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Welcome to session 2169

ENGAGING STUDENTS AS PARTNERS IN GLOBAL LEARNING

HANNA BERRETZ, GRONINGEN UNIVERSITY, NETHERLANDS
DR WENDY GREEN, UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA
SUSANNA KOISTINEN, AALTO UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION, FINLAND

Insert location here, date, time

Overview

Students as partners (SaP) in global learning?

Three contexts

1. Susanna Koistinen: Finland
2. Hanna Berretz: The Netherlands
- 3 Wendy Green: Australia

Reflections – Commonalities, differences, shared opportunities and challenges

Open discussion – your questions

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Defining 'global learning'

- **Global learning** develops the knowledge, skills and attributes that enable people to live and work effectively and ethically in an interconnected world, whether they remain at home in their increasingly pluralist societies, or abroad.
- **Global learning** is fostered through 'internationalisation of the curriculum' (IoC): *a curriculum that purposefully develops all students global, international and intercultural perspectives as professionals and citizens.*

Defining 'students as partners' (SaP)

- A particular approach to student engagement
- *SaP means involving students, academics and other university staff as active, critical, and agentic partners in all aspects of education and genuine contributors to the university community*

ENGAGEMENT...
Changes Everything

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Partnership in context

Some European countries, long history, supported by strong formal structures

- Finland
- Netherlands

Emerging practice in Anglo-sphere, primarily 'ground up'

- UK: HEA (UK) SaP Framework (Healey et al 2014)
- Canada: International Summer Institute for SaP.
- International New Journal
- Australia: National funding programs – Transforming practices program & 2 fellowships

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Why engage students as partners in global learning?

- Universities aim to prepare all students to live and work ethically and effectively in our increasingly interconnected world through IoC
- **But internationalised curricula, as designed and taught by lecturers can be experienced and understood differently by students**
- Students from diverse backgrounds can bring insights important to IoC, but there is typically a failure *'to translate their presence into the exceptionally valuable and hitherto unappreciated curricular educational resource it could be'* (Mestenhauser, 1998, p.20).

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Many students do not recognize 'international dimension' of curriculum (Zimitat, 2008), or fail to see the relevance of international/global learning

Some resent 'narrow' 'superficial' approaches (Absalom & Vadura, 2006, 332)

Many do not take advantage of opportunities offered by presence of international students - low level of interaction between local and international students (Arkoudis et al, 2010; Leask, 2009; Leask & Wallace 2011; Marginson & Sawir 2011)

International/TNE students - course content is dominated by 'western' knowledge which lacks relevance (Pandian et al, 2016)



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SUSANNA KOISTINEN
AALTO UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION,
FINLAND

Susanna Koistinen – Aalto University Student Union

Just a few words about this presentation. I'm Susanna and I work as a specialist of academic affairs at the student union of Aalto University. I have now worked for over five years with the student representational system, student advocacy and questions relating to university administration and leadership. I have my masters degree on literature, but I have studied pedagogy, higher education administration and educational leadership.

In this presentation I will give a short introduction to the Finnish system of using students as partners in different functions in higher education. Our system incorporates elements both from representative system and straight involvement of students.

Aalto University Student Union

Based on
legislation

Democratically
elected
representative
council



Over 15000
members
(Technology,
Business and Arts)

150 volunteers
50 employees
2600 apartments
Yearly revenue 19 m€

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Shortly: The Finnish law requires the students of Universities to form student unions.

A student union consists of the students of a university and is self-governing. The student union liaises with and on behalf of its members and promotes their societal, social and intellectual aspirations and those relating to studies and the status of students in society. The student union also participates in the implementation of the educational mission of the university by preparing students for an active, informed and critical citizenship.

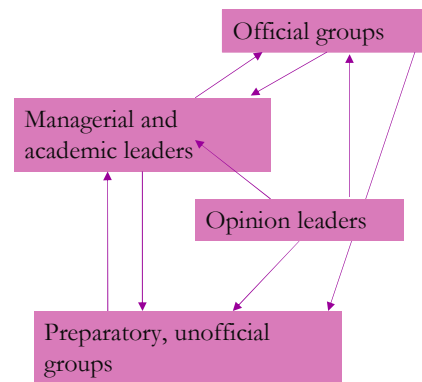
We are one of the biggest universities and thus student unions, and also one of the most international.

ACADEMIC COMMUNITY AND STUDENTS

Officially (from the laws and traditions)



Unofficially



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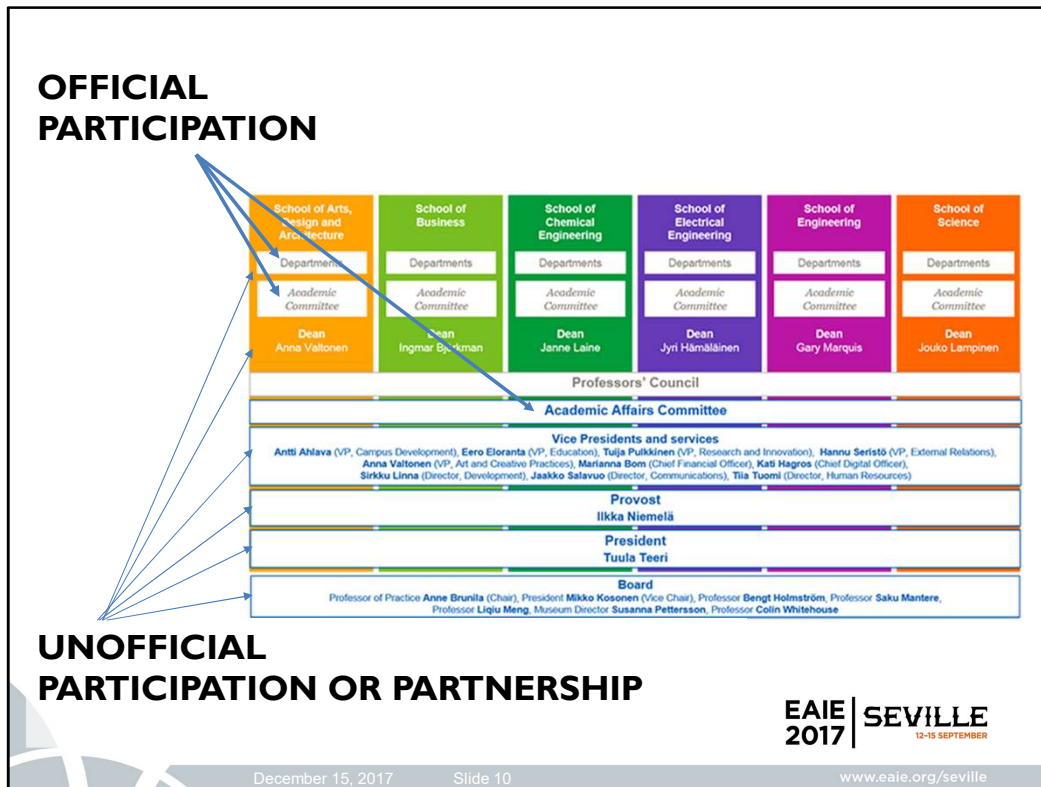
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Historically the 1960's and 70's in Finnish Higher Education had a lot of turbulence. There was a strong "one man, one vote" movement to strengthen democracy in Universities, as before that professors had more power than other groups. Because of those times, we still have what is called tripartite governance, so professors, other personnel and students are all represented in official bodies at the university level and school level.

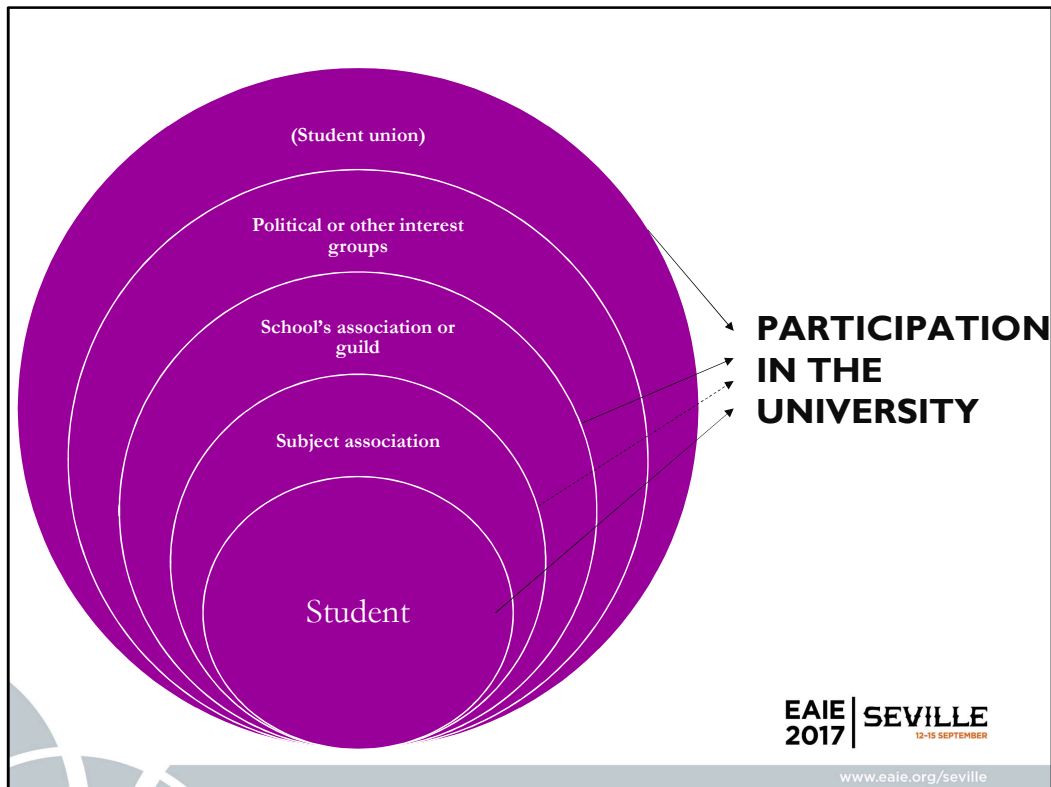
In reality the new universities act of 2010 changed the position of universities more to the direction of private sector and its ways of working. Student representation still is there, but as the universities have grown, the management and leadership is shifting more towards professional, specialised management. New public management ways of thinking and working can be seen in the Finnish higher education sector. Preparatory groups, working groups, development projects and such are replacing the traditional way of debating in the official academic affairs boards.



I'll try to explain this from the viewpoint of the university first. Aalto structure is quite simple, we have first the Board. Aalto is based on a fund, so its' board doesn't have a student member, other universities do have one. Board names the president and provost and vice presidents. The student union (for example me and our board) meet with these regularly, at least once a month.

The university academic affairs committee has students members, as do the schools academic affairs committees and most of the programme committees in the department. Inside the school, the deans meet unofficially with the student union and the guilds and associations.

We in the student union meet with the student associations representatives also monthly so that we act strategically together. Union also gives money and support to the associations so that they can do their own advocacy work. Simple, right?



We say in Finald that our country is full of associations and that is true also on our campus. Students rarely feel that they are closely connected to the student union but they are very firmly members of their associations. For example an architecture student can be a member of the subject association of architecture, member of the bigger Arts students' association, member of the trade union of architecture and a member of the green party affiliated representative council group in the student union.

We like to think we have three kinds of participation in Aalto University. We have the straight participation of students officially in the quality system and as co-creators or education. Then we have the uninformal dialogue between the school's and subject associations and guilds. Then we have the close relationship of the official representation via the student union. It is a mixture of official and unofficial ways of working together.


Examples of Partnership

- **Mutual official opinions**
- **Student union board members and specialists in the internal working groups: regulations, code of conduct, processes, quality, internationalization, curriculum work...**
- **Shared events: Opening ceremonies, university parties**
- **Training of tutors**
- **Co-creation of syllabus, student opinion on program development**
- **Mutual projects: Internationalization, entrepreneurship, campus development**

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Some examples what student partnership means to us.

- **Mutual official opinions. When the university gives it's official opinion on something, we try to negotiate a shared opinion and both sign in. For example changing the laws concerning higher education.**
- **Student union board members and specialists in the internal working groups: regulations, code of conduct, processes, quality, internationalization, curriculum work... I sit with the managers of learning services every week.**
- **Shared events: Opening ceremonies, university parties. Our producers and volunteers co-create the events on our campus with the university.**
- **Training of student tutors is a shared responsibility between university, student union and associations.**
- **Co-creation of syllabus, student opinion on program development, at the moment I'm training students to take part in the upcoming update of our syllabus for the next two years.**
- **Mutual projects: Internationalization, entrepreneurship, campus development. For example search Aalto is multicultural on youtube.**



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HANNA BERRETZ,
NETHERLANDS

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Engaging students as partners in global learning in The Netherlands

- Hanna Berretz
- Member University Council with focus on Internationalization and the International Classroom
- BSc Economics at University of Groningen, now MSc student Health Economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam
- My motivation
 - 1) meet people
 - 2) learning experience
 - 3) employability



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My story- I am an one of the few international students that actually made the step to become actively involved in both, the informal student structures and the formal University decision making. I have encountered internationalization from various different perspectives and gained a lot of valuable insights. In my year in the University Council I was a member of the international Classroom Expert Team. It is a project that aims to implement global learning in the curriculum by creating a engaging, interactive and international learning environment. One of the main challenges we faced in the last year was how to bridge the gap between the formal and the informal curriculum so that internationalization, inclusion and integration can be achieved also outside of the classroom.

Characteristics of the Dutch System

- Participation with democratically elected representatives regulated by law
- Long traditions already before internationalization
- Students organizations from students for students (University involved only indirectly)
 - formal vs informal system
- Extra curricular
 - intrinsic motivation required
- Approach global learning mainly on policy level
 - International Classroom project
 - student assistants

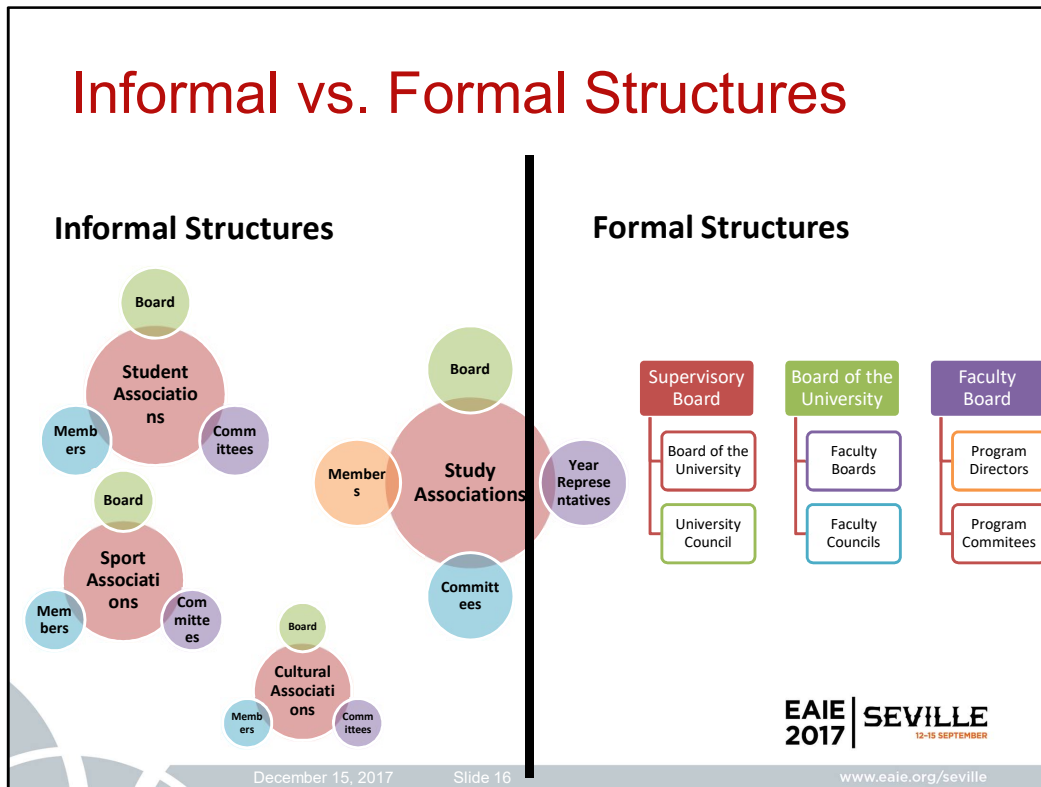
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In the Netherlands student participation is regulated by national laws. Participation bodies have certain rights (consent, advice and initiative) and are actively involved in the University policy making. The student and staff representatives are democratically elected and participation bodies exist on all levels of the University (central, faculties, degree programs).

On top of that, students organize themselves in various informal structures. Student engagement is always extra curricular, therefore the main incentive to become active are intrinsic motives.

The Dutch mostly approach changes (such as internationalization) from a highly theoretical point of view.



On the right side: Formal structures

- regulated by law → councils have formal role in decision making processes (right of consent, right of advice, right of initiative), they are democratically elected; direct hierarchical relation between governance levels, no direct relation at all between representation levels

On the left side: Informal Structures

- from students for students: students tend to organize themselves in all kind of forms; these organizations are largely independent of the University and not concerned with its policies or decision making
- Mostly social function
- Study associations are the overlap between the formal and the informal structures: focus on certain degree program or faculty, students from year representations involved in the feedback loop of degree programs; sometimes also take place in program committee
- In internationalization of curriculum the bridge between the formal and the informal curriculum

The “international” student

- I am European (German) and speak Dutch
→ cultural similarities
- Students with different cultural background have totally different experience
→ cultural clash
→ not able to engage as partner in global learning due to lack of required cultural attributes/skills
- Conclusion: stigma of int. students; diversity requires dynamic and adaptive system

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As an illustration of the problematic concept of „international students“: International students often considered equal and stigmatized. In reality, you can barely compare for example european students to asian ones. Conclusion: there is not one way on how to deal with „international students“. Different students will require different strategies. In order to truly engage students as partners in global learning we need a dynamic system that gives room to cultural diversity and constantly adapts to the changing environment.

Is the Dutch system sustainable?

- Formal and informal structures experience consequences of internationalization
→ forced to adjust gradually
- Before threshold of truly international population
- Two processes with different paces:
 - 1) internationalization happens organically in student world
 - 2) internationalization of University theory and strategy based (PDCA cycle)
- Language based division
- “Dutchness” of the system

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Both structures (the formal and the informal) are experiencing the effects of internationalization. The proportion of int. Students in Groningen is growing (aim: 30%) but we are still below the threshold of a truly international population (15%). Due to this development, both structures are forced to adjust. The formal ones need to represent the actual student population and informal student organizations are confronted with international students that want to participate.

So in essence we have two different processes going on at the same time:

- 1) internationalization happens organically in student world at a very fast pace → they do something and figure it out; share of best practices; trial and error
- 2) internationalization of University theory and strategy based (PDCA cycle); process is slow and bound to stages of quality assurance: changes happen faster and Uni often struggles to adjust. Also, the communication towards the students is often not ideal.

On both levels language is an issue. The language proficiency in English is very high in the Netherlands but people are still reluctant to switch to English in an informal setting.

Additionally, the system is very Dutch and built on Dutch culture and characteristics: people required to be outspoken, need own motivation and dry, individualistic but team work.

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WENDY GREEN
UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

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In this presentation I will give a short introduction to the Finnish system of using students as partners in different functions in higher education. Our system incorporates elements both from representative system and straight involvement of students.

Engaging students as partners in global learning in Australia

- Dr Wendy Green
- Senior Lecturer,
Tasmanian Institute of
Learning & Teaching,
University of
Tasmania, and
- Australian Learning &
Teaching Fellow



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'Internationalisation' and 'global learning' in the Australian context

- **Focus on IE as TRADE**
- National Strategy for International Education 2025: *commitment to... advance international education by identifying new products, new opportunities for expansion, and building on our current presence in the existing markets.*
- Decreasing public investment in HE— *students as consumers*

AND

- **strong commitment to IoC** for all students – university & government
- **New Colombo Plan** – increased commitment to outbound mobility to Asia-Pacific



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How global learning is interpreted and enacted, historically and currently in Aust context

IE as Trade - (3rd largest export industry)


First National Strategy in 2016 – critiqued for reinforcing 'IE as trade'

Student participation in Australian HE

Formal - representation

- Voluntary student unionism (VSU)
- SU Reps some role in governance – patchy
- Few formal opportunities
- 2017: Sally Varnham, *Towards a national framework - student engagement in Decision Making and Governance*

Informal – inclusive participation

- Pre-2016: Many small innovative SaP projects
- 2016 onwards: National momentum
- SaP Network
- National Strategic Grants & 2 Fellowships
- SaP in STEM disciplines (Kelly Matthews)
- **SaP global learning (Wendy Green)** 

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Differences between 'unions on different campuses - a range of political, commercial and other services to students. Change since VSU was introduced - decline in participation, and intervention by university administrations

Shift to VSU since 1990s; into full effect by 2007

NUS – for all students

CISA- for international students

My focus is on informal – inclusive participation



Engaging students as partners in
global learning

Australian Learning & Teaching Fellowship (2017)
Building on previous IoC work on engaging academics (Leask)

The concept of 'listening to the student voice – implicitly if not deliberately – supports the perspective of student as 'consumer', whereas students as change agent explicitly supports a view of the students as 'active collaborator' and 'co-producer', with the potential for transformation
(Dunne & Zandstra, 2011, p.4).

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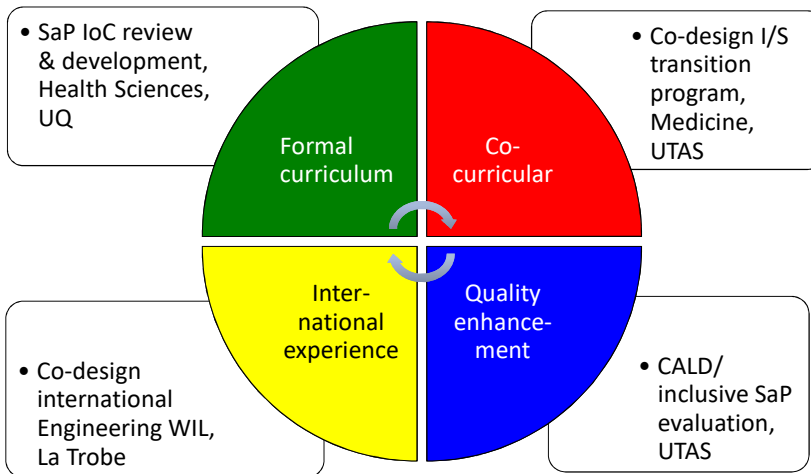
Building on previous work on engaging academics (Leask)

Developing 15 small-scale innovative SaP GL projects in 4 universities- to draw out guide principles & practical tips & case studies

Building a community of practice, based on partnership principles

Some examples of works-in-progress

For further examples see <http://www.utas.edu.au/engaging-students/case-studies>



Engaging students as partners in
global learning

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How does this work in practice and what are some key achievements/successes? (so the audience can 'picture' what this means in practice in each of our contexts)


Emerging findings – The benefits

Students

Enjoyment!
Ownership of learning, agency,
empowerment
Increased understanding of:
GL/loC; teachers'
perspectives/lived realities
Meta-learning & employability

Staff

Enjoyment!
Empowerment & ownership
of their teaching/curriculum
Increased understanding of:
GL/loC students'
perspectives/lived realities



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Challenges: moving from exclusionary to inclusionary practices

1. Structural
 2. Cultural/linguistic
 3. Personal
 4. Ideological
 5. Resourcing – staff and students
- = **Changing practices**



Structural/institutional issues

- Rapid turnover of students - Every generation negotiates the role of the students and gives new meanings to it.
- Processes of recruitment/involvement of students that work well for domestic students don't necessarily work when campus is more heterogeneous. Formal systems of Finland & Netherlands - rely on associations, knowing when to get elected and so on.
- Same issues in Australia where recruitment to Sap projects is more informal still depends on cultural knowledge, confidence etc – the usual suspects volunteer
- Speeding up of processes – shorter semesters, QA processes – little space in curriculum development and evaluation to allow time/space for real student input
- Netherlands/Finland - formal and very official structures regulated by laws vs informal structures organized by students for students; student structures evolve much faster than university decision making

Cultural/ issues

- Widening participation and internationalisation v parochialism of systems
- Developing inclusive practices – beyond 'representation' to inclusion - if we continue to recruit students in traditional ways we will recruit the most able; e.g., allowing more time (for int students to settle in) before finalizing partnership teams, recruiting via multiple channels; how do we scale up and out to include

all?

→ In the Netherlands this is very similar: student representation does not represent actual student population; also in informal structures int. students barely play a role

→ also, formal and informal systems very traditional and inherently Dutch; language is always a problematic factor: students and personnel reluctant to speak English

- Developing inclusive practices – beyond ‘representation’ to inclusion - if we continue to recruit students in traditional ways we will recruit the most able. What does partnership mean to students from different countries? (Suggestions - allowing more time for int students to settle in before finalizing partnership teams, recruiting via multiple channels; how do we scale up and out to include all?)

Personal Issues

- Global learning as personally as well as institutionally transforming – questioning roles of lecturers and students, questioning role of international students – diversity as the new normal,

Ideological issues

- education as public good (students as members of university) or a private good (students as consumers v members of academic community)
- The greatest debate is on the whole role of students, as we now have tuition fees coming to Finland also. How can we continue to deepen the role of students in the academic community when pressure towards the students an universities seems to get stronger all the time?
- Representation or participation in co-creation?

Resourcing – time poverty and funding issues – staff and students – pressure to finish degrees in minimum time - no time for students to participate
Time and money is short in all 3 contexts. In Finland (and Australia), students feel helping the university is something extra.

Conclusion – SaP GL means fundamental change to practices that may have worked well (and not so well) before universities became internationalized.

Opportunities

1. Structural
 - threshold for truly int. population close
 - participation and involvement structures in place
2. Cultural
 - low level of power distance
3. Personal
 - diversity as an asset
 - high language proficiency
4. Ideological
 - internationalization considered a goal
5. Resourcing
 - expertise and knowledge

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1. Structural
 - once a (student) population reaches the threshold for a truly international population, internationalization strategies will be implemented thoroughly, also there will be less of an international student bubble and the local and international population will mix and interact more
 - in NL participation structures and the tendency to be involved already exist so system „simply“ has to adapt to the changing environment
2. Cultural
 - interaction between students and university staff is often possible on eye-level due to low powerdistance culture
3. Personal
 - Diversity can be seen as an asset so the internationalization of the academic community, the university and student participation can enrich the discussion and improve the overall situation
 - language proficiency of staff and students is high and enables interaction
4. Ideological
 - Internationalization is generally considered as something positive, a goal even: gives opportunity to exploit benefits *** but think about rise of right wing politics and parochialism
5. Resourcing
 - expertise and knowledge about student engagement high, also on internationalization it is increasing

Sustaining and extending SaPGL?

- Recognize and reward work of staff and students in meaningful ways
- Develop global learning policy and practices through participatory processes
- Understand and respond to 'new normal' diversity
- Adjust curriculum development, review & approval processes at each level of the university to enable staff-student partnerships
- Understand that inclusion means fundamentally changing *many* practices (e.g., conduct of meetings)
- Reorient university teaching qualification programs and ongoing PD to include SaP values, principles and practices

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