

Patches: A Model for Developing Interculturality

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Abstract

The 'Patches' program is a dynamic support model that provided Malaysian and Australian pre-service teachers with both structured and unstructured opportunities to develop intercultural understandings. While many support programs for international students are unidirectional the Patches program framed both cohorts of students to interact in intercultural learning as a two-way process. Although participation in the program was voluntary for both groups, all who joined were required to engage in weekly writing workshops and additional socio-cultural activities. While three of the activities were organised by the lecturers, the Malaysian and Australian students quickly formed friendships and more spontaneous activities occurred. The Patches program provided the international students with a purpose and support for forming real connections to the local community. For the Australian students, relationships with the Malaysian students became a powerful vehicle for internationalisation including a questioning of familiar viewpoints and assumptions and a consideration of alternative and compelling perspectives.

Keywords

Internationalisation, higher education, model, intercultural learning, intercultural competence, interculturality