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**Rethinking and Reinventing Intercultural Education in Postsecondary Institutions:
A Critical, Anti-Colonial Approach**
**Repenser et réinventer l'enseignement interculturel dans les institutions postsecondaires :
une approche critique anticoloniale**

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Abstract

Critical and anti-colonial scholarship helps us imagine how intercultural education might begin to address the power imbalances inherent to issues of culture and epistemology. This paper reflexively dialogues anti-colonial theory with my own experiments of practically implementing these theories within the Intercultural Program (IP), an extracurricular program at a Canadian postsecondary institution, to demonstrate possibilities for shaping intercultural education towards ethical ends. Through curriculum, programming, and community-building that is cocreated with students, the IP aspires to shape intercultural education towards social justice and equity, opening spaces for engagement with nondominant epistemologies, and promoting the critical thinking necessary for evaluating the historical, economic, political, social, and ethical implications of students' own and others' positions. At the same time, the IP provides a helpful site for exploring the challenges of doing critical work in an internationalizing institution, and the need, perhaps, to move intercultural education away from internationalization within higher education.

Résumé

La recherche critique et anticoloniale nous aide à imaginer comment l'enseignement interculturel peut commencer à répondre aux déséquilibres de pouvoirs inhérents aux problèmes culturels et épistémologiques. Cet article est une sorte de dialogue réflexif entre la théorie anticoloniale et mes propres expériences de mise en pratique de ces théories dans le cadre du Programme interculturel (PI), un programme extrascolaire dans une institution postsecondaire canadienne, afin de démontrer les possibilités de formation de l'enseignement interculturel à des fins éthiques. À travers le curriculum, ce sont les étudiants qui créent la programmation et le développement communautaire, l'IP aspire à former l'enseignement interculturel tendant à la justice sociale et à l'équité, en ouvrant des espaces pour favoriser la participation à des épistémologies non dominantes, et en favorisant la pensée critique nécessaire pour évaluer les positions historiques, économiques, politiques sociales et les implications éthiques propres aux étudiants et aux autres. Dans le même temps, l'IP fournit un site utile pour explorer les défis présentés par le travail critique au sein d'une institution qui s'internationalise, et, peut-être, répond au besoin de décontextualiser l'enseignement interculturel de l'internationalisation au sein de l'enseignement supérieur.

Keywords: intercultural education, global citizenship education, internationalization, international education, higher education, equity

Mots-clés : enseignement interculturel, enseignement de la citoyenneté mondiale, internationalisation, enseignement international, enseignement supérieur, équité

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Last winter, a few student staff from our international student services department returned from a special intercultural workshop for student leaders at the university and clamoured into my office to share their experiences. The guest speaker, the students told me, had used the metaphor of an airplane for the global community. On an airplane, he explained, everyone is equal—on an even *plane*, as it were—regardless of where in the world they hail from, their language, ethnicity, communication style, or other cultural distinctions. They are all flying the same direction together. In recognizing our fundamental togetherness, the speaker encouraged the student staff, we can overcome intercultural conflicts together.

Indignant, the student staff asked me: how can he consider an airplane a place of intercultural equality? What about the division of passengers into first class and economy? The fact that some passengers have difficulties accessing the bathrooms and need assistance boarding the plane? What about those passengers who do not understand the English announcements and are treated with impatience by the flight attendants? They continued ... What about the passengers who, prior to the flight, were hassled by security? Or the one who was nearly refused flight because their name matched that of a person on a no-fly list? What about those passengers who have left family members at home, to whom they will be sending financial support from abroad? And further ... What about all of the people who will never board a plane? Are all of these people equally involved in this intercultural community?

The students' responses to the intercultural workshop are justified, and they indicate the need to continue to rethink intercultural education outside the current "global imaginary" associated with internationalization, which, as anti-colonial scholarship asserts, "tends to naturalize existing racial hierarchies and economic inequities in the realm of education and beyond ... legitimiz[ing] certain perspectives and delegitimiz[ing] others" (Stein et al., 2016, p. 2). While there is great potential in intercultural education to open students to new ways of relating to one another, I will explore in this paper the ways in which critical and anti-colonial scholarship, in both intercultural education and global citizenship education, help us imagine how intercultural education might begin to address the power imbalances inherent to issues of culture and epistemology, wherein cultures become equalized and simplified, and where difference is defined by the dominant Western culture. In other words, I seek to explore what it means to take intercultural education off an even plane. I will dialogue anti-colonial theory with my own experiments of practically implementing these theories within an Intercultural Program (IP), an extracurricular program housed within an international student services department at a Canadian postsecondary institution. Specifically, I will share our experiments with embedding intercultural education in an analysis of power relations, which takes the subject positions of learners seriously, and works to create space for students to experiment with contextual expressions of their learning, rather than educating towards standardized outcomes. I will conclude by reflecting on the challenges of doing this work in an internationalizing institution, and the need, perhaps, to move intercultural education away from internationalization within higher education. The purpose of this exploration of the IP is thus not to propose a model for critical, anti-colonial intercultural education, but to consider the practical opportunities and challenges for shaping intercultural education otherwise.

Critical, Anti-Colonial Approaches to Intercultural Education

The IP draws on critical and anti-colonial approaches to intercultural education (see Aikman, 1997; Aman, 2013, 2017; Gorski, 2008; Martin et al., 2017; Mikander et al., 2018; Palaiologou & Gorski, 2017; Phipps, 2014; Shim, 2012; Zembylas, 2008) and global citizenship education (see Abdi,

2012; Andreotti, 2016; Andreotti et al., 2015; Jorgenson & Shultz, 2012; Shultz, 2009; Stein et al., 2016), which extend beyond celebratory visions of diversity to address the power imbalances between individuals, cultures, and epistemologies, providing grounds for a deeply relational and structural approach. Such approaches to education seek to address current structural injustices, including “fierce waves of neoliberal school corporatization in many parts of the world, growing global wealth inequality, climate change, new patterns of migration and new hostile expressions of xenophobia, or upticks in violent heterosexism in some regions” (Palaologou & Gorski, 2017, p. 354). In this context, critical and anti-colonial expressions of both fields identify how culture cannot be abstracted from power relations, else it risks becoming depoliticized, shrouding culpability in injustice, and making invisible the hegemony of Western ways of knowing and being. In such cases, while education may purport to value difference, it may instead perpetuate injustice and become a colonizing force. Critical and anti-colonial approaches seek to open spaces for the recovery of marginalized knowledges and to test and unsettle the dominant discourses, practices, and systems of mainstream culture.

Critical, anti-colonial scholarship emphasizes the need for intercultural education to contextualize cultures within power systems, making visible the complex and hierarchical relations (cf. Aikman, 1997; Aman, 2013; Dunne, 2011; Gorski, 2008; Grant, 2016) that underlie students’ intercultural exchanges. In Canadian contexts, this includes the intersection of global power dynamics with settler colonialism (see Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Lowe, 2015; Patel et al., 2015). Without power analysis, intercultural education is reduced to the level of individual attitudes, extracting students from the ideologies, systems, and structures that shape their identities and interactions, and perpetuate inequities (see Shaklee & Merz, 2012). In this case, cultures are represented as equal and simplified as “homogeneous, static, and autonomous entities” (Aman, 2013, p. 287), wherein people risk becoming “representatives of a given culture—implicitly, singular—that can be amalgamated into a new combination” (p. 287). As an example, Hofstede’s (1983, 2001) popular “dimensions of culture” rank cultures according to six different scales, including “masculinity versus femininity,” “individual versus collective,” “power distance,” “long term versus short term,” “uncertainty avoidance,” and “indulgence versus restraint,” promoting cross-cultural comparisons that abstract culture from political, social, and historical contexts through direct, one-to-one national comparisons.¹ While understanding such cultural differences contributes to individual attitudinal changes and improvements in intercultural communication, it is limited in its ability to address systemic inequities (see DeTurk, 2006; Gorski, 2008). Wilson and Wilson (2001) thus recommend that intercultural education draws from feminist scholarship in place of social and psychological theory. Transnational feminist scholarship not only addresses issues of power but emphasizes how “full ethical engagement with others is actually not a (present) possibility because any alliance across differences is necessarily shaped by deeply entrenched injustices and inequalities” (Ahmed, 2000, p. 178); as a result, relationally addressing injustices is necessary to the process of intercultural education. Speaking to these issues directly, Gorski (2008) challenges intercultural educators to think practically about issues of power:

do we advocate and practice intercultural education so long as it does not disturb the existing sociopolitical order?; so long as it does not require us to problematize our own privilege?; so long as we can celebrate diversity, meanwhile excusing ourselves from the messy work of social reconstruction? Can we practice an intercultural education that does not insist first and foremost on social reconstruction for equity and justice without rendering ourselves complicit to existing inequity and injustice? In other words, if we are

¹ See Lebaron (2003) for a similar approach.

not battling explicitly against the prevailing social order with intercultural education, are we not, by inaction, supporting it? (p. 516)

Taken seriously, these questions inform ethical intercultural education, as issues of power infuse individual development.

By considering culture outside power relations, intercultural education also risks universalizing mainstream knowledge at the exclusion of other knowledge systems—a process de Sousa Santos (2015) terms “epistemicide.” Critical and anti-colonial scholarship advocates for “cognitive justice” (Odora Hoppers, 2009), or the legitimization of non-Western knowledge systems. In a global system of production and competition, “non-western knowledges are valued if deemed to have exchange-value” (Stein et al., 2016, p. 6), and non-Western “strangers,” with their unique differences, typically provide encounters of self-discovery for mainstream students, wherein the “stranger functions yet again to establish and define the ‘I’” (Ahmed, 2000, p. 6). Aman (2013) therefore critiques those expressions of interculturality that “[maintain] existing systems of capitalist economies, colonial differences and Eurocentricity rather than transforming them” (p. 282) in order to solve social opposition and create cohesion in multicultural spaces. A cognitive justice approach to intercultural education would move against either inclusion or recognition of difference within the mainstream, both of which inevitably reinforce the universality and centrality of Western thought (Coulthard, 2014). Instead, anti-colonial intercultural education would support the “protection, recovery, and production of marginalized knowledges” (Andreotti et al., 2015, p. 33) and the development of universities as “spaces of contention from which to organize resistance to and subversion of colonialism” (p. 34). Such incorporation of marginalized knowledges is not superficial but transformational, where epistemic diversity may contribute creatively and sustainably to a more equitable global fraternity of knowledges (Odora Hoppers, 2009, p. 611) and to transform institutional structures (Stein et al., 2016, p. 8).

Rationale and Program Structure

In an effort to apply critical and anti-colonial theories to an IP, the manager of the international student services department and I established an extracurricular pilot program in the 2015/16 year: the IP. After a small pilot year in 2015/16, over 800 students attended workshops ad-hoc in 2016/17, and a core group of 25 students completed the required six 90-minute workshops and practical component to complete the certificate program. As the program continues to evolve under different leadership following the commencement of my doctoral research, the 2016/17 school year will be used as the site of analysis for this paper.

IP and Institutional Mandates: Internationalization and Intercultural Education

While the IP aspired to implement some of the critical and anti-colonial approaches outlined above, the manager and I also sought to meet institutional aims of creating meaningful engagement between diverse students on a quickly growing and diversifying university campus, which was directed by a strong impetus towards internationalization. To legitimate the program within our student services department, we found institutional justification within the institution’s strategic plan, which at the time promoted both “intercultural understanding” and “international engagement.” While these were technically separate components of the strategic plan, overlapping discourse in the two mandates linked their aims. In fostering *intercultural* understanding, for instance, the institution was positioned to engage a diversity of local, national, and international experiences and perspectives and was promoted as a safe place for meaningful dialogues across

cultural divides. In aspiring for *international* engagement, it similarly aimed to function as a hub for cultural exchange, unlocking the transformative power of international learning. With these mandates as justification, some IP student learning outcomes sought to mirror and subtly but critically extend institutional discourses; thus, learning outcomes included how students would learn to “see themselves as part of a world community, where their actions have impacts beyond themselves and beyond the now” (Karsgaard & Sanford, 2017, p. 209), and they would “suspend judgment and notice personal bias when encountering others” (p. 209). With a few learning outcomes thus embedded in institutional discourse, additional learning outcomes extended beyond institutional aims, for instance to help students “identify and explore their own identities and relative power and privilege in relation to others” (Karsgaard & Sanford, 2017, p. 209), “identify the value of learning with/from/alongside others rather than about others” (p. 210), and “become active agents for social change” (p. 209).

To address the institution’s dual mandates in intercultural understanding and international engagement, the IP was actively promoted to students from all faculties, including both graduate and undergraduate students, domestic, Aboriginal, international, and exchange students in order to foster cross-cultural engagement between various institutional categories of students on campus. The IP was also promoted to all incoming students at international and domestic orientations. However, because it was located in an international student services department, the program had a higher profile among international students. IP workshops were offered in late August and early September as training for upper-year students within the residences, recreational facilities, student services departments, graduate student leadership, and exchange programs.

Program Structure

In an effort to incorporate a critical, anti-colonial approach, the IP program structure was flexible, accessible, and student-centred, acknowledging students’ multiple positions and drawing on their knowledge. To complete the full program and receive a certificate, students were required to attend a set number of instructor- or student-initiated and developed workshops, participate in an intercultural project or initiative of the student’s choosing, and contribute to a community of practice, fostered through social media, social events, and field trips. Students could also elect to participate in any of these components without completing the full certificate program, and scheduling was flexible to allow for drop-ins and one-time attendance. All students in the certificate program completed a core workshop, “Fostering an Intercultural Campus Community.” This workshop applied a simulation to unsettle students’ assumptions, open the concept of positionality, expose normalized Western knowledge systems and practices, and introduce the intersections of culture, power, personality, structures, policies, context, and language. The simulation also sought to engage students not only intellectually but also relationally and emotionally, to draw students into a holistic and embodied experience of intercultural learning. In addition to this core workshop, certificate students completed five elective workshops, which were also open to all students. Due to the student-initiated nature of the IP as elaborated below, optional workshops varied from year to year, but they tended to include such topics as power and privilege, cultural appropriation, media representations and culture, and anti-racism. Workshops were often co-constructed with students and incorporated a number of pedagogies, including group discussions, personal reflections, simulations, artistic expressions, videos, role-playing scenarios, and partner discussions. The aim of workshops was not to prescribe particular behaviours but to encourage students to notice and evaluate their own biases and assumptions, as well as to respond self-reflexively, critically, and imaginatively towards others.

Certificate students were also required to participate in an intercultural project or initiative and to contribute to a community of practice, though these components were loosely defined and student-directed. The aim was not to establish a metric for intercultural participation but to encourage students to consider their activities self-reflexively—whatever these activities might be—from the standpoint of their learning in the IP. Whether a student participated in a single-day event or committed to long-term anti-racist work, for example, they were encouraged to reflect on their experiences through independent assessments and one-on-one consultations with an advisor. The IP also offered group reflection and support through a community of practice that met in person over communal meals and online via a Facebook group, where members were encouraged to share personal reflections, videos, articles, and involvement opportunities.

Significant to the program was the input of both volunteer and paid students, not only as participants but also as workshop initiators, developers and facilitators. These students proposed workshop topics, researched and developed content, decided on workshop pedagogies, and facilitated workshops under the guidance of full-time staff like myself, who met with them, shared resources, networked them to other scholars, discussed various pedagogies, practiced workshop facilitation, and provided general guidance and support. Paid student staff were previous IP participants from various social locations and disciplinary backgrounds whose perspectives were critical to program development. Most of the student staff were international students and students of colour, who we actively sought out for the dual reasons that these students sometimes had difficulties finding other work due to racist hiring practices, and they often carried critical insights they aspired to share through IP workshops and programming. As the student staff salaries were raised through internal grant funding through the university, student staffing of the IP was a critical, yet tenuous, component of the program.

Experimenting With Theory in Practice

The IP is a site to consider the challenges and possibilities of working with students to develop critical, anti-colonial education within a neoliberal institution oriented around internationalization. Specifically, the IP experimentally engaged with critical, anti-colonial theory by embedding intercultural education in an analysis of power relations, systems and structures; taking the subject positions of learners seriously, rather than treating them as decontextualized individuals; and creating contextual possibilities for new ways of relating, rather than educating for standardized outcomes. It is important to note that my aim here is to explore our efforts to bring an anti-colonial critique to a living intercultural program within a particular institutional context in order to connect theory to practice. In doing so, I do not aspire to create a model of anti-colonial intercultural education but rather to open a conversation of what we might consider in bringing this form of education to life within internationalizing institutions.

Addressing Power Relations Contextually in Intercultural Learning

The IP intentionally linked intercultural education with analysis of power relations, systems and structures through student-generated topics and current issues. Rather than working from abstract or universalized notions of culture or from cultural taxonomies, the IP contextualized curriculum in relation to students' experiences within the broader culture. Working with students to explore power relations in intercultural topics, workshop developers aspired to what Clarke (2015), drawing on Hall (1985), defines as “pedagogy as articulation,” which “[starts] where the student is” (Clarke, 2015, p. 281). Though it sounds banal, this form of pedagogy requires taking seriously the fluid and multiple identities of students, rather than addressing them according to depoliticized

cultural and simplified institutional categories. Furthermore, it involves linking students' experiences to popular and current cultural circulations of what is common sense, "paying attention to what circulates, to what matters, to what connections are already being forged, to what threads are being forgotten and to what apparently natural and normal alignments of things are coming apart" (Clarke, 2015, p. 284). As a result, IP curriculum development entailed attentiveness to current cultural issues, broadly defined, as raised through media and social media, hallway conversations with students, patterns that emerged in student advising conversations with advisors like my colleagues and myself, as well as purposeful work with student staff in keeping our "fingers on the pulse" of the issues various students and student groups were facing on campus. Such work was time consuming and deeply relational, conflicting at times with the university's student services model, which focused on such metrics as the number of students advised during any given day. As a result, workshop development often involved lunch hours and evenings spent in informal student discussions, watching films, and networking with academics and community members involved in research and public action on the topics pertinent to the students. Over time, we developed a network of student services staff, professors, and community members who were willing to support, participate, and advise on IP workshops.

Practically speaking, workshops tended to be current and contextual, responding to student issues and the greater political climate, rather than reflecting intercultural skills or aptitudes. Some workshops addressed more general topics such as White privilege, cultural appropriation, or intervention tactics for addressing immediate interpersonal conflicts arising from cultural differences and racism, using examples and activities from current politics, art, and media. Other workshops addressed specific and current issues emerging from students' experiences. For example, one 2016/17 workshop responded to the personal experiences of female students of colour and their clash with Western feminism by addressing "Feminism in Different Cultural Contexts," through an intersectional approach that addressed race, religion, class, colonialism, and other factors influencing multiple feminist expressions. Another, "Invisible and Despicable: Canada's Migrant Worker Program," grew out of student interest in the racist elements of Canada's immigration policies as they relate to the unjust treatment of seasonal farm workers locally and nation-wide. This workshop introduced literary work on the topic and connected students to activist and advocacy groups who spoke to various means of practically addressing this issue. In another workshop, a few international students and their Canadian friends initiated: "Being the 'other': a student discussion on internationalization in a western university." The students used this discussion-oriented workshop to document feedback for the university's senior leadership regarding the institution's need to internationalize curriculum and pedagogy. Following the workshop, students drafted and submitted a letter to university leadership with their findings, including stories of student experiences with Western epistemological dominance in course content and some professors' microaggressions in the classroom. In these ways, all workshops were designed with students to explore the intersections between culture and such things as politics, economics, art, and social structures. By grounding intercultural education in students' positions, experiences, and interests, as they linked with current issues and culture, the IP was positioned to move beyond the Western frame offered by most postsecondary institutions. It also upset the distribution of power within the institution through its very practice, as it sought to connect students' intercultural learning to broader relations of power.

Engaging Students' Subject Positions

Moving against a liberal approach to multiculturalism, the IP disrupted institutional categories that typically shape intercultural engagement (i.e., international vs. domestic) through an intersectional pedagogy that linked such factors as status in Canada, language, race, socioeconomic status, ability, and gender. IP pedagogy drew on decolonial, feminist, and anti-racist theories and pedagogies (cf. Chinnery, 2008; Gorski, 2008; Hooks, 1994; Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Taylor, 2013; Walia, 2012), which foreground issues of power and voice, and speak to the challenges of negotiating between ranging and conflicting epistemologies. In this context, curriculum planning and facilitation was a careful and reflexive process that balanced creating a safe space for those who experience hostility within the mainstream culture and who may feel exposed or vulnerable within a workshop, while still pushing all students to the uncomfortable place of challenging their own and one another's thinking. At the same time that the IP thus centred positionality, workshops also denied fixed and essentialist notions of identity, working to create space for shared identity and culture based on friendship and discussions (cf. Jain, 2016)—including new ways of being together. In this context, it was therefore critical to avoid requiring those experiencing marginalization to empathize with their oppressors (or those who represent their oppressors), or to become educators or native informants for the personal growth and fulfillment of the privileged. Recognizing the limitations of my own perspective, including the multiple forms of power I wielded as a White, educated woman employed by the university, I worked as much as possible to codevelop and co-facilitate workshops with the department manager, a woman of colour well-versed in international and anti-racist education, and students from various positions, decentering my voice as the “expert” and instead using what theoretical and experiential background I had in order to help students consider their ideas from various angles. This included creating space for pedagogical experimentation that promoted non-Western ways of learning and being, including art sharing, structured silences, and storytelling nights, for instance. Such techniques were works in progress, particularly as there were no presets to follow within the field of intercultural education, which at the time tended to gloss over positionality or disregard it altogether, following Western, developmental models of skill acquisition.

Enabling Contextual Expressions of Learning

Finally, the IP did not fit within a competency-based model with intercultural outcomes that could be measured through standardized assessments. Instead, it sought to “disrupt students’ existing satisfactions, as well as their desire to turn away from difficulty, complexity, and complicity in the search for comfort, certainty, innocence and control” (Stein et al., 2016, p. 12), while still encouraging them to act. IP assessments of student learning were thus tied directly to student learning outcomes and included informal observation of student participation during workshops and within one-on-one meetings; formal surveys conducted at the outset, mid-point, and end of the program; written reflections on experiential learning; one-on-one meetings and email exchanges with students about their experiences in the program and ideas for experiential learning; and a portfolio of student projects and contributions to the IP Facebook group (Karsgaard & Sanford, 2017, p. 211)—all of which are intended to allow for multiple expressions of intercultural learning. What did this kind of learning lead to? While assessments in 2016/17 captured multiple student expressions of self-reflexivity, as they grappled with their places in intercultural relations, what was most interesting was how IP students were motivated to act, often in ways that fell outside the institutional norms of intercultural engagement. For instance, a number of students applied their intercultural learning to their own academic pursuits. Some developed critically-minded

intercultural training for a learn abroad cohort. Others found ways to challenge Western means of expressing knowledge by handing in alternatives to traditional essays in their classes. Some students provided policy feedback to the institution, such as those who challenged internationalization policies, as described above. Still others engaged in community organizing, by connecting with activists and organizations in support of efforts engaged with during IP workshops. A few moved beyond the workshops and began hosting more creative events of their own as expressions of Black and Indigenous resurgence and life. Finally, some students found in their learning reasons *not to act*, resolving not to attend local workshops or leadership conferences that promoted hegemonic, Western-centric approaches. Such outcomes do not map onto familiar intercultural tests and inventories, such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (Hammer et al., 2003), which tend to imagine a homogenous and teleological trajectory for individual intercultural learning. They also defy the metrics required by student services and international education departments, which typically justify program funding and foster institutional support through measurements on standardized assessments. In doing so, these student outcomes followed an anti-colonial approach to intercultural education in creative, contextual, and intersectional ways, offering both critique and transformation of the institution from within.

Discussion: Navigating Institutional Internationalization

Through the cocreation of intercultural workshops together with students outside set outcomes, the IP was able to experiment with contextual and intersectional intercultural learning that challenged institutional norms and categories. At the same time, the IP found itself bumping up against the internationalizing and neoliberal context of the university, which tended to favour celebratory expressions of diversity as part of internationalizing strategies, as well as competency-based metrics for intercultural learning. Additionally, the IP struggled to find space for its intersectional approach within an institutional structure and service model shaped by the university's categorization of students as domestic, international, or Aboriginal.

As described above, we initiated and housed the IP in an international services department, drawing on our experiences as international student advisors. While we hoped the program would address in part the racism and inequities facing the international students we advised, we also linked IP learning outcomes with both internationalizing and intercultural strategies in order to grant the program institutional legitimacy. However, we experienced institutional resistance to the IP that reflected how internationalization as a higher education policy in many ways favours depoliticized intercultural learning. The critical intercultural learning offered by the IP was uncomfortable for the institution, particularly when students directly addressed racism or spoke back to institutional policies. We found the greatest institutional support for celebratory international student events not within but outside the IP, such as an annual celebration of international students, which featured food and traditional dress from cultures around the world. This celebration was highly attended and annually profiled by campus media, with extensive photography and video at the event. The support for this cultural celebration aligns with positive and liberal multicultural discourses around intercultural education as “internationalization at home” (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Nilsson, 2003), which celebrates diversity and supports social inclusion. While the IP also contained celebratory forms of intercultural engagement, the power analysis offered by the IP often bumped up against institutional interests in celebrations of diversity that supported branding and international rankings, international student recruitment, and the subsequent boost to budgets via tuition fees.

We also experienced the limiting effects of neoliberal internationalization on critical intercultural learning through a pervasive interest in intercultural learning as competency. We found the IP was disappointing to some institutional leadership and students, who valued intercultural education for skill development, and ultimately for leadership and success in a global marketplace. Other departments and businesses external to campus offered workshops for international students that promoted intercultural skills development, particularly for workplace integration. For example, an externally offered workshop introduced Tim Horton's coffee runs and small talk about hockey in order to help students acclimate to Canadian professional work culture. While such workshops may introduce some intercultural communication skills, they also remove issues of power, reinforce cultural and gendered workplace stereotypes, and normalize mainstream Western culture, which sets the terms of inclusion. In these cases, intercultural education is introduced as competency development, where students are taught the "knowledge, skills, and attitudes" for "effective and appropriate behaviour and communication in intercultural situations" (Deardorff, 2011, p. 66), in order to ensure successful adaptation to the 21st century globalized world. Problematically, when intercultural education is individualized as skill acquisition within a normalized Western context, students coded as "diverse" are paradoxically valued for contributing to the university's reputation and framed within a deficit model, requiring empathy, assistance, and skills in order to "make it" in Canadian society, from which they are expected to benefit. In this way, internationalizing postsecondary institutions are able to maintain the status quo of their programs and operations. They thus function within the modern, colonial imaginary whereby,

whether motivated by economic interests, altruism, self-development, civic duty, or some combination thereof, the desire to gain the knowledge and skills to become marketable employees and engaged citizens tends to be rooted in philosophical and political economic traditions that presume the universal value of western knowledge and values, re-centre the individual, and place both the capitalist market and nation-state above critique. (Stein et al., 2016, p. 4)

The difficulties of running the IP within an institution driven by this colonial imaginary indicate the need to delink intercultural education from neoliberal internationalization and to work towards anti-colonial transformation of higher education institutions.

Finally, by "starting where the students are" and addressing issues that cut across identity categories, the IP often found itself testing institutional categories and discovering institutional limits. Intercultural education at the university was often understood to bridge the gap between "international" and "domestic" students in a familiar conflation of "intercultural" with "international" (Dunne, 2011). By contrast, the IP created relational engagement across institutional categories of students in ways that allowed an intersectional analysis of cultural issues, according to race, language, religion, gender, ability, academic discipline, political orientation, status in Canada and more. However, by moving outside familiar institutional boundaries and addressing more than only international students and issues defined as "international student issues," the IP risked losing its legitimacy within the university—and thus both its department "home" and funding. This issue would only compound if an intercultural program like the IP were to connect even more explicitly with decolonial and Indigenous education, expressly addressing the intersections between internationalization and settler colonialism through program structure and curriculum. While the IP did connect the students with the local Indigenous community through field trips and workshops, and introduced issues of culture and colonialism, the positioning of the program within international student services, and thus within the internationalization mandate of the university, made it challenging to explore intercultural education as also decolonial and indigenized.

Conclusion

Critical, anti-colonial intercultural education may thus struggle for institutional recognition within internationalizing institutions that prefer programming within the familiar terrain of inclusion, leadership, and diversity—institutions that celebrate international students explicitly, as a category apart from other “cultural” groups on campus. Due to these tensions, we experienced how critical and anti-colonial intercultural work is challenging in an institutional context dominated by internationalization discourse, where intercultural education tends to avoid “concern over power and oppression ... where [unjust] conditions are accepted as normal or inevitable ... where we communicate interculturally and resolve conflict without spending an ounce of energy on reconstructing society at any fundamental level” (Gorski, 2008, p. 519). I am not certain to what extent it is possible to delink intercultural education from a neoliberal internationalization agenda within higher education institutions; however, my experience within the IP indicates that, if retheorized along critical, anti-colonial lines, intercultural education may function as a “space of contention from which to organize resistance to and subversion of colonialism” (Andreotti et al., 2015, p. 34), transforming the institution from within.

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