Intercultural communication training to support internationalisation in higher education

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Abstract

With a steady growth in globalisation, many universities increasingly invest in their human capital by training employees to meet the demands of organisational diversity, to become culturally flexible and adaptable in multicultural contexts. Internationalisation is an important part of a university's economic, academic and cultural vitality, and this is true at Massey University in Aotearoa New Zealand. In order to proactively build the University's internationalisation capability, an introductory interactive intercultural communication workshop which encourages self-reflection, was developed and presented to staff on three campuses. As a follow-up to these workshops, staff were invited to participate in an online survey a week after attending the workshop, and then a focus group one month later, to ascertain any transfer of learning to the workplace. This paper reports on the findings and provides recommendations for universities to enhance their intercultural capabilities.

Keywords: *Intercultural communication, higher education training and development*

Introduction

Internationalisation is an essential part of a university's economic, academic and cultural vitality. Although there does not seem to be consensus on a definition of internationalisation, Knight (2003: 2) defines it as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education." Knight's (2003: 2) definition highlights a significant connection between international, intercultural and global dimensions that "are intentionally used as a triad" and are significantly integral to the internationalisation equation. Similarly, Yang (2002: 83) states, "internationalisation means the awareness and operation of interactions within and between cultures through its teaching, research and service functions, with the ultimate aim of achieving mutual understanding across cultural borders".

To build Massey University's internationalisation capability by raising awareness and enabling staff to appreciate different customs and cultures, an introductory intercultural communication training intervention was designed, developed and delivered to staff members. Before this there were no specific development opportunities to train staff with the basic knowledge and skills to support the University's Internationalisation Strategy. As with many international tertiary institutions, Massey University has a rich mix of cultures so it is vital that staff can confidently engage with colleagues from other cultures, international students, and international stakeholders, both on and off shore.

The purpose of training is to improve the quality of the workforce by equipping staff with the required knowledge, skills and abilities in order to produce desired cognitive, behavioural and affective or attitudinal changes (Grossman & Salas 2011). Organisations invest large sums of money on training their

staff so changes can be implemented in the workplace. Effective training should lead to improved work quality, higher staff motivation and higher productivity. The intention of this research was to find out whether any of the training undertaken by staff in the workshops had been transferred to the workplace.

This paper provides an overview of some literature on training in organisations, specifically intercultural communication training before describing the workshops. Findings from data collected in the follow-up stages are presented, as well as participants' key recommendations. These recommendations would be beneficial not only to Massey University, but also to other tertiary institutions engaging with international staff and students.

Review of the literature

Globalisation has pushed organisations to invest in their human capital and intellectual capital by training their employees to prepare them with the required skills to meet the demands of organisational diversity, to become culturally flexible and adaptable in the multicultural work context, and to increase their intercultural communication competences, interpersonal skills, and competitive advantage to achieve the organisational goals through continuous learning and development (Bean 2008; Bennett et al. 2004; Salas et al. 2012). Saks and Burke (2012: 118) state, "training is considered to be a strategic human resource practice that can benefit individuals, teams, organizations and society". Salas et al. (2006: 473) define training as "... the systematic acquisition of knowledge (i.e., what we need to know), skills (i.e., what we need to do), and attitudes (i.e., what we need to feel) (KSAs) that together lead to improved performance in a particular environment". Kragh and Bislev (2005) point out that tertiary education displays differences in educational styles as university education is culture-bound and linked to social and cultural characteristics at a national level of a particular country. Internationalisation suggests the presence of certain components (as stated by Knight 2003) that need to be adopted to ensure that universities do not remain restricted and isolated within their specific educational and cultural enclaves.

There is abundant literature stressing the importance of intercultural training in higher education (Bennett 2011; Ippolito 2007; Landis & Bhawuk 2004; Ward 2004), as it aims to develop a culturally competent workforce with intercultural competencies as "a generic skill set" (Bean 2008: 1). Intercultural training is premised on a belief that broadened cultural knowledge and cultural competencies as social capital will benefit the multicultural organisation. It should also increase cultural inclusion, challenge institutional barriers, racism, personal biases and prejudices, engage in self-reflection, foster an environment for social cohesion, creativity and innovation, and for the creation, development, and sustainability of an organisation's social and human capital, and contribute to the organisation's multicultural policy objectives (Bean 2008; Bennett et al. 2004; McGuire & Patterson 2014). In response to the changing dynamics of multiculturalism in organisations, professionals and management must integrate intercultural competence, standards, and all aspects of cultural differences into their professional practices to accurately reflect the new global thinking and the changing and multicultural reality in the workplace (Bennett 2009; McGuire & Patterson 2014; Sue et al. 1992).

To achieve intercultural training goals, it is important to map out what constitutes the effectiveness of the training programme and the factors contributing to its success (Paige 1993). Pusch et al. (1981: 73) note that although intercultural training purposes vary from profession to profession, one critical consideration is to "provide a functional awareness of the cultural dynamic present in intercultural relations and assist trainees in becoming more effective in cross-cultural situations". Paige (1993) argues that for intercultural training to be effective, it should be guided by a conceptual model consisting of key training elements and activities, such as culture-general and culture-specific knowledge, behavioural skills, self-awareness, content, multicultural challenges and issues, and didactic and experiential approaches. Effective training should help trainees to become multicultural, facilitate acquisition of "the capacity to integrate alternate frames of reference into one's life and function effectively in two or more cultures" (Paige 1993: 172).

There has been a converging theme around what constitutes effective training (Byram 1997; Pedersen 2003; Ridley & Kleiner 2003), which is often viewed as the development of "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioural skills and characteristics" that facilitate intercultural interactions in various contexts (Bennett 2009: 97). Effective intercultural training should integrate these three skills into the training

programme. Byram (1997) considered affective and cognitive factors as preconditions on which the skills of interpreting, relating, behaving and discovering are based. The affective dimension (*heartset*) refers to attitudes, motivation, curiosity, openness, nonjudgmentalness, risk taking, cognitive flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, flexibility, resourcefulness and readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures (Bennett 2009; Brislin & Yoshida 1994; Byram 1997; Pedersen 2003). The cognitive dimension (*mindset*) includes culture-general and culture-specific knowledge, theories, themes, frameworks, cultural patterns, values, norms, worldviews, racial identity development, social practices, perceptions, role conceptualization, time and space, the importance of the group and the individual, hierarchies, power relationships, class, status, rituals and superstition, racism, attribution theory, the cultural adaptation processes, and the emic and etic distinctions (Bennett 2009; Brislin & Yoshida 1994; Clements & Jones 2006; McGuire & Patterson 2014; Mio 2003; Pedersen 2003).

Bennett and Castiglioni (2004: 201) emphasise that there is a limitation in the current intercultural approach in its ability to translate cognition and attitude into behaviour which is described as "the embodied feeling of culture". Similarly Ward (2004) argued that cultural knowledge and attitude are inadequate in preparing trainees to deal with intercultural challenges. She recommends social skills trainings as a critical component of training programmes to bring about trainees' behavioural changes. The behavioural dimension(*skillset*) covers the ability to empathise, gather appropriate information, listen, perceive accurately, adapt, build relationships, resolve problems and cultural conflicts, manage social interactions and anxiety, acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices, identify cultural biases and prejudices, accurately interpret the other person's behaviour, and learn new behaviours appropriate to cultural expectations, and the ability to integrate the cognitive and affective dimensions into intercultural interactions in the workplace (Bennett 2009; Byram 1997; Fowler & Blohm 2004; Pedersen 2003). Aba (2015) highlights the important of the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions in intercultural communication competence in relation to academic mobility.

Organisations spend vast amounts of money on training and development every year, and as Aguinis and Kraiger (2009: 465) point out, "training efforts will not yield the anticipated effects if knowledge, attitudes, and skills acquired in training are not fully and appropriately transferred to job-related activities". Gumuseli and Ergin (2002: 81) define transfer of training as "the process of the implementation of knowledge, skill, attitude and other qualities acquired in the training programme into the workplace", while Garavaglia (1993: 63) adds it is "the effective and continued application … of the knowledge and skills gained in training" to the participant's job.

Grossman and Salas (2011: 104) highlight that although staff may acquire new knowledge and skills through a training programme, "learning alone is not sufficient for training to be considered effective". According to the training transfer theory, the effectiveness of intercultural training lies in the learned behaviour used in the work context and maintained for a period of time on the job (Baldwin & Ford 1988). However, as Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2014: 149) state, there is substantial evidence to show that "training programmes often fail to achieve the intended result of improving worker and organization performance". Wexley and Latham (2002) and Velada et al. (2007) report that the degree of training content which is transferred to the workplace is around 40% immediately after training, but drops to 25% after six months and to 15% after one year. Many organisations have recognised a "transfer problem" (Michalak 1981) in that a lot of training is not applied to the workplace. A significant indicator influencing the transfer of training is support provided by the organisational environment (Holton et al. 2003).

Methodology

This section focuses briefly on the design of the intercultural workshop, and the methods used in the two follow-up stages of this research.

Workshop design

The introductory intercultural communication workshop consisted of four-hour interactive sessions presented four times and available at the university's three campuses over a period of six months. These

workshops were presented at the main campus in the Video Linked Teaching classroom, allowing participants in the other two campuses to actively participate in the workshop. Facilitators at the other two campuses assisted with setting up the classrooms and facilitating the process. A workbook was developed for staff as a resource to refer to after attending the workshop. The University's Vice-Chancellor endorsed this workbook, writing a welcome message.

The workshop objectives were to increase staff awareness of the diversity of cultures at Massey University; identify and discuss basic concepts and issues associated with intercultural communication in the workplace; explore how differing cultural values, perspectives and patterns influence communication; and consider the impacts of critical components of intercultural communication in a variety of contexts.

The workshop was designed by taking into consideration Beckett et al.'s (1997) multicultural communication process model of multicultural competencies, slightly modified to suit the higher education context. Firstly, knowledge of self. Participants need to become culturally self-aware and consciously reflect on their own culture and how their values and beliefs impact on the way they communicate. As Beckett et al. (1997: 545) state, "learning about ourselves … enhances our sensitivity to other cultures and prepares us to learn about others". Through activities and discussions participants looked at what culture is, what culture(s) they belong to, how we understand who we are, and their own cultural identity. Secondly, acknowledgment of cultural differences. Staff need to acknowledge cultural differences exist that influence how individuals think, act, and communicate. Workshop participants were exposed to different intercultural communication frameworks in order to appreciate and recognise that individuals from different cultures have different worldviews. Thirdly, knowledge of other cultures. Although the workshop could not cover all cultures within the timeframe, staff were provided with some knowledge about the main cultures represented within the university. Staff were provided with guidelines on how to increase their knowledge about other cultures. Verbal and non-verbal communication across cultures was presented and participants had opportunities to engage with this topic through discussions and activities. Participants were also given some guidelines for moving towards intercultural competency. Fourthly, identification and valuation of differences. Attendees had the opportunity to identify cultural differences and either accept these differences or work towards accepting them and hopefully valuing these differences at some stage. The workshop highlighted that although we share characteristics with our cultural and microcultural groups, we are all unique individuals (Lartey 2003). Fifthly, identification and avoidance of stereotypes. Although stereotyping is inevitable, we can reflect on how and who we stereotype and whether this leads to prejudice and discrimination. Throughout the workshop, participants were asked to reflect whether a particular issue or topic led them to possibly stereotype people from a different culture because they do things differently. This included language, non-verbal communication, power distance, values, beliefs, and communication context. Sixthly, empathy with people of other cultures. One workshop objective was to increase staff awareness of the diversity of cultures at the university. By being more aware of how people from other cultures interact, engage, communicate, and behave, staff should have an increased understanding of the others' cultural perspectives and hopefully not stereotype, but have more empathy and thus open channels of communication and understanding. An intention was that the workshops would develop the participants' heartset, mindset, and skillset (Byram 1997; Bennett 2009).

Participants

There were 157 staff members across three campuses attending the intercultural communication workshops. Of these, 88.5% were professional/ administrative staff members and 11.5% were academic staff.

Research question

This research study was framed around the following research question:

> *What have staff been able to incorporate into their workplace practice after attending an intercultural communication workshop?*

Follow-up

For the first stage, an online survey was designed to find out what participants had been able to implement in their workplaces a week after attending the workshop. The survey used Qualtrics[1], an online data collection software package. Another purpose of this survey was to encourage participants to reflect on what they had learned, reinforcing the training. Eighty-one staff members (52%) responded to this survey. The second stage consisted of focus groups, where, a month after attending a workshop, participants were invited to attend a focus group to find out what they had been able to implement as well as discuss any intercultural experiences. Focus groups can create good synergy as one participant's ideas or comments can trigger further thoughts and perspectives on the given topic and thus generate more information (Berg 1989). Another positive about using focus groups is that for many of the participants it was a further reinforcement of the workshop, as well as a chance to learn from other participants about how they had implemented what they had learned in their specific workplaces. Forty-five staff members (29%) attended 11 focus groups. Focus group transcripts from the focus groups were analysed line-by-line using a grounded theory approach (Glaser 1992), to allow the participants' ideas and concepts to surface from their own words. The intention was to ensure participants' ideas could be supported by comments within the transcripts comprising of "rich data with thick description" (Charmaz 2000: 514). Strauss and Corbin (1998: 12) define grounded theory as "theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research collection process."

Findings and Discussion

In this section findings from the two follow-up stages, the transfer of training, and staff recommendations from the follow-up stages are presented and discussed.

Stage 1 – online survey

At the end of each workshop, participants were asked to think about one or two things they would like to do differently at work, and write these in their workbooks. Given the reality of the "transfer problem" (Michalak 1981) and the low figures of training content transferred to the workplace (Wexley & Latham 2002; Velada et al. 2007) it was important for participants to consciously reflect on what they learned and what specifically they could apply in their workplaces.

A week after the workshop, participants were invited to complete an online survey. Eighty-one staff members responded, with 70% stating they had implemented one thing they had done differently after returning to their workplace as a result of the workshop. One participant said a barrier to implementing changes was "remembering to do it! I had to be conscious of it – continually catching myself doing the things I was going to change and actually making the change!" Participants were also invited to provide any thoughts they had since attending the workshop the previous week. Of the 81 participants, 46 commented positively on the workshop:

- The workshop was outstanding and helped to understand other cultures.
- The workshop has given me more of an insight into why different nations work in different ways.
- Good content.
- I found the workshop thought-provoking, and the workbook very informative.
- The content was very relevant.
- Good workshop that gives you a lot to think about.
- I've learnt so much from it and I was engaged 100% the whole time.
- An excellent session, professionally delivered.
- Wonderful workshop, very informative.
- The workbook is a fantastic resource.

As with all training session, there were some negative comments from eight participants (and these comments will be taken into account for future intercultural communication workshops):

- Too long, may be better split into two, with gap in between.
- Wondered if it could be longer to allow the opportunity to cover aspects in more depth.
- I would have liked some more practical how to deal with these work place type situations covered at the workshop.
- Found it to be a little bit basic.

Twenty-two comments were suggestions on how to improve the workshop, or thoughts about the workshop, or comments about the need for such a workshop:

- Just wondered if there could be more involvement and use of Māori or Pasifika communication concepts.
- Would have liked more knowledge on basic cultural practices/greetings for some of the main nationalities we encounter at Massey.
- Perhaps insert some real case scenarios.
- Feel the need to be reminded annually about the challenges some of our students face.
- Would be good to have a Part two workshop on intercultural communication.
- I would be keen for a follow-up course to expand on what we learned.
- Wider participation is vital if Massey is to provide an inclusive learning and working environment for all staff in particular international students and staff.
- Would be great to create intercultural workshops for students as well.
- I believe this should be a mandatory workshop for all frontline service staff
- I would like to see this course as standard procedure for every new employee.
- Would like all managers to attend the workshop.
- Would love to see this be considered "highly recommended".

Five comments were neutral:

- Understanding cultural differences is important.
- The buzz-word around campus seems 'busy', so intercultural communication is not the highest thing on people's mind.

Stage 2 – focus group

A month after each workshop, participants were invited to attend a focus group to share their intercultural communication experiences and discuss what they had managed to implement in their workplaces. Forty-five participants across three campuses attended eleven focus groups, and were asked two questions: what they had been able to implement in their workplaces after attending the workshop; and what they would like to see included in cultural guides to be prepared. The paper addresses the first question only. The focus of this research was not to conduct a full evaluation of the transfer of learning to the workplace, but rather to find out what participants had been able to apply in their workplaces, thus giving some indication of what learning had been transferred. The focus groups also provided fertile ground for the emergence of a number of key recommendations beyond the focus of the intercultural workshops, and these are presented in a later section.

Transfer of training

A problem of any training session is that often training is not transferred to the workplace (Grossman & Salas 2011; Diamantidis & Chatzoglou 2014). One participant reflected, "When I get back to work, I'm going to do those things that are going to help me. Well I haven't because you just don't have the time". Another said "I looked at the training workbook and thought, 'Oh dear. I should have done these things' … which is what happens all the time when you go to workshops".

Eighty percent of participants in Stages 1 and 2 were able to implement and apply some of what they had learned to their workplaces, and this is in line with what Saks (2013: 34) indicates that "Two-thirds of employees apply what they learn immediately after attending a program". Participants stated they listened more actively and attentively, were more understanding, became more aware of potential communication pitfalls, were mindful of how one communicates, became less judgemental, became more inclusive, understood non-verbal communication more, became more aware of the impact of high and low context communication styles, and accepted that students may avoid eye contact as a sign of respect.

A recurring focus group theme was that workshops had raised awareness, with participants becoming more aware of their communication styles and behaviours and how they engage with people from different cultures. This is consistent with what Pusch et al. (1981: 73) believe intercultural training should provide, namely "functional awareness of the cultural dynamic present in intercultural relations". For some participants, the workshop confirmed certain cultural aspects and in the words of one staff member, it "reminds you to try and see it from where others are coming from". This is in line with Paige (1993: 172) who asserts that effective training should assist trainees with "the capacity to integrate alternate frames of references into one's life". Another comment was that the workshop "made me realise how important it is to have intercultural sensitivity and knowledge". One participant added, "there was so much that was really useful, but it was those things that we didn't know what we didn't know". Several participants pointed out that Massey University needed to move from a university with international students to an international university, with one saying, "you've got to act, think and deliver internationally".

One participant, responsible for developing Veterinary Professional Skills, realised after attending a workshop that "I'd been teaching veterinary communication skills from a completely western perspective". This resulted in the development and delivery of intercultural communication workshops within the Veterinary Professional Skills programme.

Staff Recommendations

From the findings in the two follow-up stages, staff presented some suggestions and recommendations to be considered by Massey University, but which could also be beneficial to other tertiary institutions. These recommendations indicate that staff not only implemented some changes in their workplaces, but also reflected on the wider implications of intercultural communication. Findings have been clustered into six recommendations.

A. Intercultural Adviser and Intercultural Office

One participant posed a thought-provoking question: "If you've got an HR question, you contact HR. And if you have an intercultural question, who do you ask?" This and other similar questions, raised concerns that we interact on a daily basis with international students and international colleagues, yet there is no place to enquire about intercultural matters. The idea of an intercultural adviser and an intercultural office was proposed to assist staff and students to deal with intercultural concerns as well as raise awareness of cultural issues. It was suggested for instance that a supervisor, knowing a student is from Thailand, could approach an intercultural adviser for assistance, and a brief induction about the Thai culture and educational system. Further, should any cultural issues arise with the student; the supervisor could contact the intercultural adviser. To broaden the knowledge base the intercultural adviser could be supported by an intercultural network of staff members from different cultures to be called upon should cultural issues arise around their particular culture. This network could assist with a range of activities, from checking that programmes are culturally appropriate to transitioning international students in a culturally sensitive way. Additional tasks recommended by participants for the intercultural adviser and office included:

1. Developing resources to help staff engage more effectively with a diverse range of students and staff from different cultures (e.g. an App for staff who can access key information about a particular culture).
2. Assisting staff who travel abroad to engage with officials and university representatives.
3. Preparing staff to teach abroad.
4. Providing support for staff whilst teaching and/or undertaking research abroad.

5. Organising regular community of practice sessions to discuss/engage with intercultural issues (e.g. invite representatives from different embassies to discuss cultural as well as educational issues).

6. Assisting staff and students who conduct research with individuals from different cultures (including ethical issues).

7. Organising workshops on how to teach students from different cultures.

8. Assisting the university to create culturally diverse and transformative teaching and learning environments.

B. Intercultural communication and educational workshops for postgraduate students and supervisors

Another recommendation was to provide intercultural communication training for postgraduate students as well as the supervisors. A discussion focused on the importance of having and maintaining a good relationship between students and supervisors, and how cultural and educational differences and expectations can put significant strain on that relationship. One participant pointed out that "It's a standard problem for PhD students … supervisors will complain that their students don't come and see them and they don't understand, and it's because the students are waiting to be invited. They don't realise that the lecturers in New Zealand expect them to go and ask them questions and hand work in." Another participant said, "It's actually very urgent for Massey because, particularly for people working as supervisors … very often the expectations, the power distance issues are huge for them" and reiterated that students "won't necessarily approach a supervisor if they don't understand something, or if they're getting behind. They'll assume that the supervisor will know and approach them".

The educational system of a society reflects its culture, and diverse pedagogies are applied in different cultures (Liu et al. 2015). Learning and teaching are intricately interwoven into the cultural context in which they are implemented, and learning and teaching styles reflect cultural backgrounds of teachers as well as students (Ariza et al. n.d.). Students who decide to study outside their countries need to accept that the learning and teaching environment in the host country is likely to be different to what they are accustomed to (Vaccarino 2009), yet without any form of training highlighting these differences, these students remain in a state of uncertainty, with unnecessary stress and anxiety. Numerous difficulties between international students and supervisors could arise when expectations, values, understandings, interpretations, and beliefs are dissimilar (Adams & Cargill 2003). Effective communication is crucial to good student-supervisor relationships, however, different communication styles and behaviours obstruct building beneficial and effective relationships, and can also prolong the research process. Therefore, in an increasingly global world, both postgraduate students and supervisors need to be more interculturally skilled. Intercultural communication training is vital as it provides a platform to open conversations about cultural aspects that could hamper the academic relationship.

C. Team training in intercultural communication

Workshop participants were from different university departments, and often at the end of a workshop, would comment "I wish my manager could attend this" or "If only my boss could have been here". In one focus group, a participant was the only one from the library who had attended a particular workshop. However, other library colleagues had attended a previous workshop, and when she returned to work she could talk to them and put the content into their specific work context. She added, "I think it would have been quite hard for some of the conversations had other people not been through the same workshop. So I found it really useful that it wasn't just one person from a team that had been". Another participant felt her entire team would benefit from attending a workshop, so an additional workshop was presented to her team two months' later. After this team workshop, she summarised the advantages. Team members are more likely to recall and relate intercultural experiences, thus making the learning very relevant. A team workshop was great for community building and encouraged on-going conversations keeping the learning current and allowing further development. In particular, having a senior person attend ensures learning and suggestions for change become action points with follow up.

Team-building activities are important as they create discussions which enable better and more open communication among employees, and between management and employees, and this in turn can

strengthen relationships, improve professional relations, understanding, motivation and co-operation. Furthermore, as Foxon (1995) and Gumuseli and Ergin (2002) point out, transfer of training is more effective with managerial support. As pointed out earlier, it is often difficult to implement changes on return to the workplace, but with a team training approach staff can remind and encourage each other. Encouraging teams at the university to attend intercultural communication workshops can have positive and long-lasting outcomes, possibly assisting in a greater training transfer to the workplace (Velada et al. 2007).

D. Intercultural communication training for host families

A number of participants suggested intercultural training would be beneficial for homestay or host families. New Zealand families receive students who for example, eat differently, do things very differently, have different values; and this can be very stressful and frustrating for families (as well as students) as misunderstandings easily arise. One participant mentioned homestays "expect the student to do everything their way … but sometimes for the student it doesn't make sense at all". Another participant said that "it's really in our interest as an institution to make sure that those relationships work both ways because the reputation of Massey, both in the host families and in the students, is at stake".

Host families play a significant role in the cultural exchange as they immerse the student in a range of activities whilst in the host country. Castiglioni (2012) states there has been little research around homestay families and none of this research focuses on the intercultural learning of the families. It is therefore crucial for tertiary institutions to provide intercultural training for host families to raise awareness of cultural differences, communication styles and behaviours, cultural values, as well as strategies on how to manage expectations.

E. Intercultural communication for new staff

Participants felt that although there is a university induction programme, there should be some compulsory intercultural communication training for new staff members. Some participants thought that it should not only be an induction into the organisation, but also an induction into the New Zealand cultures. At such a workshop, New Zealand staff could assist international staff with acculturation while international staff could share their cultures and enquire about the local cultures within a safe training environment. Another component suggested was to include the educational context from which they have come from and differences from the New Zealand way of conducting classes, preparing assessments, and grading assignments.

F. Intercultural communication workshop for all new students

Most students attend an orientation programme when they arrive at the university, but it does not include in-depth intercultural information. Focus group participants suggested new students could attend an intercultural communication workshop during orientation. This workshop would be presented to both international and domestic students as it would be a significant learning experience for both groups. Participants said that a common complaint from international students was, "We come to New Zealand to meet Kiwis and we've got no Kiwi friends". In an intercultural communication workshop during orientation where both groups attend, friendships could develop as students are encouraged to work in small groups and interact with each other.

Even though friendships are interpreted differently across the world, "friendship is one of the most important interpersonal relationships people develop with others" (Liu et al. 2015: 236) as friendship creates a sense of belonging (Duck 2002). However, friendship formation between domestic and international students is rarer than friendship formation amongst international students (Ward & Masgoret 2004). In their research, Vaccarino and Dresler-Hawke (2011) found many domestic students perceived a number of barriers in forming friendships with international students and may not perceive many benefits of having such friendships, so they refrain from developing them. Intercultural friendships also facilitate the social and academic adjustments of international students and enhance cultural understanding and learning of both international and domestic students (Zhou et al. 2014). Yet, as Duck (2002: 325) points out, "relationships do not just happen" and an intercultural communication workshop is a safe neutral space where intercultural friendships could develop.

Conclusion

With globalisation there is an increased interconnectedness and growing interdependence of different groups of people around the world. The consequence is that diversity is a reality, and being culturally competent is a vital skill required to work effectively with culturally diverse individuals. Intercultural communication is a lifelong learning process in a changing world where people have to continuously negotiate their identities, identify solutions to new cultural issues, and interact and adapt to the complicated and multifaceted changes and challenges in the multicultural world. Therefore, equipping staff with cultural proficiency has become crucial and indispensable.

Drawing on Knight's (2003) three components of internationalisation (international, intercultural and global), the authors visualised an internationalisation sandwich, where the top slice is the international component, the bottom slice is the global component, and the filling is the intercultural component. The filling is a vital element of a sandwich, but not all intercultural components are immediately visible, and therefore are often unnoticed and disregarded, although they have a crucial impact on how individuals think, act and behave. All three components are imperative in order to achieve effective and authentic internationalisation.

To build a university's internationalisation capability, a strong, culturally-aware, culturally-literate and culturally-sensitive workforce is essential. To develop staff intercultural competencies and sustain an internationally competitive advantage, it is imperative for staff at tertiary institutions to be appropriately and systematically trained in intercultural communication. There is little evidence, however, that universities are taking up this developmental challenge.

The intention of this research was to find out whether any of the training undertaken by staff in the intercultural communication workshops had been transferred to the workplace; and the research question asked what staff had been able to incorporate into their workplace practice after attending a workshop. From the findings in both stages 1 and 2, it is evident that overall the training provided in the intercultural communication workshops has been successful and learning has been transferred to the workplace, and that staff have been able to incorporate the learning into their workplace practice. This intercultural communication training project indicated that careful design of delivery reinforced by follow-up research/reflection opportunities encouraged learning transfer. The opportunity to reflect on the workshops also provided a series of recommendations, particularly valuable because they arose from those at the workface, dealing with the everyday reality of a multicultural staff and student population that make up the contemporary university.

However, the very nature of this exploratory project, with its limited numbers, only serves to reveal the extent of the journey that needs to be undertaken if the internal culture of a university is to become internationalised to reflect the global reality of current education. While the enthusiasm of participating staff, the demonstration of early learning transfer and staff-driven pressure resulting in further workshops is encouraging, more needs to be done. To help continued learning transfer, further follow-up meetings, with chances for discussion, reinforcement, as well as additional ideas, is advisable. Further, although a snowball style growth of training workshops prompted by personal recommendations and team development requests could be effective, clearly there will be little real momentum for intercultural learning unless the initiative is clearly led and sustained from the top of the organisation.

Despite this, we strongly believe that through *learning* and with appropriate management support, staff members within Massey University, as in other universities, can become *agents of change*. This has been a small project, but it is evident that higher education institutions need to take up the challenge to train their staff to become competent intercultural communicators within an international, intercultural and global institution in order to maintain its competitive edge as well as provide an embracing and inclusive learning, teaching, and working environment.

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