Chapter 46
K–20 Education and Globalization

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ABSTRACT

The stance taken in this chapter is that globalization has become pervasive in every country, and K-20 education can no longer be separated from its influence. The challenge for all educators is to acknowledge both positive and negative influences of globalization on K-20 education, attempt to neutralise the negative influences and optimise any of the benefits of globalization for improved student learning. Looking to the future, globally inspired developments in information and communication technology will increase the likelihood of the influence of globalization on K-20 education becoming even more profound.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization is ubiquitous in the business world. It is unlikely that any single nation can escape its pervading influence. Students, parents/caregivers, teachers, school administrators and academics alike all feel the accelerating influence of globalization, either directly or indirectly, every time they shop and, most commonly, whenever they log on to the Internet. The question addressed in this chapter is whether the pervading influence of globalization has penetrated into the K-20 education sector and, if it has, what are the likely effects. This chapter will define globalization in its educational context, and examine the influence of globalization on K-20 education.

Globalization has many meanings according to the perspective of the audience, but most agree that the term globalisation has a predominantly economic connotation. Knight (2008) proposes the following more broad definition:

Globalization is the process that is increasing the flow of people, culture, ideas, values, knowledge, technology and economy across borders, resulting in a more interconnected and interdependent world. Globalization affects each country in different ways and can have positive and/or negative consequences, according to a nation's specific history, traditions, culture, priorities, and resources. Education is one of the sectors impacted by globalization (p. xi).

A term more commonly used in education is the term internationalization. Again, this frequently used term has multiple meanings for differing audiences. Knight was one of the first writers to define the term internationalization and her definition has stood the test of time reasonably well. Knight defined the term internationalization as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight, 2003, p. 2). Although Knight was writing about adult education, the sections of this chapter which follow will demonstrate that her statement can be seen to apply equally to all components of K-20 education.

Globalization and internationalization are closely related terms and are often used interchangeably in the literature. For the purposes of this chapter they will be treated as linked, internationalization being a response to the educational impact of globalization (Knight, 2003; Thune & Welle-Strand, 2005). Examples of this educational response could include the internationalization of the curriculum and international student mobility (Hayle, 2008), at all levels of K-20 education.

Globalization and internationalization are both processes, but our perception of these processes tends to focus on their effects in education. One

example from many that could be quoted will suffice to illustrate this point, that of student mobility. We see semester abroad programmes being included in many undergraduate degrees and we experience groups of school children visiting other countries as educational institutions attempt to internationalize. These strategies are made possible by the globalization effects of cheaper and more readily available air travel, breaking down of border restrictions between countries and ease of transnational financial transactions, what Knight (1999) saw as the globalization catalysts for the internationalization of education. Fundamental to student mobility is an increasing desire on the part of students, parents/caregivers and educators to experience differences in language, culture and education to obtain a greater understanding of a globalized world, and greater capacity to adapt and succeed in a rapidly changing environment.

The stance promoted in this chapter about K-20 education and globalization, is that education is not immune to the forces of globalization and is struggling to adapt to a globalized world via the process of internationalization of K-20 education. This stance will be developed and explained by firstly examining the contents of the fields that comprise international education literature, then taking selected examples of issues that arise from the globalization of education. The globalization issues selected for discussion are differences between first and third world education, learning international languages and the influence of information and communication technology (ICT), commonly seen in education as the educational process of e-learning.

RESEARCH IN FIELDS RELATED TO THE GLOBALIZATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION

Dolby and Rahman (2008) provide a detailed overview of the literature in fields most related to K-20 education and globalization. Their literature

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