

Project Report ‘Developing Students Intercultural Competences’ 30.05.17

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Project Outcomes:

1. Students equipped with intercultural competences, which will better prepare them for the complexities of changing, globalised professional and social environments
2. Developed student and staff awareness of the relevance of intercultural competences
3. Contributed to student engagement and retention by developing their intercultural competences during their academic studies

Relevance for SDU’s 2020 internationalisation strategy

SDU is committed to increasing numbers of international staff and students but this does not of itself elicit intercultural skills and competences, which are integral to team-work and collaborative learning (Killick, 2015; Leask, 2009). Therefore, this project’s objectives were aligned with the skills’ need identified in SDU’s 2020 Strategy: as ‘the university aims to attract more students and researchers from abroad...it is important that all the university’s **staff and students have the skills necessary to handle cultural and linguistic diversity**’ (Strategy 2020, p.14).

Project Design

At the behest of Project Leader, Hjørdis Albrektsen, we offered an Introductory suite of workshops and consultancies on ‘Internationalising the Curriculum’ (ITC) (February-May 2016) for teachers and study leaders. Informed by participants’ interests and ITC practices at other international universities, we launched the intercultural competences project in October 2016, which led to this diverse array of pedagogic ITC projects:

Developing Students Intercultural Competences Projects – 2016-2017					
Project Leaders	Dept. Faculty Campus	Project Title	Target Group Prog. or Course	Project Activity	Project Outcomes
Zheng (Grace) Ma Associate Professor - Project coordinator Asia, Center for Energy Informatics	MMMI, TEK, Odense	<i>Flipped Learning Approach to Intercultural Competences</i>	Students - BSc Software Engineering, Course: Cross-Cultural Matters (CMM)	Integrate flipped learning activity with videos from industry, to add authenticity to the CMM course	Flipped learning activity developed for, Autumn 2018
Grace’s project aim: ‘The CMM is developed in response to software industries saying they need employees (software engineers) to understand and be able to manage the cross-cultural environment. I wanted to find ways to make this meaningful for the students so they see the relevance for now and when they get jobs.’					
Søren Jensen Lecturer in Technology and Innovation	ITI (Institut for Teknologi og Innovation), TEK, Odense	<i>Preparing engineering students for working in the global workplace</i>	Teachers -Project Development and Innovation BSc/MSc and Diplomingeniør i Integreret Design	Workshop: Facilitating intercultural group work and integrating international perspectives	1.Inspired 8 teachers 2.Kick-started 3 year plan to internationalise the curriculum
Søren’s project aim: ‘On average the IDE section at TEK sends approximately 50 % of a cohort of engineering students abroad for an exchange semester. This project aims at dealing with the 50 % of the students who stay at home and how we can activate the incoming exchange students in the internationalisation of the home students. Moreover, we would like to develop a framework of progressive steps during the first 4 semesters where international understanding is incorporated in the courses and projectwork.					
Marianne Ankjær Study Leader – MSc in Web Communication	Department of Design and Communication, Hum, Kolding	<i>Successful student integration across cultures</i>	Teachers and Students - MSc in Web Communication	1.Teachers Workshop: Facilitating intercultural group work and developing authentic tasks 2.Add intercultural group-work session for students	1.Inspired 11 teachers 2.Programme team integrating intercultural group work and authentic tasks in courses. 3. Danish and international students work effectively in intercultural study groups
Marianne’s project aim: ‘The MSc in Web Communication will be open to international students from Sept 2018, and I want to ensure all students on the programme benefit from an internationalised curriculum so they can learn and study together well in mixed cultural groups.’					

Hanne Kaae Kristensen Associate Professor - Clinical Research	Department of Clinical Research SUND, Odense	<i>Occupational science in Scandinavian contexts – assignment in the master programme of occupational therapy</i>	Students: MA in Occupational Therapy – in collaboration with students from the MA in Rehabilitation, NTNU, Trondheim, Norway	Consultancy support – embedding intercultural competences in studieordning	1.Revised studieordning 2.Practical ways to optimise intercultural learning between Danish and Norwegian students
Hanne's project aim: 'We decided to address SDU's internationalisation strategy by including an international, blended learning assignment by getting mixed groups of Danish and Norwegian students to appraise journal articles using Skype or Adobe Connect and Office 365.'					
Carola Inzunza Pedersen Assistant Lecturer - Oral Communication 2	Dept. of Language and Communication HUM, Odense	<i>Intercultural Communication focus from Session 1</i>	Students – BA Negot BA in business, language and culture (English, Spanish or German)	Consultancy support – integrating intercultural competences in course content; clarifying student expectations of course assessment	1.A course which aligns the learning outcomes and assessment. 2.More engaged students 3. Studieordning to be updated to explicitly address intercultural competences
Carola's project aim: 'I wanted to integrate activities to help the students develop and practice their intercultural communication competences across the course so they would be aware of its importance in business communication and be better prepared for the assessment which has an intercultural focus'.					
Donna-Marie Jørgensen (MSc IT Product Design student) Robb Mitchell Assistant Professor, Social Interaction Design	Department of Design HUM, Kolding	<i>Developing intercultural competences at SDU</i>	Cross faculty SDU students; student services; course teachers	Workshops 'Developing Students' Intercultural Competences' (22.02.17) 'Making group-work work: developing intercultural competences' (03.05.17)	1.Positive evaluation 2. Student initiated network and Facebook Page on Intercultural 2. Competences; Recognition of need for more student workshops on intercultural groupwork
Donna-Marie's project aim: 'I strongly believe that it is essential for all to recognize that SDU graduates not only leave with a solid education, but also to possess the relevant new learning and an awareness of working with various cultures in an international setting. I saw this project as a way to address this need.'					
Robb's project aim: 'To contribute, even in a small way, to friendly co-existence...perhaps it should go on tour'.					
Anna Galej and Anna Osiecka (Masters students), Caroline Pedersen (Bachelors student)	NAT and SAMF Odense	<i>Developing intercultural competences</i>	Cross faculty SDU students; student services; course teachers	Workshop Developing Intercultural Competences (27.03.17)	1.Positive evaluation 2.Recognition of need for more student workshops on intercultural groupwork
Anna's, Anna's and Caroline's project aims: 'We wanted to develop our own intercultural competences so we can work well in intercultural groups and to co-develop a workshop to benefit other students.'					

Concluding Remarks

This project evidences that there are diverse ways to embed ITC and intercultural competence development into courses, programmes and the informal curriculum. The 7 projects addressed the overall project goals with a particular focus on goals 1 and 2. It is evident that iterative consultancy facilitated a partnership approach between the educational consultants and the project partners which contributed to the positive outcomes and the prospect of sustainable changes at individual, course and programme level. Inspirational Talking Heads videos and action plans from each project, plus ITC resources will be shared via the project webpage itc.sdu.dk, available in June 2017. We would welcome further ITC collaboration requests and encourage new ITC project partners to contact us.