

A dynamic splash of water in shades of blue and grey, creating a sense of movement and energy. The water is captured mid-splash, with droplets and ripples visible, set against a dark, muted background.

INTERCULTURALISM AS THE KEY TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

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What is Interculturalism?



AN ACTIVE AND
REFLECTIVE PROCESS
(BEYOND PASSIVE
ACCEPTANCE).



RECOGNIZES
CONTINUUM OF
PERSPECTIVES
(CULTURAL
RELATIVISM).



ENCOURAGES
DIALOGUE AND
INTERACTION.



MULTICULTURALISM
+ DIALOGUE =
INTERCULTURALISM?

Interculturalism in University Spaces

Missing link between
Diversity and Inclusion
initiatives

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graph TD; A[Missing link between Diversity and Inclusion initiatives] --> B[Bridging of differences in values, expectations, beliefs and practices]; B --> C[Everyone benefits from interculturalism.];
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Bridging of differences in
values, expectations, beliefs
and practices

Everyone benefits from
interculturalism.

Intercultural Competency

“Cultural competence is not a state at which one arrives; rather, it is a process of learning, unlearning, and relearning. It is a sensibility cultivated throughout a lifetime. Cultural competence requires awareness of self, reflection on one’s own cultural position, awareness of others’ positions, and the ability to interact genuinely and respectfully with others. Culturally competent people refrain from assuming they fully understand the perspectives of stakeholders whose backgrounds differ from their own.”

Practicing Intercultural Competency



1. Acknowledge the complexity of cultural identity.



2. Understanding of one's own identity and worldview.



3. Recognize and eliminate bias in language.



4. Employ attitudes of respect, openness and curiosity.

Importance of Int' Student Engagement

- 500,000 international students at Canadian post-secondary institutions¹
- Primary challenge: developing social networks²
- Harm reduction strategies
- Increase retention rates

¹Data from Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE)

²Student Engagement in Higher Education 2nd Ed. Pg. 108

Strategies to Increase Int' Student Engagement 1

- Administration level:
- New student orientation as a year long event.
- Implementing intercultural competency training as a component in orientation education.
- Setting aside funding for student-initiated cultural programming.

Strategies to Increase Int' Student Engagement 2

Faculty / department specific level:

- During classroom instruction, try to use case studies or examples from all around the world.
- Avoid pitfall of mainly having negative examples from outside N. America.
- Ambassador program for upper year students to welcome new students. E.g. NSISP ambassadors

Strategies to Increase Int' Student Engagement 3

Residence Life:

- Aim for broad range of programming options.
- Variety of food from different cultures in dining hall.
- Best practices: Sunday Night Cinemas, Paint Nights and cultural food appreciation events.

Event Organizing Strategies

- Consider engagement (pre- and post-event), accessibility and sustainability.
- Power of collaborations
- Supportive and inclusive environments e.g. closed spaces
- Promotes intercultural understanding e.g. Chinese New Year: Singapore Style, Eid Celebration at Dal.
- Harm reduction: Schedule events during high risk periods e.g. Halloween, homecoming weekend.