

INSTILLING THE CULTURE OF DIALOGUE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

- Open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect.
 - (Council of Europe White Paper *Living together as Equals in Dignity* (2008))

FRAMES OF MIND

- "Dark Ages"...
- "Dark Continent"...
- History of the Americas beginning in 1492...
- "stranger" = "strange"...
- ... or cultural enrichment through learning opportunities
- ...recognition of cultural diversity as an intrinsic value?

HIGHER EDUCATION

- International in origin
- Ideas assessed on their intrinsic merit
- Progress made by challenging received ideas
- Hence particularly fluent in intercultural dialogue?

WHY HIGHER EDUCATION?

- Preparation for the labor market
- Preparation for democratic citizenship
- Personal development
- Development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base

KNOWLEDGE ONLY?

- .. or rather:
 - Knowledge
 - Understanding
 - Ability to act
 - Attitudes?
- Higher education helping develop better human beings (liberal education)?
- Education more than the sums of one's knowledge
- Universities more than the sum of their individual academic disciplines.

A PRACTICE OF DIALOGUE

- On campus
 - Learning, and not only teaching
 - Across disciplines
 - Make foreign faculty and staff a part of the academic community
- Beyond campus
 - In the local community
 - Raising awareness in broader society
 - Higher education as a voice for values

HIGHER EDUCATION COMPETENCES

- Subject specific and generic
 - Ability to look at an issue from various angles
 - Being aware of sensitivities and pitfalls
 - Recognize the inherent dignity of others
 - Understanding \neq accepting everything
 - Foreign language = different perspective
- We are good at training subject specialists
- Are we also good at educating intellectuals?

COMPETENCES FOR DIALOGUE

- Not automatic: need to be acquired and maintained
- Knowledge and understanding of other cultures and languages – not only for specialists
- Multiperspectivity
- Understand what one does *not* know
 - *Education*: that which discloses to the wise and disguises from the foolish their lack of understanding (Ambrose Bierce: *Devil's Dictionary*)

WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION?

- The answer to the question “what kind of education do we need?” is to be found in the answer to another question: “what kind of society do we want?”

(Eugenio Tironi: *El sueño chileno* (2005))