

# FIRST YEAR CORE COURSE LEADERS' COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE TOOLKIT

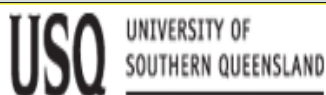
## FIRST YEAR COURSE LEADERS TOOLKIT ITEM

*International and  
intercultural teaching  
strategies*

### THE USQ CoPs PROJECT

Faculty of Arts CoP  
and  
Faculty of Business CoP

<http://www.usq.edu.au/cops>



### Topic: International and intercultural teaching strategies

#### Thinking about cross-cultural, international teaching

#### What is the intended outcome?

First year convenors begin developing students' international and intercultural knowledge and skills which they will need as both employees and citizens.

#### What is the established practice?

Many academic teachers have already introduced some international and intercultural perspectives into the curriculum.

#### What are the advantages for both teachers and students in considering all aspects of cross-cultural and international teaching?

The advantages of considering the full range of cases represented here is that it involves versions of cross-cultural and international teaching that develop students' interpersonal, cross-cultural awareness and skills – which may directly impact on their personal and professional lives. These approaches also frame cultural differences within the student cohort as a positive teaching resource.

#### Background

Many university graduates today will be employed in global corporations or in sectors with employees or clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. Australia itself is becoming increasingly diverse, so the possession of both international knowledge and cross-cultural skills is important for graduates. USQ attracts national and international students from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, with over 120 nationalities represented.

#### Challenge

The challenge for first year convenors is to increase students' knowledge of the international context and begin development of intercultural skills at an appropriate level, which acknowledges the additional support required by first year students. A related challenge is to present international and domestic students as potential educational resources for one another, but in a way that is perceived by students as relatively low risk.

### **Internationalisation and cross-cultural teaching strategies**

Some convenors focus on the internationalisation of curriculum content, comparative cross-cultural or international research and case studies. Such resources can be used as a means of exploring the impact of culture on professional practice, or as a means of making comparisons between different national approaches to a range of social and economic issues.

Others ask that students work in **multi-cultural teams** for classroom activities. Such activities begin the process of developing students' inter-cultural skills in a way that is low risk for the students themselves.

Some first year convenors perform active cross-cultural comparisons in their teaching through a *cultural mapping process*.<sup>1</sup> This process frames both international and Australian students as experts in their own culture, and alerts both groups to behavioural and attitudinal differences that may impact on either educational or professional contexts.

### **Key points for cross-cultural, international teaching**

- Cross-cultural, international teaching can be about exposing students to different approaches and contexts through the internationalisation of curriculum content
- It can also be developed through student practice, whether for in-class (or online) activities, or for group assessment items
- Cross-cultural, international teaching is about framing class diversity as a valuable resource for exploring the impact of cultural differences on educational and professional contexts.

### **Final Word**

Whether they work for large global corporations or not, today's graduates will work in an internationalised economy within an increasingly culturally diverse society. For this reason, global citizenship is listed as a key desirable graduate attribute here at USQ. The role of first year convenors is to begin the process of developing students' intercultural/international knowledge and skills, which will be important for them both as employees and citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> The cultural mapping process comes from the incorporated inter-cultural training package, The Excell Intercultural Skills Program, which we acknowledge here. For more information please access the following website:  
<http://www.excellinterculturalskillsprogram.com/interculturalskills.html>.