Professor: the missing link in the internalization of higher education

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Abstract: Emerging contexts challenge higher education institutions to develop more democratic and sustainable internationalization policies and practices based on equity. The current challenge for these institutions is to integrate these dimensions and dilemmas into their pursuit of social justice and promote educational environments that generate new perspectives. In a constantly changing scenario, new demands are emerging for higher education. This requires institutional reorganization, reconfiguration of practices, and qualified performance by teachers. This study analyzes the impact of internationalizing higher education on teaching at a Brazilian federal university, identifying possibilities and perspectives for teacher training in this context. This mixed-methods case study combines qualitative and quantitative procedures. Data were collected through interviews, semi-structured questionnaires, and document analysis. Discursive Textual Analysis (ATD) was used to analyze the qualitative data, and descriptive and inferential statistics, including the chi-square test of independence, were used to analyze the quantitative data. The results demonstrate that teachers are pivotal figures in an academic framework that demands the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge, diverse epistemologies, pluralistic knowledge and worldviews, interculturality, language policies, and international and global perspectives.
Keywords: higher education; internationalization; university pedagogy; teaching.

1 Introduction

In contemporary society, higher education is composed of institutions with diverse actors, characteristics, missions, and vocations, playing a fundamental role in political projects and in the development of nations, as well as contributing to processes of social change. Its development is embedded in complex social, political, and economic relations specific to the contexts in which it takes place. In this scenario, higher education faces a dichotomy: on the one hand, it is viewed as an instrument of economic growth, with an emphasis on the market value of knowledge; on the other hand, it is understood as essential to sustainable human and social development.

This duality shapes higher education systems around the world, which deal with the tension between training academic elites and promoting social mobility. In

Brazil, this conflict becomes evident both in the difficulty of developing mass education and in the pressure on universities to produce research that expands inclusion policies. Society's demands require Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to become agents of the necessary transformations, which presupposes institutional autonomy for the full exercise of their functions. This involves the challenge of harmonizing public, private, and academic interests, recognizing the importance of HEIs in the national political and development project, especially in their articulation with local, regional, and social demands.

In the face of the social, cultural, and technological transformations that impact higher education, it becomes increasingly urgent for university institutions to consistently and cohesively integrate the multiple dimensions and dilemmas that characterize the contemporary educational landscape. This integration can no longer be postponed, as it is directly tied to the commitment to equity and the social responsibility attributed to the university (Franco, 2016; Morosini, 2017). Meeting this challenge requires the creation of new educational environments, the reformulation of pedagogical practices, and the incorporation of innovations that re-signify the role of higher education in today's society (Dalla Corte, 2017).

This scenario of transformations demands a reconfiguration of universities in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), especially with regard to addressing contemporary social requirements and the quality of education. In this process, the social value of the knowledge produced and of learning is highlighted, as well as the need for more horizontal and cooperative institutional management (Didriksson, 2018). The author notes that, despite the persistence of the idea of a dominant model to be replicated in the region, the creation of new public universities aimed at the public and social good demonstrates the viability of alternative models. These models maintain the historical legacy of the struggle for autonomy and co-governance, while simultaneously responding to current demands.

Among these innovative experiences, institutions such as the Metropolitan University for Education and Work (Umet) in Argentina; the Federal University for Latin American Integration (Unila) in Brazil; the Regional Centers for Higher Education in Colombia; the National University of Education (Unae) and the National University of the Arts (Unartes) in Ecuador; the Autonomous University of Mexico City (UACM) and

the University of Ciénega of Michoacán (UCM) in Mexico; and the Bolivarian University of Venezuela (Venezuela) (Didriksson, 2018) stand out. These initiatives demonstrate the possibility of building a new university model aligned with emerging contexts, in which academic excellence and innovation are articulated with social relevance, inclusion, interculturality, democratic management, and relevance across multiple scales — local, national, regional, and international.

In Brazil, the creation of Unila and the University of International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony (Unilab), both founded in 2010 in the context of the expansion and interiorization of higher education, represents a promising field of research for understanding the challenges faced by faculty members in internationalized academic contexts. These universities were conceived with the purpose of promoting an internationalization model oriented toward regional integration with countries and peoples of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Portuguese-speaking nations. Their institutional identities stand out in the Brazilian context for presenting strategic and innovative proposals within the set of national HEIs (Vieira, 2018).

The mere presence of internationalization in institutional policies, however, does not guarantee its effectiveness if faculty members do not possess the necessary knowledge to develop a curriculum that fosters the internationalization of learning (Leask, 2015). According to the author, the pedagogical practices adopted by higher education teachers directly impact institutional policies, and may reflect a conception of internationalization that is either more restrictive or broader than the one expressed in university guidelines.

This study aims to understand how teaching is configured at a Brazilian federal university with an international mission, and to what extent the current challenges of internationalization have impacted teaching, research, and outreach at Unila.

2 Internationalization and teaching in Higher Education: a necessary relationship

University internationalization constitutes one of the fundamental pillars for sustaining higher education as a public good, being recognized as an essential strategy for the development of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), as well as being indispensable for promoting scientific and technological advancement. In the current context, marked by increasing globalization, institutions are compelled to adopt an

internationalization agenda that, in order to be effective, must be understood in its theoretical and practical dimensions, contributing to the construction of the university identity of the 21st century.

In a scientific field that is in constant evolution, there is currently an emphasis on approaches that seek to assign a new meaning to internationalization — one that values the circulation of knowledge and cultures, strengthens individuals, institutions, and society as a whole, and promotes formative processes centered on interculturality and social responsibility. This approach points to a formative dimension of the internationalization of higher education and, from this perspective, presents greater potential for promoting cultural change within HEIs.

Several authors and contemporary perspectives on the internationalization of higher education have broadened its conception in an effort to respond to the emerging challenges that internationalization faces with the development of society and HEIs. One of the concepts that has been most frequently used in the literature in the field defines the internationalization of higher education as:

> […] the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society (De Wit *et al.*, 2015, p. 29, our translation).

According to Morosini (2017), this interaction occurs through relationships with countries from different regions of the world, valuing cultural differences, reaching local communities, and enabling, through sustainable development, the realization of global citizenship. This is a broadened conception of internationalization that engages with the challenges currently faced by HEIs and complements the contributions of authors such as De Wit *et al.* (2015) and Knight (2020).

Recent studies show that the internationalization of higher education promotes the international projection of institutions and their academic production, while also providing students with learning experiences in a global and intercultural context. All of this is strategically aimed at positively impacting local communities and society as a whole (Beelen; Jones, 2015; De Wit *et al.*, 2015; Morosini, 2017). This perspective understands internationalization as a process that must involve the entire academic

community in fulfilling the institutional mission (Gácel-Ávila, 2017; Hudzik, 2015; Gazzoni *et al*., 2025).

When internationalization reaches a comprehensive level, all academic and administrative areas of the institution — including administrative staff, faculty, and students — recognize its benefits and commit themselves to its implementation. This commitment is reflected in the development of sectoral strategic plans and in the collective engagement toward making it effective (Gácel-Ávila, 2017; Gazzoni et al., 2025; Hudzik, 2015).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, internationalization is correlated with interculturality when there is a perspective of a supportive internationalization aimed at sustainable development. For Clemente and Morosini (2020, p. 231), we are dealing with complementary concepts, since "internationalization is understood as a process that cannot be dissociated from interculturality, given that the former is a factor in the qualification of universities[…]" (our translation), and regarding the latter, "in an increasingly global context, filled with languages, artifacts, races, dialects, and other symbols, one cannot deny the existence of cultural heterogeneity […]" (Clemente; Morosini, 2020, p. 234, our translation).

This argument is based on the understanding of interculturality as a promoter of integration in the pursuit of deepening more democratic relationships that seek to connect people without erasing the singularity of the Other. Interculturality is oriented toward generating, building, and fostering mutual respect and the full development of individuals' capacities, beyond their cultural and social differences.

Globalization and internationalization reshape the paradigm of university teaching and bring implications for teaching and learning processes. At the current stage of the development of internationalization, university professors work in culturally diverse classrooms, which require them to "[…] question the effectiveness of their own teaching principles and approaches in relation to an extremely heterogeneous group" (Tran; Pasura, 2018, p. 351, our translation).

To understand the impacts of the internationalization of higher education on university teaching, Korhonen and Weil (2016) identify fundamental dimensions, such as transformations in pedagogical practices, the need for faculty to develop international competencies, and the ability to structure learning environments that

foster the development of such competencies among students. In this context, teachers' pedagogical competencies play a central role. Although many HEIs have incorporated internationalization into their strategic and policy plans, a significant gap persists between institutional discourse and the effectiveness of teaching practices (Leask, 2015).

The exercise of teaching in the functions of instruction, research, and outreach, when articulated with internationalization, leads to the pursuit of a pedagogical perspective of internationalization (Woicolesco, 2023). This approach should be reflected in the formative dimensions of the university through the incorporation of international and intercultural perspectives into the formal, informal, and hidden curricula; into teaching and learning methodologies; into learning assessment instruments; and into outreach and research activities.

In the Brazilian context, however, internationalization still does not occupy a prominent place in teacher education programs. In order to train "[…] teachers who are competent citizens and committed to social reality, strengthening quality education" (Morosini; Nez, 2020, p. 5, our translation), it is essential to prepare them to work in international and culturally diverse contexts, and a specific pedagogy for internationalization is required.

> The Pedagogy of Internationalization is an epistemic and professionalization field that mobilizes theoretical and methodological perspectives for analyzing pedagogical practice, with the aim of developing international and intercultural teaching knowledge in university instruction. Emerging contexts drive the pedagogical-equitable dimension of the Internationalization of Higher Education and call for teaching knowledge that enables students to develop international and intercultural competencies. In this way, the Pedagogy of Internationalization seeks to meet the formative needs across different fields of knowledge, in favor of faculty professional development and the establishment of a culture of Internationalization within the Higher Education Institution (Woicolesco, 2023, p. 363, our translation).

The Pedagogy of Internationalization requires the commitment of the entire higher education institution, so that the institutional mission and values align with actions aimed at the professional development of faculty members (Morosini, Woicolesco; Nez, 2021; Woicolesco, 2023). In this context, the learning and continuous improvement of professors working in internationalized university environments should encourage pedagogical practices that value student diversity as a teaching resource. This approach supports both the development of teaching

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knowledge and the progress of the students themselves (Tran; Pasura, 2018), generating significant short, medium, and long-term impacts in the areas of teaching, research, outreach, and management.

In this sense, it becomes particularly relevant to examine how teaching is structured within a Brazilian federal university that adopts internationalization as a guiding principle of its institutional mission. The challenges posed by this perspective directly affect pedagogical practices across teaching, research, and outreach activities, requiring faculty to act in alignment with the demands of a global and intercultural context and with institutional policies. Understanding this configuration is essential for deepening the analysis of the intersection between teaching practice and internationalization processes in higher education.

Despite the theoretical advances and practical guidelines aimed at integrating internationalization into Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), an important gap remains in the literature: how university teaching is organized in contexts that embrace internationalization as an institutional mission. By exploring this intersection from a pedagogical perspective, this study seeks to contribute to the consolidation of teaching practices aligned with the principles of internationalization and interculturality, fostering the development of global citizens in emerging contexts.

3 Methodological Framework

Regarding the choice of methodological approach, this study is characterized as mixed-methods research. This type of research is defined as "[…] the type of research in which the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts, or language into a single study" (Johnson; Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17, our translation). This integration broadens the scope of the investigation, allowing for a more comprehensive and articulated understanding of the object of study.

Regarding data generalization, this study adopted analytical generalizations, "[…] in which a previously developed theory is used as a benchmark against which the empirical results of the case study are compared" (Yin, 2015, p. 61, our translation). As for its nature, this investigation is characterized as descriptive. In this type of study, the focus "lies in the desire to understand the community, its characteristic features, its

people, its problems […]", allowing for the establishment of relationships between variables (Triviños, 2008, p. 110, our translation).

The instruments used in this type of research correspond to a QUAN+QUAL[1] notation system, in which "[…] the researcher implemented the quantitative and qualitative elements simultaneously, both elements have equal emphasis, and the results of the separate elements converged" (Creswell; Plano Clark, 2013, p. 106, our translation); this is because, in mixed-methods research, "[…] it is desirable for items/themes/topics to be shared across different techniques" (Paranhos *et al*., 2016, p. 394, our translation). When the researcher integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches, it becomes possible to "cross-check their conclusions in order to gain greater confidence that the data are not the product of a specific procedure or a particular situation" (Goldenberg, 2004, p. 62, our translation).

When the purpose of a research study is to deepen the description and understanding of a specific reality, researchers often resort to the case study as a methodological strategy (Triviños, 2008). From this perspective, Yin (2015, p. 17) defines the case study as "[…] an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly defined" (our translation).

In the context of qualitative research — in which the case study is generally situated — the sample is not defined by statistical criteria, but rather by the theoretical and empirical relevance of the selected participants or situations. According to Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado, and Baptista Lucio (2014, p. 384, our translation), the sample consists of the "[…] group of people, events, occurrences, communities, etc., from which data must be collected without necessarily being statistically representative of the universe or population under study."

For data construction, semi-structured interviews were conducted and an online semi-structured questionnaire was administered. Interviews are also an important source of evidence in case studies, since most of them involve research on

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[1] The abbreviation QUAN refers to the quantitative approach, and the abbreviation QUAL refers to the qualitative approach.

human themes and behaviors, given that their analytical perspective encompasses individual, collective, social, and political dimensions (Yin, 2015). Interviews allow researchers to "[…] understand and comprehend the meaning that respondents attribute to issues and situations in contexts that have not been previously structured based on the researcher's assumptions and conjectures" (Martins, 2008, p. 27, our translation).

Semi-structured interviews were chosen, combining open and closed questions. This type of interview "[…] while valuing the presence of the researcher, provides all possible perspectives for the respondent to achieve the freedom and spontaneity necessary, thus enriching the investigation" (Triviños, 2008, p. 146, our translation). Regarding the questionnaire administration, this stage allowed for a more comprehensive examination of the perceptions of a significant number of UNILA faculty members, ensuring greater robustness in the analysis and strengthening the dialogue between the data produced by the different approaches.

In the empirical field, the faculty members who work at UNILA were considered dialogical partners, regardless of their institutional affiliation. For the interviews, the dialogical partners considered were the tenured faculty members working at the institution, with at least one representative from each Interdisciplinary Center. The selection of the faculty members who would represent each of the Interdisciplinary Centers was carried out by convenience sampling (Hernández Sampieri; Fernández Collado; Baptista Lucio, 2014), and ten faculty members were interviewed.

For the questionnaire, all faculty members working at UNILA at the time the instrument was administered were invited to participate, regardless of their institutional affiliation. The study was conducted between May and September 2022. A total of 158 faculty members participated by completing the questionnaire, representing 37% of the total number of professors with an active affiliation to the institution.

Although the results obtained through the interviews do not allow for statistical generalizations, the indications provided by the dialogical partners reveal essential elements for understanding teaching at UNILA from the perspective of the pedagogical dimension of internationalization. The perceptions and positions shared by these participants were fundamental to deepening the research problem and significantly

contributed to the construction of meaning around the phenomenon under investigation.

In this study, considering that data construction was carried out concomitantly, an interactive analysis approach was adopted. Discursive Textual Analysis (DTA) was selected in advance to process the qualitative data, while statistical analyses — both descriptive and inferential — were applied after the completion of the questionnaire data collection, in accordance with the demands that emerged throughout the process.

DTA, adopted as the main qualitative analysis technique, is grounded in a hermeneutic phenomenological approach positioned between description and understanding. This methodology privileges the production of meaning as expressed in language, situated within a specific context and historical moment, allowing for a broadened, more complex, and more in-depth understanding of the object of study (Moraes; Galiazzi, 2011).

Complementarily, the analysis of the quantitative data was conducted using descriptive statistics — absolute and relative frequency — and inferential statistics. To examine possible significant associations between emerging categorical variables, formulated from hypotheses generated throughout the study, the nonparametric chi-square test of independence was applied. This procedure is intended to assess whether the sample data provide evidence to support or refute a statistical hypothesis (Morettin; Bussab, 2017).

4 Teaching practice of higher education: in search of a pedagogy of internationalization

The Federal University for Latin American Integration (UNILA), established by Law No. 12,189/2010 (Brazil, 2010), is located in the tri-border region between Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay. Since its conception, the institution has carried internationalization as a foundational principle of higher education, configuring itself as a privileged space for "[…] the establishment of a culture of respect for diversity concomitant with a shared interaction of knowledge and technology" (Trindade, 2009, p. 151, our translation). Its creation aims to provide teaching, research, and extension in various fields of knowledge, as expressed in its institutional mission:

> […] to contribute to solidarity-based integration and to the construction of fairer societies in Latin America and the Caribbean, with economic and social equity, through the sharing of knowledge and the generation, transmission, dissemination, and application of knowledge produced by teaching, research, and extension in an inseparable manner, integrated into the education of citizens for academic and professional practice, and committed to the pursuit of democratic solutions to Latin American problems (UNILA, 2013a, pp. 1–2, our translation).

UNILA's pedagogical project reflects this orientation by establishing theoretical and methodological foundations that guide institutional actions. These foundations include interdisciplinarity, interculturality, bilingualism and multilingualism, solidarity-based integration, democratic management, ethics, human rights, ethnic-racial and gender equity, sustainability, and well-being (UNILA, 2019). Such principles guide both the curricular organization and the university's formative proposal.

With the offering of undergraduate and graduate programs in all areas of knowledge, UNILA seeks to educate citizens committed to the local and regional development of Latin American and Caribbean countries, grounded in an integration of knowledge (IMEA, 2009). Although it maintains its international vocation, the university is part of the Brazilian federal higher education system and, therefore, complies with national legal requirements.

In this context, the curricula of undergraduate programs are developed on the basis of the National Curriculum Guidelines (DCN) and are also aligned with Latin American and Caribbean issues. One of the distinctive elements of the curricular structure is the common cycle of studies, composed of three interdisciplinary axes: Comprehensive Study on Latin America and the Caribbean, Languages — Portuguese and Spanish —, and Epistemology and Methodology. These axes aim to develop competencies essential to students' education, promoting a critical, intercultural, and integrated formation (UNILA, 2013b).

UNILA's international vocation also guides its access policies, especially with regard to the admission of students and staff from Latin American and Caribbean countries. In line with this mission, the university reserves 50% of the seats in each undergraduate admissions process for international applicants, as a way of democratizing access to higher education and strengthening regional ties (UNILA, 2019). The cultural diversity of the student body is one of UNILA's distinguishing characteristics. Currently, in undergraduate programs, there are 6,059 students with

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active enrollment, of whom 67.3% (n=4,077) are Brazilian and 32.7% (n=1,982) are international, representing 31 different nationalities (UNILA, 2023).

In the historical and social context of universities, both nationally and internationally, UNILA is still a young institution, although it is the result of an innovative academic and political project that proposes a reconfiguration of the process of higher education internationalization, orienting it toward a "[…] geopolitics of knowledge, reoriented from the South and toward the South, directed from Latin America and toward Latin America" (Vieira, 2018, p. 59, our translation). In this sense, the fact that it was born already internationalized, with a singular pedagogical project, allows UNILA to be considered a privileged space for experimentation and for the development of internationalization strategies that respond, in a coherent manner, to the specific challenges and demands of the Latin American and Caribbean reality.

One way to reveal the understanding that professors working at UNILA have of the internationalization of higher education is by examining their pedagogical practices. This analysis leads to an understanding of how teaching is shaped within an internationalized Brazilian university that strives for academic excellence in teaching, research, and outreach. As faculty members are considered the main actors in the internationalization process, this study sought to identify how the dimension of internationalization is incorporated into teaching practice across these three areas.

When asked which elements of their teaching practice in undergraduate and/or graduate education incorporate the dimensions of internationalization and interculturality, the dialogical partners mostly reported that this occurs through the selection of bibliographic materials that reflect the realities of different countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (q_24_1)[2] (n=111, 70,2%), as well as through the selection of materials that examine the local, national, regional, and international context (q24_2) (n=109, 69%). The chi-square test of independence revealed that the academic unit to which the dialogical partners are assigned is associated with the teaching practice variables q24_1 (p-value <0.001, v=0,288) and q24_2 (p-value = 0,022, v=0,246). According to Cramer's V, both associations present a medium effect size, that is,

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[2] The code q24_1 was used to analyze the questions and responses contained in the applied questionnaire, where q refers to the question, 24 to the question number, and 1 to the response option.

between 0.2 and 0.6. Based on this result, it can be concluded that the variables q24_1, q24_2, and academic unit of assignment present a statistically significant association; therefore, H_0 is rejected.

Although most of the dialogical partners state that they include the dimension of internationalization in their teaching practice, the results allow us to infer that, depending on the academic unit to which they are assigned (which implies different areas of knowledge), teaching practice will be more strongly oriented toward internationalization. According to one of the dialogical partners, adopting internationalization in teaching practice entails challenges, which may be related to teaching in specific areas of knowledge:

> How am I supposed to work on internationalization, for example, in a Calculus course? In an Organic Chemistry course? Even in my own course, which is Cell Biology, we have a syllabus with very dense content. It is basic content, and every biologist has to know at least that minimum of cell biology in order to move forward in other courses in the field (Interviewee 09, our translation)[3].

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> Within higher education institutions, there is a diversity of individual perspectives and groups that can lead to varied and, at times, contradictory interpretations of internationalization, due to different ideologies and implicit assumptions, and this plurality of views may also influence the conception and implementation of internationalization policies and practices (Gazzoni *et al*., 2025, p. 10, our translation).

Thus, the analysis of the data presents challenges for institutional management, requiring efforts to be made to align teaching practices with the institutional policies set out in strategic documents.

When asked about the adoption of the premises of internationalization in teaching and learning methodologies, most of the dialogical partners seek to use in the classroom examples aligned with current requirements for professional practice in local, national, regional, and international contexts (q24_3) (n=104, 65,8%), promoting professional training and the exercise of citizenship through an understanding of Latin American and Caribbean issues and local, national, regional, and international dynamics (q24_4) (n=109, 69%). Slightly less than half of the dialogical partners

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[3] Research interview conducted on May 9, 2022, in the city of Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná.

develop learning experiences that contribute to students' understanding of the interdependence of the local context in relation to the national, regional, and international contexts (q24_5) (n=75, 47,5%), or prioritize activities/learning experiences that contribute to the development and integration of Latin America and the Caribbean (q24_6) (n=69, 43,7%). The result of the statistical test shows that the variables "academic unit of assignment" and q24_3 present a statistically significant association (p-value <0.001, v=0,392), with a medium effect size; therefore, H_0 is rejected.

These results indicate the need for investment in continuing education for the exercise of university teaching, as formative processes contribute to the consolidation of teachers' professional knowledge, since they strengthen the understanding of the meanings associated with each type of knowledge and of teaching practice in internationalized university environments (Cunha, 2010; Woicolesco, 2023). The dialogical partners understand the need for the provision of continuing education for…

> the search for new methodologies and strategies to address everyday challenges, with regard to the social, linguistic, and cultural plurality of the academic community, and with respect for students' knowledge and learning pace, as I observe that this gap has strongly impacted dropout rates in this community (Participant 72, our translation)[4].

This is because, although this scenario poses challenges to the practice of university teaching, it is expected that at UNILA faculty members adopt diversified teaching and learning methodologies, with the aim of developing a specific model of internationalization, "[…] arising from the institution's own mission, linked to Latin American integration and with a profound transformative social role" (UNILA, 2019, p. 10).

When the dialogical partners were asked about the teaching strategies adopted in the classroom that promote interculturality, most of them (63.3%, n=100) stated that they seek to address the cultural diversity present in Latin America and the Caribbean through the examples used in class (q26_1), and that they promote social interaction among students from different cultural groups in the dynamics proposed within the curricular components they teach (q26_2) (74.7%, n=118). Based on the

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[4] Excerpt from a response taken from the online research questionnaire made available to the study participants between July 1 and August 25, 2022.

data from the statistical test, it is not possible to conclude that the variables "academic unit" and q26_2 are associated (p-value >0,05); therefore, the null hypothesis should not be rejected.

Another teaching practice aimed at fostering interculturality in instruction is the promotion of situations that encourage respect for ethnic, racial, cultural, sexual, socioeconomic, religious, and gender diversity (q26_3), and this has been used by most of the dialogical partners (57%, n=90). The chi-square test of independence indicates that it is not possible to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the variables q25_5 and unidade acadêmica de lotação (p-valor > 0,05); therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

The dialogical partners recognize that working at UNILA is both a challenge and a learning experience, given the heterogeneity of the student body, not only in terms of its linguistic dimension, but also in relation to the educational process prior to students' arrival at the university. Coexistence among students with different sociocultural or academic backgrounds can become one of the instruments that promote interculturality in teaching, as occurred with the "[…] early cohorts, in which we had many Brazilian students who arrived with very weak prior education; they made an enormous qualitative leap by living alongside other students who were more engaged and who had already had a higher level of previous education" (Interviewee 3, our translation)[5].

The classroom, as a space for the integration of students and teachers from different cultures, languages, and nationalities, constitutes a territory of internationalization and interculturality. This is a realization that the students themselves make in everyday dialogues with faculty: "What they always say is 'I want to leave here learning about other cultures, other ways of seeing beyond the language.' It's great that I will receive a university education, but here I will also learn other languages, other cultures, other ways of seeing the world" (Interviewee 5, our translation)[6].

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[5] Research interview conducted on September 13, 2022, in a virtual environment.
[6] Research interview conducted on May 10, 2022, in the city of Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná.

By grounding their practices in the underlying premises of interculturality, the dialogical partners invest in a pedagogical model that recognizes "[…] the multiplicity of voices and cultural practices, the complex perspectives that intersect, encounter, and confront each other in the context of interaction between different cultures and individuals" (Lobato *et al*., 2020, p. 4, our translation). These intercultural experiences contribute to the interaction among participants in the educational process in a dialogical and horizontal relationship, which provides other perspectives for "[…] coexistence, enabling differences not to undermine communicability and learning among people, fostering reciprocity, respect, the exchange of knowledge and experiences, and coexistence without changing the individuality of the other" (Boacik; Rubin-Oliveira; Peloso, 2022, p. 3, our translation).

Another element present in the teaching practice of faculty is the planning of assessment activities. In the context of internationalization and interculturality in teaching practice, providing students with instruments that address intercultural issues relevant to the context of the curricular component and/or professional practice (q26_4) is another pedagogical practice adopted by the majority of the dialogical partners (n=108, 68,3%). The statistical test performed showed that there is a statistically significant association between the variables academic unit of appointment and q26_4 (p-value <0,001, v = 0,392), with a medium effect size; therefore, H_0 is rejected.

When asked about encouraging students, in assessment processes, to consider intercultural issues as part of the development and regional integration process of LAC (q26_5), 54% (n=85) of the dialogic partners indicated that their pedagogical practices incorporate this premise. When performing the chi-square test of independence, a statistically significant association was identified between the variables academic unit of appointment of the dialogic partners and q26_5 (p-value <0,001, v= 0,347), with a medium effect size; therefore, H_0 is rejected.

The inclusion of intercultural perspectives in the assessment activities of undergraduate and/or graduate course components was also an element of teaching practice that emerged during the interviews. According to one of the dialogic partners:

> [...] in UNILA's context, interpersonal experiences also seem very interesting to me, because it is a continuous learning process with new situations that arise. You have students from Haiti, students from Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, from various regions of Brazil in the classroom. I think it very much depends on the

> teacher's sensitivity, on not wanting to assess everyone in the same way, because each person will face greater or lesser difficulties (Interviewee 3, our translation).

The research data reveal that, in emerging contexts, university professors need to adopt the foundations of interculturality in such a way that dialogic teaching and learning practices and environments can emerge,

> [...] that interrelate students, leading them to discover their own identities, while respecting those of their peers and contextualizing society through the multiple perspectives that will be experienced in collaborative work (Santos; Queiroz, 2021, p. 4, our translation).

Another dimension of teaching practice that requires the incorporation of internationalization and interculturality is university outreach. University outreach is one of the pillars that make up the mission of Latin American universities and aims to promote an organic interaction between the university and society. As a core activity of the university institution at UNILA, it is carried out through actions and projects designed to develop training processes that contribute to the integration of HEIs into the community, and "[...] presupposes an openness to alterity, paying special attention to equality, based on respect for cultural, ethnic-racial, gender, sexual orientation, and lifestyle differences" (Unila, 2021, p. 1, our translation).

When asking the dialogic partners about teaching practices in extension activities that take into account the context of the internationalization of higher education, those who participate in actions that consider the priorities of the local, regional, national, and international contexts, with emphasis on Latin American demands and regional integration (q28_1), total 38% (n=61). The statistical test shows that there is a statistically significant association between the variables academic unit of appointment of the dialogic partners and the variable q28_1 (p-value <0,001, v=0,342), with a medium effect size; therefore, H_0 is rejected.

The teaching practice of addressing the priorities of local, regional, national, and international contexts, with an emphasis on the demands of the tri-border area and regional integration in the extension activities in which they participate (q28_2), is a reality for 41,1% (n=65) of the dialogic partners. The chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the variables academic unit of

appointment and the variable q28_2 (p-value 0,006, v = 0,284), with a medium effect size; therefore, H_0 is rejected.

It was found that 46.2% (n=73) of the dialogic partners are involved in extension activities that prioritize the local, regional, national, and international context (q28_3). The variables academic unit of appointment and q28_3 show a statistically significant association (p-value 0,006, v=0,284), with a medium effect size; therefore, H_0 is rejected.

When asked about the reach of extension activities, considering the dimension of internationalization, most of the dialogic partners (n=113) are not involved in actions that have reach in Latin American and Caribbean countries (q28_4) or in other international contexts (q28_5) (n=132). When performing the statistical test, it was not possible to conclude that the variables academic unit of appointment and the variables q28_4 and q28_5 are associated (p>0,05). In light of this, we cannot reject the null hypothesis.

Another two teaching practices within the scope of the internationalization of extension were related to the training fostered by extension activities. In the first one, when seeking to understand whether extension actions promote interculturality through respect for the plurality of knowledge, cultural and linguistic diversity, and the creation of spaces that privilege the participation of different social actors (q28_6), 405% (n=64) of the dialogic partners answered this question affirmatively. As shown by the statistical test, the variables academic unit and q28_6 present a statistically significant association (p-value <0,001, v = 0,336), with a medium effect size; therefore, H_0 is rejected.

The second practice was related to the contribution of the extension activities developed by the dialogical partners to the education and development of citizens in their various dimensions (economic, social, cultural, political, human, sustainable, regional, and cross-border) (q28_7), given that 48,7% (n=77) of the dialogical partners reported having this teaching practice. The statistical test shows that this variable (q28_7) and the academic unit in which the faculty member is employed have a statistically significant association (p-value < 0,001; v=0,336), with a medium effect size, and therefore, H_0 is rejected.

The dialogical partners who do not develop or participate in extension activities at Unila (q28_8) represent 19,6% (n=31) of those who participated in this study. Based on the results of the chi-square test of independence, it is not possible to conclude that the variables academic unit and q28_8 are associated (p>0,05), and, in this way, we cannot reject H_0.

From the dialogue with the dialogical partners, it was possible to see that the teaching practice itself converges toward the inseparability of the other university functions, and at Unila culminates in the internationalization of extension.

> The most internationalized example of all has to do with my extension project [...]. The students had a very important participation; it is a large group of students; it has always been a very active project and during the pandemic period it became even stronger, because there are very few people who understand BRICKS, an apparently very specific topic. We organized a BRICKS film festival; we chose one film per country and brought in specialists or people from the country to comment on each of the films, and we had a huge audience for that. There is a television channel called TV BICKS, whose director is a Russian woman, and she contacted us at Unila to do things together, and we even gave a lecture on Dostoiévski; it was the anniversary of Dostoiévski's death; it was very interesting. This level of internationalization is impressive because the students themselves spoke English, and in BRICKS you have to understand English, there is no other way. The Consulate, the Embassy of India, contacted us to carry out joint activities. We also had some contact with some researchers from South Africa. So, really, in extension, we achieved an impressive level of internationalization and visibility, didn't we? [...] We have created so many national and international ties from these projects [...] (Interviewee 3, our translation).

For extension practices to reach this level of capillarity in society, they need to be recognized and institutionalized within the academic and administrative structure of the HEI, as a way of valuing the "[...] role that extension plays in the construction of a truly inclusive, participatory, democratic, and dialogical university in practice" (Souza; Barbosa, 2020, p. 59, our translation). By assuming internationalization as one of the dimensions that should guide extension at Unila, the institution reinforces this university function as essential for strengthening the university's role in meeting local, national, Latin American, and Caribbean needs, developing actions aimed at promoting citizenship and social inclusion, with the goal of contributing to the construction of a more just and egalitarian society (Unila, 2019).

According to Unila (2019), the policies aimed at research are based on the principle of the inseparability of the university tripod through the "[...] production of cutting-edge scientific, technological, social, and cultural knowledge for local, regional

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(including the triple border), and national integration and development" (Unila, 2019, p. 45, our translation). As the institutional policies oriented toward research prioritize internationalization as a status that legitimizes the quality and visibility of the knowledge produced at the institution, we sought to understand the extent to which these perspectives are present in teaching practices at Unila.

Among the possibilities for internationalizing teaching practice in research involving the scientific field in which they work, 53,8% (n=85) of dialogue partners are familiar with the state of the art of research in Latin America and the Caribbean (q29_1), and 66.5% (n=105) revealed that they are familiar with the main international research approaches (q29_2). When performing the statistical test, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that the academic unit variables and the q29_1 and q29_2 variables are associated (p>0,05), so we cannot reject the null hypothesis.

Regarding coordination and/or participation in research groups and networks, 34,8% (n=55) of dialogical partners are involved in groups with international representation, with the exception of LAC countries (q29_3). The statistical test result shows that the variables academic unit and q29_3 have a statistically significant association (p-value 0,003, v=0,294), with a medium effect size, and therefore H_0 is rejected. Regarding coordination and/or participation in research groups and networks, 34,8% (n=55) of dialogue partners are involved in groups with international representation, with the exception of LAC countries (q29_3). The result of the statistical test shows that the variables academic unit of affiliation and q29_3 have a statistically significant association (p-value 0,003, v=0,294), with a medium effect size, and therefore H_0 is rejected.

The dialogue partners were asked about their involvement in research related to internationalization. In this regard, 53,8% (n=85) consider the Latin American and Caribbean context (q29_5), and 25,9% (n=41) investigate other international contexts (q29_6). The statistical test results reveal that the variables academic unit and q29_5 have a statistically significant association (p-value <0,001, v=0,402), with a medium effect size, and therefore H_0 is rejected. The chi-square test of independence shows that there is a statistically significant association between the variables academic unit and q29_6 (p-value 0,043, v=0,227), with a medium effect size, and therefore H_0 is rejected.

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With regard to participation in agreements, 18,4% (n=29) participate in international agreements with institutions located in Latin America and the Caribbean (q29_7) and 10,8% (n=17) in agreements with institutions located in other international contexts (q29_8). The statistical test results show that the variables academic unit and q29_7 have a statistically significant association (p-value 0,016, v=0,256), with a medium effect size, and therefore H_0 is rejected. The chi-square test of independence shows that it is not possible to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the variables q29_8 and academic unit (p-value> 0,05), and thus we cannot reject the null hypothesis.

Another teaching practice in the context under analysis is participation in international scientific/academic events, given that 58,2% (n=92) participate in those held in Latin American and Caribbean countries (q29_9) and 37.3% (n=59) in those held in other international contexts (q29_10). The result of the statistical test reveals that the variables academic unit of assignment and q29_7 have a statistically significant association (p-value <0,001, v=0,351), with a medium effect size, and therefore H_0 is rejected. The chi-square test of independence shows that it is not possible to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the variables q29_10 and academic unit of assignment (p-value> 0,05), and thus we cannot reject H_0.

Regarding student involvement in research, 61.4% (n=97) of respondents involve them in investigations that consider local, regional, national, and international realities (q29_11). The chi-square test of independence reveals that it is not possible to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between variables q29_11 and academic unit (p-value> 0,05), and, therefore, we cannot reject H_0.

Publication in a foreign language (q29_12) is a practice followed by 58.9% (n=93) of dialogue partners. The chi-square test of independence indicates that it is not possible to conclude that there is a statistically significant association between variables q29_12 and academic unit (p-value> 0,05), and, therefore, we cannot reject H_0.

The survey data show that most dialogue partners have incorporated internationalization into their teaching and research practices. This is because "in the case of university professors who are entirely dedicated to teaching, academic careers

are generally valued and praised much more for their publications than for their performance in the classroom" (Junges; Behrens, 2015, p. 288, our translation). According to the authors, as a result, the prestige of a university professor's career is based on their image as a knowledge professional rather than a teaching professional.

From the perspective of the dialogue partners, the incorporation of the internationalization dimension into research practice, especially characteristics focused on regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, is understood in the teaching process. As one of the obstacles to the consolidation of the internationalization process of research at Unila, the dialogue partners point to the legislation of Brazil and other Latin American countries, considering them "[...] impediments to international integration and because there is no special legislation for border regions. They hinder international academic integration, create excessive bureaucracy, and discourage the development of cross-border projects" (Participant 59, our translation)[7]. This situation is common in developing countries, where teachers have encountered difficulties in establishing international partnerships due to state control (Altbach; Postiglione, 2013).

Throughout the research, it was possible to identify that the university environment at Unila itself meets the necessary conditions for the development of teaching practices that consider the context of internationalization. This is already happening, as one of our dialogue partners explains:

> I have a student from Guatemala, a biotechnology student who is also my research assistant; he brought up an idea: "Professor, in Guatemala, people are using beetles to digest Styrofoam, which they eat, I don't know what, such and such." We researched this situation he mentioned in Guatemala; we submitted his research project on this topic. So this is something very interesting. It was an idea that came from him, from something that was being done in Guatemala, and we applied it here. So, it's about thinking beyond the classroom. In fact, even in the conversation circles there at Jardim Universitário, at PTI, trying to involve as many people as possible, it's about thinking of Unila as an international university; I think that's it (Interviewee 9, our translation).

The internationalization of higher education can happen without the participation of faculty members, even though they are "[...] key to the

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[7] Excerpt from responses extracted from an online survey questionnaire made available to survey participants between July 1 and August 25, 2022.

internationalization strategy of any academic institution" (Altbach; Postiglione, 2013, p. 1, our translation). In this understanding, the establishment of policies and programs designed to stimulate the inseparability of research, teaching, and extension can help dialogical partners to bring together the necessary conditions to achieve the internationalization of their teaching practices.

5 Conclusion

Teaching in the academic functions of teaching, research, and extension, and its intersection with internationalization culminates in the search for a pedagogical perspective on internationalization that reverberates in the university's educational dimension, guided by the infusion of international and intercultural perspectives in formal, informal, and hidden curricula, in teaching and learning methodologies, in diagnostic tools that measure learning outcomes, in extension and research activities, among others. Thus, academic training, under the auspices of internationalization, needs to train individuals who understand the relationship between local, regional, and global perspectives in dimensions such as society, politics, culture, economics, technology, among others, from a critical and holistic perspective; who have social awareness and intercultural skills; who are engaged in producing responses to multiple social demands; who try to make the world a more sustainable place; and who contribute to the transformation of Society.

In teaching practices, with the incorporation of internationalization, it was identified that it is based on four main characteristics: the inclusion of bibliographies that consider the local, regional, national, and international contexts and contribute to understanding the reality of Latin American countries; collaborative teaching and learning methodologies that enable students to understand Latin America and the Caribbean in all its dimensions; critical reflection on the different local, national, regional, and international dynamics; and professional performance in local, national, regional, and international contexts, exercising global citizenship. However, there are two gaps highlighted by the empirical field: first, in activities aimed at assessing learning outcomes, given that in all the suggestions for teaching practices in this regard presented by the research instrument, less than half of the dialogue partners indicated

that they developed them; second, these teaching practices are not adopted to the same extent by dialogue partners according to the academic unit to which they belong.

Interculturality was a dimension with greater capillarity in teaching practices, considering that all the possibilities of practices presented in the questionnaire are adopted by at least half of the dialogical partners. In this sense, it can be inferred that the following are intercultural practices in undergraduate and/or graduate teaching: adopting teaching and learning methodologies that benefit the cultural diversity present in LAC; encouraging social interaction between students from different cultural groups; and fostering situations that promote respect for sexual, racial, national, socioeconomic, religious, and gender diversity, as well as the ethnic and cultural diversity of students, so that, upon graduation, they are able to act in situations involving culturally diverse groups.

In assessment and learning outcome activities, teaching practices need to require students to consider intercultural issues relevant to the context of the curriculum component and/or professional practice, as well as those relevant to the process of regional development and integration in LAC. Although the teaching practices of the dialogue partners mostly incorporate interculturality, the research data show that, depending on the academic unit where these teachers work, the practices are adopted more frequently.

Internationalization in teaching practice in extension can be configured through participation in actions that consider the reality of local, regional, national, and international contexts, with an emphasis on Latin American demands and regional integration and/or the triple border; that have reach either in Latin American and Caribbean countries or in other international contexts; and that promote interculturality through respect for the plurality of knowledge, cultural and linguistic diversity, and the creation of spaces that privilege the participation of different social subjects. In analyzing the suggestions for teaching practices that indicate the presence of internationalization in extension activities, it was found that in all of them, less than half of the dialogical partners adopt the premises presented. This suggests that the internationalization of teaching practice in extension is not a reality for most dialogical partners, although it is one of the principles of Unila's Extension Policy. It was observed that the percentage of teachers who adopt practices that consider the premise of

internationalization in extension activities differs according to the academic unit to which they belong.

It constitutes internationalization in teaching practice in research: knowing the state of the art in the LAC region in the area of knowledge in which one works; understanding the main international approaches to research in the area of knowledge in which one works; participating in research groups/networks with international representation; developing studies on the reality of Latin America and the Caribbean and other international contexts; participating in international agreements with institutions located in Latin America and the Caribbean and other international contexts. Among the gaps observed, the low percentage of dialogue partners who coordinate or participate in research groups/networks with international representation (except for LAC countries) that develop and/or are part of studies on the reality of international contexts (except LAC) and that participate in international agreements with institutions located in LAC and other international contexts.

Although the results of this study are limited to a single Brazilian HEI, future research at other institutions may prove important in expanding understanding of the topic, such as mapping teaching practices according to the internationalization models systematized in the literature; observing teaching activities aimed at developing international and intercultural skills in teaching, research, and extension; and interviewing students to identify which teaching practices, in their view, contribute most to the development of international and intercultural skills.

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