student Barometer* survey.

This handbook has described the student version of the GEP. There is now a staff version, also licenced to *i-graduate.*

For further information about the GEP and opportunities for running it at your institution, please contact *i-graduate:*

Jessica Howlett, Email: Jessica.howlett@i-graduate.org

The authors

Professor Helen Spencer-Oatey is Professor in the Centre for Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick. Her research focuses on international education and intercultural interaction.

Dr Daniel Dauber is Associate Professor in the Centre for Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick. His research focuses on organizational culture and international education.

Footnotes and References

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