

Chapter 26

Intercultural Dialogue Framework for Transnational Teaching and Learning

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ABSTRACT

This chapter attempts to contribute to the understandings of the internationalization of higher education and the broadening of internationalization paradigms through an exploration of an intercultural dialogue (ICD) framework for transnational teaching and learning. The author highlights a shift from a traditional cross-cultural perspective which emphasizes stereotyped differences between cultures to an intercultural dialogue perspective which acknowledges dynamic interactions between hybrid cultural forces. It examines challenges for transnational higher education and discusses the underpinning theories and five key components of the ICD framework: understanding of learners and contexts, culturally sensitive pedagogy, contextualized curriculum, context-specific assessment, and supportive learning environment. The author's lived experience with transnational education is introduced as a case study against which the ICD framework for transnational teaching and learning is applied. The implications for transnational higher education and curricular and pedagogical issues are also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Transnational education is a key component of the wider phenomenon of the internationalization of education (British Council, 2013). It is at the leading edge of fundamental changes taking place in higher education today (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007). Transnational education (TNE), also known as “offshore education”, “borderless”, or “cross-border” education (Knight, 2005), has increased dramatically over the past two decades. TNE means delivering education where the learners are located in a different country from the one where the awarding institution is based. Cross-border higher education includes higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, program, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders. It encompasses a wide range of modalities, in

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a continuum from face-to-face (taking various forms such as students travelling abroad and campuses abroad) to distance learning (using a range of technologies and including e-learning) (UNESCO and OECD, 2005). In practice, there are many different delivery mechanisms for TNE programs, for example independent provision as well as collaborative provision via joint/double degrees, articulation, franchise and validation arrangements. Some arrangements can involve multiple or overlapping modes of delivery (British Council, 2013). There is also a push in recent years to internationalize curriculum and develop intercultural perspectives and intercultural competence.

The growth of transnational education is often associated with the globalization of economies, marketization, and neoliberalism (Moutsios, 2008; Sidhu, 2007). The growing demand for cross-border education, particularly in Asia-Pacific countries is fueled by the expected advantages brought forth by foreign education in terms of the growing demand for globally mobile labor (Symaco, 2013). Much of the existing literature on transnational education relates to the establishment, operation, regulation of overseas collaborations (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2001, 2007; Stella, 2006), and recently the quest for emerging education hub and internationalization of higher education in Asia (Mok & Yu, 2011; Symaco, 2013).

Increased Internationalization and Australia

International education plays an important role in contemporary higher education in many countries. Education services represent the third largest service export in Australia, the fourth in New Zealand and the fifth in the USA (Naidoo, 2009). Internationalization in Australia has created the “borderless university”, with transnational education courses and services being offered to partner institutions around the world (Feast & Bretag, 2005). All Australian universities are involved, to varying degrees, in offshore activities, and all of Australia’s 38 public universities now offer transnational education programs (Chapman, 2009).

The internationalization of Australian universities in recent decades has seen an unprecedented acceleration of international student enrollment and the strongest growth is in transnational education programs. The latest official statistics (Research Snapshot, 2015) show that over 453,500 international students from 191 countries studied in Australia in 2014. This represented a 10.4% percent increase over 2013 figures. Students from China contributed 26.7 per cent of all international students in Australia, the highest of any nationality. Transnational education involves the education of students located outside Australia by Australian institutions. In 2013, there were 328,402 international students studying in Australian higher education institutions, and 110,116 transnational students represented 33.5% of all higher education international students. The top five home countries of students in transnational education were Singapore, China, Malaysia, Vietnam and Hong Kong (Research Snapshot, 2014).

Purpose of This Work

Some scholars have recently called for a broadening of internationalization paradigms (Maringe, Foskett, & Woodfield, 2013; Maringe & Woodfield, 2013). This wide-ranging conception goes beyond traditional, commercial approaches that have both shaped and responded to human mobility needs and competitive markets. There arises a need to explore ways in which international teaching-learning spaces in higher education can be more inclusive and pedagogically compatible with the increasingly multicultural nature of the new learning spaces. There has been a growing interest in research that focuses in more detail on improving the quality of teaching and learning in an increasingly international and global higher educa-

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