

# INTERNATIONALISATION AND INTERCULTURAL SKILLS: USING ROLE-PLAY SIMULATIONS TO BUILD BRIDGES OF TOLERANCE AND UNDERSTANDING

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*Although the notion of internationalisation does not have a settled meaning, its main theme focuses on enriching 'the international dimension' of the higher education experience. Internationalisation traditionally includes promoting student mobility and embedding international elements in existing curriculum. Yet, in order to achieve true internationalisation, teachers also need to consider how students develop intercultural skills. The literature indicates that it may be difficult to implement learning strategies that achieve these outcomes. In an attempt to fill this gap, this paper evaluates a project that the authors undertook, which utilised role-play simulations in order to build bridges of tolerance and understanding amongst a diverse student cohort. The project reflected an integrative approach that incorporated international elements into the existing curriculum. It was conducted in two stages, commencing with a pilot exercise in an undergraduate law subject taught to business students and concluding with a workshop designed to shed light on some of the challenges underscored by the pilot exercise. In particular, the workshop explored findings that role-play simulations were an effective tool in encouraging students to engage with each other at a disciplinary and personal level, but somewhat less effective in facilitating meaningful intercultural exchange. Both the pilot project and the workshop highlight the need for teachers to build on their role as intercultural facilitators and to innovate and explore all students' experiences of 'internationalisation'. Moreover, while educational institutions consider internationalisation to be one of their strengths, more work needs to be done to assist teachers in developing and implementing internationalisation of the curriculum at the subject, course and program levels.*

## I INTRODUCTION

In 2013, there were 526 932 enrolments by full-fee paying international students in Australia on a student visa. This represents a 2.6% increase on 2012 and compares with the average annual growth rate for international enrolments of 5.9% per year over the preceding ten years.<sup>1</sup> These

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<sup>1</sup> Austrade, *End of Year Summary of International Student Enrolment Data* (2013) Australian Trade Commission <<http://www.austrade.gov.au/Education/Student-Data/2013#.VIPO7kunqw0>>.

figures reflect a policy drive towards internationalising higher education, which has become an accepted feature of the Australian higher education landscape.<sup>2</sup>

The notion of internationalisation does not have a settled meaning. De Wit defines it in terms of ‘processes [that]...enhance the international dimension’ of learning in higher education.<sup>3</sup> Montgomery views the process as one that encourages students to develop intercultural skills that enable them to ‘work in an intercultural context’.<sup>4</sup> Internationalisation is sometimes confused with globalisation and vice versa.<sup>5</sup> Strictly speaking, globalisation occurs ‘without regard to national borders’.<sup>6</sup> In the context of higher education, globalisation could refer to the free and unregulated movement of students across the globe. By way of contrast, internationalisation, at least in a practical sense, predominately involves students moving from developing to developed countries in a process regulated by the developed countries.<sup>7</sup> In this paper the term ‘internationalisation’ is used as it more correctly reflects the backdrop to the project that is later discussed.

It is worth keeping in mind that there are arguments against, as well as in favour of, Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC). Arguments against internationalisation emphasise the danger of subjects adopting a superficial approach to the study of foreign or comparative legal systems, and distracting students from studying domestic regimes.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, arguments in favour of internationalisation note that comparative studies can actually assist students towards a better understanding of domestic regimes. Moreover, if students can relate to legal problems in different jurisdictional settings this can sharpen their problem-solving skills.<sup>9</sup> This paper argues that there are benefits to internationalisation and provides a case study as one means of promoting it.

It follows that, in a pragmatic sense internationalisation is reflected in the cross-border movement of students. However, this is not the only dimension to internationalisation.<sup>10</sup> An equally important component involves fostering interaction between local and international students so that each cohort has the opportunity to develop intercultural skills.<sup>11</sup> Commentators

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<sup>2</sup> Wing On Lee notes that in an increasingly globalised society, this is a world-wide trend: Wing On Lee, ‘Learning for the Future: The Emergence of Lifelong Learning and the Internationalisation Of Education as the Fourth Way?’ (2012) 11 *Educational Research for Policy and Practice* 53, 61.

<sup>3</sup> Hans De Wit, ‘Education and Globalization in Europe: Current Trends and Future Developments’ (1995) 1 (2) *Frontiers: the Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* 28, 28.

<sup>4</sup> Catherine Montgomery, ‘A Decade of Internationalisation, Has it Influenced Students’ Views of Cross-Cultural Group Work at University?’ (2009) 13(2) *Journal of Studies in International Education* 256, 256.

<sup>5</sup> Erlenawati Sawir, ‘Internationalisation of Higher Education Curriculum: the Contribution of International Students’ (2013) 11(3) *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 359, 361; Ulrich Teichler, ‘The Changing Debate on Internationalisation of Higher Education’ (2004) 48 *Higher Education*, 5, 7, 23.

<sup>6</sup> Adelle Blackett, ‘Globalization and Its Ambiguities: Implications for Law School Curricular Reform’ (1998-1999) 37 *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, 57, 61.

<sup>7</sup> Philip G Altbach and Jane Knight, ‘The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities’ (2007) 11 (3-4) *Journal of Studies in International Education* 290, 292.

<sup>8</sup> Vai Io Lo, ‘Before Competition and Beyond Complacency — The Internationalisation of Legal Education in Australia’ (2012) 1 *Legal Education Review* 3, 5–6.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Altbach and Knight, above n 7, 290, 292.

<sup>11</sup> Lori Hanson, ‘Global Citizenship, Global Health, and the Internationalization of Curriculum’ (2010) 14 (1) *Journal of Studies in International Education* 70, 72; Lindy McAllister et al, ‘Reflection in Intercultural

largely agree that the key to attaining intercultural skills lies in students developing respect and tolerance for each other.<sup>12</sup> This includes having the capacity to question one's own philosophies, ideals and assumptions as well as acknowledging that others may regard exchanges 'through different cultural lenses'.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, merely bringing two diverse cohorts of students together does not automatically lead to the acquisition of intercultural skills.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, early studies on the dynamics between local and international students concluded that students were reluctant to engage with those from other cultures. This illustrates the challenging nature of fostering intercultural skills.<sup>15</sup>

However, more recent literature notes that students are starting to see benefits in learning in a culturally-diverse environment.<sup>16</sup> In particular, graduates hope to attain transferable skills that prove advantageous in international employment markets.<sup>17</sup> This sentiment is shared by Australian universities whose graduate attribute and vision statements for teaching and learning reflect the strategic importance of 'international' competencies.<sup>18</sup> In order to foster the attainment of intercultural knowledge and skills, teachers need to take on the role of intercultural facilitators and incorporate intercultural activities into the learning process.<sup>19</sup> Internationalisation can then become focused on students' relationships with each other in an intercultural context.

This paper discusses two projects that the authors conducted in 2010-2012, focusing on the use of role-play simulation (RPS) as an enriching group work activity to help students develop intercultural skills. The projects reflect an *integrative* approach that incorporated international elements into the existing curriculum. It was an attempt to fill a gap, identified in the literature, between the objective of internationalisation and its achievement. The first project, which comprised the running of the RPS, was carried out pursuant to a Vice-Chancellor's learning and teaching grant from the University of Technology, Sydney.<sup>20</sup> The second project, involving a

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Learning: Examining the International Experience Through a Critical Incident Approach' (2006) 7 (3) *Reflective Practice* 367, 368.

<sup>12</sup> Betty Leask, 'Using Formal and Informal Curricula to Improve Interactions Between Home and International Students', (2009) 13(2) *Journal of Studies in International Education* 205, 205; see also Montgomery, above n 4.

<sup>13</sup> McAllister, et al, above n 11, 368.

<sup>14</sup> Leask, 'Using Formal and Informal Curricula to Improve Interactions Between Home and International Students', above n 12, 205; see also Montgomery, above n 4, 256.

<sup>15</sup> Karen Kimmel and Simone Volet, 'University Students' Perceptions of and Attitudes Towards Culturally Diverse Group Work: Does Context Matter?' (2010) *Journal of Studies in International Education* 1, 2 <<http://jsi.sagepub.com/content/early/2010/06/29/1028315310373833>>; Simone Volet and Grace Ang, 'Culturally Mixed Groups on International Campuses: An Opportunity for Intercultural Learning' (1998) 17 (1) *Higher Education Research & Development* 5.

<sup>16</sup> Montgomery, above n 4, 262.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid; Leask, 'Using Formal and Informal Curricula to Improve Interactions Between Home and International Students', above n 12 219.

<sup>18</sup> Afshin A-Khavari, 'The Opportunities and Possibilities for Internationalising the Curriculum of Law Schools in Australia', (2006) 16 *Legal Education Review*, 75, 87 – 8; Blackett, above n 6, 74–5.

<sup>19</sup> Diane Gabb, 'Transcultural Dynamics in the Classroom', (2006) 10(4) *Journal of Studies in International Education* 357, 357; Yvonne Turner, 'Knowing Me, Knowing You, Is there Nothing We Can do?' (2009) 13(2) *Journal of Studies in International Education* 240, 241.

<sup>20</sup> Sophie Riley and Grace Li, Vice-Chancellor's Learning and Teaching Grant, *Role Play Simulations: Active Learning for Educational Integration and Professional Practice*, University of Technology Sydney (2011).

workshop, was made possible by a grant from the Office of Learning and Teaching.<sup>21</sup> Together, the two projects focused on the single topic of promoting internationalisation and intercultural skills in teaching and learning. The RPS project was carried out as a trial, to introduce a new classroom teaching/learning activity. The students regarded this as a successful tool for delivery of subject content. By contrast, it was not as effective as expected in promoting internationalisation and the development of intercultural skills. The primary purpose of the follow-up workshop was to share the experience of the authors, including challenges, and to obtain specialist help in making internationalisation operational. In the process, the authors gained insight, which can be incorporated into future classes, in order to help students attain intercultural competencies.

The paper starts by examining the literature regarding personal skills that encourage students to develop tolerance and respect in an intercultural context. This provides the theoretical background for the RPS and the workshop. Part three of this paper provides a description and evaluation of the 2011 RPS project, which proved to be an effective tool for encouraging students to engage with each other both at a disciplinary and personal level, but seemingly less effective for facilitating extensive and meaningful intercultural exchange. Following the RPS, the authors arranged the role-play workshop that explored more effective means of engaging students by using RPSs. As set out in part four, the workshop revealed that teachers are keen to implement principles of IoC, yet are unsure how and where to start. Perhaps for this reason, educators are enthusiastic with regard to obtaining specialist help to implement IoC. The paper concludes by noting that while educational institutions consider internationalisation to be one of their strengths, more work needs to be done to assist teachers in developing and implementing IoC at the subject, course and program levels.

## II BACKGROUND: DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL SKILLS

As discussed in the introduction, in a pragmatic sense, internationalisation is reflected in the cross-border movement of students. However, this should not be the only dimension to internationalisation.<sup>22</sup> In particular, Sawir considers that such an approach exhibits a narrow understanding of internationalisation. This approach is reflected in curriculum design and learning approaches that focus on language difficulties and limit consideration of international students to helping them '[survive] in the new academic setting'.<sup>23</sup> Extending beyond this restricted view of internationalisation is the notion that internationalisation should also assist with the development of intercultural skills.<sup>24</sup> As Vai Io Lo indicates:

... internationalisation does not equate with the recruitment of international students and the consequential enlargement of an international student body... In essence, internationalisation is a two-way enterprise because international students learn Australian law by pursuing law degrees here,

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<sup>21</sup> Sophie Riley and Grace Li, Office of Learning and Teaching Grant, *Internationalisation of the Curriculum: Using Role-Play Simulations to Enhance Intercultural Engagements in a Practice-Oriented Context*, Office of Learning and Teaching (2012).

<sup>22</sup> Altbach and Knight, above n 7, 290, 292.

<sup>23</sup> Sawir, above n 5, 359, 361.

<sup>24</sup> Hanson, above n 11, 72; McAllister et al, above n 11, 368; Lo, above n 8, 3, 18.

while domestic students learn from their international peers through class discussions and team projects.<sup>25</sup>

Intercultural skills have been described as capabilities that allow people to ‘behave effectively and appropriately in intercultural’ contexts.<sup>26</sup> The skills commence with the development of intercultural awareness and progress to an intercultural sensitivity that allows students to understand and appreciate other cultures.<sup>27</sup> Commentators such as Leask have noted that in order to develop intercultural skills an approach is needed that:

[enables] our students and staff [to] develop their intercultural competence to the point where they move beyond the limitations of their own world view and develop new frames of reference.<sup>28</sup>

However, achieving these types of objectives can be challenging. As has been noted, students may not wish to mix with those from other cultures. For example, in 1998, Volet and Ang conducted a key study of the dynamics of student interaction and concluded that students favour working in groups of individuals from similar cultural backgrounds.<sup>29</sup> These findings were replicated some six years later by Sánchez who found that 99.1% of students surveyed felt that cultural differences presented a barrier against intercultural exchange.<sup>30</sup> This was particularly the case where interaction is mandatory for group activities and assessments.

However, by 2008, commentators such as Montgomery had discerned a shift in attitudes amongst students. Those who had worked in culturally diverse groups were at least interested in other cultures, and could also see positive aspects to interacting in a culturally diverse environment.<sup>31</sup> This shift in attitude is significant because the acquisition of intercultural skills normally progresses by means of a complex series of interactions and modification of attitudes that are based on growing cultural sensitivity and awareness.<sup>32</sup> Thus, it is axiomatic that intercultural skills cannot exist unless students are willing to engage with cultural diversity.

In encouraging positive changes, there are many practical issues teachers need to keep in mind. To start with, international students are often ‘cultural outsiders’ who must deal with inequalities not faced by local students.<sup>33</sup> However, the very fact that international students are living and studying overseas means they often have no choice but to confront cultural issues. Hence, international students experience at least a fundamental level of intercultural engagement.<sup>34</sup> The same is not necessarily true for local students. Courses invariably contain a ‘hidden’ curriculum

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<sup>25</sup> Lo, above n 8, 3, 18.

<sup>26</sup> Guo-Ming Chen, ‘A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity’ (Paper presented at Biennial Convention of the Pacific and Asian Communication Association, Honolulu, HI, January 1997) <<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED408634.pdf>>.

<sup>27</sup> Claudia Nieto and Margaret Zoller Booth, ‘Cultural Competence, Its influence on the Teaching and Learning of International Students’ (2010) 14(4) *Journal of Studies in International Education* 406, 408.

<sup>28</sup> Leask, ‘Using Formal and Informal Curricula to Improve Interactions Between Home and International Students’, above n 12, 219.

<sup>29</sup> Volet and Ang, above n 15, 18–9.

<sup>30</sup> José Saura Sánchez, ‘Intergroup Perception of International Students’ (2004) 8(1) *Academic Exchange* 309, 309–13.

<sup>31</sup> Montgomery, above n 4, 262, 263–4.

<sup>32</sup> Chen, above n 26.

<sup>33</sup> Turner, above n 19, 244.

<sup>34</sup> Martin Haigh, ‘Fostering Cross-Cultural Empathy With Non-Western Curricular Structures’, (2009) 13(2) *Journal of Studies in International Education* 271, 282.

that favours specific social and ethnic viewpoints.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, even where local students recognise the value of intercultural skills, the classroom dynamics of mixed cultural groups are often delineated by the potential for cynicism and wariness.<sup>36</sup> If managed inappropriately, this type of situation will not only impact on the learning experience of international students, but can also fail local students by not developing suitable cultural skills.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the pedagogical issues turn on how best to foster intercultural skills through a process of ‘internationalisation’ that takes place in local settings.<sup>38</sup> Within this context, intervention by the teacher is critical.

In effect, teachers become intercultural facilitators who create learning environments where students can develop respect and understanding for the ideals, principles and hopes of others.<sup>39</sup> This requires commitment and planning by the teacher<sup>40</sup> and includes implementing strategies that make the classroom atmosphere conducive to intercultural learning,<sup>41</sup> and targeting learning and assessment activities that incorporate an intercultural element.<sup>42</sup> It is important to maintain a sense of ‘social inclusion’ for all students,<sup>43</sup> and to channel this to create authentic learning experiences within the framework of the subject content.<sup>44</sup> Collectively, thoughtfully planned interventions enable teachers to take advantage of cultural diversity in a way that emphasises the significance of effective intercultural skills, while also acknowledging the subject discipline from a global viewpoint.<sup>45</sup>

From the teacher’s perspective, designing authentic learning experiences entails changes which can be substantial. Lombardi and Oblinger point out that teachers may be concerned that designing, implementing and assessing authentic learning tasks will increase their workload.<sup>46</sup> This is especially relevant where the assessment task is new and requires extra time and resources to prepare and familiarise the students. Further, authentic learning experiences may require great effort to administer in subjects with large student numbers.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ciarán Dunne, ‘Developing an Intercultural Curriculum Within the Context of the Internationalisation of Higher Education: Terminology, Typologies and Power’ (2011) 30(5) *Higher Education Research & Development*, 609, 611.

<sup>36</sup> Gabb, above n 19, 363.

<sup>37</sup> Haigh, above n 34, 282.

<sup>38</sup> Turner, above n 19, 240–1.

<sup>39</sup> Susana Eisenchlas and Susan Trevaskes ‘Intercultural Competence: Examples of Internationalizing the Curriculum through Students’ Interactions’ in David Palfreyman and Dawn Lorraine McBride (eds) *Learning and Teaching Across Cultures in Higher Education* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 177, 180–1.

<sup>40</sup> Hanneke Teekens, ‘The Requirement to Develop Specific Skills for Teaching in an Intercultural Setting’ (2003) 7 (1) *Journal of Studies in International Education* 108, 110.

<sup>41</sup> Sophie Arkoudis, *Teaching International Students*, Centre of the Study of Higher Education, 11 <[http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/resources\\_teach/teaching\\_in\\_practice/docs/international.pdf](http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/resources_teach/teaching_in_practice/docs/international.pdf)>.

<sup>42</sup> Haigh, above n 34, 282.

<sup>43</sup> Montgomery, above n 4, 256.

<sup>44</sup> Irene CL Ng ‘Teaching Business Studies to Far East Students in the UK’ in David Palfreyman and Dawn Lorraine McBride (eds), *Learning and Teaching Across Cultures in Higher Education* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 36, 41.

<sup>45</sup> Kimmel and Volet, above n 15, 2.

<sup>46</sup> Marilyn Lombardi, (Diana Oblinger (ed)) *Making the Grade: The Role of Assessment in Authentic Learning* (January 2008) Educause Learning Initiative, 5 <<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI3019.pdf>>.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

With these points in mind, the authors devised an RPS with two aims: first, to enhance the overall learning experience of the students; and second, to harness the cultural diversity of the student cohort in order to promote the development of intercultural skills. This activity has provided a useful example of the rewards of planning for intercultural learning.

### III A PROJECT TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

#### A *Role-Play Simulations and Intercultural Skills*

The use of RPSs is of course, well established for some aspects of legal education, such as interviewing clients and negotiating. By contrast, it appears that RPSs have not been developed with the specific aim of enhancing student learning in environments of high cultural diversity.

The use of role-plays as a learning tool usually involves 'setting up of more or less unstructured situations' where students are assigned roles which they act out in an improvised way.<sup>48</sup> Simulations are similar, with the main difference that simulations are less tightly scripted than role-plays.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, RPSs can be thought of as framed scenarios in which students assume various roles that they adopt and develop in an extemporised way. In each case, the aim is to offer the student a 'highly simplified reproduction' of the real world.<sup>50</sup> The objective is not to reproduce the complexities of the real world in their entirety, but instead, to include sufficient real-world elements to provide students the opportunity of learning from their enactment of the scenarios, rather than merely by reading and discussion.<sup>51</sup>

In the pilot project, the authors hoped that the learning task would provide students with opportunities to develop intercultural awareness and sensitivity. These are essential precursors to the development of intercultural skills. In particular, the authors hoped that encouraging students to work in groups with members of diverse cultural backgrounds would break down the cultural barriers and stereotyping that they had recognised during their iterative development of the subject, Applied Company Law.<sup>52</sup> RPSs are particularly well suited to achieve these objectives. This is because in order to carry out the activity, students must interact with others in a way that encourages them to tap into their social skills and closely consider the outlooks and values of others.<sup>53</sup> This is not to say that RPSs are without problems. One disadvantage is that by their very nature they are simplified. Despite this, many of the issues that flow from oversimplification can be rectified by strategies such as on-the-spot correction of students' factual errors and by thorough debriefing.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Kristina M DeNeve and Mary J Heppner, 'Role Play Simulations: The Assessment of an Active Learning Technique and Comparisons with Traditional Lectures' (1997) 21(3) *Innovative Higher Education* 231, 233–4.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Morry Van Ments, *The Effective Use of Role Play* (Kogan Page Ltd, London 1999) 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Sophie Riley and Grace Li, 'Student Diversity: Widening Participation by Engaging Culturally Diverse Non-Law Students in Law', in Sally Kift, Jill Cowley, Michelle Sanson and Penelope Watson (eds), *Excellence and Innovation in Legal Education* (LexisNexis, 2011) 337.

<sup>53</sup> DeNeve and Heppner, above n 48, 233–4.

<sup>54</sup> Ments, above n 50, 16–7.

Further, it is worthwhile remembering, that as simulations become more complex, they are also subject to additional constraints. These constraints can limit the ‘power of the imagination’ that enables students to improvise, and develop their own understanding of the material as well as exploring the viewpoints and beliefs of other group members.<sup>55</sup> Another disadvantage flows from the resourcing considerations identified by Lombardi and Oblinger<sup>56</sup> and discussed in the earlier part of this article. In particular, this is an issue in subjects with a large student cohort.

In addition, when the subject involves a team of teachers, some may be wary of engaging with unfamiliar learning and teaching activities. As a corollary, some teachers may also be concerned that RPSs do not represent ‘learning’ in a traditional sense. As a consequence, these teachers’ views may subtly alter the pedagogical value of the activity for their students.<sup>57</sup>

## B *The Project*

As already noted, in 2011 the authors designed and conducted a teaching and learning project entitled ‘*Role-Play Simulations: Active Learning for Educational Integration and Professional Practice*’. The project was supported by a Vice Chancellor’s Teaching and Learning Grant from the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). The project aimed to provide students with a practice-oriented learning experience and to afford an opportunity for local and international students to interact in a semi-structured environment.<sup>58</sup> The project was implemented in a subject called Applied Company Law. This is a cross-disciplinary subject taught by the Faculty of Law to students enrolled in the School of Business. The subject has a high proportion of international student enrolments. The RPS grew out of an earlier project that had concluded that students were aware of the benefits of cultural interaction, but that they look to their teachers to facilitate the achievement of this outcome.<sup>59</sup> The RPS project was carried out in three distinct phases: development and design in autumn 2011; the implementation of the RPS activity in classes; and the student evaluation in spring 2011. The overall findings were that the RPS proved to be an effective tool for encouraging students to engage with each other at a disciplinary and interpersonal level. By contrast, it was less clear how effective it had been in facilitating meaningful intercultural exchange.

The RPS activity setting was the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of a fictitious Australian company called Telco Ltd. Telco supplies mobile and Internet services and its board of directors is investigating the possibility of expanding Telco’s operations to China. To do this, Telco needs additional funds and has approached an overseas investor from China (Investor) who will become a shareholder and who will also sit on the board. The investor agrees to contribute \$AU50million and the board appoints Investor as a director, with the appointment to be confirmed at the next AGM. The company’s shareholders are made up of three major factions: directors 40%; other shareholders 54%; and a group of environmentalists 6%. There are tensions

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Lombardi, above n 46, 5.

<sup>57</sup> Van Ments, above n 50, 15.

<sup>58</sup> The role-play project was titled ‘Educational Integration: Enhancing Intergroup Dynamics Between Local and International Students in Cross-Disciplinary Law Subjects at UTS’ and was approved in 2010 under UTS HREC 2010-310.

<sup>59</sup> Riley and Li, ‘Student Diversity’, above n 52.

amongst the groups, including the fact that the ‘other shareholders’ are concerned about the appointment of the Investor to the board, largely because they are not familiar with business practices in China. The confirmation of the Investor’s appointment at the next AGM is therefore not guaranteed.

In writing the scenario, the authors specifically considered how they could incorporate intercultural elements. The authors were also mindful of the fact that many cultural challenges stem from the context of the subject discipline. For example, in the business world there are great variations in business practices across different countries and cultures.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, to tap into this diversity, students were provided with an opportunity to explore cultural norms<sup>61</sup> within the limits of the scenario. Furthermore, the authors also tried to avoid what Zhang and Mi have identified as the ‘deficiency’ perspective. Rather than concentrating on what is commonly perceived that international students cannot do, the authors instead focused particularly on what international students could bring to role-play simulations.<sup>62</sup>

Before the start of the activity, the authors briefed the teaching team on the objectives of the RPS and how it would be conducted. In the first tutorial, the tutors explained the RPS to their class and gathered information on whether the students were enrolled as local or international students and what languages the students spoke. In the second tutorial, the tutors divided the students into groups of approximately five to six students, consisting of a mixture of local and international students. In order to obtain as standardised a mix of cultures as possible, the students were not permitted to self-select into these groups. Each group was assigned to take the role of one of five ‘players’: the board of directors, the company secretary, an investor, the main group of shareholders and a group of environmental shareholders. As an introduction to the role-play simulation, the authors prepared a flyer titled ‘Making Connections’ in accordance with the guidelines developed by Arkoudis, Yu, Baik et al.<sup>63</sup> This flyer, which the tutors distributed in the first class, explained the aims and importance of the RPS. In addition, the tutors also gave the students a copy of the scenario, a brief for their role, an assessment guide and a timetable for completion of written work and the carrying out of the RPS. Four of the individual groups were also provided with special or secret information sheets containing material only known to the individual group. These ‘secrets’ were designed to bring an element of fun to the role-play and anecdotally were quite successful, as the groups tried to discover each other’s ‘secret’.

The groups were typically given 15 minutes in each of the next five tutorials to work on the role-plays, although they were also expected to organise meetings outside of class as necessary. During the tutorials, the teachers were on hand to answer questions and make sure the students

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<sup>60</sup> Ng, above n 44, 41.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Cultural norms’ here refers to the different ways to conduct business in different cultures. In this RPS, the scenario included a Chinese investor wanting to invest a large amount of money into an Australian company. The design of this particular factual element encourages students to find out and to learn how to do business in Chinese culture. We also intentionally put students from different cultural backgrounds into study groups hoping cultural exchange could occur in carrying out their communications.

<sup>62</sup> See generally, Yanyin Zhang and Yinan Mi, ‘Another Look at the Language Difficulties of International Students’ (2010) 14(4) *Journal of Studies in International Education* 371.

<sup>63</sup> Sophie Arkoudis, et al, *Finding Common Ground: Enhancing Interaction Between Domestic and International Students, Guide for Academics* (Report, Australian Teaching and Learning Council, 2010), 53–4.

were on the right track. The course coordinator also set up a dedicated online discussion board for the RPS that was monitored regularly. Student groups were required to document their activities in a position statement. This was submitted as a group assessment during the tutorial held in week seven. In this statement, students were expected to identify relevant issues (legal, cultural and/or social) and strategies for dealing with those issues. The same tutorial was also the forum for the RPS activity and students were assessed individually for their participation in this exercise, both on this day and during the in-class preparation sessions.

The RPS was not designed to be tightly scripted or replicate the real world in every way. They did, however, allow the students to use their knowledge and understanding to develop their roles in individual ways. Thus the role-play would not necessarily pan out in an identical way for each class. There were also practical matters the authors needed to take into account. For example, the RPS would take the place of the mid-semester exam, and therefore needed to be based on material that the students learned in the first five weeks of the subject. The actual AGM also needed to be carried out within the time-frame of one tutorial, although, as already noted, the students were given time for preparation during the tutorials leading up to the RPS. In addition, the design of the RPS needed to be sufficiently flexible to take into account the fact that students enrol late, change tutorials or withdraw from a subject.

To evaluate the impact of the RPS, the authors surveyed the students two weeks after the simulated AGM. The survey results, together with the tutors' own observations are discussed below.

### C *Results: Evaluating Students' Learning and Intercultural Engagement*

A total of 273 of 326 students in 13 classes participated in the survey. In broad terms, international students accounted for 40% of the participants, while the remaining 60% were local. The questionnaire consisted of 11 questions. Five open-ended questions elicited important information, such as what the students felt they had learned, whether they had difficulties with the learning exercise and whether they felt comfortable working in their group. Six closed questions were used to obtain data about students' enrolment and how many times their group met.

Students' answers to the question: 'What did you learn from participating in this role-play exercise?' were clustered around three areas and demonstrated that the students found the role-play most useful in learning about the structure of an AGM, followed by fostering teamwork and finally learning about other cultures. The RPS would thus appear to be most successful for attaining disciplinary knowledge and fostering team-work skills. Given that this was an open-ended question that allowed students to nominate as many or as few learning outcomes as they wished, the fact that 10.5% of the local student cohort found the exercise useful for learning to work with those from different cultures is more significant than may first appear. Eleven of the 273 students surveyed made negative comments about the exercise, including two who indicated they found it difficult to work with international students and seven who felt they had not learned a great deal. By the same token, there were also 21 positive comments about the usefulness of the learning task. This was the first time that a project in this subject targeted student diversity

and it provides a solid foundation from which to continue embedding the attainment of intercultural skills.

TABLE 1  
WHAT DID THE STUDENTS LEARN?

	International	Local	Total
Structure of AGM	31.80%	41.40%	73.20%
Teamwork	30.90%	17.30%	48.20%
Different cultures	2.70%	10.50%	13.20%

Another open-ended question asked students to comment on any difficulties they faced in carrying out the role-play simulation. Because it is an open-ended question, students can comment on as many difficulties as they would like to. Their responses were varied and a summary is set out in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2  
DIFFICULTIES

Reason	Not indicated Int. or Local	International	Local	Total
Not Answered		34	33	67
Language Barriers	1	29	24	54
More Detail		19	28	47
Commitment		6	31	37
Not enough information		13	9	22
None		3	18	21
Not enough time		1	9	10
Group too big		1	6	7
Marking Criteria		2	4	6
Textbook		2		2
Total	1	110	162	273

The students' most commonly cited difficulty was language barriers and this made up just over 20% of the student cohort. However, if the figures are evaluated according to the students' enrolment as a local or international student, 26.4% of international students considered language difficulties a problem compared to 14.8% of local students. In addition, local students were likely to think of language barriers in terms of the English proficiency of international students. Eight local students for example commented that the biggest difficulty was working with international students, some of whom had 'sub-standard' English language skills. By the same token, when answering this question, six international students said 'thank you' for the chance to interact with local students.

The second most common difficulty mentioned by the students was the need for ‘more detail’. ‘More detail’ indicates that the students required greater detail about the task in terms of what was expected of them and the assessment criteria. On the other hand, ‘not enough information’ refers to students wanting more information about the company in the scenario and the resources available. If the responses are calculated as a percentage of the category of student who answered this question, more international students (27.63%) felt this hindered their learning experience compared to local students (21.71%).

When students were asked whether they were able to contribute to the group meetings 95% of the students believed they contributed to group discussions in a meaningful way. The very small percentage of students who indicated otherwise cited reasons such as: other members would not listen to his/her views, they had nothing to contribute and concern about expressing his/her views in front of the group. A reasonably high proportion of students (65%) also felt comfortable working in their group most of the time; with only 4% of students responding that they did not feel at all comfortable working in the group. Reasons for this discomfort included a ‘bad group’ and communication problems. The three main reasons students felt comfortable in their group were: friendly members, a ‘good group’ and equal contribution by team members. These results are significant in the context of the large body of literature documenting the difficulties often experienced by students in group assessment work.<sup>64</sup> With respect to how the student groups allocated their tasks, more than half (54%) of the students prepared for the RPS as a group. Furthermore, 61% students believed the exercise encouraged them to interact with other members of their group outside the scheduled group meetings. Once again, this is significant given the reluctance to mix in cross cultural groups outside of class usually found in the literature.<sup>65</sup>

Importantly, several tutors noticed that the students had achieved a far deeper understanding of the subject matter than would normally be expected at this early stage of the semester. In particular, the authors and two other tutors observed that the students were becoming curious, actively asking questions and exploring the material in a way that involved linking different parts of their degree programs. This was telling, because their exploration stemmed from aspects of the scenario and the role-plays that were not spelled out in detail. Although some students indicated in their responses that they wanted ‘more information’, it appeared that this very ‘lack’ of information had in fact acted as a catalyst for them to consider the implications of the scenario from a variety of perspectives. Indeed, the authors noted that in classes students started to ask extremely targeted questions, underpinned by a richer understanding of corporate law issues than they had encountered in many years of teaching the subject.

#### D *The Project: Analysis*

In analysing the data, it is clear that a majority of the students felt that they had learned something useful about AGMs and teamwork. In particular, the exercise provided students with an opportunity to engage in practice-oriented learning. Not only did the students gain

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<sup>64</sup> Kimmel and Volet, above n 15, 18–9; Sánchez, above n 30, 4.

<sup>65</sup> Leask, ‘Using Formal and Informal Curricula to Improve Interactions Between Home and International Students’, above n 12, 205.

disciplinary knowledge, but the exercise also provided opportunities to create a real-life scenario for students to practise their problem-solving skills. Some of the positive comments included: 'Good to see how an AGM works, rather than just reading about it. Makes you actually think about the issues'; 'It is also useful to have an idea of what an AGM is like before we see the real thing'; 'It was a very informative experience which I think will benefit me one day in the workplace'. These comments were all made by local students, which may indicate that international students struggled to recognise the value of the role-play activity or, perhaps, that the way an AGM is conducted in Australia seemed of little or no relevance to them and their own cultural legal contexts.

Another positive outcome was that the project afforded students a chance to hone their social skills in a culturally-diverse setting. Not only did the authors specifically include intercultural elements in the RPS,<sup>66</sup> but the assessment task required students to comment on any legal/social and cultural issues they identified and/or encountered. The authors had hoped that these interventions would create opportunities for the students to engage with each other at an interpersonal level, which would lead to the development of empathy and tolerance and a greater awareness of cultural matters. The extent to which the project achieved these aims is not clear, although the reported student meetings outside of scheduled class times seem to be a positive step.

At first glance, the fact that only 13.2% of the student cohort indicated that they learnt something useful about working with those from different cultures is disappointing. However, if the data is analysed further, a slightly different picture emerges. Indeed, the data indicates that the students did interact in a meaningful way, even if the students themselves did not recognise that fact. It will be recalled that 95% of the students felt they made a meaningful contribution to their group and only 4% did not feel comfortable working in their group. This indicates that students' attitudes towards each other were tolerant and cooperative. Moreover, the fact that an overwhelming majority of students felt they made meaningful contributions signifies that no single student dominated the groups. Given that the groups were deliberately comprised of local and international students, it is also clear that tolerance and cooperativeness flowed between local and international students and vice versa. This conclusion is further reinforced by the fact that 61% of the students believed that the learning exercise encouraged them to interact outside the scheduled group meetings. These interactions were voluntary and are a further indication that students worked collaboratively. This collaboration was crucial to the completion of the assessment, for students needed to be sufficiently open and frank with each other in order to express different points of view, including those relating to cultural issues. Overall, the project encouraged students to work collaboratively in culturally diverse groups and this proved to be an important outcome.

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<sup>66</sup> There were a few cultural elements that the authors had incorporated into the design of the RPS, which included: 1) in the first class, collected data from students in relation to their cultural background (by using a short questionnaire); 2) in the second class, students were put into groups with others from a different cultural background (based on the data collected at the first class); 3) there were specific requirements in the RPS information sheet requiring students to consider cultural elements in carrying out their tasks; 4) A Chinese investor was inserted into the RPS scenario and played an important role in the project; 5) cultural exchange was clearly specified as a criteria for the evaluation of the RPS; and 6) cultural exchange was also made clear as an important goal for students to achieve in the final project survey.

As already mentioned, another unexpected and welcome outcome was the deeper and richer understanding that students attained with respect to corporate law. Although the scenario involved an AGM, students asked questions extending beyond the conduct of company meetings. This included issues relating to directors' duties, the power structures that operate within a company and corporate governance. The incisive quality of the questions demonstrated that students were linking the different parts of the subject – something that was not targeted in the original project design, but which was a potentially important outcome of the RPS activity.

Despite all of these positive outcomes, the authors reflected on the students' comments and the survey results, to evaluate which parts of the project could be improved. One aspect that the survey pinpointed was the fact that the students expressed a strong desire for clearer instructions and more detailed information on their roles. While this is something that can be easily addressed in the writing of an RPS, the authors feel that a balance needs to be struck between how much information and/or constraints are given to students and how much 'learning space' teachers reserve for students to question, research and make their own contributions. The authors acknowledge that the students' stance towards a learning activity may be coloured by the perceived complexity of the task and that it is vital to brief students to an appropriate extent. The requests for clearer information also varied across the tutorials, therefore these may be related, at least in part, to the dynamics of the different tutorial classes as well as to individual teachers' approaches to the RPS. The authors also acknowledge that it is vital to brief the teaching team adequately. This helps to ensure that each teacher is able to support students when they undertake novel learning tasks. This will clearly need to be a strong focus in any future iterations of the RPS activity.

#### IV THE ROLE-PLAY WORKSHOP

##### A *Pre-Workshop Survey*

As discussed in the introduction to this paper, following the role-play activity the authors obtained a grant from the Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) to bring together experts in internationalisation and the use of role-plays as a learning tool. The purpose was to workshop some of the challenges that flowed from the RPS activity. In particular, the workshop targeted the use of RPS as a type of group work that could be used to enhance local-international student engagement. A key theme that underpinned the sessions was the understanding that 'internationalisation' depends on the development of intercultural skills based on fundamentals of respect and tolerance for other people.<sup>67</sup>

Prior to the workshop, participants were asked to complete an anonymous online survey to gauge how they perceived and implemented IoC. The survey was based on a questionnaire developed by Associate Professor Betty Leask, 'Questionnaire on the Internationalisation of the

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<sup>67</sup> The workshop project was titled: 'Internationalisation of the curriculum: Using Role-Play Simulations to Enhance Intercultural Engagement in a Practice-Oriented Context' and was approved in 2012 under UTS HREC 2012-193A.

Curriculum',<sup>68</sup> and was designed to elicit information on the participants' understanding of IoC, the relative importance of internationalisation to the participants' educational institution, and how educators implemented the concept of internationalisation.

The survey comprised eight questions where answers were provided on a Likert scale, with room for participants to provide additional comments. Nineteen people participated in the survey and five participants also made comments. Question one asked the participants to identify how clearly the rationale for IoC was understood by the teaching team. The responses, set out in Table 3, indicate that 62.11% of the participants were either not clear on this point, or only somewhat clear.

TABLE 3  
UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONALISATION

Question 1: How clearly is the rationale for internationalisation of the curriculum in your course understood by yourself and other members of the teaching team (if any)				
Not clearly	Somewhat clearly	Clearly	Very Clearly	Total responses to this question
7	5	6	1	19
36.8	26.3	31.5	5.4	100%

Question 7 asked to what extent students are required to apply knowledge and skills in different national and cultural contexts. The responses, set out in Table 4, reveal that 31.6% answered never or almost never while 68.4% noted that such application was expected sometimes (42.1%), almost always (15.8%) or always (10.5%).

TABLE 4  
UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONALISATION

Question 7: To what extent are students required to apply knowledge and skills in different national and cultural contexts?					
Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always	Always	Total responses to this question
1	5	8	3	2	19
5.3	26.3	42.1	15.8	10.5	100%

The survey results indicate that most participants have some awareness of the rationale and importance of IoC and also that most participants have endeavoured to include international elements in their course. The latter, for example, is demonstrated by the fact that the majority of

<sup>68</sup>Betty Leask, *Questionnaire on the Internationalisation of the Curriculum* (2011)

<uq.edu.au/tediteach/ioc/docs/QIC14.doc>; Support for Betty's original work was provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, the forerunner of the Office of Learning and Teaching.

teachers have required students to apply knowledge and skills in different national and cultural contexts. Despite this, there appears to be a gulf between these endeavours and teachers being able to demonstrate that their students have, in reality, achieved a measure of intercultural competence. This conclusion stems primarily from the responses to two questions: Question 5, set out in Table 5 below, which indicates that few participants had correlated assessment tasks with IoC; and Question 6, set out in Table 6 below, which reveals that international learning goals and outcomes are overwhelmingly not clearly defined.

TABLE 5  
ASSESSMENT AND IOC

Question 5: To what extent do assessment tasks in your course require students to consider issues from a variety of cultural perspectives?					
Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always	Always	Total responses to this question
1	9	7	0	2	19
5.3	47.4	36.8	0	10.5	100%

TABLE 6  
ARTICULATING INTERNATIONALISATION IN LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Question 6: How clearly defined and articulated are the international/intercultural learning goals, aims and outcomes in your course?				
Not clearly	Somewhat clearly	Clearly	Very Clearly	Total responses to this question
13	0	6	0	19
68.4	0	31.6	0	100%

These gaps lead to an obvious dilemma when students are expected to achieve aims and objectives (68.4% of the responses to question 7) that are not assessable. From a pedagogical perspective it raises important issues of fairness, as well as competency with respect to realisation of course aims. Moreover, if it is kept in mind that the responses to question 6 disclose that 68.4% of participants have not clearly defined international and/or intercultural learning goals, aims and outcomes, it means that the message of internationalisation will not reach students in an articulate and openly defined way. In the absence of a strong link between aims, objectives and assessment tasks it is at least arguable that, even with the best intentions, attempts at IoC will be ineffective or, at the very least, not as effective as they could be. Moreover, these dilemmas extend to IoC at an institutional level, where assertions that graduates have achieved intercultural competence lack clear data to substantiate those claims.

The reasons for the gap between expectation and reality include two possibilities. First, although the majority of participants believe that IoC is an important consideration, there appears to be a

misunderstanding, or a narrow understanding, of the notion of IoC. One participant noted that because the subject they teach relates to Australian law, internationalisation occurs incidentally through limited comparative work. The same participant also indicated that internationalisation is not regarded as important for their subject. Another participant wrote that although the student cohort comprises a diverse range of students, IoC is not integrated into the core subjects. These comments evince a lack of understanding that an important component of IoC is the development of intercultural skills, something that is not necessarily fostered by the addition of ‘token’ international/intercultural activities. Indeed, Betty Leask also pointed out that IoC should occur even if there are no international students in the class.

Second, due to the fact that some subjects, such as those targeting international studies, are considered easier to internationalise than others, IoC, if it happens, frequently occurs at the individual subject level, rather than the program level. One participant commented that as a curriculum developer it would assist if ‘widely applicable curriculum internationalisation strategies’ could be developed. These would be made available to program and course coordinators who could adapt them for ‘discipline specific learning and teaching’, including assessment.

In this context, the discussion noted that when referring to international students, teachers and educational institutions need to question assumptions that international students are a homogenous group. Moreover, the workshop group examined whether there is a hidden curriculum that makes IoC challenging. In many cases, for example, teachers tend to focus on international material drawn from the United States and the United Kingdom. Yet, is this appropriate? Perhaps the answer is ‘yes’ if the subject relates to Australian law. However, coordinators need to consider the content of courses from a program view. Issues of cross-cultural orientation can provide an unnecessary hurdle for international students. Consider, for example, what messages teachers and institutions send when tacit, if not express, expectations centre on international students making the bulk of the connections and concessions, rather than local students also accepting that they have a part to play. This problem calls into question how lines of responsibility and obligation are determined and also how institutions can circulate that message. As a corollary, teachers and educational institutions also need to consider how international students interact in the wider community.

### B *Role-Play Simulation as a Learning Tool*

Against this backdrop, the workshop explored the use of RPS as a learning tool to enhance internationalisation and promote practice-oriented learning. RPSs usually involve the ‘setting up of more or less unstructured situations’ where students are assigned roles which they act out in an improvised way.<sup>69</sup> They are related to simulations, although the latter are less tightly scripted than role-plays.<sup>70</sup>

Hence, RPSs are framed scenarios where students assume various roles, which they adopt and develop in an extemporised way. In each case, the aim is not to reproduce the complexities of the

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<sup>69</sup> DeNeve and Heppner, above n 48, 231, 233–4.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

real world in their entirety but instead to include sufficient real-world elements so that the students have an opportunity of learning from their joint enactment of the scenarios, rather than merely by reading and discussion.<sup>71</sup>

Speakers at the workshop noted that using RPSs involve a big fear factor, largely because students are worried that they will embarrass themselves. While such fear exists for all students, it is intensified for international students. Specifically, the sense of isolation that international students experience, combined with fear of embarrassment, can be a significant stumbling block to their participation in RPSs. Yet, as was pointed out, if fear is properly handled it can lead to positive feelings and emotions, such as curiosity and deeper interest. Moreover, 'group work is good for helping you to let go of your first idea'. From the teacher's perspective, using RPSs involves a vast shift in perspective. As pointed out in the workshop, teachers need to advance from 'pride in owning (my) knowledge' to 'pleasure in the fact of knowledge'. In particular, teachers need to be prepared to 'lose control' of the action, to 'teach through no talking' and to 'have the willingness to make mistakes'.

Other practical challenges stem from workloads that may increase if RPS is used. Writing scenarios can be time-consuming and implementing and assessing an RPS can be labour-intensive. In particular, this may be the case where the assessment is new and extra care must be taken to familiarise students with it. In addition, because the assessment may be the first time students are undertaking an RPS, it is important to be crystal clear on matters such as the marking criteria.

Teachers also need to keep in mind that from the point of view of the students there are roughly three stages to an RPS: briefing the students; actioning the RPS; and, debriefing. The students will not be privy to much of the work that goes on behind the scenes, and yet the single most important element for success of an RPS lies in its detailed design. This includes the development of clear rules, roles and scenarios, as well as careful assessment. With respect to the latter, this means ensuring that the teaching team assesses the RPS effectively. Although assessment will depend on individual learning outcomes and attributes as well as the design of the RPS, it is important for teachers to be aware that assessment can be undertaken throughout the three RPS phases (briefing, action and de-briefing). In the briefing phase, assessment can include knowledge tests, profile statements, position papers. In the action phase, assessment can include participation, analysis, statement of standpoint, negotiation; and the debriefing phase may include a report, a considered standpoint essay and evaluation of postings.

Given the large investment in time and effort that academics will invariably put into developing RPS it is beneficial for the team to treat the RPS process as akin to a research project. This involves some further work in summarising the project and writing it up for publication. However, this extra work is worthwhile as it not only helps academics with their own research output, but it also allows the project to be disseminated to a wider academic audience, helping others who might be considering a similar learning task.

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<sup>71</sup> Van Ments, above n 50, 15.

In addition, academics need to be appreciative of the time-and-effort cost and set up a team with widely drawn experience and expertise so that the load can be shared effectively. For example, one member of the team could be a content expert, another, an education-focused academic, and a third, a person experienced with the use of technology as a learning aid.

The use of RPSs, is of course well established for some aspects of legal education, such as interviewing clients and negotiating. Despite this, RPSs do not appear to have been developed with the specific aim of enhancing student learning in environments of high cultural diversity. Yet, as pointed out at the workshop, diversity should be a resource that at the very least enables students to examine and explore different points of view, including in the context of RPSs.

At the same time, the use of RPSs in situations of high diversity has many challenges. First, interaction does not happen automatically or indeed happen well. Successful interaction depends on the interventions made by teachers. Second, when planning interventions it is important for teachers to keep in mind that participants have distinct identities and paradigms. Thus, the type of role-play design a teacher will structure will be different in business from law, for example. Third, most studies thus far have focused on perceptions, and few have examined outcomes.

### C *Evaluation of the Workshop*

Only 19 people attended the workshop, therefore evaluation done by collecting data from questionnaires and presenting data by way of percentages might not be the most effective way to analyse the workshop. Unfortunately, given that all of the workshop attendees were either academics or professional staff from educational institutions their time with us was rather limited. In this context, using a questionnaire was the most convenient way of collecting feedback on the day. Accordingly, the workshop evaluation is carried out primarily based on the data collected by the questionnaire at the end of the workshop.

The feedback was mainly positive, with 80% of the participants indicating that they found the workshops helpful to them. The participants particularly enjoyed the following: the fact that the sessions were interactive; learning how other universities manage group work; developing a better understanding of internationalisation; the good mix of discussion and questions, and; understanding that issues and strategies in internationalisation are common across universities.

Many participants also noted that they would have liked more time for real-life exercises and more activities on cultural diversity. In particular, one participant noted that, it is necessary to 'separate the discussion of how to internationalise course content from parallel conversations around learning and teaching processes. We need strategies on both fronts'.

A number of participants also indicated that they would like individual follow-up, more workshops, examples, and more practical 'how to do' advice. These observations clearly indicate that teachers are keen to engage with IoC but are not sure where to start. At the same time, teachers are enthusiastic with regard to obtaining specialist help to implement IoC.

These statements also need to be read in conjunction with the pre-workshop survey responses to question 4, set out in Table 7 below. These indicate that 94.7% of participants believe that their teaching and learning arrangements support their students (to varying levels) to work effectively in cross-cultural groups and teams.

TABLE 7  
SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Question 4: To what extent do the teaching and learning arrangements in your course assist all students to develop international and intercultural skills and knowledge?					
Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always	Always	Total responses to this question
0	1	13	5	0	19
0	5.3	68.4	26.3	0	100%

However, it will also be recalled that 68.4% of participants acknowledged that they did not clearly define international/intercultural learning goals, aims and outcomes in their courses. It thus appears that while educational institutions consider internationalisation to be one of their strengths, more work needs to be done to assist teachers in developing and implementing IoC at the subject, course and program levels.

## V CONCLUSION

The concept of internationalisation encompasses more than simply providing enhanced opportunities for cross-border movement of students. At an interpersonal level, it centres on the development of intercultural skills. These are skills built upon a foundation of tolerance and understanding of cultural diversity. In the words of Haigh, ‘internationalisation, [should effectively set] local learners those same challenges currently facing international learners.’<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, teachers have the opportunity to become intercultural facilitators by taking advantage of cultural diversity in their classrooms and highlighting the importance and relevance to students of developing intercultural skills.

The RPS project reported in this paper underscores that becoming an intercultural facilitator can be challenging. The findings demonstrate that although RPS is an effective tool for encouraging students to engage with each other at a disciplinary and personal level, this is not necessarily the case with respect to enabling meaningful intercultural engagement. Accordingly, for teachers to develop their role as intercultural facilitators, they need to innovate and explore all aspects of students’ experiences of internationalisation.

The workshop revealed that IoC can occur at different levels and at different stages of teaching and learning. In particular, IoC can occur in both the process and the products of education. It is

<sup>72</sup> Haigh, above n 34, 282.

telling that discussions at the workshop noted that while educational institutions consider internationalisation to be one of their strengths, more work needs to be done to assist teachers in developing and implementing IoC at the subject, course and program levels. Until institutions acknowledge and deal with this discontinuity, it is likely that IoC will remain an aspiration with piecemeal application and implementation.

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