

# Introduction: Critical Engagements with the Internationalization of Higher Education

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For the academic with a taste for adventure, an insatiable desire to know and experience a wide range of exotic ‘others’, a willingness to board the entrepreneurial bandwagon, a hankering after airport departure lounges, and an immunity to the effects of long term exposure to radiation at 10,000 metres above sea level, the internationalization of higher education is an enticing and intoxicating cocktail of possibilities. From teaching intensive residential schools off-shore in the ‘glitz and glamour’ of Hong Kong, to educational consultancies in remote Kingdoms ‘lost in time’, to the mad cap intellectual menagerie of massive academic conferences in Montréal, to the exquisite pleasure of witnessing the graduation of one’s on-shore international students, the internationalization of higher education appears to provide increasing opportunities for academics to become global travellers, makers of difference, effectors of personal change, and facilitators of social progress. Indeed, if some programs are to be believed, it provides elusive opportunities to be peddlers of poverty alleviation practices and dispensers of sustainable development. Under internationalization, the world is our oyster, or perhaps, our garden, in which we sow the seeds from the fruits of our academic labours: powerful knowledges, proven (best) practices, and established systems of scholarship, administration and inquiry. Of course, the preceding description is only one reading of the internationalization of higher education, and the main purpose of this volume is to trouble such unproblematized notions and to provide more critical readings and explorations of the process.

Internationalization has been the subject of study and comment in a range of academic fields, including comparative education. The relationship between internationalization and comparative education is both complex and dynamic. For decades, comparative educators have been concerned that the field of comparative education

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should contribute to international understanding, peace, and global interconnectedness. Demiashkevich (1931: 45), for example, expressed a desire that the field would contribute to the enhancement of intercultural relations and the sound conduct of international relations, and would contribute to the avoidance of war as nations learned about each other. Kandel (1933: xxv) hoped the field would contribute to a rational internationalism that would enhance “the work and progress of the world”. Similar sentiments have been expressed by Moehlman (1951), Ulich (1954), Schneider (1955), Woody (1955), Paplauskas-Ramunas (1955), and Butts (1973).

As well as debates over the role of comparative education in promoting internationalism, the field of comparative education has at various times tried to differentiate itself from international education. Kandel (1956: 2), for example, argued that comparative education

should not be confused with the aim of international education, which seeks to promote a common aim – good-will, friendship, brotherhood, peace and so on – among the peoples of the world. The study of comparative education may have a contribution to make towards this aim by showing where and how it may be implemented but it is not itself international education.

In a similar vein, Bereday (1964: ix-x) argued that because of the unique combination of methods and concepts that comparative education employed, it “cannot simply be a part of history of education or of sociology of education or of international education”, although he did suggest that it could contribute to “international understanding” (Bereday 1964: 9). In a later work, Bereday (1967) suggested that there was some overlap between comparative education and international education. Noah and Eckstein (1969: 185-186) suggested that while the early aims of comparative education such as promoting international brotherhood and cooperation [were] “highly laudable” they were “inadequate bases to sustain a field of study”. Later authors, such as Lawson (1975) and Wilson (1994), also sought to strictly differentiate comparative education from international education. Yet other writers, such as Collings (1956: 126) argued that one of the relevant issues for comparative education was “international cooperation for economic and social development, particularly through technical assistance”. Much of this technical assistance occurred through student exchanges such as the Colombo Plan (Auletta 2001), which are often considered a component of international education. Others argued that international education is a subset of comparative education (see, for example, Fletcher 1974), while Arnove (1980: 62), in introducing world systems theory into comparative education, argued that such a move restored the international element to comparative education. It could also be argued that Arnove’s (1980) introduction of world systems theory into the field of comparative education presaged the later emphasis on globalization. More recently, Rust (2002) has editorialized that articles on international education have a proper place in comparative education

journals, as long as they meet certain academic criteria regarding conceptual framing, methods, and originality.

The acceleration of globalization in the last two decades has to some extent rendered obsolete the debates about the differences between comparative and international education. Cultural, economic and political globalization has resulted in, if not the breakdown, then the increased porosity of the nation state, which many comparative education researchers have used and continue to use as a unit of analysis. However, the notion of the discrete nation state able to be studied and compared with other nation states becomes less meaningful as nation states become more socially, culturally, politically, and economically integrated. In addition, the notion of international education comprising primarily international exchanges in order to learn about other countries, or to provide technical assistance in development, is also limited. While some international student exchanges still have these goals, many are based on economic motives. For countries such as Australia, international student recruitment has shifted emphasis from aid to trade. Furthermore, as Harman (this volume) shows, the international dimensions of higher education also embrace practices such as the global movement of teachers and researchers, the diversification of the curriculum, educational programs offered across national borders using new technologies, bilateral and multilateral agreements between universities and the commercial export of education. This appears to be a broader set of activities than envisaged by Knight (1995), who defined international education in terms of incorporating international or intercultural elements into teaching, service and research. The implication for comparative education research is that, as part of its engagement with globalization (see, for example, Stromquist & Monkman 2000, Jones 1999), there needs to be an increased emphasis on the academic study of international education as a practice and of the diverse processes of internationalization. It is this emphasis to which the current volume contributes.

The increasing pace of the internationalization of education is a response to a diverse set of conditions. As Bauman (2002: 231) observes, we live in a “fast globalizing world of crumbling state borders and a worldwide supranational network of capital, knowledge, and knowledge capital”. This has created a perception that international perspectives in all levels of education are imperative, as have global events such as terrorism and protracted regional disputes focused on issues of ethnicity and religion. At the same time, changes to funding regimes for higher education have forced many institutions to engage globally through off-shore programs and increased recruitment of international students. Yet education is an increasingly contested domain as the processes of global destructuring and restructuring continue to empower and disempower a range of education stakeholders. Furthermore, these changes have produced uncertainty at the micro level, or in the everyday practices of systems, institutions, academics and learners. There is now a questioning of the character and quality of the products of the rapid internationalization of education. At the unglamorous ground levels of office and classroom, it could be argued that the internationalization of higher education is

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currently experiencing a moment of exhaustion brought on by increasing workload demands and seemingly insoluble pedagogic and ethical dilemmas. Many programs are simply being sustained by academics' goodwill and passion for teaching. Thus there is a great need for review, renewal and critical insight into current practices of internationalization.

In this volume we attempt to peel back taken-for-granted practices and beliefs (McHoul & Rapley 2001), and "alienate" normalized notions (Søndergaard 2002). Rather than provide a manual on how better to internationalize higher education institutions (see, for example, Cavusgil & Horn 1997, Mestenhauser & Ellingboe 1998, Speck & Carmical 2002), we seek to be intentionally critical of teaching, learning, research and policy. By "critical" we mean that we seek to explore the gaps and silences in current pedagogy and practices, and to address the ambiguities, tensions, unevennesses and contradictions in internationalization. We aim to foreground, and consider the unintended consequences of, the taken-for-granted, and to ask unsettling questions about whose interests are served by the processes of internationalization.

Welch (2002) attempts to distinguish internationalization from globalization, as do Edwards and Usher (2000). In the former case, Welch employs Knight's (1995) relatively narrow definition of internationalization mentioned above, and hence sees internationalization as a relatively benign or positive process, in contrast to globalization and especially "the unfettered global competition of industries and institutions, including the knowledge and culture industries" (Welch 2002: 434). Edwards and Usher (2000), in contrast, view internationalization less benignly, arguing that it comprises "the spread of Western institutions, culture and practices", while globalization is concerned with issues such as hybridity, space and the global-local nexus (Edwards & Usher 2000: 20). This colonial characterization of internationalization is revealed in several of the chapters in this volume. At the same time, many of the works collected here reject these dichotomistic approaches and show how internationalization and globalization are entangled with, rather than distinct from, each other. The space-time compression, electronic information networks, global spread of ideas, cultures, and values, economic integration and so on that many writers identify as aspects of globalization (McGinn 1997, Edwards & Usher 2000, Rizvi & Lingard 2000, Stromquist & Monkman 2000, Langhorne 2001, Carnoy & Rhoten 2002, Torres 2002, Singh 2004) simultaneously aid and are intensified by processes of internationalization. Thus, while the space-time compression of the teaching and learning process is aided by, for example, the existence of web based educational delivery systems, the development and improvement of such systems is driven in part by universities' desire to internationalize their operations. As a result of this entanglement, many of the chapters in this volume frame their analysis of internationalization in terms of processes of globalization.

This book arose from ideas generated at the 30<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Australian and New Zealand Comparative and International Education Society (ANZCIES), which had as its theme "Internationalizing Education in the Asia-Pacific

Region: Critical Reflections, Critical Times” (Ninnes & Tamatea 2002). A number of the chapters are revisions of work first presented at that conference, while the other chapters have been specifically commissioned for this volume.

The chapters proceed through two stages, dealing successively with pedagogy and policy issues. The first set of chapters commences with Michael Singh’s exposition of how internationalization and globalization provide opportunities for creating new kinds of teaching and learning in universities. Drawing on the findings of a major research project with international students, Singh shows how academics can work with/in the incomplete and inadequate concepts and practices of internationalization to construct meaningful and powerful learning communities. In chapter 2, Rajani Naidoo and Ian Jamieson unsettle some of the taken-for-granted assumptions about the pedagogical desirability of virtual learning. They argue that many of the recognized characteristics of effective teaching and learning are difficult if not impossible to reproduce in cyberspace, because virtual learning systems are designed principally to deliver a commodified educational product rather than to engage the learner in deep and profound cognitive or affective change. In chapter 3, Cathie Doherty and Parlo Singh trouble some of the familiar routines and performances of English language classes for international students. Their insightful presentation of data from a research project conducted in Australia and Indonesia demonstrates how practices of internationalization that apparently seek to empower international students are inadvertently contributing to westernization. Next, Anne Prescott and Meeri Hellstén disrupt some of the assumptions about the process of transition of international students into the academic cultures of their host institutions. They argue that the ways in which many international students interpret their initial experiences are quite different to the host academics’ expectations, and Prescott and Hellstén call for a re-thinking of pedagogies that are meant to aid and include international students’ transitions.

The following two chapters provide a case study of internationalization and a review of Australian literature on the process. The case study in Chapter 5 is provided by Rui Yang and focuses on a major Chinese university. His work shows how internationalization policy has impacted on research agendas over three quarters of a century. Of particular interest is the way in which his research reveals the unevenness of internationalization between academic departments, and how internationalization benefits some parts of the university at the expense of others. In the following chapter, Grant Harman provides a rich and detailed review of research into internationalization, pedagogy, practice and policies, conducted in Australian universities. The chapter shows the various approaches that have been used, the kinds of results found, and also the gaps and silences that currently exist in the issues, frameworks and topics that inform contemporary research in this area.

The final chapters of the book explore specific issues pertaining to internationalization policies. In chapter 7, Peter Ninnes presents an alternative reading of a government aid program designed to involve higher education institutions in international development. His analysis shows how the program inadvertently creates

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overly flattering representations of Australia's capabilities and characteristics, while simultaneously representing Australia's neighbours as essentially lacking. Pam Nilan's analysis of an overseas aid scholarship program follows in chapter 8. Nilan reveals how the scholarship recipients use the program for their own purposes, which may be at odds with the purported aims of the program. Furthermore, despite its best intentions, the program contributes to the maintenance of social stratification in the recipient country. In chapter 9, Jan Schapper and Susan Mayson explore a number of management policies and practices related to internationalization in one major university. Their work identifies the ways in which these policies and practices contribute to a deskilling and marginalization of academics and a homogenization of the curriculum. Finally, in chapter 10, Katarina Tuinamuana discusses the implementation of international management practices at a higher education institution in Fiji. Her analysis is particularly important in showing how international practices intersect and interact with local institutions, academic cultures, and bureaucracies with unexpected and unintended effects.

Barring a full-scale revolt by jaded and jet-lagged academics, the internationalization of higher education is likely to continue at an increasing rate. Our hope is that in a small way this volume will contribute to a thoughtful and critical approach by academics, policy makers and administrators to teaching, learning, research and policies of and within the internationalization of higher education.

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