



The International Studies in Education Programme: An untapped contribution to internationalisation at the University of Iceland

Brynja Halldorsdottir (brynhall@hi.is)

[School of Education](#)

[University of Iceland](#)

UNICA Rome 2017



Guiding issues

- Ten year anniversary of program
- General sceptism/lack of knowledge within University
- Current research funded by University of Iceland Research Fund
- Framing for further publications.



A little bit about the Icelandic context



Population: 330,000 people (about 10-12% first and second gen. migrant)

National Language is Icelandic

Internationalization of University of Iceland



University of Iceland



- Established 1911
- Registration fee (no tuition)
- 11000- 14000 students
- 1000 employees (faculty and administration staff)
- Equal access



Internationalization

- Focused on international rankings
- Focused on exchange and international students
- Programmatic support for exchange students and graduate programs
- How do we make it work for migrant/refugee students
- Language policy focuses on maintenance of Icelandic as national language



History, rationale and global local perspective

The International Studies Education Programme aimed to empower future „teachers“ as active participants in Icelandic and international contexts and in diverse educational settings.

- Implementation in the autumn of 2008 (time of the economic crash)
- A social justice response to demographic change in the country
- Increasing the diversity of students

Students currently registered (BA 30, MA 10)

Dropouts (BA 3-5, MA 5)

Graduations (BA 13 , MA 12)



Structure

- 3 year BA/2 year MA program in Education Studies
- Offered alternate years
- Draws on multiple academic traditions
- Pursue other courses at UI to fulfill program requirements
- Complete a 10 ECTS BA project or a 40-60 ECTS MA research project



Programmatic features:

- Inter- and multidisciplinary
- Encourages self-reflection
- Open-ended structure
- Self-directed learning/student centered pedagogies
- Encourages cross-cultural interactions
- Varied assessment tools and processes



Institutional Constraints

- Program “divergent” from University norm
- Impact of financial crisis and understaffing
- Courses in English are not just for exchange students
- Placement within a restructuring within in the SoE
- Interdisciplinary approach challenged flexibility of University to take courses in other departments
- Misunderstanding of teaching



Reference

Books, S, Ragnarsdóttir, H., Jónsson, O. P., & Macdonald, A. (2010). A University Program with “The Whole World as a Focus”: An Icelandic Response to Globalization. In *Innov High Educ* (2011) 36:125–139 DOI 10.1007/ s10755-010-9163-7.

Macdonald A. and Pálsdóttir, A. (2011). Creating Educational Settings. Designing a University Course. *Ráðstefnurit Netlu – Menntakvika 2011 Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands*.

Macdonald A. and Pálsdóttir, A. (2013). Case-based studies: a critical pedagogy of place in international education in Iceland. *Education in the North*, 20(Special Issue), pp. 55-72.

Ragnarsdóttir, H. (2012). Empowering diverse teachers for diverse learners: A program in international studies in education and its implications for diverse school settings. In A. Honigsfeld & A. Cohan (Eds.), *Breaking the mold of education for culturally and linguistically diverse students* (pp. 229–236). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Ragnarsdóttir, H. & Blöndal, H. (2014). Fjölmenningarlegt námssamfélag. Reynsla nemenda af alþjóðlegu námi í menntunarfræði við Háskóla Íslands/Multicultural educational community. Experiences of students in the International Studies in Education program at the University of Iceland. *Uppeldi og menntun*, 23(1), 27–

45.

