

PREFACE: INTERNATIONALISATION AND THE FUTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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The great challenges facing our world—and our graduates—do not often conform to national boundaries. Climate change and sustainability. Peace and justice. Poverty and discrimination. Health and well-being. These—and many others that I did not list here—are international challenges that require both local and global action to address. For higher education to prepare our students to live, work, and thrive in the future, we need to internationalise our teaching and our curricula.

This book makes an important contribution to the scholarly literature on and the pedagogical practices of internationalising teaching in higher education. By centering peer learning in their analysis and case studies, these authors help us reimagine the roles that students can and should play in internationalising higher education.

Decades of research demonstrate that purposeful student peer-peer interactions can be one of the most effective approaches to teaching in higher education (e.g., Bovill 2020; Felten and Lambert 2020). These peer relationships enhance academic learning and also contribute to many other positive outcomes including student well-being, belonging, and persistence to graduation. Peers do this by supporting and challenging each other as they learn together. Near peers—such as students one or two years ahead in the same academic program—also can be influential inspirations and allies in the learning process.

These powerful peer relationships are most likely to develop when academic teachers intentionally design for them. We cannot simply rely on chance and spontaneity to derive the full benefits from peer learning. Instead, as the chapters in this book document, careful pedagogical planning and skillful teaching are essential for effective, high quality peer learning. This book also illustrates how assessments can deepen peer learning when they are aligned with academic goals and when they encourage meaningful collaboration among students. Academic teachers need to attend to the motivations, identities, cultures, and personalities of their students so that pedagogies build on students' strengths and promote purposeful learning (Eddy et al. 2015).

By doing this, academic teachers are not only helping students learn our disciplines, but we are also enabling them to develop the skills and mindsets necessary for life and work in the future. Our graduates will need to be able to collaborate with people who speak many languages and who come from differing cultural backgrounds. Higher education is a unique opportunity for students to learn to navigate international contexts and to work with diverse peers, but higher education only fulfills that role if academic teachers do what this book illustrates so well—systematically enact good practices to internationalise our teaching and curricula.

None of this is easy but done well peer learning can be transformational for students—and for internationalising teaching in higher education. This book provides invaluable guidance and case studies for all of us seeking to enhance and internationalise our students' learning.

References

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