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The Internationalization Cookbook: Critical ingredients for serving healthy and tasty globalized education

Janneke M. FRAMBACH*

Abstract

Internationalization in higher education is a debated topic in society, politics and higher education itself. Often, the debate centers on one aspect or form of internationalization, such as student mobility. However, definitions of internationalization relate to many different elements of higher education, including curriculum content and structure, pedagogical approach, and organizational and societal context and values. In this article, the author uses a cooking metaphor to explore some of these aspects and how they relate to each other and to dominant definitions and debates on internationalization. The steps of the recipe take you through internationalization research and experiences of educational design and management of international programmes. The key purpose of this conceptual article is to invite readers to critically reflect on their own or their institution's internationalization efforts. A central question that this article asks is: What are critical considerations when selecting, combining and preparing ingredients in order to serve 'healthy and tasty' dishes of internationalized or globalized education that meet students' needs? Rather than presenting a prescriptive approach, the cooking metaphor is used to explore the complexity of internationalization and the limitations of dominant definitions. Taking equity, justice and epistemic plurality in higher education seriously, internationalization and globalization efforts need to involve asking critical and uncomfortable questions, including about how and why these concepts are defined, and creating a diversity of dishes in the process.

Keywords: Internationalization of higher education; Internationalization of the curriculum; Globalization; Decolonization; Educational design

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* Associate Professor, School of Health Professions Education & Department of Educational Development and Research, Maastricht University, Maastricht, the Netherlands, j.frambach@maastrichtuniversity.nl



Introduction

Internationalization in higher education is a debated topic in society, politics and higher education itself (Marginson, 2026). Historically, the debate has often centered on a limited number of aspects or forms of internationalization, notably student (and faculty) mobility or exchange, and international cooperation (de Wit, 2019). However, definitions of internationalization relate to many different elements of higher education, including curriculum content and structure, pedagogical approach, and organizational and societal context and values (Knight, 2003; Leask, 2015). In practice, many higher education institutes struggle to translate and implement theoretical ideas of internationalization regarding its different elements into their programmes (Marginson, 2026). Moreover, existing definitions and approaches of internationalization have been questioned and critiqued in light of issues of equity, power, postcolonial imperialism and ethics involved (Bamberger and Morris, 2024).

Given these considerations, there is hardly a 'cookbook' approach to the complex and contested phenomenon of internationalization. Still, in this article, I will use a cooking metaphor to explore some of the aspects related to internationalization, and how they relate to each other - not with the intention to present internationalization as a straightforward process, but to explore and underscore its complexity and ambiguity. The steps of the recipe take you through internationalization and globalization research and experiences of educational design and management of international programmes that I was involved in. The key purpose of this cooking journey is to invite you to critically reflect on your own or your institution's internationalization efforts. A central question that this article asks is: What are critical considerations when selecting, combining and preparing ingredients in order to serve 'healthy and tasty' dishes of internationalized education that meet our students' needs? The cooking metaphor - i.e. the steps of the recipe which discuss my experiences - serves as a tool to explore this question.

As a disclaimer, I am not a chef. In full disclosure, I don't even enjoy cooking. Perhaps that is precisely why I chose to use this metaphor. We all need to prepare food to provide nutritious and preferably tasty meals for ourselves and our families. Some of us are natural talents in this area, while others, such as me, struggle in the process - but we all have to engage with it. Internationalization and globalization are phenomena that we as educators in higher education also have to engage with, whether we like it or not, and whether we are 'natural talents' in this area or not. As with my cooking, I find myself struggling with internationalization. Hence, I considered it may be helpful to explore a 'simple' recipe together, such as cooking an omelet, and discuss critical considerations at each step. Before we move to the recipe, I briefly provide more background on internationalization debates and definitions.

Defining and debating internationalization

In my national context of the Netherlands, public and political debates on internationalization in higher education have largely focused on numbers of international students, and the perceived consequences this may have for local students, language, society and economy (Altbach & de Wit, 2018; NRC, 2024). Similarly, in other European countries there is “debate about the negative impact of English on the quality of teaching” (Altbach & de Wit, 2018, p.3). Dominant definitions of internationalization in the scientific field, however, move beyond this arguably narrow focus on internationalization. The well-known definition by Knight (2003) defines internationalization “at the national, sector and institutional levels” more broadly as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight, 2003, p.2). This highlights that internationalization does not only take place “abroad”, but also “at home” (Knight, 2004), and that it relates to “all aspects of education and the role that it plays in society” (Knight, 2003, p.2). Leask’s influential work on internationalization at home expanded on this definition and defined “internationalization of the curriculum” as the “incorporation of international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study” (Leask, 2015, p.9).

While dominant in educational literature, these definitions and perspectives on internationalization have increasingly received critique and are being debated in the global scientific field. The universal connotation of the definitions has been criticized, as they have been argued to reflect Euro-centric or Western-centric perspectives (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021; Heleta & Chasi, 2023; Marginson, 2026). As a response, Heleta and Chasi (2023) deployed a decolonial lens to explore an alternative definition of internationalization for their South African context, and possibly beyond. Their proposal is to define internationalization in South Africa as “a critical and comparative process of the study of the world and its complexities, past and present inequalities and injustices, and possibilities for a more equitable and just future for all. Through teaching, learning, research and engagement, internationalisation fosters epistemic plurality and integrates critical, anti-racist and anti-hegemonic learning about the world from diverse global perspectives to enhance the quality and relevance of education” (Heleta & Chasi, 2023, p.269-270). Related critiques of the dominant perspective on internationalization have pointed to its misalignment with plural reality and the challenges that it yields for operational practices (Marginson, 2026; Zhang & Cao, 2024). Moreover, several authors have problematized the term “internationalization” due to its limited focus on relations between nations and its Western-centric connotations, and proposed terminology that reflects more global, decolonial and ‘pluriversal’ perspectives (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021; Marginson, 2026).

As educators we have to navigate this landscape of different perspectives, challenges and interests, in which each context requires its own considerations. During the keynote

What are key topics in the debate about internationalization in higher education in your context?

43 respondents



Figure 1. Word Cloud of responses during edUNITA keynote speech, October 2025.

held at the edUNITA Conference, which formed the basis of this article, I asked the audience - which consisted mainly of educators from higher education institutes across European countries - what were key topics in the debate about internationalization in higher education in their contexts. Figure 1 is a word cloud that reflects their responses. Many of the aspects discussed above are represented in the figure, from ethics and equity to language and numbers, which confirms that internationalization is a multi-faceted construct and is experienced as such. We now turn to the cooking metaphor to explore some of these facets in more detail, including how they relate to the definitions and debates presented above.

Cooking an internationalization omelet in six steps

The title of this section may raise the expectation that there is an easy step-wise approach to internationalization (or globalization). As highlighted above, even definitions of internationalization are contested, let alone its approaches. The following sections reflect my personal journey and experiences in internationalization and globalization research and educational design and management, which are flavored by my personal positionality and context. I am a multidisciplinary social scientist working in the field of health professions education at a Dutch higher education institution. Manifestations and

implications of globalization, internationalization and diversity have always been major themes in my research, life and work. I attempt to approach these themes through critical lenses, yet at the same time I acknowledge that I am naturally biased by my experiences and background. So is my choice for the omelet recipe, which may be a common dish in my context, but perhaps not in yours. As I take you through internationalization and globalization research and experiences below, I invite you to ‘create your own version of the omelet’, reflecting on your own context, lenses, and the needs of your students. An omelet is perhaps the opposite of a universal dish: it is personalized by each person that cooks it. A quick online search shows that it is believed to have roots in ancient Persia, from where it evolved into different variations across many cultures, such as the Spanish *tortilla de patatas* and the Japanese *omurice*.

What unites us as educators is that we all want to serve ‘healthy and tasty’ education to our students: education that matters, that shapes them as responsible and healthy future professionals, and education that they enjoy in the process. To achieve this, the level of sophistication of the ‘dish’ is not the most important aspect. Also with simple ingredients one can cook a healthy, tasty meal, such as an omelet. However, it matters how the ingredients are selected, prepared, combined and served. In the film “The Hundred-Foot Journey” (Hallström, 2014) it becomes clear that cooking a ‘perfect’ omelet requires technique, skill and respect for ingredients, and also that great cooking can transcend cultural boundaries. Applying this metaphor to internationalization in higher education, I will now reflect on my considerations for a healthy and tasty omelet.

1. The eggs: your curriculum content

An omelet’s main ingredient are eggs. Selecting good quality eggs is paramount for the taste of your omelet. Translating this to internationalization in higher education, the content of the curriculum is your main ingredient. It is the foundation upon which to build students’ experiences; it is what you want your students to learn about. It refers to the first part of Leask’s definition of internationalization of the curriculum: “the

incorporation of international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the *content* of the curriculum” (Leask, 2015). Research however shows that educators have blind spots in this area.

Zanting et al.’s (2020) work describes an example from the medical education domain. Their research investigated in which parts of educational materials of three undergraduate medical programmes in the Netherlands cultural diversity was constructed, and how. They found that ‘culture’ or ‘cultural characteristics’ were only mentioned when the (patient) case deviated from a “standard Dutch or Western patient or disease”, or in elective curriculum parts (Zanting et al., 2020). The authors argued that these mechanisms of othering and stereotyping resulted in an “embedded notion of ‘problematic stranger’”, in which culture was constructed as something problematic and not relevant for ‘standard’ medical knowledge (Zanting et al., 2020). This highlights the relevance of Heleta and Chasi’s definition of internationalization presented above, which

emphasizes attention for critical study, injustices, equity and anti-racism (Heleta & Chasi, 2023).

In another study, Zanting et al. (2025) reviewed how cultural diversity was conceptualized and employed in common approaches to cultural diversity education in medical education. They identified four different ways in which cultural diversity was conceptualized: 1) culture as a fixed patient (or student) characteristic (viewing individuals based on one static aspect, such as their nationality, religion or gender); 2) culture as multiple fixed characteristics (viewing individuals based on multiple intersecting static aspects, such as nationality, religion *and* gender); 3) culture as a dynamic outcome impacting social interactions (viewing yourself and others fluidly through the product of interactions); and 4) culture as medical culture's power dynamics (viewing your and other's identities as shaped by systems of inequality and power imbalances) (Zanting et al., 2025). The authors found commonly used approaches to cultural diversity education to be based on these conceptualizations, including cultural competence (mainly conceptualization 1), intersectionality (mainly conceptualization 2), cultural humility (mainly conceptualization 3), and critical consciousness (mainly conceptualization 4) (Zanting et al., 2025). Notably, Zanting et al. reported that these conceptualizations were rarely made explicit in the used approaches, yet one can easily imagine that the conceptualization you select has consequences for what your students will learn in this area. Incorporating international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum should therefore be handled with caution. Zanting et al.'s (2020; 2025) work, in line with Marginson (2026), suggests that it is important to ask ourselves what we actually mean when we say "intercultural", "international", or "global", and how we then translate this into curriculum content.

Something that could help in this process is to consider who is represented in decision-making about curriculum content. Giuliani et al. (2020) explored medical education literature to investigate, from an anti-colonial perspective, who was involved in the development of global oncology curricula. They reported that existing global oncology curricula are heavily influenced by Western male authors, which "as a result may not incorporate relevant socio-cultural perspectives impacting care in diverse geographic settings" (Giuliani et al., 2020, p.9). In sum, selecting our 'eggs' needs to happen with great care and attention for our blind spots. Critical considerations for internationalized or global curriculum content that can be derived from the research described above include attention for representation of diverse voices in decision-making, consistent integration of intercultural elements in all curriculum parts rather than in selective cases, making conceptualizations of international, intercultural and global explicit and acknowledging our own position in these dynamics, avoiding othering and stereotyping based on static aspects, and showing awareness of power dynamics. Analyzing existing curriculum content with these considerations in mind may contribute to the 'quality of the eggs'.

2. The tools: your pedagogy

The next step of the recipe is to whisk the eggs with a mixer, a tool that gets them ready to be processed further. The ‘how’ of handling the eggs matters, as it determines the way in which they will ultimately be consumed. In higher education internationalization or globalization, the tools (mixer) to handle the curriculum content (eggs) refer to pedagogical tools, or teaching and learning activities. Following Leask’s (2015) definition, it suggests incorporating international, intercultural and global dimensions into the *teaching methods* of an educational programme. These methods and tools determine how students will learn, which simultaneously impacts what they will learn. The question can be raised what is meant by incorporating such dimensions into teaching methods or approaches.

Analyzing the case of problem-based learning (PBL) in medical education, which has been promoted as an active, student-centered, collaborative, self-regulated approach to learning (Dolmans, 2019), some reflections related to this question come to surface. In the international practice of higher education, pedagogical approaches and innovations, such as PBL, are traveling the world, yet their assumingly universal nature is rarely questioned (Frambach, 2014). Since PBL’s inception in Canadian medical education in the 1960’s, this concept spread across the world and was adopted in higher education institutions in many different settings (Frambach et al., 2019). One could argue that this reflects an international or global dimension to the teaching method; adopting innovations that were developed elsewhere and that are used globally. However, cross-cultural research on implementing PBL across contexts has emphasized that this is not a straightforward process and that it may have unintended consequences (Frambach et al., 2019). Frambach’s (2014) work on the cross-cultural applicability of PBL in medical education concluded that PBL looks different everywhere and that it is not a matter of ‘one-size-fits-all’; context-sensitive adaptation is key (Frambach, 2014). The author furthermore suggests that the choice for PBL is not always taken for the right reasons, as institutions internationally have been pressured into PBL adoption due to funding regulations, accreditation requirements or ranking considerations (Frambach, 2014). Consequently, the worldwide spread and adoption of PBL has been named a new wave of Western imperialism and neo-colonialism (Bleakley et al., 2008; Frambach et al., 2019).

This suggests that incorporating international, intercultural and global dimensions into teaching methods requires critical analysis of both the pedagogical approach itself and the local context and needs. Regarding PBL, Frambach et al. (2019, p.938) state that “the term PBL as a singular and universal concept has no global future. Globally, we can only talk about PBL in the plural sense”, where each institution ideally is free from pressure and can determine its own version of PBL or an entirely different approach. Some years ago, my own university engaged in a university-wide research project to critically examine and rethink its local version of PBL, which resulted in a position paper and report with local recommendations for teaching, educational design and management (EDview, 2018a; 2018b). An approach that can help in the process of

creating contextualized pedagogical tools is design-based research, which involves close collaboration with stakeholders in educational design (Dolmans 2019; 2012). This can also be used to develop internationalized education with stakeholders across borders. Kolm (2025) for example used design-based research to develop and evaluate an interprofessional collaborative online international learning (ICOIL) in health and social care professions students of four European countries. The study reported positive outcomes of students' international online collaboration competencies (Kolm, 2025).

In sum, internationalization of teaching methods requires asking critical questions, such as: What are the cultural beliefs, norms and values expressed by our pedagogical approach? What is the history of this approach, where did it originate? What is our practice of the approach? How does it relate to our students' and teachers' backgrounds and experiences? What are our explicit and implicit expectations of students and teachers? Are other approaches possible or desirable? Do we engage in these discussions with our students and teachers? Do we involve them in educational design? These considerations again relate to Heleta and Chasi's (2023) decolonial definition of internationalization, which emphasizes epistemic plurality and integrates critical and anti-hegemonic learning. We can't just choose any mixer to whisk the eggs – they come in different forms and shapes - and we have to select our tools with care.

3. The spices: your values

The whisked eggs need flavor. Adding spices is the next step in the recipe. It is a relatively short step, but a decisive one for the flavor and taste of the dish as a whole. In internationalization in higher education, flavors are created by the values that spice and underpin the internationalization approach - and in that sense this fundamental step is perhaps better placed before step 1 and 2 in the internationalization recipe. Following Knight's definition, it refers to "integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the *purpose* [...] of postsecondary education" (Knight, 2003, p.2). Values are about the *why* (or *why not*) of internationalization and they shape the decision-making in this area. Existing literature has highlighted different rationales and motivations of institutions to engage in internationalization efforts (Knight, 2004; Zhang and Cao, 2024), which have implications for educational quality.

In medical education, Brouwer et al. (2020) looked into implicit values underpinning internationalization efforts by investigating ethical concerns surrounding international medical programmes. By asking how academic staff in international medical programmes experienced ethical issues surrounding their programme, the authors identified three ethical dilemmas related to the purpose of internationalization. First, the concern of "homogenization of teaching methods and content": staff were positive about the fact that their international programme resulted in exposure to best practices in education and healthcare for students, but at the same time they noted that education quality and teacher autonomy were at risk because curriculum decisions were guided by foreign regulatory bodies (Brouwer et al., 2020). Second, the concern of "marketization of

medical school access”: staff were positive that their international programme widened access for students from countries with limited medical school capacity, but simultaneously noted that their programme served as a “back door into medical education for students who were not selected in their home country” (Brouwer et al., 2020). Third, the concern of diversification of the student population: staff were positive about the opportunities their programme offered for intercultural learning, but noted student well-being to be at risk due to stereotyping and discrimination by teaching staff (Brouwer et al., 2020).

These concerns relate to questions raised by Knight (2004) about the rationales and challenges involved in pursuing internationalization efforts. One can see that there will be a difference in decision-making about curricula if the main purpose is to generate income, to raise international reputations, or to enrich knowledge and student development. These different spices will give different flavors to the dish of education. Some spices might go well together to create a flavorful and impactful meal, while other combinations may ruin the dish. In this light, the commercialization of internationalization has received substantial critique (Bamberger and Morris, 2024), and it has been argued that internationalization has oftentimes been pursued as a goal in itself rather than a means toward addressing educational issues (Brouwer and Frambach, 2021). In sum, it is important to make explicit the values and purposes underpinning internationalization efforts, as well as considering the implications for ethical issues and educational quality. It involves approaching internationalization as a means, not an end, and asking the critical question: What do I aim to achieve and why?

4. The pan: your context

The next step is to pour the egg mixture into a pan. The interaction between the mixture and the characteristics of the pan – its size, temperature, material, being buttered or not – further shape the omelet’s quality. In internationalization or globalization, the pan can serve as a metaphor for the context in which education takes place, and in this process it is crucial to consider characteristics of the context. A problem that surfaces in this regard is the question which context to consider: The immediate context of the institution? The contexts that international students are from? The contexts that graduates will move to? A global context? Is it possible to define that? Balancing between global and local perspectives, or standardization and contextualization of education, has been a long-recognized tension in medical education and beyond (Prideaux, 2019; Bates et al., 2019; Brouwer and Frambach, 2021). A longitudinal study by Brouwer et al. (2022) made this tension visible when considering the question of context in international medical education. The study investigated early career experiences of 188 graduates of seven international medical programs in Europe and Asia, and found that graduates moved to many different contexts, for which their training did not always prepare them well in terms of clinical exposure, language issues, and international career orientation and transition guidance (Brouwer et al., 2022). The authors concluded that international

programmes, which essentially prepare students for careers elsewhere, have a responsibility for preparation and practical guidance that is currently lacking in these curricula, and that “there is a world to win” in embracing opportunities of globalization in these programmes (Brouwer et al., 2022, p.264).

Next to the future work contexts of students, internationalization efforts have to be embedded in the institutional context. A popular internationalization strategy among higher education institutions is to engage in international institutional partnerships, such as crossborder curriculum partnerships, where the intention is to deliver identical or comparable curricula across institutions internationally (Waterval, 2018). Waterval’s (2018) work explored challenges, opportunities and strategies of managing international curriculum partnerships, and found that challenges related to governance, quality control, staff buy-in, faculty development, relationships, logistics, language and communication could all potentially cause friction in the partnership. Strategies such as capitalizing on the unique global learning environment and fostering cultural intelligence at all levels of the institution were suggested as ways to contribute to partnerships’ success (Waterval et al., 2018).

The research described in this section underlines the need to critically consider context in its broad sense in internationalization efforts. Considerations such as who are your students, who are your graduates, and what is your institutional context are key to determine a suitable ‘temperature, material and size of the pan’. Notably, support services, as mentioned in Leask’s (2015) definition of internationalization of the curriculum, are easily overlooked aspects of the context in internationalization efforts, but can play crucial roles as evidenced by Brouwer et al.’s (2022) findings on the experienced lack of career and transition guidance among international graduates, and Waterval’s (2018) work on international partnership management. Additionally, the global-local tension, as mentioned above, is characteristic of the debate on context in internationalization. Bates et al. (2019) suggest to shift focus from viewing contextualization and standardization as competing concepts, to analyzing how these concepts interact, as a way to embrace and navigate the tension. This aligns with the focus on studying “the world and its complexities” in Heleta and Chasi’s (2023) definition of internationalization. The recipe is not a clear-cut process. The interaction between each type of pan and each particular egg mixture will result in different omelets, but all can taste good if these elements are critically and carefully aligned.

5. The cooking: your curriculum structure

When the egg mixture has been poured into the pan, the cooking starts. Through cooking, and dependent on cooking temperature and duration, the omelet slowly reaches its structure, from liquid to solid. In education this can be translated into the structure of the curriculum. It relates to “integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the [...] *functions or delivery* of postsecondary education” (Knight, 2003, p.2).

Designing a suitable curriculum structure that involves these dimensions requires care and effort, as I have experienced in my work as well.

I am involved in a Master of Health Professions Education programme in my institution, which is a two-year, part-time, largely online programme (SHE, 2026). Our students are working health professionals residing in many countries across different continents, looking to develop their competencies as educational designers, leaders or researchers in health professions education. Internationalization has been a “leading principle” in this curriculum for the purpose of enriching education and tailoring education to the specific yet diverse student population (SHE, 2026). In this programme, internationalization is practiced as “learning with and from fellow students from all over the world and from different professional backgrounds”, learning to “apply educational theory to different contexts”, and “continuous exchange of best practices and staff expertise” (SHE, 2026). The curriculum structure has been designed in a way to support these purposes and practices. The curriculum is based on authentic learning tasks derived from the professional practices of educational designers, leaders and researchers. Students are encouraged to contextualize these tasks to their local setting and needs. Around sixty percent of the curriculum consists of elective learning tasks, enabling students to personalize their curriculum and self-regulate their learning. The programme is competency-based and employs portfolio-based programmatic assessment, supported by a coaching programme. Examples of competencies include “navigating diversity”, which includes considering context and collaborating with diverse stakeholders, and “taking a critical and reflexive stance”, which includes awareness of personal biases and critically evaluating claims and beliefs (MHPE, 2026). Next to elective tasks, there are mandatory learning tasks in which students collaborate in small, international and interprofessional groups. The programme collaborates with several partner sites and teaching staff abroad.

While student evaluations and staff experiences show that many of these aspects are valued positively, at the same time the programme runs into struggles related to internationalization. International collaboration and communication among partners, as well as students and staff, require continuous attention and sensitivity. Additionally, programme management has attempted to make a start with decolonizing the curriculum, as the large majority of theories and frameworks used are Western-based, as well as the perspectives of teaching staff. Decoloniality “foregrounds reclaiming, reframing, and recentering of Indigenous knowledge systems, methods, and languages, and correcting deficits created by colonialism and maintained by coloniality” (Naidu, 2021, p.S10). The programme is struggling with this aspect, yet to counter Euro-centrism it is crucial – in international programmes specifically but in fact in any programme – to examine curricula from a decoloniality lens (Naidu, 2021). In sum, critical considerations for ‘cooking’ an international or global curriculum structure may involve strategies that encourage contextualization and personalization of learning, international collaboration, attention for personal positionality and reflexivity, and decolonizing curricula.

6. The toppings: bringing it together

When the egg mixture has reached its intended structure, it is time to add toppings of your liking, such as cheeses, vegetables, meats, herbs or a combination of these. The toppings bring it all together – quite literally when you fold one half of the omelet over the toppings that are added on the other half. What's important for taste and nutrition is that all ingredients are balanced and in alignment. The same goes for internationalization. In the recipe that we have explored, curriculum content (the eggs), pedagogical approaches (the tools), purpose and values (the spices), contexts (the pan), and curriculum structure (the cooking) are interrelated and therefore need to be closely aligned. Unlike the omelet recipe, the six steps may not be followed chronologically in the case of internationalization. In the example of the Master of Health Professions Education programme discussed in the previous section, the curriculum structure reflects the contexts of students and the values of the institution's perspective on internationalization, which subsequently shapes its pedagogical tools and curriculum content. For a tasty and healthy internationalized or globalized omelet, alignment matters more than chronologicity of the recipe steps. Misalignments in perspectives on internationalization in medical education have been found to create tensions, conflicting practices and confusion among learners, teachers and other stakeholders (Brouwer et al., 2025). This risks affecting learning outcomes, which are a main focus in Leask's (2015) definition of internationalization of the curriculum.

The internationalization research and experiences of educational design and management of international programmes discussed in the recipe touch upon different aspects of the dominant definitions of internationalization. Above, we explored issues related to content, teaching methods, learning outcomes, support services, purpose, functions and delivery of higher education. The definitions initially were helpful to identify a breadth of elements to consider in internationalization. However, with each of these aspects, critical questions were raised that point to the theoretical and practical limitations of the definitions, which supports the critique they have received (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021; Heleta & Chasi, 2023; Zhang & Cao, 2024; Marginson, 2026). An alternative definition provided by Heleta and Chasi (2023), originally designed for internationalization in South Africa, seemed to align with many of the critical issues raised and considerations proposed.

My personal 'toppings' (considerations) for a healthy and tasty globalized omelet, shaped by my research and other experiences, include attention for representation, power dynamics, cultural humility and reflecting on one's own position, decoloniality, plurality and involvement of different voices, complexity of contexts and ethics, and making conceptualizations and intentions explicit. This is hardly a simple recipe. My struggle continues, both in the kitchen and in my educational efforts, trying to embrace the complexities. The issues presented, moreover, reflect considerations on a general level rather than practical recommendations. Internationalization requires not only high-level discussion, but also detailed decision-making about practical aspects such as

languages, which was a topic mentioned by participants of the edUNITA conference (Figure 1).

The aim of this article was to invite you to critically reflect on your own or your institution's internationalization efforts, and the six steps intended to support this invitation. While the cooking metaphor enabled a journey through specific internationalization and globalization research and experiences, it notably has limitations, including a possible underrepresentation of structural, political, historical and funding issues. This reinforces the article's key purpose of inviting critical reflection and encouraging critical questions. What are your ingredients? What is your dish? Why are you serving this one and in this way? How are you preparing the ingredients? Is there an ingredient missing? Or used too much? If we are serious about equity, justice and epistemic plurality in higher education, internationalization and globalization involve asking critical and uncomfortable questions, including about how and why these concepts are defined. I shared some of my questions and urge educators and institutions to explore their own questions – they may be similar or different, they may be fewer or more, but they are a crucial step to transform dominant Euro-centric and Western-centric perspectives and approaches to internationalization. As a call for future research, I invite you to share your critical internationalization or globalization recipes and dishes, including the struggles and the successes. I look forward to continue learning from a plurality of recipes in search of healthy and tasty globalized education.

AI Use Statement

In the writing of this article no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used.

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