Engaging students as partners in global learning

RAISE Partnership SIG, Newcastle University
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Engaging students as partners in global learning

An Australian Learning & Teaching Fellowship (Jan 2017-Dec 2018) that aims to:

*develop a program of activities that inspires, supports and disseminates innovative approaches to engaging students and staff as partners in global learning*

- 13 projects in 4 Australian universities (UTAS, UQ, USyd, LaTrobe) in formal curriculum, co-curriculum, abroad and at home
Outline

1. What is global learning? Why important to engage students as partners in GL?
2. What did we do, and what you are doing/might do?
3. Some troubling questions, benefits & challenges
4. Propositions for (culturally inclusive) global learning
1. What is global learning? Why important to engage students as partners in GL?

SO WHAT?
What is global learning?

Global learning is a critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people’s lives and the earth’s sustainability.

Through global learning, students should

1) become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences,
2) seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities,
3) address the world’s most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably.

(Association of American Colleges & Universities 2015)
Designing for global learning through internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC)

- **Internationalisation of the curriculum is the incorporation of international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study** (Leask 2015)

- IoC is an intentional, purposeful process focused on the assurance of learning outcomes
Why rethink student engagement in global learning through partnerships?

(Internationalized) curricular and co-curricular programs, as designed and taught by staff are experienced and understood differently by different students

(e.g., Absalom & Vadura, 2006; Arkoudis et al, 2010; Leask, 2009; Marginson & Sawir 2011; Pandian et al, 2016)
Students from diverse backgrounds can bring unique insights, but there is typically a failure ‘to translate their presence into the exceptionally valuable and hitherto unappreciated educational resource it could be’


SaP is a process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to the conceptualisation, decision-making, and practice of teaching and learning

(Cook-Sather, Bovill & Felton 2014, p.p. 6-7).

puts reciprocal learning at the heart of the relationship, and fosters trust, risk, inter-dependence and agency.

(Healey, Flint & Harrington 2014, p.7)
The concept of ‘listening to the student voice’ – implicitly if not deliberatively – supports the perspective of student as ‘consumer’ whereas ‘students as change agents’ explicitly supports a view of the student as ‘active collaborator’ and ‘co-producer’, with the potential for transformation. (Dunne & Zandstra, 2011, p.4).

What is ‘students as partners’ aka, change agents, co-creators, co-designers ...

Rather than simply consuming the final product of someone else’s labor students and teachers [and other staff] are involved with the entire process of production [of new understandings and practices] (Neary, 2010, p. 6).
2. How we imagined & developed ethical, inclusive partnerships in global learning. And you?
Types of roles – depth of engagement (Dunne & Zandstra 2011).

Exclusive - Small number of select students

Inclusive - All students

Who partners, and in what ways

Students as evaluators

Students as change agents

Students as co-creators

Students as participants

Access to roles – breadth of engagement
Who actually participates?
1. Mostly small scale (1-5 students)
2. Risks 'prioritizing voices that are already privileged and engaged'

Some troubling questions ...

1. Questions of **culture**: Is the concept of SaP culturally blind, or culturally bounded? How does it/can it ‘translate’ across cultures?

2. Questions of **access and equity**: Is it possible to engage a whole cohort of culturally (and otherwise) diverse students as partners? If so, how? If not ...?

3. Questions of **epistemology**: What is the nature of students’ (cultural/linguistic) expertise, and how can (culturally) diverse students and staff learn from each other?

4. Questions of **power**: What does a ‘partnership’ mean, or what might it mean to staff and students (from different cultural linguistic backgrounds)? How is power interpreted? Can we/should we re-negotiate power in these relationships?

5. Questions of **imagination**: Given the commodification of (international) education, (how) can we - staff and students - imagine another way of talking about, doing and being learners and teachers in a globalised world?
The fellowship process – action research

- National Round table Survey
- National workshop AR cycle Survey
- Virtual CoP connecting project CoPs, Local workshops, Blog, Works in Progress
- Symposium Survey
- Analysis, reflection Narrative interviews
**How** – The process of engaging students as partners in GL
Adapted from B. Leask’s IoC process model [http://www.ioc.global/docs/IoC-brochure.pdf](http://www.ioc.global/docs/IoC-brochure.pdf)

![Diagram](image-url)
Examples of how student-staff partnerships in GL developed

http://www.utas.edu.au/engaging-students/case-studies-

**Minimal participation - Students as evaluators**

- **Business**
  - 'WeChat' project (USyd, Stanway
  - Student consultants (UTAS, Schonell et al)

- **Life Sciences (UTAS, Edwards et al)**
  - Inclusive
  - SaP in prac design & assessment

**Exclusive**

- **Health Sciences (UQ, Turpin et al)**
  - Co-designing IoC in all programs

**Inclusive**

- **Occ Therapy (La Trobe)**
  - Co-designing capstone project
  - Focus on GL

**Maximum participation - Students as co-creators**
Discussion

• Are you already engaging with students and staff in global learning? Or could you? How?

• If you are engaged in other SaP projects, how culturally inclusive are those projects? What opportunities are there to include some aspects of global learning?

Through global learning, students should

1) become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences,

2) seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities,

3) address the world’s most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably.
3. Benefits and challenges
Impact on project participants

**Students**
- Enjoyment!
- Empowerment, ownership of learning, increased agency, self-efficacy
- Increased understanding & interest in: GL, lived realities of (culturally) other students, teachers’ perspectives/lived realities
- Meta-learning & employability

**Staff**
- Enjoyment!
- Empowerment & ownership of their teaching/curriculum
- Increased understanding & interest in GL/IoC, students’ perspectives/lived realities
- Increased excitement about, commitment to IoC and to SaP

Also see: Mapstone-Mercer et al 2017; Curran 2017; Cook Sather 2008)
Returning to those troubling questions ... 

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4. **Questions of power**: What does a ‘partnership’ mean, or what might it mean to staff and students (from different cultural linguistic backgrounds)? How is power interpreted? Can we/should we re-negotiate power in these relationships?

5. **Questions of imagination**: Given the commodification of (international) education, (how) can we - staff and students - imagine another way of talking about, doing and being learners and teachers in a globalised world?
**Culture**: What happens when people with diverse cultural-linguistic constructs are invited into SaP conversations?

- Reframing SaP values

Developed during an interactive discursive process at HERDSA Conference 2017 (Chang, Crawford, Green, Hong, Theseira, Vu).

Also see Cook-Sather et al 2014, Healey et al 2014
Further reflections on culture & pedagogy

Although the term ‘students as partners’ is quite new, it seems to me that the ideas that underpin it are much older. Throughout my schooling in China, I was rarely given opportunities to have a say on what I wanted and should learn. I never thought about it because our educational system is not designed to question the authorities. It did not seem to foster critical thinking. Most importantly, it was: ‘Pass the exam!’

Does this mean that international – or at least Chinese students – will be reluctant to ‘buy’ the idea of SaP? No!

When I think back on my education in China, I realise that I was always an active participant. I took positions, such as teachers’ student advisor [in my maths class] proving feedback about how the class went and suggesting what exercises could be helpful, based on the pace of the learning... In becoming involved in SaP practices in Australia, I have understood that my school maths teacher was actually practicing an advanced teaching strategy; that is, giving students the chance to produce knowledge rather than just consume it.

Coco Bu, Engaging students as partners in global learning blog
https://blogs.utas.edu.au/engaging-students/
Types of roles – **depth** of engagement (Dunne & Zandstra 2011).

- **Exclusive** - Small number of select students
  - 5 projects

- **Inclusive** - All students
  - 1 project
  - Feedback

- **Students as evaluators**
- **Students as participants**
- **Students as co-creators**
- **Students as change agents**

Access and equity? Who partners, and in what ways
Questions of epistemology

We've [lecturer and students] come to [GL] a bit more of an equal I think, because I'm learning as much from them as what they're learning from me. Whereas if it was in a research context, there's still all of my background - not to be arrogant or anything - but I'd have the depth of knowledge that they [students] wouldn't necessarily have. Whereas with this, I'm learning as well - we are all students in some respects. Their interpretations [of intercultural experiences during a field trip to Sri Lanka] might be quite different to mine as well. So it feels like mutual discovery. From an educational point of view, my understanding has broadened out. Before this, internationalisation of the curriculum was a bit of a term – it had no depth to me. I've got a little bit more of a sense that there's a whole stack that I don't know.

Lecturer, Science
It throws the notion of what it means to be a student or a lecturer [faculty] on its head. For me, it’s been a real shift – a paradigm shift. Once I was focused on the learning outcomes and knowing the best way to get there was my job. Now I see there are so many ways to get there. It is a negotiated process. I see myself as a negotiator, a facilitator of affable conversations. I have come to realise that there is no one right way to be a student or lecturer. There are multiple ways. Working in partnership has allowed me to say ‘this is who I am’ and the students to do the same.
We are no longer students just sitting in a lecture listening to the lecturer and doing the assignments assigned to us. We have autonomy and staff have autonomy too. We are solving problems together. It is a challenge. We need to work out how to navigate the partnership so we don’t overtake each other and so we can all contribute to our maximum capacities.

Green, Engaging students as partners in global learning (unpublished)
SaP as an identity and power shifting practice

Partnership can be incredibly disruptive in the way that it challenges and blurs the boundaries and assumptions that underpin the traditionally hierarchical space of teaching and learning (Mercer-Mapstone & Mercer 2017).
Imagination, and its limits? Common themes across projects

Staff & students agreed that

- Outcomes were more imaginative and qualitatively better than outcomes that either group would have conceptualised on their own

- Co-design should be limited in formal curriculum – no co-design of assessment or learning outcomes: *There is scope to involve students in some aspects of curriculum design, but not assessment* (also Matthews et al 2017; Murphy et al 2017)

- But – SaPGL projects covered full spectrum of engagement in curriculum design, inc. assessment
Some challenges

• All partnerships take time – relatively short ‘student life cycle’ – culturally inclusive partnerships may take longer
• Partnerships in large classes are more challenging
• Limitations imposed by requirements of professional accreditation, institutional policies, practices, deadlines
• Assessment is ‘high stakes’ - students’ varying capacity for risk-taking
• Institutions’ ultimate responsibility for assuring learning (assessment)
• Resistance – students and other teaching staff; SaP challenges ‘students as customers/curriculum as product’
Discussion

• What are/would be the benefits and challenges in engaging with students and staff as partners (in global learning)?

• What are your thoughts /experiences of the troubling questions of access & equity, culture, epistemology, power, and imagination/resistance?
What makes partnerships in global learning work?

1. Fostering inclusive partnerships

2. Nurturing power sharing relationships through dialogue and reflection – recognising different expertise

3. Accepting partnership as a process with uncertain outcomes

4. Engaging in ethical partnerships – ‘SaP as ethic of reciprocity’ – ensuring all receive meaningful recognition & reward

5. Enacting partnership for transformation – individual, disciplinary, institutional
   • (Matthews 2017; also Bryson et al 2016; Cook-Sather & Felton 2017)
What makes partnerships in global learning work?

6. Recognising our cultural ignorance (Singh 2010)
7. Creating cultural safety in shared learning spaces (Williams 1999)
8. Welcoming, sharing and playing with new cultural-linguistic constructs – ‘manaakitanga’
9. Discussing and co-developing shared values and expectations through disciplined, ‘affable’ conversations (Appiah 2007)
Further information

Fellowship Website http://www.utas.edu.au/engaging-students


Contact Wendy Green for further details w.j.green@utas.edu.au
References


References


• Matthews, K., Groenendijk, L., Chunduri, P. (2017). We want to be more involved: Student perceptions of students as partners across the degree program curriculum. International Journal for Students as Partners. 1 (2), 1-16.


• Murphy, R., Nixon, S., Brooman, S., Fearon, D. (2017). I am wary of giving too much power to students': Addressing the ‘but’ in the principle of staff-student partnership. International Journal for Students as Partners. 1 (1), 1-16