



Transformation of higher education: Internationalization and Indigenization

Learning at Intercultural Intersections
Thompson Rivers University
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Overview:

Land acknowledgement

Panel introductions

- Sonja Knutson, Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Chad Hamill, Northern Arizona University
- Stan Chung, College of The Rockies

Questions and comments

Transforming higher education

Both internationalization and Indigenization advocate for transformation of higher education: both concerned with limitations of mono-cultural perspectives within the academy...both advocate for space for perspectives that are not part of the dominant culture (Deardorff, 2004; Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Smith, 2012).

Both face a university community fatigued by “seemingly endless requests for inclusion be that ‘internationalisation’ or ‘indigenisation’ or some other ‘isation’...” (Howlett et al, 2013, p. 71) often imposed in a top-down approach (Heyl, 2007).

Surface similarities, but underlying theories of internationalization conflict with Indigenous education frameworks...not natural allies.

Theoretical differences

Internationalization is increasingly tied to national goals related to economics and soft power (Trilokekar & El Masri, 2016) and to institutional goals related to finances and rankings. Internationalisation, “driven by globalisation, privileges Western models” (Radford, 2013, p. 55).

Indigenous leadership warns the academic community “about globalization and neo-liberal economic policies and practice” that maintain unequal global relations (Smith, 2012, p. 220).

Indigenization critiques the homogenizing forces of globalized knowledge for “...naturaliz[ing] values such as competition, hyper-individualism, profit, and the externalization of social responsibility ...increasingly influencing the academy” (Kuokannen, 2007, p. 157).

Theoretical differences

Western higher education has emerged as both a gatekeeper of what constitutes knowledge and a generator of new knowledge “dominated by epistemic colonialism” (Archibald, Davis, & Haig-Brown, 2008, p. 2).

Internationalization contributes to constructed binaries of insiders and outsiders, with Dixon (2006) finding the West positioned as providing the ‘gift’ of knowledge, despite the fact that students and countries actually pay for the knowledge. She also found that students expressed the desire to acquire the ‘insider’ knowledge. Australian faculty expressed ethical tensions around their role.

Indigenization of higher education

- Underlying resistance by academic gatekeepers and the "subtleties of gatekeepers' strategies to protect the status quo..."(Mihuesah, 2004, p. 32).
- Academic gatekeeping in scholarly activities, research, publications, promotion and tenure - the "small practices of the institution" (Mihuesah, 2004; Davis, Gaywish, & Van Every-Albert, 2008, p. 181)
- Acceptance of student supports designed by dominant culture (Guido, Chavez, & Lincoln, 2010), which are "primarily about the insiders and how much or how little they will have to adjust their practices and share their privileges in order to "respond" to (by once again determining) outsiders "needs"."(Battiste, Bell, & Findlay, 2002, p. 83).

Internationalization of Higher Education

- Mainstream students: individual development of empathy towards cultural difference, ethical decision-making and good citizenship (Green, 2012; Jaramillo & McLaren, 2008).
- International students, staff and faculty: services and programs help them conform to academic, social and professional norms - perceived as deficient in the skills needed to be successful.
- Tendency to “add services [which] do not facilitate the cultural deconstruction and redesign of daily practice to include cultural norms inclusive of all students” (Guido, Chavez, & Lincoln, 2010, p. 11).

Changing academic culture, instead of expecting individuals to change...

- International students, scholars, faculty are not only vulnerable to academic gatekeeping in the ways experienced by Indigenous peoples, but also have no permanent status within the country. Their experiences return home with them.
- Canada specifically targets international students to become immigrants – they must adapt their identity and practice to the accepted status quo or risk their academic career potential.
- Indigenous scholars Alfred, Smith, Grande, and Kuokkanen advocate resistance to assimilation...not to accept compromising of Indigenous values and knowledge in order to “adhere to academic expectations defined by Western values and knowledge systems” (Garcia & Shirley, 2012, p. 76).

Turning the mirror onto our system

The Indigenous approach promotes transforming policy and practice to true acceptance of different ways of knowing, of worldviews – respectful, reciprocal relationships.

Internationalization activities examined from an Indigenous worldview:
recruitment, study abroad, partnerships, research

If internationalization creates a context of imposition/privileging of one set of values over another, it creates a breakdown in the partnership or relationship, perpetuates inequality and the insider/outsider knowledge.

What can internationalization learn from Indigenization?

Student recruitment - supports – how framed? Do staff and faculty really “see” each student?

Cross-cultural training – how designed? who provides it?

Policies and Regulations, ie codes of conduct – tend to be in “denial stage” of cultural development – culturally loaded terms

Partnership agreements – how worded, who benefits, where is the respect and reciprocity?

Research - what/whose research questions? Who is investigating and how?

Strategic plans – who is consulted? And more importantly at what point are they consulted?

Can we be allies in transformational change?

- Indigenous scholars Mihuesah and Wilson (2004) identify “activism and persistence” (p. 5) as key traits of leadership.
- *Activism*: resistance to a colonizing system – become allies in challenging dominant culture to support Indigenous perspectives in core activities: teaching, learning, engagement and research (Wilson, 2008; Howlett et al, 2013).