

# Course Internationalization: Engaging Students as Learning Resources

Elise Ho, BEd, MES<sup>1[1]</sup>

Barbara Bulman-Fleming, PhD<sup>2[2]</sup>

Bruce Mitchell, PhD<sup>3[3]</sup>

The project documented in this report was made possible by a grant in 2002 from the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) with matching funds from the University of Waterloo. The authors sincerely thank Donna Ellis, Verna Keller, Wendy Mertz and Darlene Radicioni for their help during the project.

---

<sup>1[1]</sup> Elise Ho was the research assistant for this project, and recently obtained her Masters of Environmental Studies degree at the University of Waterloo. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto.

<sup>2[2]</sup> Barbara Bulman-Fleming is Director of the Teaching Resources Office (TRACE) at the University of Waterloo, and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology.

<sup>3[3]</sup> Bruce Mitchell is Associate Provost, Academic and Student Affairs, at the University of Waterloo, and a Professor in the Department of Geography.

## **Abstract**

As post-secondary institutions seek to internationalize their campuses, international student recruitment and study- or work-abroad opportunities for domestic students are increasing. This results in an increasing number of students with various international experiences on university campuses, who take courses with the majority of domestic students who may not have any international experiences as related to their university studies. This report documents four strategies to effectively engage such students as learning resources for all students, in order to bring increased international and multicultural perspectives to Canadian classrooms. These include: in-class discussions, multicultural group work, students as guest speakers, and students as cultural resources. Finally, successes at the University of Waterloo relating to the introduction of some of these strategies are documented, with recommendations for faculty and administrators aiming to incorporate these approaches in their institutions.

## **Introduction**

Internationalization is a term that has become commonplace in most Canadian and international post-secondary institutions. This is largely due to the increasingly global nature of our society, and the recognition that colleges and universities should lead such a trend. In the post-secondary setting, "internationalization" refers to a range of activities, policies, and services to integrate an international and cross-cultural dimension into teaching, research, development study, and service functions (modified after Knight 1993). To be "internationalized" implies that these activities, policies, and services have permeated all aspects of university life, and that such a movement has been driven or supported by administrative international aims and guidelines.

Internationalization brings with it a host of benefits to both the students and the institution. The University of Waterloo has identified eight benefits of internationalization.

1. Diversify and enhance the learning environment for the benefit of domestic students, the University, and the nation;
2. Diversify and enhance the student population by attracting excellent international undergraduate and graduate students;
3. Ensure that research and scholarship are informed by international, as well as national, provincial and local considerations and issues;
4. Produce graduates who are internationally knowledgeable and cross-culturally sensitive;
5. Address through scholarship the increasingly interdependent nature of the world, and thereby contribute to improved understanding among nations;
6. Generate resources to enhance other international activities;
7. Help to maintain the economic, scientific and technological competitiveness of Canada, and promote the export of Canadian educational products and services abroad; and,
8. Raise the international profile of the University (University of Waterloo 1999).

Two of the most common strategies employed by post-secondary institutions to achieve such benefits are the promotion of study-abroad programs for domestic students and the recruitment of international students. However, fewer than 1% of Canadian full-time students

travel abroad for work or study (Knight 2000). At the University of Waterloo, 4% of students have a university-related international experience. The number of international students studying in Canada is relatively higher, comprising an average of 4.3% of the national student population (Knight 2000). Again, this figure is slightly higher at the University of Waterloo, where 6.3% of the student population in November of 2002 were full-time, international visa students. This leaves a large portion of students (90-95%) without any first-hand international experiences directly related to their University of Waterloo studies. While universities continue to encourage study or work abroad opportunities, financial barriers to such experiences will continue to hinder international student mobility. Therefore, in order to provide students with an internationalized university experience, strategies must reach beyond study- and work-abroad opportunities.

One method to accomplish this is to focus on "at-home" internationalization. This term arose from concerns, similar to those mentioned above, about the proportion of European post-secondary students (a relatively higher 10%) who travel abroad during their studies (Crowther et al. 2000). The European Association for International Education's special interest group, "Internationalisation at Home" (IaH), has focused on the definition of at-home internationalization, as well as on the documentation of strategies and frameworks to accomplish this in order to create a European model of internationalization at home. One of IaH's many recommendations is the use of students with international experiences as sources of expertise in the classroom for the benefit of students who have not travelled abroad.

The IaH is not alone in this regard. International students have long been recognized as an underused resource for internationalization. However, "having many international students on campus does not make that institution international" (Harari 1992: 75). This conclusion

implies that on-campus international students need to *contribute* to the internationalization of that campus through systematic and active participation.

Vertesi (1999: 154) recognises the advantage of engaging students with international experiences in the classroom, and that,

By calling on these students, the faculty member brings new information to the class and signals to other class members the value of these different perspectives. Given the multicultural nature of Canadian society, many Canadian students can contribute in this way as well.

Furthermore, Boehringer (2002: 111) states,

Most campuses today host a number of foreign students providing a valuable intercultural resource that is often not sufficiently utilized. Aside from the learning experience of our students, forcing them to initiate contact with foreign students may contribute to better integration and thus to a more rewarding experience for the exchange students. I particularly like the emotional impact this exercise [semi-structured interviews with foreign students] can have on participants, as they may see their own culture through the eyes of another; experiential learning like this can often have the most lasting effect.

Students who have travelled abroad and then return to their home institutions are also a valuable resource, especially in senior classes, which tend to be smaller and are more likely to have such students enrolled (Vertesi 1999). Schoorman (2000: 10) agrees that such students are valuable resources in the classroom, and that they can be used as educational resources in classroom discussion, as counsellors for study abroad, as guest speakers on international or cultural topics, and as organizers of cultural events.

Bowry (2002) conducted a study of undergraduate and teacher-education students at QueenÆs University to determine the impact of international students on the education of Canadian students. He concluded that international students do have an enriching effect on their Canadian peers, both in and out of the post-secondary classroom. The in-class enrichment was found to be related to the different perspectives and views that international students contribute,

as well as to knowledge of and information about other countries and cultures. Barriers to perceived enrichment included lack of in- and out-of-class social interaction, as well as the nature of the course that Canadian and international students shared. He suggests that one reason why in-class social interaction might be hindered is the reluctance of some international students to speak out during class. He also found that the extent to which Canadian students perceived their education being enriched by international students was limited by academic discipline. For example, economics and computer science students reported less enrichment than the education and business students. Bowry (2002: 177) states that this is because "the passive learning style in those [economics and computer science] classes involves little social interaction, and because the subject matter fosters little subjective interpretation and reflection from personal experience". Finally, the extent to which course instructors actively call on the expertise of international students in class also contributes to domestic students' perceived level of enrichment.

In spite of the considerable potential benefits, few institutions actively and systematically use the international experiences of students as a learning resource. Knight (2000: 46) indicates that fewer than 5% of respondents from post-secondary institutions polled in Canada "draw upon the experience and knowledge of international students and Canadian students with international experiences" as a teaching and learning strategy in the classroom with high frequency, and fewer than 45% do so with moderate frequency. This low level of student engagement is probably a result of several factors, one of which might be a lack of knowledge and familiarity with those teaching-and-learning strategies that might better engage the expertise of international students and students with international experiences.

Humphries (2002) suggests that this low level of involvement is partly due to concentration on international research collaboration and travel-abroad opportunities as vehicles

for internationalization, as opposed to concentration on in-class student interactions. Furthermore, she states that international students are too often not being engaged in the classroom, and are mainly regarded in terms of their financial impact as opposed to their knowledge of other cultures.

Recognizing that the literature has called for increased student engagement as a means to internationalize, but that few institutions actively do so, we sought to provide course instructors and university administrators with examples of how to better engage the expertise of such students in the classroom. In this report, details of our process of investigation are given, so that others may learn from and build upon our findings.

### **Culture Sharing and Intercultural Learning**

Boehringer (2002) distinguishes between "culture-specific" and "culture-general" skills, and states that the latter are more relevant to students, in order that they be prepared for employment in an increasingly global society. Although culture-specific information is useful and can complement general intercultural training, students must be able to learn about and adapt to other cultures outside of their classroom and beyond their university careers. As he states, "knowing about different attitudes and behaviours in other cultures does not necessarily mean that we are able to adapt and change our notions and behaviours" (Boehringer 2002: 106).

In addition, for the benefits of culture sharing and intercultural learning to be optimized, they must be facilitated systematically and with relevance to course material and concepts. Any attempts to internationalize must fit in with the general framework of the course aims as well as the university aims. If they do not, then the material usually will be seen as extraneous and will be given low priority by both the instructors and the students.

In this report, we present strategies that contribute to the culture-general skills and attitudes necessary for students who wish to be culturally competent and be successful members of a global society. We also seek to provide strategies that will relate to course material and the overarching goals of internationalization so that their relevance and necessity are easily recognized.

## **Methodology**

To achieve the above project aims, we employed three approaches. First, we conducted a review of the literature regarding internationalization and more specifically, of methods to engage students in an internationalized classroom. Concurrently, an Internet review of other post-secondary institutions was conducted in order to identify best practices occurring at North American, British, and Australian universities. These findings were the foundation for a series of focus groups with various members of the University of Waterloo, including international students, Canadian students with international experiences, and course instructors.

## **Results**

The literature review, website review, and University of Waterloo student and faculty focus groups indicated several ways in which students with international experiences can be effectively engaged as learning resources in the classroom. These were grouped into four general strategies: calling on specific students to offer their unique perspectives in class discussions, forming multicultural groups to work together on projects, using students as guest speakers, and having students act as cultural resource people. Although these strategies are

common in many classrooms, they can be modified to incorporate student expertise and experiences.

### **o Class Discussion**

In-class discussion is commonly used to draw upon the experiences of students. Vertesi (1999) states that calling on students and encouraging their involvement in class can be an excellent strategy to include international and culturally different points of view in class discussions. Schoorman (2000) also stresses the importance of international students as resources in classroom discussions. This type of student engagement can reach beyond simple call-and-answer techniques, to systematically draw upon the unique perspectives of students in class as they relate to the course material.

Sarles (1998) describes a case study of a history course on American culture at the University of Minnesota. The students in the course included both domestic and international students, and the course required students to use each other's perspectives to understand and deconstruct various aspects of American culture. The American students were surprised to learn that the international students' perceptions of American culture were so different from their own, and the international students were able to better understand American culture through their peers' points of view. In this case, the course instructor prompted students to contribute their cultural perspectives in open discussions spanning several weeks. Sarles (1998: 149) states that in an "interdependent world, Americans will be interacting increasingly with individuals from other countries". Furthermore, this type of student interaction and discussion can provide students with:

1. The ability to communicate cross-culturally on sensitive issues;

2. The ability to use cultural knowledge;
3. The ability to use foreign nationals as cultural resources (Sarles 1998: 149).

Facilitating critical in-class discussion and encouraging students' different international and cultural perspectives is a straightforward and relatively simple way to draw upon student experiences. This teaching method is likely used in many courses, quite possibly because it is so obvious. But, rather than a random inclusion of students' different perspectives, the technique should be used systematically to encourage all students to participate. That is, instructors should attempt to include all students in class discussion, by calling on them to contribute. In addition, instructors and tutors need to be aware of which students would have 'different' perspectives, so that such cross-cultural discussion can occur (Vertesi 1999). Bond et al. (2003) report that many faculty members attempt to include diverse perspectives in class discussions, but that it is impossible, using only visual cues, to identify students from a different cultural background or who have travelled abroad.

In a focus group of University of Waterloo faculty members, this concern of falsely assuming a student's background also arose. It was suggested by these faculty members that the use of confidential and voluntary information cards to profile students at the start of classes would help to identify those students with relevant cultural experiences as related to the course and to identify those students who would be comfortable talking about these experiences in class. Bond et al. (2003) also report the use of student profiles as an effective way of identifying students with international experiences, which the instructor may use to facilitate and encourage class discussions. These concerns and ideas contributed to the creation of a generic student information sheet at the University of Waterloo, which is documented in the 'Successes at the University of Waterloo' section of this report.

## o **Multicultural Group Work**

Multicultural group work is another way to draw upon the expertise of students. Cross-cultural dialogue and discussion can occur in these smaller groups, and small-group learning is a common teaching and learning tool in many international programs and courses (Milhouse 1996; Leask 2001; Bowry 2002; DeVita, 2002). Multicultural group work allows students to learn how to communicate, interact, and solve problems with people from other cultures, and it also allows students to learn about the course material from other perspectives. In addition, multicultural group work is increasingly common in the workforce; employers recognize the creative and competitive advantage of employees who can work harmoniously and productively in multicultural groups (Watson et al. 1993; Thomas 1999).

Multicultural group work is also a means to promote cross-cultural sensitivity and awareness (Smith and Berg 1997). This was demonstrated in a case study at an American university documented by Moremen (1997), involving students in a 15-week, 200-level sociology course on health and aging. Students worked in small groups throughout the course, and were asked to address such issues as racial and ethnic pride, discrimination, and privilege in order to discover how such factors affect a person's quality of life and aging processes. Students were placed in groups based on their cultural background, and the groups were given opportunities to share opinions and discuss ideas without being judgmental or defensive. Throughout this process, the instructor commented that the students experienced an increased awareness and appreciation of other cultures and an increased sensitivity to discrimination experienced by others from a different class, ethnic background, or gender. Student feedback on course evaluations included the following comments:

æThis course really opened my eyes to view different things in our society with a more objective and selective attitudeÆ,

æI have learned a lot from this class, not only about the material, but about myself and othersÆ,

æI knew immediately from the start that I would be learning a great deal that would be extremely beneficial in my lifeÆ (Moremen 1997: 117).

Moremen (1997) describes an enriching process that many of the students experienced in this class, in which they were able to appreciate the new and varied perspectives of other students, and also were able to gain a heightened awareness and appreciation of their own background and culture. She concludes that multicultural group work has an overall positive effect on studentsÆ cultural attitudes and perceptions.

The students in the University of Waterloo focus groups also indicated that multicultural group work is an excellent way to learn about and from students with different cultural experiences. Both the international students and students who have traveled abroad expressed their support for multicultural group work as an effective teaching and learning strategy. The students felt that this type of small-group learning is effective for idea-sharing, and facilitation of opportunities for students to learn about other cultures and to learn how to communicate with people from different cultures.

Students in mathematics and science were especially keen on multicultural group work, as there are few opportunities for this type of collaborative learning in their disciplines. These students felt that multicultural study groups outside of class time would be an effective way of collaborating and problem-solving with people from diverse backgrounds. One faculty member at the University of Waterloo informed us that the way in which mathematics is taught in France is vastly different from how it is taught in

North America. In this instance, multicultural study groups might provide students with opportunities to learn about and share different problem-solving skills. Not only does this provide students with different methods of addressing mathematics problems, but also with the recognition that culturally different problem-solving skills are valuable tools in their discipline. The students from the University of Waterloo focus groups also recognized that culturally mixed groups often result in varied perspectives on the same issues. In addition, smaller work groups tend to encourage more sharing of ideas than in-class discussions, as students indicated that they are generally more comfortable with sharing their ideas and experiences in smaller groups.

The challenges of multicultural group work should also be recognized. These are challenges of communication and challenges of productivity. Kirchmeyer (1993: 128) says that, "to realize the creative potential of diversity, multicultural groups may need to overcome the interpersonal problems and communication [challenges] that diversity can also present". This is a common problem documented in the group-work literature. Jackson (1992) describes how the interpersonal and within-group communication process of multicultural groups in the work force needs special management skills from group-work facilitators. Smith and Berg (1997: 8) state "these teams face a special challenge as they work to become functional groups for, unlike groups composed from one nationality, the members of a multinational team cannot assume they hold the same beliefs about work group dynamics". Group members often cite the challenge of communication within multicultural groups as a negative experience (McLeod et al. 1996).

The second challenge that can arise in multicultural group work is the challenge of productivity. There is some debate in the literature regarding this, as some authors report that culturally homogenous groups are more productive than multicultural groups and other authors come to the opposite conclusion. Kirchmeyer (1993) described how minority members in group-work situations are found to contribute less to group efforts than the remaining group members. Thomas (1999) demonstrated that culturally homogenous groups perform better at group-work tasks than their culturally diverse counterparts. Watson et al. (1993) also found that group performance was higher in culturally homogenous groups, as was group *ôprocessö*, which is a measure of the interaction among group members during decision-making. But importantly, the study by Watson et al. (1993) revealed that many of the performance differences between culturally homogenous and heterogeneous groups tended to even out as time progressed. That is, they found that over a 17-week period, culturally diverse groups performed equally well relative to homogenous groups and even outperformed them in some measures of group productivity.

As can be seen from this short review, it is difficult to discern whether multicultural groups are more or less productive than culturally homogenous groups, and the relatively short duration of 1-term courses (12 weeks at the University of Waterloo) would seem to militate against the preferential formation of heterogeneous groups. Although communication and productivity challenges exist in multicultural group work, there are also advantages, relating to diverse problem-solving perspectives and increased culture sharing and intercultural communication. The students in the University of Waterloo focus groups acknowledged many of the challenges documented in the

literature, but to a greater extent recognized the benefits of multicultural collaborative learning. In addition, such challenges are likely to be less inhibitive as students are increasingly encouraged to work in and with multicultural groups.

#### **o Students as Guest Speakers**

Employing international students and domestic students as guest speakers is a more intensive method of engaging these students as resources in the classroom, as it demands more time and preparation on behalf of both the presenter and the instructor. However, many authors recognize the advantage to having such presentations in class, as it allows for the guest speakers to gain presentation experience, and for the students to learn about an aspect of the course material from a unique point of view (Pickert and Turlington 1992; Schoorman 2000). Bowry (2002) also refers to international-student presentations as one method through which domestic students perceive their education as being culturally and internationally enriched.

Pickert and Turlington (1992) make specific reference to Oregon State University, which began an International Cultural Service Program (ICSP) in 1983. This program seeks to provide international students with the opportunity to share aspects of their cultures by being guest speakers in university classes as well as at events in the surrounding community. In exchange for this service, students are reimbursed with a reduction in their relatively high tuition fees (to be at par with domestic-student tuition fees) as well as with language and presentation training. This program was still in effect during 2003, and had a roster of 35-38 full-time international undergraduate and graduate students available for speaking events (Oregon State University 2003).

This type of student engagement as a means of course internationalization was the only one of the four strategies (in-class discussions, multicultural group work, students as guest

speakers, and students as cultural resources) documented on institutional websites. This may have been because it is the only strategy that is institutional in scale, the others being on an individual-course scale. Other post-secondary institutions have made efforts to develop such a roster of available students; for example, the University of Alberta's *Bridges* Program, which is run on a volunteer basis, places most of its students in community settings such as elementary and secondary schools. The University of Minnesota has a *Culture Corps* scholarship program, which is similar to the ICSP at Oregon State University, and seeks to provide international students with partial tuition refunds for their cultural service to the University. These programs seek to facilitate the placement of international students and encourage cross-cultural interaction within the university and the surrounding communities.

Faculty members at the University of Waterloo indicated concern regarding the likelihood that one student can or should represent any culture or country. This type of representation can be misleading and can also perpetuate stereotypes. As a solution, faculty indicated that classes should be informed that student presentations are individual, reflecting one person's perspectives and experiences, and not any whole culture or region. Indeed, this applies to all strategies that seek to facilitate culture-sharing, and students and faculty should be encouraged to understand that individual perspectives vary within cultures.

Students from the University of Waterloo focus groups were generally very eager to participate as guest speakers, and cited increased experience in presentation skills and cultural sharing as main motivations for serving in this capacity. Several international students cited language difficulties as a potential barrier to volunteering to be a guest lecturer, but also acknowledged that practice at public speaking would help their communication skills. Other concerns included a lack of knowledge or confidence in the subject matter, but the students were

generally receptive to extra research, given the benefits related to presentation experience and the opportunity to share their culture or cultural experiences.

These findings prompted the creation of a voluntary "Student-Speakers Roster", which is documented in the "Successes at the University of Waterloo" section of this report.

## **o Students as Cultural Resources**

This last method is often used in training courses that seek to provide students with "hands-on" experiences with people from other cultures. Nilsson (2000) describes the use of recently arrived immigrants in the community as resources to help train students in various schools (such as Dentistry) in intercultural communication and treatment skills. Pickert and Turlington (1992) describe similar strategies in which international members of the community are drawn into the university to serve as resources for students who need to learn how to work with people from different cultures or who speak different languages.

This type of intercultural training can also take place on campus, with international students as the training resources. Students might be able to serve as language tutors, resources for on-campus cultural events, or as in-class cultural resources (Pickert and Turlington 1992; Schoorman 2000). In addition, international students can provide intercultural training by serving as interviewees for student interviews, to provide Canadian students with insights into the experiences of a visiting student (Boehringer 2002). Boehringer stresses that understanding the perspective of a visiting student or scholar is integral to the intercultural training necessary for students wishing to work abroad (Boehringer 2002). This type of interaction also provides the students with the skills to communicate with and understand people from various backgrounds.

The students from the University of Waterloo focus groups expressed interest in this type of cultural sharing in the classroom. In particular, the students felt that their expertise could be useful for students planning to travel abroad, whether in pre-departure workshops or briefings. The international students expressed an interest in providing students with international readings and case-studies, which might complement the course material. In general, the students were eager to share their culture with the mainstream university population, and to dispel stereotypes and misconceptions about their culture or region of origin.

## **Summary**

International students and domestic students with international or novel cultural experiences are valuable resources who can help to internationalize the post-secondary curriculum. Knight (2000) indicates that, at present, this is being done at low or moderate levels in Canadian institutions, and may be occurring haphazardly or by instinct in many situations. Vertesi (1999) calls for a more systematic inclusion of such expertise, and many authors agree that this type of student engagement should be part of a more comprehensive and concerted approach to internationalization and intercultural training (Nilsson 2000; Schoorman 2000; Boehringer 2002).

We have described four different (although not mutually exclusive) strategies to engage students as learning resources that are identified in the literature: class discussions, multicultural group work, students as guest speakers, and students as cultural resources. Each of these strategies allows students with no previous international experience to learn about different cultures and about course material from more expert students. They also provide students with experiences in culture sharing, which includes learning how to learn from people with diverse

backgrounds and experiences. Each of the strategies involves various levels of planning, coordination, and time on the part of the course instructor. Nevertheless, each of the four strategies can be easily incorporated into courses that seek to enhance their international focus.

### **Successes at the University of Waterloo**

The results of our research led the way for two initiatives at the University of Waterloo. The first was the creation of a *Student-Speakers Roster*, modelled after the ICSP, *Bridges*, and *Culture Corps* program. Recruitment for the roster was done through email advertisements via the University of Waterloo International Student Office (ISO) and departmental administrative assistants. In addition, a web-based form was available on the Teaching Resources and Continuing Education (TRACE) website, and the Student-Speakers Roster was advertised on the University of Waterloo's *Daily Bulletin* (web-based) and weekly newspaper. The student response to these advertisements was very good, and during the winter 2003 semester there were approximately 20 international and domestic students on the roster, both from undergraduate and graduate programs. Each of the volunteers was able to contact the TRACE office for help with presentation skills, and was also offered remuneration for any presentation expenses.

Course instructors were notified of the roster and the students' availability at the faculty focus groups. A wine-and-cheese reception was held in winter 2003, at which four students from the roster gave short cultural presentations to a group of invited faculty members, who were then informed of the Student-Speakers Roster and the possibility of inviting such students into the classroom. Finally, posters aimed at advertising the roster to course instructors were distributed to departmental administrative assistants. The roster was introduced to faculty midway through the winter 2002 semester, when many instructors had already finalized their course

plans. Because of this, the faculty response to the Student-Speakers Roster was low in comparison to the student response, and only one student was asked to do a guest lecture in winter 2003. In this case, a PhD candidate from the faculty of Engineering gave a presentation on renewable energy and China to an undergraduate class in the Department of Geography. At the wine-and-cheese reception, faculty expressed interest in the roster, and some will likely invite students to give guest lectures or presentations in the upcoming Fall 2003 semester, given more time to plan for and include such presentations into the course schedule.

From our experiences, faculty members or university administrators aspiring to start a similar program at their university should:

- ÷ Identify and contact instructors with international interests
- ÷ If applicable, work with the International Student Office on campus to recruit potential volunteers
- ÷ Advertise the program through a variety of media
- ÷ Allow instructors time ahead to plan for and incorporate guest speakers
- ÷ Provide volunteers with training in presentation skills, if required

The second initiative undertaken at the University of Waterloo was the creation of Student Information Cards, which could be used to facilitate the four strategies. These information cards were designed to be adaptable to any course, to identify those students who have international or cultural experiences that are relevant to that course, and to determine whether or not that student would be comfortable speaking about those experiences or perspectives in class. This information could be used to create multicultural work or study groups, facilitate in-class discussions, suggest topics for student projects, or to identify students who could act as cultural resources for other students. Although the use of student information

sheets or profiles at the beginning of term was mentioned in the literature (Bond et al. 2003), no examples of a generic information sheet were discovered. The information sheets created at the University of Waterloo were made available to instructors at the university through emails to participants in the focus groups and invitees at the wine-and-cheese reception, as well as through word-of-mouth. The information sheets were used in the winter 2003 semester in an undergraduate *Interpersonal Communication* course in the Faculty of Arts and in the Spring 2003 semester in an undergraduate *First Nations and the Environment* course in the Faculty of Environmental Studies. The instructors for these courses indicated that the potential for such information sheets was high, and commented that in courses requiring a global perspective, these sheets would be a great aid to the course instructor to encourage international perspectives and student participation.

## **Conclusions**

This project verified that students with international and multicultural experiences are useful resources for course internationalization. Their experiences and perspectives can readily enrich university classrooms through a variety of teaching and learning strategies that can be easily integrated into existing curricula. There may also be other strategies to engage students as learning resources in the classroom, and the best way to discover these is by openly encouraging students to share their experiences, ideas, and perspectives. These strategies can help to produce graduates who are culturally sensitive and have the skills to learn from and share information with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

As instructors and administrators, our role is to encourage others to understand that these students can make unique contributions to the learning environment. We suggest that

perseverance is necessary for such strategies to take place in a post-secondary institution, but that the effort will be worth the benefits that all students would achieve from a more culturally diverse and internationally informed classroom.

## References

- Beebe, S. A., Beebe, S. J., Redmond, M. V., Geerinck, T. M., & Milstone, C. (1999). Interpersonal communication and cultural diversity: Adapting to others. *Interpersonal Communication: Relating to Others*. [2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.]. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., pp. 258-297.
- Boehringer, M. (2002). Learning to walk in each other's shoes: Intercultural training and the business-German classroom. In Kluth Cothran, B., and Gramberg, A.K. [eds.]. *The Global Connections: Issues in Business German*. Waldsteinberg: Heidrun Popp., pp. 101-125.
- Bond, S. L. (2003). *Engaging Educators: Bringing the World into the Classroom, Guidelines for Practice*. Ottawa: Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE).
- Bond, S.L. (2003). Untapped resources, internationalization of the curriculum and classroom experience: A selected literature review. *CBIE Research Millennium Series, Research Paper No. 7*. Ottawa: Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE).
- Bond, S. L., Qian, J., & Huang, J. (2003). The role of faculty in internationalizing the undergraduate curriculum and classroom experience. *CBIE Research Millennium Series, Research Paper No. 8*. Ottawa: Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE).
- Bowry, C. (2002). *An Initial Exploration of the Impact of Foreign Students on the Education of Domestic Students at Queen's University*. [Master's Thesis]. Kingston, Ontario: Faculty of Education, Queen's University.
- Crowther, P., Joris, M., Otten, M., Nilsson, B, Teekens, H., & W.,chter, B. (2000) *Internationalisation at home. A position paper*. Published by the European Association for International Education. Amsterdam: Drukkerij Raddraaier.
- DeVita G. (2002). Does assessed multicultural group work really pull UK students' average down? *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 27, 153-161.
- Harari M. (1992). The internationalization of the curriculum. In Klasek, C.B. [ed.]. *Bridges to the Future: Strategies for Internationalizing Higher Education*. Illinois: Association of International Education Administrators, pp 52-79.
- Humphries, J. (2002). *International students: Force for internationalization or neglected resource?* Paper presented at the Queen's University conference "Internationalization in Higher Education in Canada: Connections and Complexities", February, 2002.
- Jackson, S.E. (1992). Team composition in organizational settings: Issues in managing an increasingly diverse work force. In Worchel, S., Wood, W., & Simpson, J.A. [eds.], *Group Process and Productivity*, pp. 138-173. California: Sage Publications Ltd.

- Kirchmeyer, C. (1993). Multicultural task groups: An account of the low contribution level of minorities. *Small Group Research*, 24, 127-148.
- Knight, J. (2000). *Progress and Promise: The AUCC Report on Internationalization at Canadian Universities*. Canada: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC).
- Leask, B. (2001). Bridging the gap: Internationalizing University Curricula. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 5, 100-115.
- McLeod, P.L., Lobel, S.A., & Cox, T.H. Jr. (1996). Ethnic diversity and creativity in small groups. *Small Group Research*, 27, 248-264.
- Milhouse, V. (1996). Intercultural communication education and training goals, content, and methods. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 20, 69-95.
- Moremen, R. D. (1997). A multicultural framework: transforming curriculum, transforming students. *Teaching Sociology*, 25, 107-117.
- Nilsson, B. (2000). Internationalising the curriculum. In Crowther, P., Joris, M., Otten, M., Nilsson, B., Teekens, H., and Wachter, B. *Internationalisation at Home: A Position Paper*. Amsterdam: European Association for International Education (EAIE), pp. 21-28.
- Oregon State University (2003). *International Cultural Service Program*.  
<http://oregonstate.edu/international/oie/iss/scholarships.htm>
- Pickert, S., & Turlington, B. (1992). *Internationalizing the Undergraduate Curriculum: A Handbook for Campus Leaders*. Washington D.C.: American Council on Education.
- Sarles, H.B. (1998). Explaining ourselves through otherÆs cultural visions: A mini course on America. In Mestenhauser, J.A., and Ellingboe, B.J. [eds.]. *Reforming the Higher Education Curriculum: Internationalizing the Campus*. Arizona: Orynx Press, pp.135-149.
- Schoorman, D. (2000). *How is Internationalization Implemented? A framework for Organizational Practice*. USA: Florida Atlantic University.
- Smith, K., and Berg, D. (1997). Cross-cultural groups at work. *European Management Journal*, 15, 8-15.
- Thomas, D. C. (1999). Cultural diversity and work group effectiveness: An experimental study. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology*, 30, 242-263.
- Vertesi, C. (1999). Students as agents of change. In Bond, S.L., and Lemasson, J.P. [eds.]. *A New World of Knowledge: Canadian Universities and Globalization*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre (IDRC), pp. 129-158.

Watson, W. E., Kumar, K., and Michaelsen, L. K. (1993). Cultural diversity's impact on interaction process and performance: comparing homogenous and diverse task groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36, 590-602.

---