

## Call for the special issue *Internationalization of curricula*

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### Outline

Modern information societies are in constant flux due to globalization processes and increasing movements of migration. International and intercultural competencies are therefore of great significance for professional and personal success. In the future, the German Rectors' Conference asserts, German higher education institutions must understand their role as "higher education institutions in the world and for the world," and accordingly not only prepare students for a career in an increasingly globally connected world, but also educate them to become tolerant and responsible global citizens (2008, p. 3; translation).

How exactly such a vision of higher education may be implemented is currently subject to intense debate in higher education policy and research communities. Study-related stays abroad may well provide students with opportunities of acquiring the respective competencies, yet the mere short-term immersion in other cultural contexts does not result in the acquisition of these competencies (LEASK & BEELEN, 2009, p. 3). In contrast, the development of intercultural and international competences requires continuous sensitization, guidance, experience, and reflection. Currently, approximately 30 % of the German students are mobile; this percentage, however, also raises the question of how students who – for various reasons – cannot realize a stay abroad may gain intercultural competencies and a sound knowledge of international affairs. An internationalized curriculum may offer a solution and, as Jos Beelen and Elspeth Jones argue, ensure opportunities for the acquisition of competencies for *all* students on the campus at home (2015, p. 7).

Internationalization measures that take this into account and focus on the curriculum therefore fundamentally transform higher education (cf. LEENEN 2015, p. 25). They prompt a reform of traditional learning settings and invite us to examine the role of new and innovative forms of teaching and learning as well as the significance of topics and perspectives beyond existing disciplinary traditions. Particularly digital forms of teaching and learning receive great relevance since they hold numerous opportunities for the internationalization of teaching and learning (cf. Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft, 2015): They allow for a strong international connection of learners and teachers and facilitate their access to new perspectives, knowledge, as well as research and teaching methods from other scientific cultures. Providing lectures and materials in the form of free and open teaching and learning materials (Open Educational Resources, OERs) in particular helps to enhance the international profile of universities and support students' intercultural competencies through the exchange and collaboration with international students (Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft, 2015, p. 32; DEIMANN, NEUMANN & MUUSS-MERHOLZ, 2015, p. 8). However, as of yet, these two aspects –

internationalization and digitalization – have not been systematically linked (ZAWACKI-RICHTER & BEDENLIER, 2015, p. 10).

Moreover, with regard to both the content and organization of learning and teaching, higher education institutions in the German-speaking area face the challenge of designing curricula

- that help students to develop a critical awareness of the local and global issues in their discipline and provide them with opportunities to deepen their knowledge of transnational problems;
- that include the increasingly heterogeneous student population and do justice to the faculty's diverse national and cultural backgrounds;
- that enable students to communicate successfully (i.e. empathetically and in a context-sensitive manner) in cross-cultural settings and motivate them to actively seek enriching contact with members of other cultures (BREIT et al., 2013, p. 123; JONES, 2013, p. 101; LEASK, 2010, p. 6f.).

This thematic issue takes as its starting point the definition devised by Betty Leask, who describes curriculum internationalization as “the incorporation of international, intercultural, and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods, and support services of a program of study” (2015, p. 149).

Although the internationalization of the curricula is becoming increasingly more relevant in the context of higher education in German-speaking countries, there has only been limited research on the topic. Efforts to systematically and strategically internationalize teaching and learning in higher education are not yet clearly visible; likewise, both research and operational implementation exhibit gaps.

Since the internationalization of the curricula does not constitute a didactic concept in itself, the question arises which concepts and methods are particularly suited in different academic disciplines. Furthermore, we need to explore how learning environments may be designed to create appropriate frameworks for cross-cultural encounters, how teaching and learning may productively draw on global perspectives, and how classes may foster students' awareness of their own as well as others' perspectives. This also involves questions on 'good teaching' and the roles of teaching professionals as well as other stakeholders in the internationalization process. Likewise, these issues also point to overarching questions on the transformation of higher education: They may relate to a growing awareness of diversity in higher education institutions or refer to a seemingly changing understanding of higher education, where a turn to the concept of 'global citizenship' as a corrective to the much-debated notion of employability can be observed.

## Contributions

Contributions from the following fields, which provide the theoretical foundations for the internationalization of the curricula, may constitute points of departure for discussions in this issue: intercultural education, diversity research, inclusive pedagogy, intercultural German studies or cultural studies etc.

Drawing on these conceptual frameworks, contributions may show how the acquisition of intercultural competencies may be implemented on module- and program-level in a systematic and theory-driven manner.

We invite contributions on the internationalization of the formal curriculum in different disciplinary contexts and academic traditions, in which 'the international' is assigned priority and relevance to different degrees and is represented in the curriculum in different ways. We also welcome contributions which explore the connection between the formal and informal curriculum – for instance further 'Internationalization at Home' measures or anti-bias work on campus – or contributions which consider internationalization and the various dimensions of diversity side by side. Moreover, contributions may discuss which impulses teachers and academic staff in higher education institutions need in order to be able to reflect on their roles with a view to the internationalization of teaching, and thus an opening of their curricula.

We would also like to invite contributions that discuss the internationalization of the curricula from the perspective of 'constructive alignment' and direct a systematic gaze toward relevant learning outcomes at program-, module-, and course-level as well as on the processes of teaching and the design of assessment tasks. Contributions may show how modularized curricula may continuously accompany and support students in further developing their competencies and attitudes, how alternative perspectives on seemingly familiar contents or opportunities for (cultural) comparisons may be integrated without crowding the already dense curricula (WINTERSTEINER, 2014, p. 37f.; LILLEY, 2015), and how learning outcomes may be assessed.

Contributions may focus on the following topics:

- **Internationalization of the curricula and theoretical foundations:** fundamental theories and concepts (intercultural education, diversity research, inclusive pedagogy, intercultural German studies, cultural studies, etc.);
- **Internationalization of the curricula in different disciplines:** problem-oriented and theory-driven presentations of good practice in different disciplines as well as reflections and advice for a transfer of these examples;
- **Internationalization and digital forms of teaching and learning:** practice-oriented insights into the conceptual, didactic, and technical design of virtual mobility, cross-border forms of communication and collaboration, and the use or production of open education resources;

- **Internationalized curricula and ‘employability’:** empirical studies on the integration of academic and vocational competencies in the context of internationalized curricula; qualitative or quantitative studies on employers’ perspectives;
- **Internationalization of the curricula and diversity:** empirical and exploratory studies on teachers’ perception of and interaction with ‘international’ students; case studies on the design of inclusive learning environments for the acquisition of intercultural and international competencies; research- and practice-oriented contributions on students’ socialization in the German-speaking academic system and the ‘hidden curriculum’;
- **‘International classrooms’:** Case studies on the support of cross-cultural encounters in cooperative forms of learning; empirical studies on students’ perception of internationalized learning settings; Scholarship of Teaching and Learning contributions which shed light on the design of learning environments for formal and informal learning;
- **Connections between the local and the global in teaching and learning:** good practices on experience-based learning and/or service learning in internationalized curricula; theoretical and conceptual studies on possible links to ‘global citizenship education’ and/or the education of ‘globally concerned citizens’;
- **Internationalization of the curricula and mobility:** Contributions on facilitating and guiding student mobility by means of internationalized curricula from the perspective of reflective practice; theoretical and empirical studies on ‘international’ students’ participation in the curriculum;
- **Further aspects:** Internationalization of the curricula and foreign languages; assessment; certificates and accreditation; quality assurance.

## Target audience

This issue is addressed to scholars from the fields of teaching and learning in higher education, higher education research, educational sciences, as well as diversity research, cultural studies, intercultural German studies and intercultural pedagogy. Moreover, higher education staff involved in curriculum design and internationalization processes as well as teaching professionals and study program coordinators are addressed.

The thematic focus aims at exploring the challenges and opportunities of curriculum internationalization in the German-speaking higher education context, particularly with regard to different disciplines and academic traditions. We therefore welcome theory-building contributions and studies focusing on the evaluation and application of theories and models as much as studies on the effectiveness of internationalized curricula. The issue thus aims at linking two perspectives: On the one hand, theory-driven reports from practice should provide an insight into the pedagogic-didactic and technical or organizational design of tried internationalization concepts and their integration in the curriculum. On the other hand, articles should discuss the conceptual points of departure of the curricular integration of global perspectives and

intercultural competence. Ultimately, we seek to initiate an increased academic exchange on this emergent topic.

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## Guidelines regarding the journal

The ZFHE is a peer-reviewed online journal that publishes scientific contributions of practical relevance concerning current higher education development issues. The focus is on didactical, structural, and cultural developments in teaching and learning. Topics that are innovative and still regarded as open in respect of their design options are preferred.

The ZFHE is published by a consortium of European researchers and funded by the Austrian Ministry for Science, Research and Economics. For more information, see <http://www.zfhe.at>.

## Submission information

German and English contributions may be submitted in two possible formats:

**Scientific contributions** within the main theme should comply with the following criteria: The contribution...

- presents innovative perspectives, arguments, problem analyses etc. on the key topic;
- focuses on essential aspects of the key topic;
- is theoretically supported (i.e. it offers a clear connection to the scientific discourse of the topic under discussion);
- provides scientific insights with added value at least in some parts;
- clearly elucidates the methodology used to acquire knowledge;
- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA style, 6<sup>th</sup> edition);
- comprises up to 33,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, bibliography and author information).

**Workshop reports** comprise the instructional presentation of practical experience, good practice examples, design concepts, pilot projects, etc. Workshop reports should comply with the following criteria:

- demonstrates potential for knowledge transfer;
- describes illustrative aspects and factors for the purpose of theory formation;
- systematically and transparently presented (e.g., no incomprehensible clues to details in an area of practice);
- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA style, 6<sup>th</sup> edition);
- up to 21,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, bibliography and author information).

## Submission and review schedule

**June 19, 2017 – Submission deadline for complete articles:** Please upload your contribution(s) to the ZFHE journal system (<http://www.zfhe.at>) in the corresponding section

(scientific contribution, workshop report) of ZFHE 12/4 issue in anonymous format. To do so, you must first register as an author in the system.

**September 15, 2017 – Feedback / Reviews:** Scientific contributions and workshop reports are evaluated in a double-blind process (see below).

**October 20, 2017 – Revision deadline:** Where necessary, contributions may be revised according to feedback and recommendations from the reviews.

**December 11, 2017 – Online publication:** In December 2017, the finalized contributions are published under <http://www.zfhe.at> and also made available in print.

### Review Process

All submitted contributions will be examined in a double-blind peer review process to guarantee scientific quality. The editors of the current issue propose the reviewers for the respective theme and allocate individual contributions to the reviewers; they also determine which contributions will be accepted. The selection of reviewers and the review process for each thematic issue are always supervised by a member of the editorial board.

### Formatting and submission

In order to save valuable time with the formatting of the contributions, we kindly ask that all authors work with the template from the beginning. The template can be downloaded from the ZFHE website under the following link:

[http://www.zfhe.at/userupload/ZFHE\\_12-4\\_TEMPLATE.docx](http://www.zfhe.at/userupload/ZFHE_12-4_TEMPLATE.docx)

Since we must be able to edit the texts, they must be submitted unlocked/unprotected in in Microsoft Word (.doc), Office Open XML (.docx), Open Document Text (.odt) or Plain Text (.txt) format. Please do not submit any PDF files! Submissions in the “Scientific Contribution” and “Workshop Report” categories must first be made in anonymous format in order to guarantee the double-blind review process. Please remove all references to the author(s) of the document (including in the document properties!). Upon a positive review result, this information will be re-inserted.

### Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the content of the issue, please contact Tanja Reiffenrath ([tanja.reiffenrath@zvw.uni-goettingen.de](mailto:tanja.reiffenrath@zvw.uni-goettingen.de)). For technical and organizational questions, please contact Michael Raunig ([office@zfhe.at](mailto:office@zfhe.at)).

**We look forward to your submissions!**

**Tanja Reiffenrath und Hiltraud Casper-Hehne** (Universität Göttingen)