Birgit Wolf, Tobias Schmohl, Larisa Buhin, Michael Stricker (Eds.)

From Splendid Isolation to Global Engagement

Exploring Internationalization in Higher Education

6 | TeachingXchange

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Editors of the "TeachingXchange" Series

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The individual publications, which are linked to a volume under one topic, are to be understood as examples of implementation or contributions to the discourse on subject-related or higher education didactics by the authors. Practically reflected essays can be published that seek theoretical connections to current educational science concepts, models or discourses. In addition, contributions are included that reflect on and examine one's own teaching practice using observational forms of research.

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From Splendid Isolation to Global Engagement: Reflecting Global and Domestic Changes

Foreword

Larry Moneta

Studies indicate that nearly 6 million students enroll in colleges and universities outside their home countries[1]. While a relatively small percentage of the overall college student body of approximately 225 million, the impact of international students' presence at institutions of higher education is significant. Every aspect of the college experience offers the opportunity to engage international students as learners or, conversely, to widen the divide between their domestic student counterparts. For an international student, simply navigating institutional housing, dining, healthcare, and recreational processes can be daunting and discouraging. Fortunately, many institutions offer support through dedicated offices and services directed specifically at addressing these needs. However, admitting international students into a college or university hardly ensures a truly integrative and engaging experience - one where international and domestic students authentically learn from each other's experiences and environments.

As uncomfortable as it may be for international students to adapt to the cultural, logistical, and educational differences associated with study in a foreign country, necessity is, according to the proverb, the "mother of invention" requiring international students to adjust as needed, generally with some help from the institution, in order to survive and advance. Domestic students in most countries may avoid all forms of discomfort, often choosing paths of least resistance through their post-graduate studies and beyond. A truly global and internationally focused education stretches the mind, enables experiences beyond the sheltered norm and encourages exposure to alternate viewpoints, challenging conditions, and cultural diversity.

International and domestic students are often too sheltered from the life experiences of others. Both will benefit from understanding the plights of first-generation students, students with various immigration backgrounds, gendered perspectives, religious and racial differences, sexual orientation, and other identity characteristics. To be sure, designing a curriculum and pedagogical practices that can effectively introduce identity, cultural, and environmental differences spanning local and international perspectives is complex and daunting. Yet, it is this very challenge that makes this book and the work of Wolf, Schmohl, Buhin, and Stricker even more compelling.

Over my nearly 50-year career in higher education, both as a faculty member and an administrator, I've rarely seen effective approaches to truly internationalizing the

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1 https://timeassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/TIME_Association_International_Mobility_Report.pdf

collegiate experience. International students are generally expected to adjust to local rules and rituals with fairly significant disregard for confusing and stressful cultural conditions and expectations. As a result, international students often bond only with other international students and avoid or are uninvited to connect with domestic students.

Equally suboptimal are the international exposure and content offered to domestic students. For those who can and opt to study abroad for a semester or two, the international experience can be meaningful and illuminating. This is especially true for students who seek opportunities outside their comfort zones and choose international venues where culture, history, and conditions require substantial acculturation and reconditioning. Unfortunately, educational tourism often influences the choices of host countries and institutions.

Internationalizing a curriculum requires heightened sensitivity to a host of critical factors. Global challenges and conditions influence pedagogy and course content; local political processes and contexts, including national immigration policies and conflicts as well as racial, gender, and religious conditions (among other identity concerns), influence teaching and learning; and regional circumstances and relationships (e. g., European, Pan-Asian, and Latin American distinctions) greatly influence educational priorities, perspectives, and environments. Thus, curricula and pedagogy are always in flux and subject to forces within a country's context and history as much as they are shaped by external influences such as visiting international students and scholars.

But nowhere is the opportunity for genuine internationalization of the learner more likely and currently under-realized than in the classroom. Internationalizing the classroom experience requires new and effective approaches to teaching and learning in both didactic and experiential forms. An internationalized curriculum should contextualize learner outcomes in varied and global circumstances. Problem-based learning that features cases and scenarios grounded in world-wide crises, conditions, and characteristics will transcend narrower local perspectives. Experiential elements of a course that embed students in multinational and international challenges should stimulate far greater creativity, reflection, and understanding of life beyond domestic borders and invite more intensive and fulfilling engagement with students who bring different experiences and expectations to the institution.

All this is to simply affirm the timeliness and critical need for this book. By focusing on the teaching mission of colleges and universities, Wolf, Schmohl, Buhin and Stricker have provided a set of chapters, each of which addresses key opportunities for genuine internationalization of instructional processes. Readers are invited to draw from these texts a variety of innovative approaches to inform curricular development, the integration of experiential techniques to complement formal teaching methodologies, and the application of technologies that permit both asynchronous and synchronous learning on a campus and everywhere in the world where their students are likely to be found.

This book will inspire enhanced approaches to assessment of learning outcomes, the development of competencies, and consideration of the multicultural, multilingual,

and identity diversity ever present in all classrooms. Suggestions are grounded in theory, offered with evidence of efficacy, and featured with considerable flexibility to meet the needs of institutions across the globe. The chapters address the internationalization of the liberal arts as well as of pre-professional education.

"From splendid isolation to global engagement: exploring internationalization in higher education" offers unambiguous advocacy. To avoid democratization and internationalization of the classroom is to stay rooted in outdated and ineffective models of teaching with diminished outcomes. For the next generation of leaders to be properly prepared for the challenges ahead—all of which have global implications—colleges and universities must dramatically alter their educational efforts. Wolf, Schmohl, Buhin and Stricker provide a roadmap and a wide variety of tools for innovation in teaching and learning, which will inspire institutional leaders and faculty to rise to the occasion.

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From Splendid Isolation to Global Engagement: Exploring Internationalization in Higher Education — A Comprehensive Perspective

BIRGIT WOLF, TOBIAS SCHMOHL, LARISA BUHIN & MICHAEL STRICKER

1 Introduction

1.1 The Evolution and Impact of Internationalization in Higher Education

In the modern academic milieu, internationalization has emerged as a vital aspect and objective within universities around the globe. Originating in the 1960s, this phenomenon has witnessed significant transformation, including the escalating recruitment of international students, the integration of global perspectives into curricula, and the expansion of research collaborations. These shifts have empowered students to tap into career opportunities overseas, thereby augmenting their employability and, for some, even serving as pathways to immigration (OECD, 2022).

In general terms, internationalization refers to the "infusion of an international or intercultural dimension into teaching, research, and service through a combination of a wide range of activities, policies, and procedures" (Knight, 1999, p. 15). As characterized by Teichler (2017), the concept includes, among others, the following six main aspects: the global transfer of knowledge through various media; physical mobility across countries involving students and staff; international cooperation and communication among countries and educational institutions; international education and research fostering intercultural learning and understanding; international convergence and similarity; and the pursuit of international reputation and quality.

Teichler adds, however, that these classifications are not rigoros. For instance, the Bologna Process in Europe (Curaj et al., 2015) highlighted additional factors such as student mobility flows, internationalization as a catalyst for change in higher education, intercultural competence, strategic international cooperation, funding for internationalization, and a quality review of internationality. These aspects align with the OECD's (1999) definition of internationalization, which encapsulates the infusion of an international or intercultural dimension into a university's core functions such as teaching, research, and service.

Knight (2006) aptly distinguishes between *Internationalization Abroad (IA)* and *Internationalization at Home (IaH)*. IA refers to the mobility of students, faculty, and staff, whereas IaH signifies the process of diversifying and globalizing the curriculum and pedagogy in order to appeal to both international and non-traditional domestic students (Sa & Serpa, 2020). IA and IaH, while distinct, interact synergistically to enhance internationalization. For example, the internationalization of home curricula aug-

ments the experience of students studying within their countries while simultaneously attracting more international students.

The global crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for technology-supported activities (de Wit & Altbach, 2020), triggering the inception of a third paradigm, *Internationalization at a Distance (IaD)*:

> "a rising number of technology-supported activities have created new opportunities for university internationalization. For example, students can now remain 'at home' while using technology to study with an institution or program that is simultaneously located 'abroad'. We have conceptualized these activities as a new third category called Internationalization at a Distance" (Mittelmeier et al., 2020).

IaD encompasses all forms of cross-border education where teaching and learning processes need to be facilitated by technology because students, personnel, and institutional resources are geographically separated (Mittelmeier et al., 2020). The current discourse in this context is geared towards exploring the development of students' intercultural competence and its implications for online collaborative international learning pedagogy (Liu & Shirley, 2021).

1.2   Internationalization at Home and its Implications for Higher Education

Our discussion within this book focuses on *IaH*, which encompasses initiatives aimed at amplifying the international and intercultural dimensions of higher education within the domestic campus:

> "Internationalisation of the curriculum is the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning processes and support services of a program of study" (Leask, 2009, p. 209).

From our viewpoint, IaH extends to curricular and co-curricular activities such as introducing international themes in the curriculum, hosting international speakers, cultivating intercultural competencies, and collaborating with international partners in research and educational projects (de Wit, 2020). Given its potential to prepare students for becoming global citizens (Cottong et al., 2018), elevating institutional prestige, generating research, addressing global issues, and contributing to the internationalization of the local communities (Almeida et al, 2018), this manifestation of internationalization has gained strategic significance in higher education research, policy, and practice.

Leask (2015) and Beelen and Leask (2011) underscore that IaH should not be restricted solely to the presence of international students. Rather, it should be leveraged as an opportunity to cultivate diversity within the classroom by expanding the definition of culture to encompass elements such as gender and social class. This approach holds particular promise for institutions aspiring to promote IaH but lacking a substantial international student body.
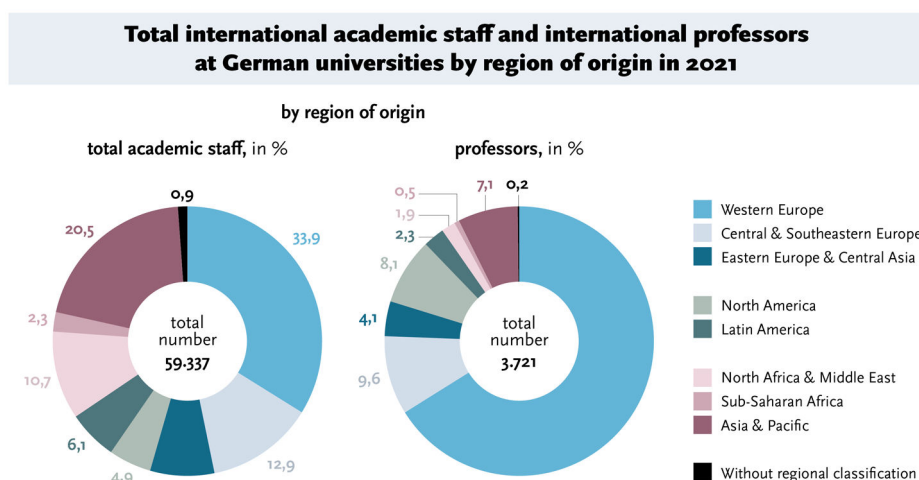
Empirical evidence illustrating the efficacy of IaH in fostering global, international, and intercultural (GII) competencies has been provided by Soria and Troisi (2013). Their study, conducted across nine large public research universities in the United States, demonstrates that IaH activities significantly amplify students' cross-

cultural and global competencies, thereby shaping them into globally competent graduates and citizens. Concurrently, Baldassar and Mckenzie (2016) advocate the integration of diverse pedagogical approaches in IaH activities to facilitate cross-cultural engagement, emphasizing cultural immersion, perspective-taking, critical reflection, and community involvement as instrumental in achieving the anticipated benefits of IaH.

The COVID-19 pandemic has paradoxically catalyzed *and* impeded IaH, inducing temporary reductions in mobility, increased use of teleconferencing, and modifications to curricula, pedagogy, and assessment (Jensen, Marinoni, & van't Land, 2022). These changes could potentially become permanent, fostering greater participation and diversity in higher education. Simultaneously, the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation poses substantial challenges to globalization, affecting cross-border flows of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, and ideas. The consequent implications for higher education continue to evolve.

2   Internationalization in German Higher Education: The Paradox of "splendid Isolation"

The term "Splendid Isolation", coined by Wildt (2013), a well-known expert on German higher education, aptly summarizes the prevailing condition in the country: despite a myriad of educational initiatives being undertaken, a tangible disconnect from the global pedagogical community exists. Supporting this assertion, staffing statistics from German universities (DAAD, 2023) reveal that the share of international staff in the total of 427,698 academics at German universities is a paltry 13.9 % (Fig. 1).

Total international academic staff and international professors at German universities by region of origin in 2021

by region of origin

total academic staff, in %

0,9
20,5
2,3
10,7
6,1
4,9
7,8
12,9
33,9
total number 59.337

professors, in %

0,5
1,9
2,3
8,1
7,1
0,2
4,1
9,6
66,2
total number 3.721

- Western Europe
- Central & Southeastern Europe
- Eastern Europe & Central Asia
- North America
- Latin America
- North Africa & Middle East
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Asia & Pacific
- Without regional classification

Figure 1: Figure based on data provided by the German Federal Statistical Office (university personnel statistics) and the data preparation in DAAD (2023, p. 17)

The proportion shrinks even further for foreign professorships: of the 59,337 academic and artistic personnel with foreign citizenship, a mere 7.4 % (3,721) are professors (Fig. 2).

International and german scientific staff at German universities in 2021

total scientific staff at German universities

| 59.337 | 427.698 |

■ 13.9 % from abroad

professors in Germany

| 50.260 |

3.726

■ 7.4 % from abroad

scientific staff that are professors

| 46.539 | 427.698 |

3.721

■ 0.87 % international professors
■ 10.9 % German professors
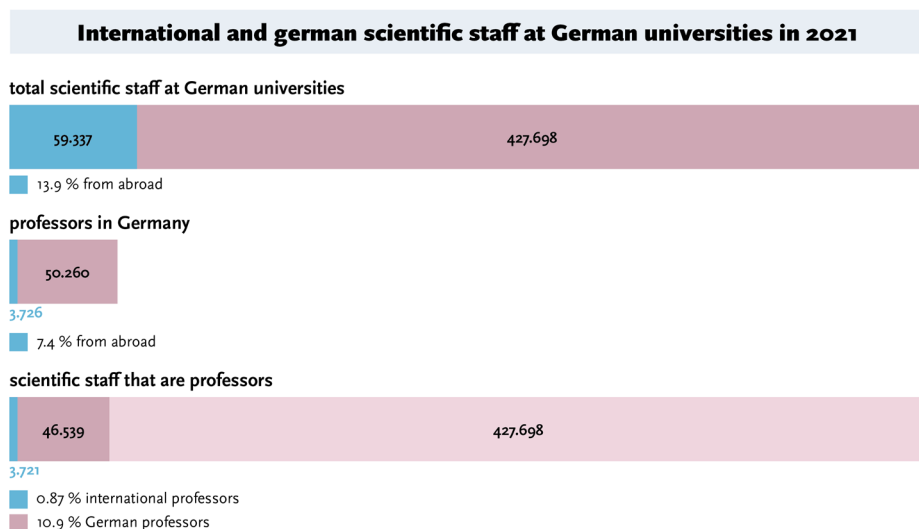
Figure 2: Figure based on data provided by the German Federal Statistical Office (university personnel statistics) and the data preparation in DAAD (2023, p. 17)

Additionally, the "international" staff turns out to be mainly from Western Europe, which is the primary region of origin for foreign academic employees, contributing 34 % of all foreign academic staff and 66 % of foreign professors in Germany. A significant number of these foreign academics hail from German-speaking countries such as Austria (19 %) and Switzerland (9 %).

This striking dearth of international pedagogical engagement stands in contrast to the ongoing trends of globalization and regionalization, which typically reshape national landscapes and inherently influence higher education systems (van der Hijden, 2014). This stark divergence between the nationally focused educational approach and the evolving global milieu, characterized by increased migration and a rising demand for international education, not only curtails the development of global citizenship and authentic intercultural exchanges but also constrains the potential benefits for universities and their increasingly diverse student communities.

3   The Evolving Role of Higher Education in Internationalization: A Deep Dive into Our Publication

Against this backdrop, our publication serves as a humble attempt to probe into the role of higher education in bolstering internationalization—more specifically: IaH—with an intention to magnify the global facet of the three central missions of higher

education: teaching, research, and societal service. Such integration culminates in the enhancement of education and research quality for all students and staff, thereby making a significant contribution to society (de Wit, 2020, p. ii). In this context, we find Hudzik's (2011) expansion of Knight's definition of "comprehensive internationalization" especially relevant as it encompasses the curriculum, the learning outcomes, and the *ethos* of higher education.

Our publication is divided into two interconnected domains. The first field scrutinizes responses to the changing and diverse classroom environment that results from IaH. These contributions focus on curriculum adaptations meant to cater to an increasingly student body (Sa & Serp. 2020), taking into account incoming international students as well as societal shifts such as immigration influx. The second area focuses on educational goals with an international outlook, particularly the development of intercultural and social competencies deemed crucial for higher education graduates and prospective global citizens.

The chapters in this book are primarily written by educators and researchers who strive to address the social dimension by adjusting their curricula and teaching methodologies in highly international and intercultural higher education institutions. We believe that the cross-disciplinary nature of the chapters will demonstrate that internationalization and interculturalism in the classroom are vital considerations across all academic fields.

As a community of educators, we share the conviction that higher education transcends the mere transmission of information and the facilitation of learning. It also has a growing duty to prepare a workforce capable of meeting the demands of an increasingly industrialized, technologically advanced, and globalized world. In response to this, higher education must keep pace with developments in various industrial and technological sectors.

In compiling the chapters in this book, we seek to foster a pioneering spirit of transformation and evolution in the sector of higher education, pinpointing ways to increase the accessibility and advantages of higher education to the wider public. It is incumbent upon educational institutions to not just educate but also to foster an inclusive environment advocating for equity, diversity, and responsiveness to local community needs. We argue that integrating internationalization across institutional structures and operations is crucial. By nurturing a campus culture that esteems and promotes intercultural exchange, the international potential of the student body can be fully realized, resulting in a more socially conscious and diverse university. We trust this book will offer readers insights and guidance on how to navigate the changing landscape of internationalized higher education at home and provide practical approaches to teaching and learning for future global citizens.

Part I: The Global Classroom: Embracing Diversity, Inclusivity, and Sustainability

In a world that is becoming increasingly globalized, education must equip students with the skills to navigate the complexities that accompany a diverse society. Conse-

quently, the first section of this book takes a broad look at the necessary transformations regarding teaching and learning practices within higher education. It underscores the importance of cultivating comprehensive viewpoints and the development of inclusive pedagogies and curricula to serve a diverse student body. Additionally, it sheds light on the importance of incorporating sustainability studies to help students confront the challenges that come with crossing cultural, national, and geographical boundaries.

The contribution by **O'Rourke and Kreber** delves into the experiences of Indian students in Canada. The authors conducted surveys and semi-structured interviews to gain insights into these students' experiences in the Canadian university system. The authors' findings underscore the importance of understanding diverse perspectives and adapting teaching and learning practices accordingly. Such practices will foster a more inclusive and accommodating environment for an international student body.

Bengtsen's work further emphasizes the need to adapt educational practices and foster inclusivity. His focus is on doctoral education, specifically the requirement for higher education to produce socially responsible researchers. Bengtsen's discussion brings attention to the societal demands and globalization agendas that are shaping PhD programs and doctoral education.

Crawford's work echoes the sentiments shared by Bengtsen and stresses the need for education to cultivate well-rounded, socially responsible individuals. His focus is on the value of humanities education within the context of a liberal arts approach. The article underscores the need for international and culturally diverse education and the importance of adapting course outcomes to multicultural settings.

Charry Roje's article explores the cultural implications of assessment privacy, an area often overlooked in discussions of intercultural learning. The investigation emphasizes the importance of understanding and adapting educational practices to accommodate cultural differences, ultimately creating an inclusive learning environment.

Fahrner, Wolf, and Schmieder's research provides empirical data on the shift from on-campus to online teaching and learning in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their findings suggest that well-planned and utilized technical environments may positively affect students' competence development. The authors also highlight the importance of fostering interdisciplinary skills to empower students to solve problems independently and collaboratively.

Sonnleitner and Ruffeis examine the importance of formative assessment in online and blended learning environments, a topic of great relevance in the digital age. Their work explores the significance of Bloom's taxonomy and constructive alignment in facilitating a more student-centered and competency-based approach to teaching and learning.

Stricker and Burow demonstrate how academic writing assistance can further enhance teaching and learning practices in higher education. Their contribution presents a course titled "Techniques of Academic Work" (TAW), which aids students in their introductory period by teaching academic writing skills.

Lastly, **Božinović and Havelka Meštrović** address the role of learning strategies in language acquisition within multicultural and multilingual learning environments. Their work emphasizes the importance of educators being familiar with the necessary skills and methods for successful language teaching in a multicultural setting.

Taken together, these chapters present a comprehensive view of the various strategies needed to internationalize higher education. They discuss the significance of inclusive pedagogies, the understanding of diverse perspectives, and the adaptation of teaching and learning practices to meet the needs of a diverse student body in an increasingly globalized world.

Part II: Training Global Citizens: Integration of Multicultural and International Dimensions into the Curriculum

The increasingly globalized nature of our contemporary society calls for an inclusive and internationalized higher education system that equips students with the necessary multicultural competencies. Our authors have risen to this challenge. In this section, they present theoretical approaches, empirical data, and their own experiences as instructors in higher education.

Buhin and Moskovits lay the groundwork, advocating for education steeped in liberation pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and cultural humility. They have developed courses emphasizing critical thinking and bias identification in students. These courses, with their focus on culturally relevant literature and disclosure of assessment methods, contribute to a lively and encouraging learning environment.

In the spirit of internationalizing education, **Lüdeke and Lüdeke** further build upon this concept by calling attention to the importance of language education in the context of management careers. Noting the significance of students' early decisions regarding their foreign language specializations, they show how language acquisition can expand the cultural understanding crucial to a global workforce.

The theme of practical skill development is central to our discussions. **Čondić-Jurkić** presents an innovative approach: a semester-long valuation project integrated into finance education. Echoing Buhin and Moskovits' focus on critical thinking, Čondić-Jurkić's project is designed to encourage students to hone the same skill, applied to a real-world business context. Additionally, it links with Lüdeke and Lüdeke's emphasis on career preparation by offering students insight into potential career paths.

Despite these innovative approaches, challenges persist. **Theiss-Abendroth** details one such issue, discussing the difficulties in integrating psychoanalysis into higher education. Despite the complexity and controversy surrounding the field, Theiss-Abendroth aligns with our earlier authors, emphasizing the need for open dialogue and comprehensive understanding, a thread of thought that can be found in all of the contributions.

Biniok presents an innovative experiential training program, the EVe-LaB Training Program. Much like Čondić-Jurkić's valuation project, this program employs hands-on learning. Aligning with Theiss-Abendroth's approach, Biniok's program also necessitates deep understanding and application of a field of knowledge—in this case, teacher training—to ensure effective instruction.

As we redefine our traditional learning spaces, **Schmidt & Vejzagić** provide an example from RIT Croatia. They repurpose a classic introductory Financial Accounting course using a flipped classroom model, connecting back to the theme of innovative instruction and pedagogical strategies presented in previous contributions, thus further enriching the discourse on internationalizing higher education.

Finally, **Lüdeke and Brock** explore the impact of varied instructional strategies in business education. Building on the interconnected themes of practical application and critical thinking seen in Čondić-Jurkić's contribution, Lüdeke and Brock examine how deep familiarity with business practices can impact student perception and evaluation.

The synergy among these diverse yet interconnected perspectives illuminates our understanding of internationalizing higher education. Each contribution emphasizes the need for inclusive education that integrates theoretical knowledge with practical skills, innovative pedagogical strategies, and a rich understanding of multicultural competencies to prepare students for a globally interconnected workforce.

4   Conclusion

As we prepared this book and dug deeper into the various contributions, it became evident to us that IaH is not merely a passing trend but a paradigm shift that is reshaping the landscape of higher education. This shift is driven by the realization that in our increasingly interconnected world, it is essential for students to develop global competencies and intercultural understanding.

As a strategy, IaH aims to incorporate an international and intercultural dimension into the curriculum and pedagogy of institutions of higher education. This strategy enables all students to gain international exposure and develop global competencies, not just those who can afford to study abroad. It is a response to the requirement that higher education prepare students for a globalized workforce and promote global citizenship (Leask, 2015).

Implementing IaH necessitates novel pedagogical approaches capable of effectively integrating international and intercultural dimensions into the curriculum. This book's contributions demonstrate that these approaches should aim to foster students' intercultural competencies, global awareness, and understanding of global issues.

The advantages of IaH are numerous. It improves educational quality by giving students a global perspective and cultivating intercultural competencies that prepare them for a globalized workforce. Furthermore, it contributes to the internationalization of the local community and improves the international reputation of higher education institutions (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

However, implementing IaH may also lead to new obstacles. For one, it necessitates a shift in institutional culture, modifications to the curriculum and pedagogy, and investments in infrastructure and resources. In addition, successful long-term implementation of IaH depends on the dedication and support of all stakeholders, including faculty, students, and administrators (Leask, 2015).

After editing this book, we believe that IaH is an essential response to the need for higher education to prepare students for a globalized workforce and to foster global citizenship. Successful implementation of IaH entails novel pedagogical approaches as well as the commitment and support of all stakeholders. Despite the difficulties, however, the advantages of IaH far outweigh the disadvantages, making it a worthwhile investment for higher education institutions.

We hope that this book contributes to this development by providing inspiration and insight that may enhance institutional prestige, generate research that addresses global issues, help students become global citizens, and promote the internationalization of local communities. Last, but not least, we as the editors, would like to thank our authors for their contributions and flexibility in meeting the special requirements of a double-blind review process. It has been a great pleasure working on this project with so many enthusiastic experts. Having mentioned this, we would of course particularly like to thank the scientific reviewers who supported the quality assurance for this publication by taking part in this double-blind review process.

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The Global Classroom

Understanding Implications and Considerations for International Students at a Canadian University

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1 Introduction

Increasing student mobility and thereby attracting students from other countries is one among many strategies employed in the effort to internationalize higher education (Knight, 2012). The motivations of the host country and institution for recruiting international students are often many, varied, and at times conflicting. It has been argued that these efforts are increasingly driven by economic considerations, but academic, social/cultural, ethical, and political reasons are not uncommon either (Kreber, 2009). Arguments in favor of attracting international students therefore range from seeking to include a global perspective into courses and programs of study to increasing diversity on campus and in the wider local community, to wanting to help the home country innovate and develop, and to the hope of enhancing intercultural understanding among graduates and society. An additional motivation for international student recruitment, especially at graduate and doctoral levels, is to secure the required brain power to strengthen one's own country's economic, social, and cultural development, as well as its competitiveness in a global knowledge economy, through research (Conference Board of Canada, 2018). The economic rationale obviously features strongly at this level.

In a relatively sparsely populated region such as Cape Breton (Canada), which over many years has experienced a steady decline in domestic students and a slowly diversifying economy (following the decline of a formerly booming industry based in coal and steel), attracting international students is often seen as a beacon of hope for a more prosperous future. In a context where government funding of public universities is based on student enrollment, where gradual increases in annual transfer payments to universities have not kept pace with inflation, and where tuition fees make up a substantial proportion of an institution's annual budget, many universities see the recruitment of more students—including international students—as imperative, not just for development but often for sheer survival. In this article, we report on a small study grounded in survey and interview data collected from international students and their instructors at Cape Breton University (CBU), a small, primarily undergraduate institution in Atlantic Canada that doubled its enrollment over the past five years, largely through the recruitment of international students. Our focus is on students from India,

who make up the largest proportion of international students at Canadian postsecondary institutions such as CBU.

The article is organized into four sections. We begin by reporting some pertinent statistics on international students in Canada and providing an overview of Cape Breton University and its region, both of which are relevant for the subsequent discussion. We then introduce the study's design, followed by its major findings. Here, we focus on international students' academic needs and challenges, pedagogical approaches employed by instructors, and attempts to internationalize curricula and assessment practices. We also report on the extent to which international students feel integrated with their international and domestic peers both inside and outside the classroom. We conclude with recommendations for instructors and institutions on how to best support international students and refine higher education programming and policy *for all students.*

2   Cape Breton University in Context

Canadian colleges and universities have experienced a substantial increase in international student enrollment, from 228,924 to 388,782 per year (an increase of 69.8 %) over five years. The vast majority of international students (46 %) are from India (Erudera, 2022). Most international students in Canada (65 %) are enrolled at universities, most of them pursuing a bachelor's degree or a two-year diploma program. The majority of international students in Canada study engineering, business, administration, or are enrolled in health-related programs (Erudera, 2022). In 2021, there were 11,251 international students in the Province of Nova Scotia in Atlantic Canada, well over half of whom were from India and China (MPHEC, 2021). With nearly 62 % of students at Cape Breton University (CBU) being international in 2021, CBU has had by far the greatest percentage of international students among Nova Scotian universities over the past few years; at the other nine universities, the percentage of international students ranges from 3.5 % to 28.8 % (MPHEC, 2021).

CBU is located on an island of only 130,000 inhabitants, which is connected to the mainland of Nova Scotia by a causeway. Although the entire population of Nova Scotia is only one million people, the province features ten degree-granting institutions, five of which are located in the famous port city and Nova Scotia's capital, Halifax.

Due to its many natural and cultural attractions, such as vast parks and impressive coastlines, the Bras D'Or Lake biosphere reserve, and numerous theater and music festivals, Cape Breton Island is a renowned tourist destination, especially during the summer months. However, just like the rest of Nova Scotia, Cape Breton is also characterized by substantial economic deprivation and significant inequalities in income across families. More than one-third of all families in Cape Breton live below the poverty line (Frank et al., 2020). Although going back as far as the 1950s under the name of *Xavier Junior College* (an offspring of Saint Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia), Cape Breton University, formerly known as the *College of Cape Breton* and later the