Internationalization of Global Women in Higher Education
Shifting to a "Two-Way" Approach of Engagement

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Abstract
Higher education is globalized and internationalized; and the number of international students, particularly women studying in U.S. institutions of higher education is at a record high. However, as education continues to be a pathway to success and leadership positions, the representation and progress of women into leadership positions remains a debated issue. Although in the past 30 years there are more women who are qualified to assume leadership position both in higher education and in business, women still lag behind their male counterparts. It cannot be denied that gender continues to affect the way women are perceived as leaders. Based on the findings from a study conducted at a US university, a paradigm shift from a unidirectional approach to learning to a "two-way" model of engagement is necessary to promote a collegial community of collaborative scholars. To develop global women as leaders, it is not enough to recruit, retain and graduate international students who are female —it is critical to observe, learn, and collaboratively learn from each one of them. Most curriculums are "western" centric and based on values and ideas from the United States, with minimal exposure to current global practices. The knowledge and experiences of international women are not optimized as a source of global data that contributes to the collective information of global cultures and best practices. In order to truly capitalize on the influx of international data, the authors are suggesting the 2.0-approach, "two-way" method of creating, collaborating, editing and sharing user-generated curriculum content.

Keywords: internationalization, engagement, higher education

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Introduction

Higher education is becoming globalized and internationalized with the number of international students, particularly women, studying at institutions of higher education in the United States at a record high. Education continues to be a pathway to workforce success and advancement, but unfortunately, the representation and progress of women into leadership positions remains a debated issue. Over the past 30 years, more women are qualified to assume leadership positions, both in higher education and in business, but women still lag behind their male counterparts in obtaining these roles. It cannot be denied that gender continues to affect the perception of women as leaders.

Based on the findings from a pilot study conducted in the Learning and Performance Systems program at a university in the state of Pennsylvania in the United States, it was uncovered that a paradigm shift is necessary from a unidirectional learning approach to a "two-way" model of engagement, in order to promote a collegial community of collaborative scholars. For global women to develop into leaders, it is not enough to recruit, retain, and graduate international females students; it is also critical to observe, engage, and collaboratively learn from each one of them.

Many graduate curricula are "western" centric, based on practices, values, and ideas from the United States, with minimal exposure to current global practices. In these curricula, knowledge and experiences of international women are not utilized or optimized as a contribution to the collective information of global cultures and best practices. In order to truly capitalize on the influx of international data, the researchers are suggesting the 2.0 Approach: a "two-way" method of creating, collaborating, editing, and sharing global user-generated curriculum content.

Review of the Literature

Graduate programs in higher education systems have been influenced by the forces of globalization and trade in educational services. These influences have created the formation of strong strategic alliances and increased competition among countries hosting international students. Through the export of study programs or the establishment of branch campuses abroad, academic cultures of one country are introduced in another. The literature discusses three other aspects of this mutual influence. The first is, the adoption of the United States higher education system, or elements of it with appropriate adaptations, in other countries (e.g., the model of the graduate school). The second aspect relates to the convergence of the European higher education systems on the basis of the Bologna reform process, and third, the relationship between developed and developing countries.

Globalization and Internationalization

Globalization can be described as creating opportunities for sharing knowledge, technology, social values, and behavioral norms, and by promoting development across countries and cultures at different levels including the individual, the organizational, the community, and the societal level (Brown, 1999; Cheng, 2000; Waters, 1995). Globalization is a flow of goods or ideas, with a diminished importance on boundaries of time and space, as well as a diminished importance of nation-state (Steiglitz, 2003).

Internationalization, according to Hans de Wit (2002), includes the entire range of processes that transfers higher education from a national to an international orientation. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), (2005), education is "the complex of processes whose combined effect, whether planned or not, is to enhance the international dimension of the experience of higher education in universities and similar educational institutions". Olson, Evans, & Schoenberg (2007) suggest that internationalization is "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, function, or delivery of postsecondary education" (p. viii).

Given these definitions, globalization can be seen as the catalyst and internationalization as a response. For the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2005), globalization and internationalization cover "all types and modes of delivery of higher education programs, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based". Education provides a wide range of opportunities and benefits for individuals and societies. In many countries across the globe, education is recognized as a human right and viewed as essential to economic growth and social cohesion.

International Student Mobility

Top host countries for international students are the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, China, Canada, and Japan. From the perspective of the United States, Obst & Forster (2012) stated, "international students play an important part in U.S. higher education, not only because they contribute more than $13 billion to the U.S. economy every year, but also because many academic programs rely on them to conduct research and serve as teaching assistants in key fields of science and technology" (p. 2).

Additionally, Obst & Forster comment, that the perspectives of diverse minds contribute to the internationalization of American classrooms (2012). Friedman (2005) stated, "The world is now flat". Globalization is leveling the educational playing field and higher education programs need to embrace this shift, not only to survive, but also to compete and succeed in this international world. Friedman (2005) further connected globalization to higher education by emphasizing global collaboration.

Statement of the Problem

It is critical that institutions of higher education, as well as the programs within colleges and universities, shift their paradigm from being a program that has international students, to a global program that promotes an internationally collegial community of collaborative scholars. Furthermore, to develop women as global leaders, it is not enough to recruit, retain, and graduate international female students, but also critically important to observe and collaboratively learn from their experiences.

In order to truly capitalize on the influx of this international data, the authors are investigating a "two-way" methodology to create, collaborate, edit, and share user-generated curriculum content. In order to further understand this approach, the researchers are examining the following questions:

- R1.How are international students' indigenous knowledge utilized in the classroom?

- R2.What barriers do international students experience when sharing their indigenous knowledge in the classroom?

- R3. Are women's experiences different in the classroom than men's experiences?

Impacts and Challenges of Internationalization

Internationalization has traditionally focused on study abroad programs, intercultural curriculum, and language studies, and has generally emphasized learning outcomes (Altbach & Knight, 2007). As economies continue to expand and develop, the global climate in higher education becomes increasingly more competitive. Institutions, colleges, and universities often highlight their international presence both in resident and online programs. In addition, institutions are expanding operations across borders and markets through branch campuses. Although education is a part of the core mission, transnational enterprises bring a new set of stakeholders overseas (Chambers & Cummings, 1990).

In the last decade, a number of global-minded institutions have opened graduate or undergraduate programs abroad (Becker, 2009). These institutional partnerships help build and expand a country's capacity. These campuses typically establish a physical 'brick-and-mortar' facility in the host country (such as in the United Arab Emirates), as well as employing the faculty and administrative structure to support the institution's overseas operation (Green et al., 2008).

However, most students attending such campuses located in a host country may never actually set foot on the soil of the source country (such as the United States). Furthermore, the complexity of expanding overseas may present additional challenges. Institutions involved in increasing global programs need to expand their faculty and administrative staff in order to achieve international competencies. McBurnie and Ziguras (2007) suggest some institutions "may not be equipped with the skills and experience to make the best-informed decisions" in this international environment (p. 38).

Pilot Study

To begin to address the three research questions present for this study, the researchers conducted a pilot study at a university in central Pennsylvania, the United States. This study utilized semi-structured interviews of international graduate students in order to develop a clearer understanding of the effectiveness of the "two-way" approach to engagement and learning.

Study Population and Sample

The population for the study consisted of international graduate students pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in the department of Learning and Performance Systems. This department is made up of three separate programs: Workforce Education and Development, Adult Education, and Learning Design and Technology.

The study population was defined as graduate students from the Workforce Education and Development (WF ED) department. This specific program was targeted for several reasons. The first, was that this particular program was ranked in the top three by U.S. News & World Report since 1997 (earning the number one position in 2006, 2012, and 2014). The second criterion for selection of the WF ED program was the diversity of the Doctoral students.

The program currently has students enrolled from a variety of countries such as, Bulgaria, China, Crete, Ghana, Grenada, India, Malaysia, Namibia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, the UAE, and Taiwan. The final criterion for program selection was based on access to the population. Two of the researchers are current students in the program while a third researcher is a recent graduate of the program. The researchers felt their close connection to the program would encourage study participation and honesty in sharing experiences.

An invitation to participate was sent to WF ED students who met the pre-selected criteria of: (a) current graduate student enrolled in the Workforce Education and Development program; (b) student was pursuing a PhD degree; and (c) student was international (not born in the United States). The study participants, a mix of men and women that responded came from Crete, Grenada, Namibia, and South Korea.

Study Methodology

The individual interviews were conducted off-campus by two of the researchers. The interview protocol was semi-structured, to allow the study participants to speak freely and confidentially about their United States graduate school experiences.

Study Findings

The overall response from the study participants to research question 1, "how are international students' indigenous knowledge utilized in the classroom" indicated that their global knowledge and experiences were not currently utilized throughout the curriculum. The study participants discussed the one-way dissemination of information, from instructor to student. The instructor held the authoritative leadership style in the classroom. Even when student participation was requested, the participants noted that care was not taken to address indigenous cultural behaviors. Most notably, was the study participants' discussion about language. The instruction was provided in English, which was a second, third, or sometimes fourth language for the participants. Even though a working knowledge of verbal English and written composition skills were a requirement for admittance into the WF ED program, it was the nuances of the English language, like idioms and colloquialisms, which made translation and engagement in the classroom difficult.

In addition, specific industry vocabulary was very different across the globe. For example, the term "competencies" is used a great deal in the United States, while elsewhere, this concept is defined as "skills".

Another common theme to emerge regarding the first research question had to do with group interactions. Many of the study participants were uncomfortable when asked to complete in-class exercises in groups. When asked to self-select into groups, the participants perceived, though perhaps unintentionally, negative feelings from peers. The study participants felt that the national, or United States-born students, would form groups together, probably out of comfort and familiarity. This would often leave a group entirely comprised of students from around the world. One study participant explained, "what the American students failed to realize was, we don't necessarily like to work with different people from certain cultures either".

When asked to address the second research question, "what barriers do international students experience when sharing their indigenous knowledge in the classroom", the responses were split into two themes, which focused on the students and on the faculty. From the student perspective, a lack of social networking and out-of-class opportunities were presented as a barrier to internationalization. The study participants were interested in getting to know their peers, sharing experiences- both job-related and family-related, and developing research platforms and collaborations. Unfortunately, the WF ED program lacked a formal structure to accomplish this. Students tried to create social opportunities on an informal basis, but events had limited funding, lack of space, and small participation.

Regarding the faculty barriers, scarce resources, lack of interest and expertise were common themes addressed by the study participants. The participants felt that the faculty members lacked time, money, and the incentive to focus on a two-way model of student engagement. The participants offered two possible explanations. The first had to do with lack of expertise and the inability to integrate international learning, both knowledge and in learning and presentation style. The second was a harsher criticism, calling for lack of interest and negative attitudes regarding change from some of the program faculty.

The third research question, "are women's experiences different in the classroom than men's experiences" brought out themes concerning gender roles and social interaction that varied by culture. The male study participants were quick to point out that women have the same opportunities as men in the United States, while the women participants shared different insights. The female participants suggested that interaction, both in the formal classroom and in more informal social settings, varied not only from culture-to-culture, but also within cultures. One study participant expressed her concern for publicly challenging a professor in the classroom, where the instructor is the expert. Another female participant shared a personal story from her undergraduate experience about feeling pressured by a male student in her culture to be academically dishonest.

Both male and female study participants were very interested in sharing their educational and job-related experiences in the classroom and embraced the concept of a two-way method of learning and engagement. The participants revealed that even though they came to study in the United States and wanted to learn about American

workforce education practices, it still would be beneficial to share best practices from a global perspective.

Recommendations for Additional Research

The attendance of a diverse population of international students provides numerous opportunities for universities to meet their goals for global engagement; however, the pilot study reveals that higher education may not be equipped to take advantage of these opportunities. Further investigation is recommended to explore the experiences of international students in higher education and identify systematic processes to actively engage them as cultural resources. In addition, the researchers recommend identifying educational opportunities to develop intercultural competence among peers, faculty and staff, in order to promote engaged and meaningful interactions (Montgomery & McDowell, 2009).

Concluding Remarks

The field of higher education is becoming globalized and internationalized, but needs to embrace further change and development. With the number of international students, particularly women, studying in U.S. institutions of higher education at a record high, there are many resources available to aid with pedagogical change. In addition, the numbers of international students have been growing within U.S. institutions, approaching 770,000 in 2012 (Institute of International Education, 2012). Graduate students have the potential to support and encourage the development of an international curriculum, as well as be a resource of institutional learning. Unfortunately, few programs in the United States are prepared to engage these students as cultural resources. Various researchers have indicated that international students can significantly contribute to creating a globally engaged community, particularly when they are given the opportunity to share their diverse experiences.

Based on the pilot study mentioned in this paper, it is suggested that American students and faculty are not exploring the indigenous knowledge of their international peers, therefore missing the opportunity to learn about other cultures and other countries' business practices. As many graduate curriculums were created based on values and ideas from the United States, minimal reference is given to current global practices. More specifically, the knowledge and experiences of international women are not compiled and incorporated as a source of best practice global data. In order to truly capitalize on the volume of this international data, the authors are suggesting the adoption of a 2.0 Approach; this approach is a "two-way" method of curriculum development and collaboration with user-generated curriculum content. This suggested shift seeks to incorporate unique cultural experiences and perspectives on classroom topics, in order to provide multiple viewpoints and international perspectives. The authors concur with Urban & Palmer (2014), with their statement, "ultimately, meaningful engagement of international students as equal partners in the internationalization of U.S. campuses can contribute to the recruitment and retention of international talent to positively impact institutional internationalization efforts" (p. 321). The researchers recommend further investigation to explore systematic approaches to internationalization and methods to engage international students, particularly women, to become cultural resources.

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