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Global Learning and the Engaging Questions of Globalization

Daniel J. Paracka

While universities can act as important mediators amidst the highly disruptive and contentious change processes of globalization, very few institutions are intentionally fulfilling such a mission. Moreover, there are significant ethnocentric and ideological barriers to overcome before intercultural understanding and cooperation may occur. Nonetheless, universities in the global age are increasingly called upon to help prepare students to better perceive, understand, interpret, translate, and negotiate complex interdependent global contexts. This article examines the significance of several common reactions to the challenges of globalization for teaching and learning in higher education. It also outlines primary areas of focus for global educators who wish to help students and scholars connect local and global issues, develop an ability to effectively and appropriately communicate and interact across cultures, and foster a commitment to social justice and sustainable communities throughout the world. Such efforts require bringing together, across disciplines and communities, diverse perspectives to engage in a process of building shared understanding.

Conceptualizing and Contextualizing Global Learning

Global learning is an educational process aimed at developing greater understanding and appreciation of the complex interdependence necessary for sustaining natural diversity and a healthy human ecology. It requires the ability to work both effectively and appropriately across cultures (Deardoff, 2004). Global learning prepares students to think critically about their values and actions, about issues of identity, and their assumptions regarding others. It strives to help

communities work together across differences and through conflicts. It sees the interaction among natural environments and human cultures as the context in which problem solving occurs. Global learning helps students to better understand a world marked by interdependence, diversity, and rapid change, and teaches them how their actions affect people and places the world over. It teaches them the importance of acting with care and concern for humanity and the environment. Gaining more than a rudimentary understanding of complex global interdependence requires patience, flexible thinking, and the ability to see, understand, and engage multiple perspectives. Global learning is an interdisciplinary undertaking. It attempts to advance and promote ethical leadership, human dignity, multicultural identity, environmental sustainability, and responsible stewardship across cultures and national boundaries.

Global learning requires students and scholars to study other countries and communities and see the connections between local problems and global forces. As Paul Rabinow has stated, students and scholars need to understand “the culturally mediated and historically situated self which finds itself in a continuously changing world of meaning” (1997, p. 6). Addressing important issues and problems on a global scale requires a commitment to dialogue and to shared responsibility and accountability, if mutually appreciated solutions are to be defined and developed. There is a real need for public spaces where such thinking and collaboration can occur. Thus, universities that effectively advance global learning will play an important role assisting communities in mediating and negotiating such contexts. Certainly, the disruptive and complex global changes faced by the world today need to be measured and studied. Furthermore, universities can generate new ideas that question old assumptions about our world.

Today’s world is accompanied by unprecedented and dramatic increases in its human population, agricultural production, industrialization, and trade, thus placing severe stress on the environment and availability of natural resources. While humanity has increased its ability to communicate and interact due to advances in technology and transportation, it is yet to develop shared responsibility for a sustainable system of human ecology. However, universities can utilize modern technologies to improve global research and analysis by bringing diverse stakeholders together from different communities around the planet to share information, knowledge, and perspectives regarding globalization even as they question the means and purpose that have driven the development of such new technology.

Globalization is replete with ambiguity and uncertainty; it is a highly contested process. It is now estimated that one-half of income worldwide is

generated by trade across national borders (U.S. in the World). Within this context, globalization may be seen as a means for hiring cheap labor and therefore threatening jobs in one part of the world but it may also be seen as economic empowerment for people previously mired in poverty. As at least one concerned observer has noted, “proponents of globalization argue that it allows poor countries and their citizens to develop economically and raise their standards of living, while opponents claim that the creation of an unfettered international free market has benefited multinational corporations in the Western world at the expense of local enterprises, local cultures, and common people” (Globalization 101). Understanding the effects of globalization, those benefiting, and how any gains in profit or productivity do or do not translate into improved sustainable living conditions is a critical question for each and every individual, community, nation, and world region. Does the future hold promise or peril? In the postmodern world, which truths will individuals and humanity choose?

In a world of limited natural resources and growing population demands, the imperative to conserve, renew, and recycle is paramount. While knowledge may be viewed as an expansive and transformative resource, it is also threatened. Languages and cultures, like species, are threatened with and have experienced extinction. Indeed, there is a link between threatened habitats, species, cultures, and knowledge. There is value in rediscovering traditional knowledge that links cultures to the natural environment, just as there is value in developing new knowledge aimed at nurturing and preserving the quality of life on the planet. Human knowledge-based resources that could be employed in service to the planet are often underutilized and wasted or used to its detriment.

The Overwhelming Complexities of Globalization

As Bill Gates said at Harvard’s commencement in May 2007, “The barrier to change is not too little caring; it is too much complexity. To turn caring into action, we need to see a problem, see a solution, and see the impact. But complexity blocks all three steps... Don’t let complexity stop you. Be activists. Take on the big inequities” (Gates, 2007). As humans, our interpretation, our understanding of the world is, at best, partial, but that does not mean that we give up trying to understand the world. No doubt, the world is complex and its problems seemingly overwhelming. But complexity, just as it is not an excuse for inaction, it is not a justification for succumbing to simple quick solutions. Demonstrating care and concern for the planet and its inhabitants

requires the ability to engage others across cultures in critical, in-depth analysis of difficult, complex issues. Developing consensus across cultures about such issues takes great skill and commitment. Communicating care and concern for people living in different cultures and communities, including those living half a world away, is critical to a more secure and stable global future.

Sometimes it seems that students want answers from their teachers. They want to be told how to think and about what to think. They often lack information, the skills to acquire information from a variety of sources representing diverse perspectives, as well as the ability to interpret, analyze, or effectively communicate across cultures and from different perspectives. Often students seem to have already made up their minds based on the limited information provided by their immediate circle of friends and acquaintances. They view the world through narrow prisms. Academics do this as well, often missing critical pieces of information in their analysis because they did not consider other fields of inquiry beyond their own disciplinary boundaries. As Paul Houlihan has observed, universities need to learn that,

in the real world there are no strictly scientific, economic, or sociological solutions to complex, vexing problems facing the global community... [Therefore] there needs to be interdisciplinary approaches to these issues by decision makers at all levels. We need to train our students to comprehend that while they may not be an ecologist, or an economist, or a sociologist, they need to understand and appreciate that all these perspectives are important and must be considered in effective decision making processes (2007, p. xv).

To effectively negotiate, understand, and manage globalization requires the ability to employ multiple perspectives. It requires shared leadership and mutual accountability. It requires that universities work across disciplines to connect different societal sectors and natural systems.

The interdependent processes of globalization are complex and its problems often overwhelming. Global processes and problems are not easily managed, controlled, or resolved. Sometimes these processes may be manipulated for specific purposes or for the benefit of particular people with unforeseen consequences. Therefore, many people, rich and poor, urban and rural, fear the myriad changes and challenges of globalization. Furthermore, globalization's complexities and inequities often result in a search for someone to blame rather than a search for solutions or in taking on shared responsibility. In

this article, I examine how the complexity of globalization, the problem of its attribution, the fear of globalization, and finally the waste, scarcity, and inequities of globalization have, to a large degree, become ready-made excuses for inaction and denial of responsibility for the ills of globalization. These common reactions to issues of common concern point to a need for greater social responsibility, shared understanding, and ethical leadership in society and higher education. More than aid or trade, it is through raising awareness and consciousness of global interdependence that diverse communities can bridge differences, demonstrate mutual care and concern, and together build a more sustainable future.

The Problem of Attribution

Historic patterns of exploitation and underdevelopment experienced through colonialism persist in today's global inequities undermining efforts at developing a more shared sense of responsibility. Globalization is not a new phenomenon, rather it seems to have learned to adapt itself and grown more powerful with subsequent iterations of empire, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Persian, Mongol, Chinese, Ottoman, Arab, Incan, Mayan, Aztec, Songhai, Spanish, British, American, etc. (the list is long, non-sequential, and porous), changing and adapting as different cultures come into contact. So much knowledge has been appropriated by the powerful throughout history that it is nearly impossible to accurately attribute origins. The powerful often take credit where it is not deserved and assign blame to victims. History has been rewritten many times. Frederick Buell puts it succinctly thus: in the increasingly global society, "one no longer leaves home confident of finding something radically new, another time or space. Difference is encountered in the adjoining neighborhood, the familiar turns up at the ends of the earth.... The locally produced, authentic culture, is a myth history has invented and used in relations of power, not a description of the world" (1993, p. 58-62). Every nation and culture is a result of inherent borrowing, appropriation, and adoption of different influences. Thus, according to Edward Bruner, "a single real authentic culture does not exist" (2005, p. 93). Cultures co-create as they coexist. It can be said that the only villages anthropologists can study today are global villages.

At the same time, as Winona LaDuke has affirmed, "cultural diversity is as essential as biological diversity to maintaining sustainable societies" (1997, p. 74). For any global village to value human rights and the sustainability of natural systems surely requires the recognition of the critical importance of diversity.

Cultures arose, in part, in response to unique environmental conditions. Now there is great need, real urgency, to connect people and the land, to reintegrate with cultural traditions informed by the land, and to remember what threatens to be lost to history.

Adams and Carfagno argue that without the security of geographic boundaries, “it is necessary to rediscover what creates the bonds between humans that constitute a community” (2006, p. 85). In a world of six billion and growing, globalization provides conditions of anonymity that can be disconcerting and exploited. Anonymity undermines a sense of responsibility and contributes to a sense of insignificance. Today’s modern communities are increasingly multicultural, border-less spaces; many traditional communities including the nation-state feel threatened by and resist this change. Migration in the form of increased urbanization and unprecedented population growth presents serious challenges to building sustainable, caring communities. Both modern cosmopolitan cities and the most traditional rural communities realize the impact of globalization on their existence. Pratap Mehta has asserted that “citizens all over the world worry about the loss of control over their own collective destiny” (2004). Thomas Friedman gives particular voice to this concern noting that “globalization is going to be more and more driven not only by individuals but also by a much more diverse—non-Western, non-white—group of individuals” (2005, p. 11). Within this context, Moises Naim has also asserted that “globalization is empowering individuals and weakening governments” (2005). The nation-state increasingly seems to be an inadequate organizational structure for the more global society. Many nations feel threatened as their ability to manage people, the economy, and the environment are at risk, if ever such capability has really existed. Immigrants especially are targeted as scapegoats for the problems faced by the modern nation-state. Different forms of association, including religious and corporate, move to fill these power vacuums.

In this most recent age of globalization, everyone seems to be looking for someone else to blame. Many would point to multinational corporations and the military industrial complex. However, there is plenty of blame to go around as people everywhere participate in a system that glorifies material acquisition. Wealthy (and not so wealthy) elites around the world share complicity in a system that takes out more than it puts back in, whether this is investing in the environment or in the poor. The environment and the poor tend to be afterthoughts, charities that are supported after necessities are taken care of. Externalized costs, such as healthcare, education, clean air and water, need to be accounted for as part of the real costs of doing business.

Historically, the advancement of capitalist consumptive culture has demanded more and more resources, both natural and human, to grow, thus impinging upon an ever-widening circle of peoples and lands. Modern society has largely promoted and rewarded the act of ownership over caregiving. A healthy, sustainable, and productive lifestyle involves more than subsistence, it is an artistic expression that nourishes the soul as well as the body. Civilization requires dignity, respect, care, and concern.

The world needs a more stable, balanced, and sustainable socioeconomic model of human ecology. One group need not blame another for what no modern society has been able or willing to do, establish a healthy, balanced, reciprocal relationship with the natural world. Globalization is not a rallying call for some utopian society; rather it is a wakeup call to address some serious shortcomings. Global learning is not going to save the world nor is it going to insulate societies from today's problems; it does however represent an opportunity to develop a greater sense of shared understanding, responsibility, interdependence, and integration. Global learning promotes a more forgiving, less absolute perspective than tends to be the case within the modern competitive world. It recognizes the imperfect, complex, negotiated, and connected realities of human existence. The blame game represents an ethnocentric position, essentially denigrating others, which is counter-productive to any kind of shared problem-solving process.

Fear of Globalization: A Problem of Isolationism

Globalization, acting as a leveler (*The World is Flat*), appears to have threatened American society. Lately, for example, the United States government has exploited the politics of fear and promoted consumerism as a means of escape from the challenges of globalization, challenges such as economic competition in the form of cheap labor and quality goods from abroad, immigrants (legal and illegal) taking jobs and requiring public resources, and finally terrorism. Naively, Americans are asked to spend more and keep the economy growing as part of the national response to terrorism. We are not asked to reflect on the efficacy of our consumer behaviors, but rather to increase spending. We are rarely asked, as a nation, to conserve. Equally disconcerting, U.S. nationalistic fear (or fervor) has resulted in a backlash against newly arriving immigrants. The nation seems to have forgotten that we are a country of immigrants. Discriminatory legislation has been proposed (not just in the United States but also in many other countries) aimed at reducing flows of people who actually contribute significantly to economic and cultural exchange worldwide, and

especially among neighboring countries. Migrants can serve as important bridges between cultures.

Of late, concerned citizens of the world have spoken out against U.S. imperialism, militarism and unilateralism. They are concerned about the many international protocols, treaties, and agreements the United States has refused to sign which the majority of the world's countries have supported. Henry Liu states, "Critics have cited the U.S. decision under the Bush administration to withdraw from the ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) Treaty, to violate commitments to the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), to reject the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, to invade Iraq without UN approval and to make other hegemonic military-geopolitical-economic moves" (2006). All of these actions have served to isolate the United States. Isolation does not foster dialogue. It is only through open dialogue that a more complete and shared understanding of both the positive and negative effects of globalization can possibly be reached. Unfortunately, U.S. fears have resulted in the country asserting its military power to protect its interests, a reactionary rather than proactive approach to problem solving. In isolation, we become what others fear, an elite imperialist power.

Waste, Scarcity, and Inequity: The Need for Shared Access and Responsibility

There is more than enough food produced on this planet to feed everyone. Unfortunately, more often than not, unsustainable lifestyles are promoted as the norm while the poor continue to lack access to basic resources necessary to meet their basic needs. Waste, scarcity, and inequity are problems of poor stewardship, management, and governance. The global society needs better systems of production and distribution, systems that conserve energy and restore resources, systems that recycle and replenish, and it needs clearly communicated, transparent rules and regulations. Often, this involves developing localized solutions to global problems, but it does not mean freedom to act with impunity.

Inequity poses the greatest threat to maintaining peaceful, sustainable communities. It undermines good public policy, collective decision making, and the social institutions critical to healthy democratic societies. Philip Altbach and Jane Knight, two leading international education researchers, have observed: "Globalization tends to concentrate wealth, knowledge, and power in those already possessing these elements. International academic mobility similarly favors well-developed education systems and institutions, thereby compounding existing inequalities...Northern institutions and

corporations own most knowledge, knowledge products and IT infrastructure” (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 291). In addition to the inequalities that separate institutions in the generally wealthier North from the poorer South, within most underdeveloped countries, educational opportunities are vastly unequal thereby further widening and perpetuating inequities of opportunity. Under such circumstances, human potential is wantonly wasted. Universities can play an important role in finding better ways to share resources and broaden access while also promoting conservation and preservation.

Too often, those who oppose exploitation are labeled terrorists, shunned, and ostracized rather than engaged in dialogue. Employing dehumanizing or demonizing terms does nothing to address the root causes of conflict, the basic global problems (e.g., population growth, poverty, disease, and hunger) that are directly related to land use and access to natural resources (e.g., clean air and water, bio-diversity, nutritious food sources, minerals, and energy). It is imperative that governments, businesses, communities, and individuals recognize the interconnected nature of these issues—arms control with maintaining peace, enhancing security with alleviating poverty, and managing resources cooperatively, responsibly, and equitably. Poverty and violence thrives where people lack a voice, representation, participation, and a sense of belonging.

Growing inequities coupled with increased resource scarcity presents great cause for concern. As the World Health Organization (WHO) director-general Gro Harlem Brundtland has remarked, “there are no impenetrable walls between the healthy, well-fed and well-functioning world and the sick, undernourished and poor world” (Adams & Carfagno, 2006, p. 39). Historically, the poor and disenfranchised have found ways to make their voices heard. For example, the Atlantic slave trade was finally defeated as it was increasingly understood that free labor was more profitable than slave labor and as European powers realized that providing security in the face of recurring slave rebellions was forcing them into bankruptcy.

Providing social services and educational opportunities is much more beneficial and far less costly than waging war. Prior to the invasion of Iraq, the United States spent about \$300 billion annually on its military budget, while the United Nations estimated that the additional cost of achieving and maintaining universal access to basic education for all, reproductive health care for women, adequate food for all, basic health care for all, and clean water and safe sewers for all was roughly \$40 billion a year (Peterson, 2002, p. 27). Current estimates of annual assistance needed for heavily-indebted, underdeveloped countries to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals are \$100 billion. Some estimates for the financial cost of the Iraq war exceed \$2 trillion.

Staggering wealth and abject poverty exist, side by side, all around the world. A lot is wasted. It is waste that causes want. As noted by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, "the wealth of this minority of nations is rooted in the poverty of many" (2006, p. 36). The wealthy cannot disarm distrustfulness or resentment by throwing money at problems and avoiding real engagement in problem solving. Money has often been thrown at problems for some political gain, for appeasement, or on behalf of an ideological stance. As Joseph Stiglitz has observed, "too often, the IMF and World Bank have made decisions based on ideology and politics" (2003, p. x). Rarely are resources focused on or reserved for long-term care and sustainability. There are no quick fixes. Solutions cannot parachute in. It takes time to develop care, concern, empathy, and trust between peoples, especially people (previously or still) in conflict. As such, cross-cultural knowledge is to be nurtured, if it is to take root and become meaningful. This means leaving the safety and isolation of what is familiar to engage others, living different lives in different places, engaging in global learning.

Social Responsibility and Ethical Leadership

Through globalization's movement of people and ideas, and the creativity that accompanies intercultural relations, not just a few people have learned to exercise greater tolerance, respect, and appreciation for differences as well as to realize the potential synergies that lie in a broader (less ethnocentric) sense of belonging and of justice. The question is how to extend this awareness to wider segments of the world's population? In this next section of the article, I will examine the pressing need for socially responsible, ethical leadership in mediating processes of globalization and the role of higher education in helping to meet this need.

Globalization can certainly be said to have shed light on unethical and irresponsible business practices. What one group may have been able to get away with in one part of the world, will no longer easily pass in another. Moreover, ethical business decisions make for good business decisions. As profit is generated and reinvested (recirculated) in socially responsible ways, its benefits are compounded. Unfortunately, the cultures that have traditionally valued living with nature (and without much waste) have been marginalized, impoverished, driven to extinction. Their ways of life undervalued and misunderstood by more powerful, wasteful and consumptive groups of people interested in acquisition, growth, and conquest. Throughout the world but especially in underdeveloped nations, small farming communities have been forced to introduce new crops for export rather than specializing in

the production of indigenous food crops for local consumption. The energy footprint of moving food and products long distances is extremely costly and only recently been given consideration. Hitherto, these costs have not been considered. Regionally specialized indigenous food crops in non-industrial regions of the world could serve and develop their own local niche markets; however, these products often cannot compete with imported subsidized crops from wealthier nations. Thus, small scale family farming is disappearing.

As young people are enticed by the promises of a better life in the global economy and seek to increase their purchasing power, they leave the farms for the cities and their traditional home for distant lands. They stop caring for the earth so that they may consume more of the so-called modern conveniences. They are sometimes lured by false promises only to find themselves enslaved and/or in debt (Batstone, 2007). They seek greener pastures but there are serious risks for such migrants. Immigrants are among the world's most vulnerable populations, often deprived of their basic human rights and sometimes criminalized.

Values of peace and justice are the ethical basis for global educators. Peace rests on the humanitarian ethic of doing no harm and justice rests on the political ethic of fairness. These values at times seem to come into conflict. Social responsibility in today's world means protecting minority rights, the marginalized majority poor, and future generations through engaging in environmentally and economically sustainable activities. Societies need to learn to preserve and conserve at least as much as they consume. Developing new technologies to clean the environment and harness natural power sources such as wind, water, and solar may be costly in the short term but can also drive new job creation and promote economic sustainability in the future. According to many experts, a lean supply chain is supposed to reduce waste. It is considered effective and efficient. A socially responsible supply chain would be appropriate and sustainable. The provision of goods and services understood in a long-term perspective, appropriately taking into account the health and sustainability of communities would be sure to provide for basic sanitation, health care, and educational needs. Business and industry have a responsibility to close the loop and replace (renew) what they have taken out. This applies to human as well as natural resources.

There is a need for a global polity to complement the global economy. This does not mean that governments simply ally themselves with big business to ensure their survival. Presently, there are few, if any, effective global governing bodies. There is a need for more effective global rules and regulations to provide for public goods, protect the global environment, manage global financial risks, and encourage fair trade and competition. Because global rules have tended to

reflect the interests of the rich, poor countries and poor people need to have a greater voice within global forums such as the IMF, the World Bank, and World Trade Organization. There is also a need for better surveillance of rich countries' commitments and adherence to fair rules.³⁵ For example, as Joseph Stiglitz has noted, too often, "western countries have pushed poor countries to eliminate trade barriers, but kept up their own barriers preventing developing countries from exporting their agricultural products and so depriving them of desperately needed export income" (2003, p. 6). Accountability, the protection of minorities, and the rule of law are the essential elements for the good governance needed to establish trust and encourage wider participation in the political process (Barber, 1992, p. 6).

Good faith governance, rule of law, and low levels of corruption are some of the primary determinants for economic confidence and investment. Transparency and mutual accountability are also essential to cooperation in such an open system. Cooperation is a necessary prerequisite if win-win scenarios are to be realized among people or nations trying to emerge from poverty or alleviate conflict. The blame game works for politicians and may be psychologically comforting, but it does little to change the status quo.

Communities appreciate the interconnectedness of well-being. Peter Hershock notes that leadership in the 21st century requires "skills for initiating, sustaining and qualitatively enhancing shared meaning making...among plural actors and perspectives" (2007, p. 12). According to Suarez-Orozco, "the main forces that define globalization in education today are: increasing diversity, increasing complexity, the premium on collaboration, the need to take multiple perspectives on problems, and the premium on moving across language and cultural boundaries" (2005, p. 211).

It is possible to summarize the discussion in this section with the following statement by Norma McCaig:

At a time when the term globalization carries both positive and negative connotations worldwide and international cooperation is vital to the health of the planet and its people, the leadership of persons whose vision and experience extends beyond borders is critically needed (2002, p. 10).

The more we know about other countries and cultures, the better we will understand our own. To be truly effective, communication is a reciprocal process of interaction and engagement, not a shouting match or statements to the press. Cross-cultural learners understand the need to suspend judgments,

to listen to, and develop trust with those whom they have previously not known, distrusted, or feared. As Elizabeth Minnich has emphasized, “it is only when our self definition is built on exclusions and de-valuations of others that those others threaten us, revealing the circular reasoning of prejudice” (1990, p. 173). Shared leadership is appropriate in a global context. This is the reason that global learning has become a critical component of higher education today.

Global Learning: Bridging Boundaries

Within historiography, according to some observers,

the dynamic interplay of cultures and civilizations—interaction, sharing, clash, and conflict—replaced what had functioned as the organizing narrative of earlier generations of courses: ‘a view of history as the evolution of human freedom’ from Athens through Rome, England, and to the United States. The United States and Western Europe were de-centered in this curriculum; neatness and order gave way to mixing and complexity. (Hovland, 2006, p. 2)

Today within this new paradigm U.S. diversity is increasingly understood and taught as the historical result of multiple overlapping diasporas created by an evolving process of globalization. If this approach is being successfully actualized, then it would follow that the United States would be better prepared to interact within an increasingly diverse and globally interdependent world. Unfortunately, the realities do not match the rhetoric. Edward Graham noted that,

[O]n the whole we [the U.S.] have dealt with other cultures to change them (missionary and immigrant assimilation experiences) or to defend against some threat they posed (war and cold war experiences). Insularity and pragmatism have pretty much defined and delimited the internationalization of U.S. curricula...American society is yet at some distance from the idealistic objective of consciously educating its young to be citizens of the world and acting on that premise (1991).

Sadly, Adams and Carfagno also have found that “American universities, with all their talent, resources, and scholarly activities, continue to graduate significant numbers of students who are less than well-informed about the world outside

the United States and who have difficulty with even the most elementary issues of international business and intercultural functionality” (2006, p. 206). Thus providing evidence that “while many view schools in general and universities in particular as hotbeds of radicalism and springboards for change, the reality is that educational institutions are...most likely to resist change” (Adams & Carfango, 2006, p. 171). For example, public universities may question the legitimacy or necessity to fund international travel for teaching and research. They may not have planned strategically to set aside funds for such purposes.

Such resistance is the challenge faced by global educators. Innovative thinking is needed to answer the new challenges that globalization presents. Innovation flourishes within open, democratic spaces where knowledge producers, managers, and users across society work in partnership. It requires a meeting of minds among diverse stakeholders. Therefore, global networking and partnering between universities, businesses, and government organizations is crucial for innovation. According to Richard Levin, president of Yale University,

[A]s never before in their long history, universities have become instruments of national competition as well as instruments of peace. They are the locus of the scientific discoveries that move economies forward, and the primary means of educating the talent required to obtain and maintain competitive advantage. But at the same time, the opening of national borders to the flow of goods, services, information and especially people has made universities a powerful force for global integration, mutual understanding and geopolitical stability (2006).

Universities can help level the playing field as well as reward excellence. Universities offer the open academic space necessary to critically assess research results and address overarching issues beyond the special interests of particular groups or organizations. Few other institutions are better situated to offer conditions conducive to free and unbiased discussion of development and progress (Hansen & Lehmann).

However, education has also been used as a tool of oppression. Knowledge is power and withholding access to education has been a strategy employed by oppressive regimes. Ideas do not always flow freely. Undoubtedly, the most open societies are characterized by their ability to provide broad-based educational opportunities and academic freedom. Enhancing the quality of education requires open access to the sharing and testing of ideas through critical,

comparative analysis and application. Unfortunately, the more ethnocentric and immediate need to protect national security or competitive advantage often overrides the need for dialogue or for mutually agreed upon solutions to complex global problems.

Knowledge is power is a phrase worth repeating. According to Thomas Friedman, “more people are able to communicate, interact, and collaborate with each other today from anywhere on the planet than ever before” (2005, p. 71). Knowledge communities linked globally through the Internet are able in theory to involve more people and perspectives in their decision making processes. However, this is yet to be fully realized. Again Adams and Carfagno have asked “try to imagine what globalization can mean to half of humanity that has never made or received a telephone call” (2006, p. 38). Most people in the world neither own a computer nor have ready access to the internet. The vast majority of people at the grassroots level do not have access to all the technologies or education necessary to access the wealth of information available. Lack of access to education, including civic-minded human rights oriented education and protections, places the poor in the most vulnerable position. According to the U.N., “The poorest 40 percent of the world’s population accounts for 5 percent of global income. The richest 20 percent accounts for three-quarters of world income” (UNDP, 2007, p. 25).

No single segment of society can successfully negotiate today’s complex interdependent world alone. International students and scholars studying global issues who want to help find solutions will need to be critically aware of the different roles and perceptions of local, national, and international stakeholders. Erica Bornstein has noted that “conflicts [especially] arise in issues of international versus national governance when, for example, international demands voiced by NGOs for human rights and environmental conservation compete with state control over citizens and natural resources” (2005, p. 67). In the 1990s, as donor agencies lost confidence in impoverished governments, which were also downsizing and cutting back on the provision of social services, donors increasingly invested in NGOs which were seen as working more at the grassroots level and therefore more capable of delivering services to the most needy. However, a real power imbalance exists between international donors and these mostly small scale NGO recipients of aid. How do the wealthy invest in the poor? Who mediates the process? As Jim Igoe has described, power in such contexts is linked to “flows of funding from global sources to local institutions... in which differentially empowered actors negotiate a constantly shifting terrain of institutions and discourses in pursuit of the material resources

necessary to support their livelihoods, interests, and worldviews” (2005, pp. 142-143). It is a much manipulated environment. For example, does anyone benefit in the following case described by Lindsey Moore,

The WTO responded by coming out against the subsidizing of [cotton] goods on the world market. Officials proposed an elimination of all cotton subsidies over a period of three years (2004-2006) in the form of gradual decreases...Unfortunately, the U.S. is not complying with the WTO's directive...The United States support [through subsidies] of the [US] cotton industry contradicts its spoken principles of liberalization and free trade, and goes against its commitment to the WTO and the objectives of the DOHA negotiations...American taxpayers are contributing \$37 million in foreign aid to Mali in an attempt to help mitigate the suffering of the 70% of the rural population living below the poverty line. However, U.S. taxpayers are simultaneously financing subsidies that cause Mali to lose \$43 million in falling export prices (2007, p. 185).

It is estimated that the developed (OECD) countries provide \$350 billion annually in subsidies to their domestic agricultural producers, most of which are large companies. What if these funds were set aside to promote agricultural research partnerships? Or invested in underdeveloped areas and in the building blocks of civil society—healthcare and education? Importantly for this essay, how do universities with vastly different access to financial, human, or natural resources work together to tackle issues of joint concern? Certainly, university partnerships that link institutions to address global issues make strategic sense, finding common ground is a critical first step in their success.

According to Kevin Hovland, “Today’s students are faced with issues that are increasingly defined in global terms: environment, development, health, disease, peace, security, resources, inequity, human rights, and freedom. These issues do not respect national borders, nor do they fit neatly within existing academic disciplines or divisions” (2006, p. 11). Understanding other cultures requires multidisciplinary perspectives and interdisciplinary analysis. What is most needed is to study together, more often and more closely. At the university level, institutionalizing global learning means that it is a part of all units and degree program offerings (Mestenhauser, 2003, pp. 165-213). Every discipline needs to take into account global realities. Students and scholars can achieve much more by moving beyond the boundaries of a discipline to engage in

interdisciplinary global studies. Universities need to promote the development of Global Studies and not leave such programs to the exclusive purview of doctoral research institutions. All institutions of higher learning can teach the content and skills necessary to live responsibly and successfully in the global society. This is especially true when universities effectively partner across national boundaries to conduct joint research, deliver classroom instruction, and collaborate on joint projects. It cannot be emphasized enough, that understanding complex global interdependence requires bringing together diverse perspectives and stakeholders (Hershok, 2007, pp. 10-26).

An Institution's Approach: Global Learning for Engaged Citizenship

Today's universities need to articulate what it means to be globally educated, infuse such global learning throughout the curriculum and campus life, effectively and appropriately partner with institutions abroad, and incorporate global learning into their strategic plans. Kennesaw State University (KSU) has worked closely with ACE over the past five years employing such a process (Green & Olson, 2003).

At KSU, a widely representative leadership team established a process to promote faculty, staff, and student ownership, frame the conversation for the campus, and enhance collaboration and connectivity across colleges, disciplines, and units to define and advance global learning. The leadership team includes faculty from all of the colleges on campus including those specializing in assessment, general education, curricular review, and global learning. It also includes top leadership demonstrating support from upper administration and keeping the team's work visible and in the minds of diverse institutional leaders and decision makers. In articulating global learning outcomes the team conducted a literature review, administered campus surveys, and convened focus groups. By first specifying global learning outcomes and reviewing campus learning opportunities to see if they are adequately addressing global learning, the campus could then begin to assess student achievement against these outcomes and make improvements based on the findings. At KSU, global learning outcomes were built into accreditation and assessment processes. Alumni, businesses, and community organizations have also been invited to provide feedback on the efficacy and value added dimensions of global learning. KSU has also shared these ideas with its partners abroad.

Over the past five years, KSU has engaged in multiple iterations of this process providing continuous assessment through built-in feedback loop mechanisms. KSU has used this information to improve its practices and

curriculum. Most recently, KSU followed this process to develop a quality enhancement plan (QEP) for re-accreditation focused on the topic of “global learning for engaged citizenship.” The QEP aims to improve global learning at KSU by ensuring that: global learning is assessed as an annual institutional priority; global learning outcomes are infused across the curriculum and co-curricular activities; global learning opportunities available to students are expanded and enriched; the number of global learning specialists among the faculty, staff, and administration increases; the University’s financial investment to its global learning programs and initiatives increases; technology is used to improve global learning; and the creation of a rewards system for students in the form of global engagement certification be implemented. Progress on all of these measures is being made and continues to be tracked and assessed.

KSU has defined global learning for engaged citizenship as an educational process that enhances one’s competencies for participating responsibly in the diverse, multicultural, international, and interdependent world. The global learning for engaged citizenship QEP means that there will be more courses with global learning content, more co-curricular global learning opportunities, additional education abroad opportunities, increased funding for education abroad and local global learning experiences, availability of “Global Engagement Certification,” more global learning professional development opportunities and campus leadership roles in global learning.

Tracking of the global engagement certifications over time will not only yield information on the growth of student participation in global learning opportunities and achievements, but also their distribution across the degree programs and colleges at KSU. KSU’s global learning outcomes serve as the driving force that sets the direction for the QEP’s improvement of student learning. Multiple assessment strategies, involving direct and indirect measures, will be employed to not only evaluate the strength of student achievements in global learning outcomes, but also the breadth of KSU’s educational impact on global learning campus-wide. KSU’s approach aims to strengthen the alignment of student learning outcomes at the degree program level with the QEP’s global learning outcomes.

Moving Forward

Institutions of higher learning, places of privilege, have a lot to still learn about the world. Universities need to connect with partners in their local communities and around the world, form teams, listen, and work together. Universities, if they want to contribute to a more stable, peaceful, and sustainable

world, would not only seek university partners abroad in countries that are hot prospects for growth or are already well-developed but also intentionally seek out partners in countries that are faced with serious economic and social issues, especially those countries that are immediate neighbors. Only through direct engagement with these issues can we truly understand their global dimensions and implications. Such relationships require financial investments, commitment to sustained engagement, and mutual responsibility, and accountability. These partnership relationships also need to extend beyond the limited impact of one or two researchers working together. Internationalizing the curriculum and strengthening international partnerships are two of the most important and effective means for enhancing global learning.

A globally relevant education emphasizes the development of multicultural communities centered on respect for differences as well as the ability to address equitably and cooperatively common problems affecting humanity. Today's intercultural and international university classroom can serve as a proving ground for the emerging global society. It is a place where conflicts may be resolved and mutual understanding established. It is a place where issues of global concern can be studied and acted upon. Such global classrooms involve critical thinking and assessment that can help turn disdain into respect, neglect into care, weaknesses into strengths, and failure into success. Bringing together different people from around the world and within local communities, especially people occupying different levels of socioeconomic status, requires great thought, effort, and outreach. Universities that venture out beyond their domestic ivory towers and provide leadership and guidance as they observe, listen, learn, interpret, assess, analyze, and evaluate will be better able to help communities find more effective and creative means for understanding, sharing, and implementing solutions to the complex global problems facing humanity.

The complex relationships and unique multicultural confluences of the many various world regions deserve careful attention, if humanity and the planet are to flourish and thrive together. We need a more globally-minded civil society that stops blaming victims as terrorists, that stops wasteful over consumption, that nurtures the diversity of life, conserves precious resources, and respects human dignity. It is an exciting time and critical moment in the development of global studies, and we are hopeful at KSU that we are laying the foundation from which we can make substantive contributions. Envisioning a future with less fear, less blame, and less divisiveness requires acting today to build deeper connections and greater understanding across cultures.

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Endnotes

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