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INTERCULTURAL SPACE IN
HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULA

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INTRODUCTION

Aguado and Malik highlight that the world has increasingly become a more complex, unstable but also interconnected place, populated with people from many diverse cultures. They state that universities “should be able to prepare their students for life in this increasingly hybrid and complex world” and that they “must help students to see beyond themselves and understand better the interdependent nature of our world” (Aguado & Malik 2009:201). They argue that intercultural education has to do with creating new social spaces where interaction and relationships are characterised by negotiation and creativity; subsequently they propose that, instead of conceptualising intercultural education as being part of the university setting, the university should rather be conceptualised through an intercultural lens (Aguado & Malik 2009:201). Florio-Ruane expresses a resonating principle when she states that the “explosion of intercultural contact in our historical moment challenges us to rethink our social and psychological explanations of learning and development ... We must teach with the insight that culture is bound up with learning” (2001:28). Breier identified this issue a decade ago when she pointed out that one of the international debates in higher education involves how curricula should accommodate the effects of changes in student population from diverse ethnic groups and from other countries (2001:2).

This chapter aims at taking the reader on a tour of the literature in order to explore what has happened in the past decade by focusing on how intercultural curriculum issues in higher education could be conceptualised, how spaces for interculturalism could be infused into the curriculum and how intercultural curriculum issues in higher education has been and could be further researched. It is important to note that the wider understanding of diversity is not the focus of the chapter, although it is acknowledged that the many faces of diversity (which includes racial, ethnic, gender, language and many other forms of diversity) are all intertwined with cultural diversity. In view of the many ways in which interculturalism and related concepts are understood, a brief overview is presented of the evolving terminology associated with

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a context that includes more than one culture. Following on this, a characterisation of intercultural education is given that could enhance the infusion of interculturalism into the higher education curriculum. The next section presents an overview of salient and recent research on interculturalism in an education context and some characteristics and trends are highlighted. The consulted literature in general, and in particular the research overview, uncovered gaps and challenges. Directions are indicated in the final section of the chapter.

CONCEPT CLARIFICATION – THE JOURNEY TO INTERCULTURALISM

The terms that appear most often in the literature when discussing education in a context that involves more than one culture, are ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘interculturalism’. The ways in which these terms are understood, have evolved over time, having culture as the ‘mother’ concept. The literature shows a link between the concepts ‘multicultural education’ and ‘intercultural education’. These concepts also link with the broader notions of diversity and culture. This sub-section will therefore, first highlight diversity as the relevant umbrella concept, then focus on culture as the ‘mother’ concept of multi- and interculturalism and subsequently explore the concepts ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘interculturalism’ and how it links with internationalisation.

An understanding of diversity has developed worldwide to include many different dimensions of humanity, such as culture, race, class, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, social and political affiliation and education (Narsee 2004). Increasing diversity in the same geographical areas (e.g. higher education institutions), and an increasing sensitivity towards these dimensions of diversity, has resulted in increasing activity relating to diversity. Cushner (1998:5-6) provides an exposition of how the varying causes of increased diversity in different countries, societies and communities, e.g. slavery, immigration or colonisation, co-determine the views these societies and communities have on strategies to accommodate their own particular type of diversity and on the implementation of these strategies.

This brings us to the concept ‘culture’. The literature presents two almost contradictory viewpoints on the conceptualisation of culture: on the one hand it is seen as a stable concept and on the other as a concept that changes over time. This is further complicated by the view that culture is difficult to define. Some decades ago, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952:181) defined culture as a stable concept:

[It consists of] patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment and artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of the traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; cultural systems may on the one hand be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.

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Tabane and Bouwer's view (2006:554) concurs with this idea of stability, when they contend that perceptions of cultural representations could be interpreted to be permanently established. In contrast to this, Dasenbrock (1992:39) refers to culture as "a conceptual moving target ... an idea whose definition is contested and whose boundaries are mapped with difficulty". Florio-Ruane (2001) and Van Binsbergen (2003) support Dasenbrock's point of departure. Some of the dimensions of culture referred to in the literature include that culture is "webs of significance [man] himself has spun" (Geertz 1973:5); that identity plays a significant role in culture (Meade 1956; Schiefelin & Osch 1986); that it is both meaning and the process of making meaning (Florio-Ruane 2001:27) and that race and socio-economic class is intertwined with culture (Florio-Ruane 2001:78). Florio-Ruane (2001:27) also states that culture is actually what human life is all about and not about stereotyping. This links to the decades-old perspective of Goodenough (1976) that multiculturalism is the normal human experience.

When the normal human experience is monocultural, the challenges to education in general and higher education in particular are more limited than and differ in nature to those in a multicultural context. Various but related perspectives exist regarding the purpose of multicultural education, some of these being to implement change with the aim of facilitating educational equality (Banks 1995, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995); reconstructing society so that individuals are developed to live their lives through critical and analytical social interaction (Sleeter 1996:38); facilitating mutual understanding and tolerance within a context of unity and diversity (Kamwangamalu 2001); transforming the unequal power relations that exist between and among individuals and groups (James, Ralfe, Van Laren & Ngcobo 2006:682) and/or creating a suitable learning environment for learners from diverse cultural backgrounds (Lemmer, Meier & Van Wyk 2009:3). All of the mentioned purposes of multicultural education are relevant to the South African higher education context, especially in making a contribution towards creating a South African society in which South Africans want to live today, as remedying and triumphing over the ravages of apartheid.

The understanding of multicultural education as reflected in the literature is also linked to its context in time and space, for instance targeting students outside the main stream, while in other contexts it is aimed at all members of society (Cushner 1998; Manalo 2006; Ngo 2010; Nkomo & Vandeyar 2009). This time-space link also explains, at least partially, why the consulted literature shows that there is preference in certain countries to use the term 'multicultural education' (parts of North America, Great Britain, Australia), while others prefer 'diversity' (parts of Europe) or 'intercultural education' (Canada, Japan, Africa, USA). Cushner (1998:2-8) provides an exposition of this link to time and space which could be a useful point of departure for future research, bearing in mind that new developments would have emerged in the past 15 years. This time-space link also points to different types of multicultural education as categorised by Van der Merwe (2004), namely affirmative multiculturalism (the

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narrow, activist African-American and Feminist approach), liberal multiculturalism (the traditional, conventional approach – Euro-centric chauvinism), cultural relativism (the descriptive, uncritical approach – developing from the pitfalls prevalent in the previous two types) and critical multiculturalism (contextualised, critical and self-reflective with pluralism as the basic premise).

Research on the multicultural curriculum has explored various dimensions of the concept and how it is operationalised into practice. Some of these dimensions include identifying components of the multicultural curriculum (Gurin, Dey, Huertado & Gurin 2002; Lemmer *et al* 2009; Narsee 2004), space for reflection and discussions by students and teachers (James *et al* 2006) and the development of the multicultural teacher (Atwater 1995).

With reference to the difference between a multicultural and an intercultural curriculum, Lee (2005:201) indicates that the former covers multiple cultures, while the latter works through a dialogue between cultures. This resonates with Cushner's viewpoint that multiculturalism has to do with unrelated knowledge without any interconnection, while interculturalism "implies comparisons, exchanges, co-operation, and confrontation between groups" (1998:4). Thus intercultural education is pro-active and action-oriented. It is also the point of departure for collaboration between cultures. Bennett (1993:21) emphasises that such collaboration is not easy and not natural, as it provokes anxiety and should therefore be approached with great sensitivity. I am of the opinion that the South African university needs an intercultural rather than a multicultural curriculum, given this difference in approach. Cognisance must be taken of the anxiety as identified by Bennett, as this aspect is particularly relevant to the post-apartheid South African university.

When further investigating how the literature portrays interculturalism, the difference between multicultural and intercultural becomes more pronounced in many ways. 'Interculture' means any encounter between people from different cultures (Alfred, Byram & Fleming 2003:159) and therefore the higher education context is an intercultural teaching and learning space, usually configured in terms of (local) norms that silently privilege (home) students (Turner 2009:243) or the political majority, as these are the students who have cultural capital.

Portera (2008:484) is of the opinion that intercultural education and intercultural pedagogy are particularly relevant to today's global context with its concomitant junction of languages, religions, cultures and thinking. Whitsed and Volet (2010:3-4) contend that there seems to be a general view that significant intercultural interaction and a tolerance of diversity will automatically result from a diverse student and staff body. However, this view is in contradiction to the views of some earlier writers (Hewstone & Brown 1986; Wright & Lander 2003). De Vita and Case (2003:388) echo the contradicting view when they indicate that intercultural learning has to do with discovering differences and subsequently rising above such differences by authentic experiences of cross-cultural interaction through actual real tasks and intense

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participation. Whitsed and Volet also state that the intercultural dimension pertains to “policies and processes that are aimed at reducing cultural distance and enhancing intercultural communication, competencies and engagement, and mutual reciprocal understanding” (2010:3). These viewpoints are potential indicators of what could be labelled intercultural spaces, with the potentialities further extended in the literature (as relevant to the school) to include classroom discipline (Lemmer *et al* 2009:117-127) and intercultural space through parental involvement (Lemmer *et al* 2009:131-145) – these could be investigated through further research in the higher education context.

The strong connection between internationalisation and interculturalism is evident from the literature cited previously as well as other literature (Appiah 2006; Botha 2009; Botha 2010; Hunter, White & Godbey 2006; Knight 2003; Otten 2003; Turner 2009). In countries like South Africa, Australia and the USA, the complexity of the context is taken to another level due to the multicultural nature of the domestic population (see for example Botha 2009; Botha 2010). In South Africa this complexity is further intensified through the impact of apartheid on society in general and university campuses in particular.

Knight and De Wit (1995) point out that one of the main purposes of internationalisation in higher education is to prepare staff and students to function successfully in intercultural contexts. The ability to do the latter is crucial for students as members of a community and wider society, both in the present and in the future, considering the highly visible, culturally diverse student population of most university campuses around the world. The internationalisation discourse is increasingly changing its focus, as universities are endeavouring to transform themselves by creating spaces in the curriculum that integrate the development of intercultural communication skills and enhance reciprocal intercultural understanding (Brown & Jones 2007). Whitsed and Volet (2010:5) are of the opinion that an “institutional environment where cultural inclusion is valued and culturally inclusive practices are embedded in the curriculum and embraced at all levels of the institution” is required in order to foster the development of cultural sensitivities and thus promote an appreciation of cultural difference. In the South African context this dimension takes on deeper meaning when considering the multicultural nature of the national society and the contrived historical separation of races and cultures.

Now that a broad base has been established for thinking about interculturalism, the next section provides a framework that could be used for characterising intercultural space in higher education.

INTERCULTURAL SPACE IN CURRICULA

There are conflicting opinions on the purpose of curriculum reform: on the one hand it is believed that the aim of such reform should be to eliminate xenophobia and ethnocentrism (Coulby & Jones 1995:107) by teaching about other cultures, while on the other hand it is seen as a strategy to enforce unity and homogeneity in the nation-state by ensuring that more of the same is perpetuated (Coulby 1997:7;

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Jones 1997:3). Interculturalism could offer a vehicle to defuse this conflict, if one of the aims of education is to cultivate intercultural citizens. An intercultural citizen is defined as someone who supports the principles of a multicultural state, exhibits a range of more positive personal attributes towards diversity, who is curious rather than fearful about other peoples and cultures, who is open to learning about other ways of life, willing to consider how issues look from other people's point of view and who feels comfortable about interacting with people from other backgrounds (Kymlicka 2003:157). Lee (2005:203) indicates that a multicultural curriculum is a prerequisite for interculturalism, but the inverse is not necessarily true. MacPherson (2010:282) states that "when learners from diverse backgrounds come together, the curriculum becomes an intercultural practice regardless of the intention of the teacher, school, district, or system."

Creating space for interculturalism in the higher education curriculum should not be misconstrued as an 'add-on' approach, but it should rather be understood as thinking, talking and doing in an intercultural way – an infusion approach. Intercultural spaces in the curriculum are therefore not 'events' but are the result of a different approach to what we teach, why we teach what we teach and how we teach. Using these statements as a point of departure, the logic of the remainder of the chapter is outlined next.

To facilitate intercultural space in the higher education curriculum, a multicultural context must be changed into an intercultural context. Drawing on the characterisation of these two contexts presented in the previous sub-section, this implies that a context where more than one culture exist next to each other in the same geographical and time space (multicultural), must be transformed to become a context of discovery and transcendence of differences through communication and engagement, leading to mutual reciprocal understanding (intercultural). To facilitate this transformation, space needs to be created in the curriculum for own and other cultures to be explored, discussed, accepted, understood and appreciated. Florio-Ruane (2001) has described a set of strategies that would enhance intercultural spaces, namely "conversation and stories", "texts and contexts", "engagement", "thinking and re-thinking" and "knowing". Although she conceptualised these strategies for the school context, they are equally relevant to higher education, as will become apparent in the subsequent paragraphs. I will draw on the literature to show how intercultural spaces emerge in the curriculum by mobilising her strategies towards such transformation.

Conversation and stories

Waghid (2006:568) contends that South African university classrooms are places of multiculturalism and that civil interaction between them implies a connection with one another's stories. The use of conversations and stories to create space in the curriculum to explore own and other cultures and connect with each other in this way, is characterised in the consulted literature in several ways: it has to do with finding the origins of our identities (Florio-Ruane 2001:25); it demands that learning needs to be re-understood as interpretation rather than possession – the teacher does not

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demonstrate knowledge that is already in place, but is a mutual learner with students whose lived experiences inform the curriculum (Dasenbrock 1992:39; Preece 2000:3); conversations and stories need to include interpretive discussion and reflective thinking (Florio-Ruane 2001:50); language is the vehicle for such conversations and stories, which in itself is a cultural expression (Cargill 2000:28; Nieto 2009); it has to do with the negotiation of meaning and acknowledgement that personal understandings are not natural or normal, but culturally made (Florio-Ruane 2001:32).

By establishing conversations and stories as an intercultural space in higher education, Waghid's argument that South African higher education should concern itself with teaching students to deliberate could also be served. He believes that it is "through deliberation that people engage with the possibility of coming to something new – a matter of connecting with one another, taking risks and simultaneously offering possibilities for a better future" (Waghid 2010:492).

Florio-Ruane (2001:85) is of the opinion that an expanded understanding of culture, diversity and education will develop through new cultural discourses in educational settings. An example of such a cultural discourse is offered by MacPherson who investigated "intercultural teaching through teachers' collaborative conversations about critical intercultural incidents in schools" (2010:271). Such conversations could be useful in the higher education setting, possibly including teachers as well as students. By discussing and reflecting on intercultural incidents, Florio-Ruane's idea of scrutinising narratives from a variety of cultures (some canonical ones and some less likely ones) in order to learn about culture will also be served (2001:48).

Florio-Ruane (2001:56) contends that encouraging teachers as practitioners to have conversations across boundaries, and analysing their own practice is one way of transforming contexts in order to learn about culture. In this process story and dialogue become intricately interwoven with each other and with context.

Texts and contexts

Florio-Ruane (2001:14) was intrigued by "the idea that cultural experience might be accessible to beginning teachers in literature and other artistic renderings of human life." This prompted her to consider the role of alternative texts and contexts as a way of facilitating intercultural education, thus including multiple voices and stories of culture. In this way, culture can be moved from the margins to the centre of teachers' work in literacy and learning (Florio-Ruane 2001:44). Using such alternative texts in higher education has the potential to create space in the curriculum to promote intercultural understanding and appreciation. This was found to discourage the use of stereotypes (McDiarmid & Price 1990). Several other studies confirm the value of using multicultural literary texts to facilitate intercultural understanding (Gere, Buehler, Dallavis & Haviland 2009:816; Nkomo & Vandeyar 2009:199).

In cases where cultures display extreme differences, texts might have limited value in efforts to transcend these differences. Mostafa (2006:36) found in a study that

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explored the experiences of Arab Muslim graduate students at the University of Alberta, Canada, in connection with cultural differences and adjustment, language difficulties, supervision, differences of study system and funding, that difficulties with adjusting were made easier through interaction with, and thus mediation by, local Muslim communities and organisations. This finding is confirmed in a study by Rostron in Qatar with Muslim students which found that a Western curriculum was regarded as out-of-context and not readily accepted (2009:226).

Although the literature shows that the use of alternative texts enhances intercultural knowledge and appreciation, people will not readily discard their own values and replace them with those of another culture, which supports the principles of interculturalism. The promoters of interculturalism need to take cognisance of this and, when creating intercultural space, also create space for own cultures.

Engagement

Engagement further connects the threads of the web that enhances intercultural spaces in higher education, by immersing the participants in each other's realities. This could be challenging and even frightening to the participants. Florio-Ruane (2001:152) declares that it is difficult for educators (at school and higher education level) to come to terms with "their own biases and perspectives and coming to learn about these in dialogue with others whose backgrounds differ from their own". She refers to "dysconsciousness" towards issues of race, to a safe colour-blindness and avoidance of the topic of race. She believes that we could learn to speak about race through a sense of "passionate engagement" that would invite such a conversation and that this difficult conversation could lead to personal transformation.

Ditton's study on intercultural postgraduate research supervision found that supervisors need to develop intercultural competence in interacting with students to give guidance in acquiring skills of debate, conflict, reflection and difference, as these are the keys to problem-solving in the intercultural context (2007:50-51). This finding is echoed in a study by Meier (2007:659-660). Intercultural competence can, therefore, only result from intense engagement with the own culture and other cultures. Engagement can also be identified in the concept of 'connectedness', understood as community building, which is central to moral thought and practice (Bradley 2007; Frick & Frick 2010).

Thinking and re-thinking

The work of thinking and re-thinking emerges through engagement with conversations and stories, texts and contexts, from which knowing takes shape. The reference to a cosmopolitan pedagogy by Engelbrecht, Mafumo and Waghid links very well with this notion, when they state that it "provides spaces that are both comforting and unsettling, spaces that both disturb and enlighten, spaces in which students can experience one another and connect with the otherness of others – that is spaces in which they learn to become citizens of the world" (2009:223). The outcomes of the work of thinking and re-thinking are reflected in the knowledge of the own culture and other cultures.

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First there is entry into the other culture through the conversations and stories, then immersion into the other culture through engagement, and from this emerges thinking and re-thinking towards new thinking.

Knowing

Knowledge as one of the roots of intercultural spaces in the higher education curriculum has at least two dimensions: firstly, the matter of whose knowledge we teach (which could include ways of knowledge) and, secondly, the knowledge we have of our own and other cultures (and this could include knowledge that would facilitate learning by students from other cultures). Both these dimensions have been explored in the consulted literature.

Apple (2000) refers to the matter of whose knowledge we teach and ways of knowledge as the intense curricular debates on what counts as knowledge. Almeida (2008) characterises interculturalism as a bridge by which to expand the ways of knowledge and contends that the university is a school that embraces all ways of knowledge and does not turn one way of knowledge into a universal one. Mitchell investigated the usefulness of “tapping into the epistemic reservoir of experiences and insights linked to communal knowledge/wisdom unique to the African American community” (2010:606).

The knowledge we have of our own *and other cultures* and how we *facilitate learning* by students from other cultures are discussed by a number of authors (Botha 2010; Cornbleth & Waugh 1995; MacPherson 2010; Magos & Simopoulos 2009; Mitchell 2010; Okorocha 1997). Buehler, Gere, Dallavis and Haviland (2009:408) state that over and above being committed to culturally relevant pedagogy, it is important for school teachers to acquire cultural competence (‘knowledge’) and also to focus on the challenges to actualise this competence.

A study done on the nature and content of the knowledge that enables academics in higher education institutions to encourage learning specifically for African American students provided outcomes that complete the set of intercultural spaces identified by Florio-Ruane (2001). It emerged from this study that “knowledge of the discourses of a student’s community of origin, discourses often based on collective experience, are a valuable resource to professors in their efforts to promote educational equity” (Mitchell 2010:604) and that improvisation can be linked to pedagogy to facilitate black students’ learning (Mitchell 2010:625). A clear link can therefore be identified between intercultural discourses (‘conversations and stories’) and the knowledge needed to facilitate intercultural learning.

In spite of the value of mobilising conversations and stories, texts and contexts, engagement, thinking and re-thinking and thus coming to knowing about the cultures of the other and different ways of knowing, Nkomo and Vandeyar (2009) warn against adopting multicultural texts. Their concern refers to neglecting to teach children to read by shifting the focus to learning about other cultures by engaging with texts; neglecting

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to teach children about music by shifting the focus to learning about other cultures through music; having culturally aware teachers rather than focusing on teaching. They are concerned that the focus will be to bring black and white children together in South African schools rather than “interrogating the quality of post-apartheid contact” (Nkomo & Vandeyar 2009:21).

The discussion above has shown that the strategies proposed to enhance intercultural space in the curriculum do not necessarily have to occur in a linear manner in the curriculum. They are never fully concluded; they could simultaneously contain each other or overlap with each other or exist independently from each other while still being interdependent and they feed inwards into each other and also outwards into the transforming context.

To actualise the above-mentioned (or alternative) strategies for enhancing intercultural curriculum space, it could be useful to consider relevant completed research. The next section provides an overview of some trends in and examples of recent research on interculturalism that could be linked to the university and/or curriculum context.

INTERCULTURALISM AND CURRICULUM INQUIRY

In the review of relevant literature (mainly published during the past decade), certain themes in intercultural research emerged, namely culturally relevant pedagogy, the importance of the own culture and the other culture in relation to each other as well as evaluation of programmes that were developed to promote interculturalism. In addition to the themes, some patterns pertaining to research methodology could also be identified from the consulted literature. All of these are briefly discussed below and the section is concluded with some remarks on indigenous research methodologies.

Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP)

DeCuir-Gunby, DeVance Taliaferro and Greenfield indicate that it is important to create culturally relevant school contexts, as this approach could facilitate academic, social and cultural success through making a cultural connection to schools (2010:185-186). Although their research was conducted in the school context and in particular in the USA, further research could test their findings in other contexts as well. They show that culturally relevant pedagogy has three basic tenets, namely academic success (all children have the potential to be academically successful – challenges deficit-based learning), cultural competence (educators must appreciate cultural strengths of learners and develop classroom techniques that incorporate these principles) and critical consciousness (help students develop the habits and tools to become active citizens of a global community – needed to promote social justice) (DeCuir-Gunby *et al* 2010:186).

Young (2010) conducted research with the purpose of defining, implementing and assessing culturally relevant pedagogy in an elementary school setting in the USA. This is a significant piece of literature with references included on what culturally relevant

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pedagogy is (Ladson-Billings 1994, 1995a, 1995b, and other studies that applied her theory as is or slightly adapted; also studies with their own theoretical framework, all as cited in Young 2010). Young categorised data under the three CRP tenets referred to by DeCuir-Gunby (academic success, cultural competence and socio-political consciousness). The main findings were, firstly, that it is important to develop a shared understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy before applying CRP to lesson planning and, secondly, that teachers experienced the application of the theory on CRP in the classroom as an impossible task (Young 2010:257).

Mitchell's research (done in the USA) also links indirectly with CRP. He found that improvisation in teaching can be linked to pedagogy to facilitate black students' learning (2010:625) and that "knowledge of the discourses of a student's community of origin, discourses often based on collective experience, are a valuable resource to professors in their efforts to promote educational equity" (2010:604).

Own and other cultures

The crux of this theme was described almost two decades ago by Zeichner, who came to the conclusion that own cultural identities could emerge and own attitudes and beliefs about other cultures investigated through studying other cultures (1993:20). Florio-Ruane echoes this in more poetic language when she says that "cultural study can concern itself with how people make meaning in particular, local contexts ... also be alert to how those local webs of meaning are networked as human beings make their way through everyday lives and lifetimes". She acknowledges that we are not "parallel players" who endlessly spin and repair "our cultural webs, oblivious to and disconnected from the spinners working on the webs a few feet away" but that our "webs are linked in cultural networks" (Florio-Ruane 2001:27).

Dela Cruz, Salzman, Brislin and Losch (2006) also found that it is crucial to have knowledge of the own culture and other cultures in order to facilitate interculturalism. They conducted a study that aimed to develop a foundation for the development of an Intercultural Sensitizer (ICS). These authors argue that counsellors, academic advisors and educators working with Hawaiian students in a university setting need to possess a firm grasp of the indigenous population and should also have a sound understanding of the differences between Western and Hawaiian education philosophies and values (Dela Cruz *et al* 2006:121). Similarly, Trahar (2009:1) explored different realities and knowledges about learning and teaching in a UK higher education context while doing her doctoral research with postgraduate students from many different cultures.

Programmes to teach with an intercultural approach

Two 2009 publications were consulted that report on university programmes that provide intercultural education, while a third 2009 publication, investigating a single module in a taught Master's programme, discussed research on the challenges that could occur when curriculum is used to enhance cross-cultural integration. Mendoza Zuany (2009) reports on a BA programme in Intercultural Management for

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Development that is offered at the Intercultural University of Veracruzana ('Universidad Veracruzana Intercultural' – UVI), training people as intercultural mediators to deal with diversity. The curriculum has five specialisation areas (health, rights, languages, heritage and sustainable development) with much potential for inter- and cross-cultural dialogue; it also recovers the value of indigenous knowledge (Mendoza Zuany 2009:215). The establishment of this university as one of nine intercultural universities, supported financially by the government, situated in rural and indigenous areas offering programmes catering for the needs and demands of the indigenous communities, aims to provide intercultural education for all (Mendoza Zuany 2009:214). This is an example of creating intercultural space – nationally, institutionally, as well as in the curriculum.

The second publication reports on the development and implementation of a five-year degree programme at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil. This programme aims "to graduate and qualify indigenous teachers with an intercultural approach to teach in their secondary schools" (De Rezende 2009:206). The programme is part of a move that was initiated by the indigenous leadership of several ethnic groups in Brazil "in order to guarantee their constitutional right to receive appropriate education" through a "differentiated public school with indigenous teachers and managers" (De Rezende 2009:204). Among other activities, teacher education programmes were developed to supply suitably qualified teachers for this school. The main purpose of these teacher education programmes was to adapt existing methods, curricula, school calendar and other related matters to diverse cultures (De Rezende 2009:204). It is also noteworthy that as a result of this programme, teachers studied their own culture (De Rezende 2009:205). The reader who is interested in such a programme is advised to refer to this publication to familiarise him-/herself with the way in which intercultural spaces become evident in this curriculum through academic activities that focus on indigenous rights, production of didactical materials, indigenous organisations, indigenous schools, community radio, indigenous languages and literature, indigenous art, sustainable economics, indigenous health, land use and medical centres (De Rezende 2009:206).

An important finding identified by De Rezende's research is that there is an indigenous concern that universities function separately from the community, which is foreign to the way the indigenous world thinks and does things. The university should become part of the community and the community must also play a role in the university (De Rezende 2009:205).

The third 2009 publication used a case study of a cross-cultural management module that is part of the curriculum of a taught Master's degree in international management in the UK (Turner 2009:244). The module content dealt with intercultural management and facilitated intercultural learning among participants. The research found that although the module achieved its learning aims, it failed to enhance student integration (Turner 2009:252).

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A South African study reports on the process of reviewing the curriculum of an existing university programme with the purpose of transforming the underpinning pedagogy as well as the curriculum structure and outcomes, which subsequently impacted on a change in the knowledge sources, teaching and learning strategies and assessment approach (Botha, in press). This reviewing process had to build on, *inter alia*, the multicultural nature of the student population and their diverse geographical contexts (Botha, in press).

Trends in research methodology

Two studies reported on the development of an instrument to determine intercultural sensitivity. A research project conducted by Dela Cruz *et al* (2006:120) establishes a platform for the development of an Intercultural Sensitizer (ICS) for counsellors, academic advisors and educators working in Hawaiian higher education. Spinthourakis, Karatzia-Stavlioti and Roussakis (2009:267) write about research that assessed intercultural sensitivity of Greek student teachers, using an adjusted version of Chen and Starosta's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (based on Bennett's Inventory on Intercultural Sensitivity).

Another interesting instrument was used in research conducted by Velo in 2007. He explored the values that are culturally linked to the notion of excellence in higher education at three different locations on three different continents: Buenos Aires (Argentina), Coventry (UK) and Shanghai (China) (Velo 2007:16). He contends that the new reality of developing international links between universities (through e.g. franchised and joint degrees, academic and student exchanges) demands the "homogenization of the curricula delivered as well as a compatible process of evaluation across borders" and hence asks, "How could we achieve global excellence if what we understand by this term is culturally sensitive?" (Velo 2007:15). As methodology this study used the Repertory Grids tool, which was developed by psychologist George Kelly in 1955, based on Western American values and derived from the constructivist school of thought (Velo 2007:16). This tool has been widely used in various disciplines and is based on the idea that people understand reality "through aligning concepts in their minds in order to make sense of the world" (Velo 2007:16). The methodology has been investigated for validity for qualitative research in general and cross-cultural studies in particular (Hunter & Beck 2000 as cited in Velo 2007) and tested and re-developed (Reeve, Owens & Neimeyer 2002). This seems to be a useful methodology in intercultural studies, especially to identify determinants for culturally sensitive curricula.

Popular research methodologies employed in research that could be linked to the intercultural curriculum are ethnography (Florio-Ruane 2001; Mendoza Zuany 2009; Ngo 2010), auto-ethnography (Trahar 2009), case studies (DeCuir-Gunby *et al* 2010; Turner 2009; Young 2010 – critical case study), action research (Frick & Frick 2010; Young 2010) and descriptive studies (refer to Young 2010). The gathering of data was done mainly by interviews (DeCuir-Gunby *et al* 2010; Ditton 2007; Gere *et al* 2009;

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Huidor & Cooper 2010; Magos & Simopoulos 2009; Mitchell 2010; Mostafa 2006; Ngo 2010; Tabane & Bouwer 2006; Trahar 2009), field notes (Florio-Ruane 2001; Gere *et al* 2009; Huidor & Cooper 2010; Ngo 2010), observations (Magos & Simopoulos 2009; Mitchell 2010), document analysis (Biseth 2009; Botha 2010; Florio-Ruane 2001; Gere *et al* 2009; McMillon 2009; Meier 2007; Ngo 2010; Otten 2003; Whitsed & Volet 2010), discourse analysis (Castro 2010; Florio-Ruane 2001; McMillon 2009), and narrative inquiry (Cargill 2000; MacPherson 2010; Trahar 2009). The understanding of the last-mentioned three data-gathering strategies could overlap, as all three have been applied to the written word (documents such as e-mails, essays, letters, official documents and others) as well as the spoken word (conversations, interviews, presentations). Young (2010) also report on studies that used case studies, ethnography and descriptive studies, gathering data through interviews, observations, journaling, examining of documents, participant observation and action research (self-reflection). Young's study employed collaborative inquiry as a methodology.

I found the use of letters as a data-gathering instrument in a pen pal research project to be intriguing. The project aimed at "facilitating a risk-free cultural exchange between students living in two very different worlds – a predominantly White university and a predominantly Black urban elementary school ... openly and honestly sharing information about their cultures ..." (McMillon 2009:122). The findings of the discourse analysis of the letters helped teachers to develop skills and obtain crucial cultural knowledge that could help to prepare them to effectively teach the diverse student body in the USA (McMillon 2009:119).

Another interesting methodology was employed in a study that investigated racial integration in schools. The methodology of portraiture "draws attention to the outstanding qualities of high schools, studying excellence rather than pathology" (Nkomo & Vandeyar 2009:64). Citing several scholarly writings that spans the past decade, these authors indicate that this is a well-established methodology.

Florio-Ruane chose an unusual research site for an ethnographic research project (2001:49-72), using a teachers' reading club as the site of data collection. The purpose of this research was to investigate the use of autobiographies as texts to learn about culture to facilitate improved teaching in a multicultural context. The sources of data were meeting tapes, field notes and the writing in members' sketch books. Working assumptions were formulated based on the data, which were revised using the technique of constant comparison as the researcher listened and interpreted the conversations that took place during the club's meetings. Thus the focus of the research changed and developed as the study progressed. The research showed that reading and responding to selected and relevant texts have great potential for learning about culture in "complex, critical, and dialogic ways" (Florio-Ruane 2001:71).

Otten (2009) also used a rather less-than-usual way to analyse formal and informal learning processes in his study on interculturality in academic communities of practice.

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He employed Wenger's concept of communities of practice as a heuristic background for this analysis.

I end this section with a reference to indigenous research methodologies, as these could be of much use in research on intercultural education. Denzin, Lincoln and Smith (2008) include a number of chapters in their book on the implementation of critical indigenous methodologies. This implementation is believed to happen by transforming, rereading and criticising existing research practices. They refer specifically to life story, life history, ethnographic, auto-ethnographic, narrative, visual and postcolonial methodologies. Denzin *et al* (2008:323) remark on the characteristics of critical indigenous methodology in the following way:

- They implement indigenous pedagogies.
- They are fitted to the needs and traditions of specific indigenous communities.
- This fitting process may include creating new methodologies, as well as modifying existing practices.
- Pragmatic and moral criteria apply.
- These practices and modifications must produce knowledge that will positively benefit this indigenous community, and if so, which members? This answer cannot always be given in advance, as the meaning of any set of actions is only visible in the consequences that follow from that action.

Finally, I mention some critique of research into culture, and by implication into intercultural matters, as it is not always viewed as promoting a better understanding of the subject. Leacock (1971, as cited in Florio-Ruane 2001:37-38) is of the opinion that the application of a cultural explanation to the experiences of the poor is nothing else but another way of labelling people. Pratt (1986:32-33) contends that some important knowledge on culture is sometimes omitted or impoverished by poor writing. Florio-Ruane (2001:10) states that "in attempting to describe cultural experience objectively, authors often compromise the narrative power of their own and others' experience of the process of living culture" and "cultural study is inevitably partial, interest-driven and value-laden."

CHALLENGES AND DIRECTIONS

When I engaged with the literature on intercultural education, areas in which future research needs to be conducted became apparent. These further research areas were identified by the authors referred to in this chapter, and when the full picture started emerging, I was able to identify a few additional future research directions.

Some concerns that need to be investigated as expressed by authors

The first type of concern relates to an absence of intercultural education. Wekker and Lutz (2001, as cited in Nkomo & Vandeyar 2009:152) contend that race or ethnicity is ignored as "ordering mechanisms" for the curriculum and that a deficit discourse is

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the main mode relevant to students and academics of colour in the higher education sector in the Netherlands. This matter needs to be further explored in national and international contexts. In the South African context this concern is particularly alarming, as it could be a manifestation of an attitude that glosses over cultural diversity. Since this possible non-acknowledgement of cultural diversity would be an obstacle in progressing towards an equitable society in South Africa it needs urgent attention from researchers and practitioners.

A second type of concern relates to the fact that intercultural education sometimes targets only part of the relevant people. De Rezende highlights the need to expand the experience of an intercultural programme constructed to educate indigenous students to non-indigenous students; also to improve the “level of intercultural dialogue with other culturally excluded groups in order to reach all the students of the university” (2009:208). Once again, the multicultural nature of the South African population is not mainly the result of recent immigration, but rather of historical immigration of a few centuries ago. The then immigrant population has since become part of the national population, which implies that multiculturalism is inherent to the country. This calls for a different approach to intercultural education than if the other cultures are from recent immigration.

Another type of concern deals with the unintended implications of multi- and intercultural education. Narsee believes that multicultural education could have the potential to trivialise culture, thus contributing to stereotyping (2004:88); Nkomo and Vandeyar fear that some approaches to multicultural education do not embrace a commitment to social and economic justice (2009:19) and Turner sees a challenge in the fact that when the focus is deliberately placed on cross-cultural integration, it might highlight insider-outsider attitudes rather than resolve them. When using the curriculum to promote student integration, its objectives must be clearly articulated and understood in “high-performance, intensive educational environments, such as in postgraduate programmes” (Nkomo & Vandeyar 2009:292).

A fourth area that needs further exploring has to do with research into improving existing intercultural education efforts. Turner identified some such challenges, namely to determine whether cultural integration supports academic success; to devise ways in which attempts by the curriculum to facilitate student cultural integration are supported, evaluated and assessed; how academics and students can be assisted in attaining the appropriate skill and social competence levels linked to intercultural communication, as required for successful interaction in diverse groups (“uniting formal demands of the curriculum with complex classroom dynamics”) (2009:242). Castro conducted research on the views of pre-service teachers about teaching culturally diverse learners. He identified three areas that need to be researched, namely the impact of prior experiences and social interaction with culturally diverse others on people’s openness to diversity, particular teaching practices and curricular components that foster changes in the beliefs and attitudes of teachers, and the ways in which teachers

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interact with notions of critical multiculturality. This is especially relevant to teachers of colour – they are to be the subjects/actors in the research, not only the objects (Castro 2010:207).

A few gaps emerging from the bigger picture

The research reported by both Mostafa (2006) and Rostron (2009) clearly indicate that very little is known about how to negotiate different value systems in the intercultural curriculum. The closer the value systems are to each other, the easier it becomes to accommodate both (or more) systems, but when the differences are more pronounced, huge challenges emerge.

At the start of this chapter, various interrelated concepts were discussed and reference was made to a time-space link. Cushner's exposition of this link to time and space (1998:2-8) was highlighted as a useful point of departure for some further research. However, many new developments would have emerged in the past 15 years – these developments need to be researched so that the time-space link can be updated. This is especially relevant to South Africa.

Another gap has to do with the way in which research on interculturalism in higher education is very often conceptualised within the context of the internationalising of higher education, especially in non-South African contexts. One example of this is Turner's illustration of the challenges "inherent in supporting cross-cultural learning within diverse cohorts", with one such challenge being to "internationalize local student populations, giving them through their education intercultural competence or so-called internationalization at home" (Turner 2009:240). Another (almost converse?) dimension of this is apparent in the work of Whitsed and Volet (2010), who found that internationalisation in the Japanese higher education context gives limited attention to intercultural dimensions.

In a study that investigated which criteria South African students used when selecting a higher education institution at which to further their studies, it was found that the multi-cultural nature of an institution was the most powerful selection factor among black South African students (Jordaan & Wiese 2010:546). This points to the need for research (both nationally and internationally) on what university contexts students of different cultures find attractive, as such research should shed light on what they regard as true intercultural institutions.

Finally, one of the most glaring gaps in the intercultural research conducted over the recent decade or two is the dearth of work on the infusion of interculturalism into the curriculum, and more specifically, on interculturalism in higher education. Most of the research done on interculturalism was contextualised in schools and although it is possible that many of the findings are relevant to the higher education context, this needs to be confirmed by replication in the latter context before such findings can be acted upon. Such research should include work on actual ways to

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infuse interculturalism into the curriculum, for example, how communities of practice (Otten 2009) and service learning (Cross, Mkhwanazi-Twala & Kline 1995) could be conceptualised to serve this purpose.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has touched on some aspects of intercultural education in higher education as reflected in the recent literature, without any claim to being complete or presenting a definitive viewpoint. The challenges and directions that emerged from the mapping of the literature overview are of particular significance to South African intercultural education and need to be taken up urgently by policy-makers, researchers and practitioners. The importance of developing and implementing strategies for infusing interculturalism into the curriculum must not be under-estimated. This holds true for South African as well as international higher education as it would contribute to a much improved study experience for such students and to the evolution of a truly equitable society across the world.

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