Internationalization of higher education systems

Fatemeh Behjati Ardakani, Mohammad Hossein Yarmohammadian, Ahmad Ali Foroughi Abari, Koroush Fathi

Abstract

Today curriculum planners have tend to plan to internationalize the higher education systems in most countries around the world. The objective of this article is to study and compare the efforts in different countries for the Internationalization of the higher education. This article is a comparative study which uses a qualitative content analysis with inductive category development, studying and comparing of different approaches and plans for the Internationalization of curriculum of the higher education (including strategies, programs, activities and methods of teaching and learning) in countries like the United states America, Canada, Australia and Japan.

Keywords: Internationalization; higher education; curriculum development; educational systems; comparative study.

1. Introduction

Today, internationalization of higher education is considered as an efficient strategy to fulfill the various needs of the international community. Any international plan should not only be internationalized but also reflect the suitable features and expectations of the local and national community. International curriculum is in fact the most important aspect of the internationalized higher education systems. Such curriculums make use of scientific approaches, methodologies and strategies which are effective in planning the programs and educational courses, furthermore these curriculums also analyse the content of the native culture and knowledge and not only teach language, culture and history but also analyse the characteristics of other nations and the development of global labour force (Motlow State Community College, 2006a,b; Galligan, 2008). Internationalization deals with the issues like learning and teaching, education, evaluation, professional development, the measurement and the quality of graduates. It's also concerned with the values and intercultural understanding and can be considered within the usual educational programs, in the higher education, or in the training courses for the researchers or academic members of the universities.

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According to a general classification, the reasons for internationalization can be summed up in three political, economic and cultural fields. In today's world politically education especially the higher education considered as the fourth aspect of the foreign policy (Air, 1992). Culturally, the most important goal for internationalization of the higher education is to extend the values and principles of the national culture of the countries to the world community. (De wit, 2002). And, economically, international higher education is the main source of both short-term and long-term income in different countries. In general, universities are considered as the main measure of progress in a country and provide the basis for the dynamic competition of a country in the region and in the world. Thus, strengthening the international aspect of higher education is the strengthening of a country in the regional and international competitions too. The objective of the present research is to study and compare strategies, plans and activities which are suitable for the internationalization of the curriculums, teaching and learning methods of higher education in countries such as the U.S.A, Canada, Australia and Japan.

2. Research method

This research is a comparative study which uses a qualitative content analysis with inductive category development. It includes techniques for analysing and comparing systematic contexts, organizing the results, the observations, the interviews and the contexts. In the inductive category development the attitudes and findings are studied at first, and then final conclusion is made. (Mayring, 2000). Thus, the data is primarily extracted and gathered through search motors of Google, yahoo, AltaVista, Google scholar, find article, written and electronic library sources sending e-mails, and the data basis for the internationalization of higher education curriculum in the selected countries. After reviewing the literature of the research in the universities of selected countries, the strategies, plans and activities of these countries, including the U.S., Canada, Australia and Japan for the Internationalization of the higher education and learning and teaching methods have been compared and analysed and finally the total conclusion has been presented in the tables.

3. Results

3.1. Internationalization of higher education curriculum in the United States of America:

Infusing international content to the curriculums

According to the American international-intercultural association of education, is the best way of international education within the existing curriculums which raises the student learning through increasing his knowledge and understanding of the international problems such as familiarity with the culture of the nations.

Furthermore, international content for the existing courses can lead to positive conveyance of values, attitudes, and the students, knowledge about the people, systems, cultures, and different nations. Such opportunities let the students understand the slight difference of the position of their own culture and the hypotheses occupied in the larger international content (American Council on International Intercultural Education, 2006). Green (2005) states that students should gain skills and international knowledge in the campus and in classes. Basic international learning courses include those courses with universal and international subjects, learning foreign languages, or establishing courses which are not particularly international, but emphasize on international issues. Therefore, the main goal of internationalization has been expressed the development of student learning by various cultural views for the preparation of the students in order to achieve a position in a world community through Infusing international
approach to the existing curriculums. Hayward (2000) states the main place for the international learning for the American students is the class.

3.2. Internationalization of curriculums in universities and colleges of Canada:

Training of international graduates

Since the Association of universities and colleges of Canada started to study the internationalization topic their main reason and justification was preparing knowledgeable and informative students. So, it was natural that the aspects of international in the curriculum and the learning teaching process to be considered as a strategic priority in curriculum universities.

The internationalization of curriculum provides a means with the Canadian students to develop their international skills and attitudes. (The Association of universities and colleges of Canada, 2000). The head of the international department from York University in Canada, Schubert (2009), states learning a foreign language is a valuable skill for the students to be employed in foreign countries and it is also a means to serve multicultural citizens in Canada. (AUCC, 2000). Attracting international and Canadian academic members who know foreign languages and have international experiences is a valuable asset for any university.

In order to internationalize their academic members, universities may increase their research opportunities in foreign countries, or let the students make use of new educational technologies in order to develop their necessary skills for the analysis and solving, assessing the problems of the world community. The internationalization of curriculum provides a suitable teaching process for the international students in universities and prepares a path for the Canadian students to develop their universal skills and attitudes in their country. (AUCC, 2000).

3.3. The internationalization of curriculum in Australia:

A globalized native curriculum

The relationship between internationalization and remaining native curriculum in Australia follows the principle that internationalization is a response to the globalization. Any international program should be combined with a proper local program and internationalization should focus on the local and international circumstances. (Galligan, 2008). Establishing theoretical and practical majors in cultural and global issues is related to the students’ capacities. Thus, it is required to have a pattern in order to put the quality of the graduates within the curriculum (including global citizen and cultural literacy). The skill and the cultural literacy can be performed in different levels of courses and programs. The following objectives are effective to provide opportunities for the students:

Understanding the local and national issues like multicultural and native issues, finding out various international issues, being able to deal with various groups, cultures, people, and different values, changing the learning, teaching plans including the flexibility of the curriculums, the vertical incorporation of curriculum with certain sources for the internationalization reviewing the programs and courses and controlling. The purpose of this plan is to provide a linear process, flexibility, and the vertical incorporation of curriculum with certain sources.

The internationalization of learning is composed of the following subdivisions:
Establishing a framework for the internationalization of the curriculum in the courses and programs, evaluating other universities, preparing a series of internationalized curriculum with samples from each college, samples from other universities and establishing web-sites, developing ways for exposing, reviewing and assessing the course level, developing professional programs including workshops about cultural knowledge (Bell, 2008; Delvin 2006).

3.4. The internationalization of curriculum in Japan universities:

Passing from traditional internationalization

The internationalization of curriculum in Japan's universities has been defined as a process of planning and performing the programs with beyond-nationality approach (Hung, 2007). The internationalization of curriculum in Japan's universities includes all kinds of curriculums which are prepared for the local and foreign students.

New forms of internationalization of curriculum in Japan's universities include flexible international programs, flexible international institutes and virtual courses (Takeda, 1999).

4. Conclusion

The Comparison of the strategies in the four countries of the US, Canada, Australia and Japan (table 1) indicates that the most important strategy in these countries is the internationalization of the curriculum and learning, and supplementing international content to the existing curriculums and the geographical movement of teachers and students in exchange plans is less considered. Most of these countries also focus on their own native. Local and national curriculums in order to develop them throughout the world.

An internationalized curriculum can be practical and performable when there is a possibility of expression and planning of various cultures in it. While respecting the rights and values of the nations, it makes the students ready for the global market, encourages active citizens of the world to take part in the international scenes, and promotes effective communicative skills, and ability of problem solving, and the philosophical spirit which is required to make multi-cultural harmony. Educationally, it's justifiable that the university doesn't prepare student for life, job, and business in the international tasks. However, it's more important that the university provides a means for the students to gain international literacy.
Table (1) a comparison of internationalization of higher education curriculum in the selected countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name of country</th>
<th>Name of programs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Teaching multi-cultural topics, cultural and ethnic studies, language learning, international, national, and local seminars and conferences, employing international academic members, the agreement of the text content with the international content</td>
<td>Formation of training workshops for the teachers and academic members, determining syllabuses of curriculums under the headings of understanding the history of communities, their physical and geographical environments, values, institutes, language and cultural traditions of those communities, understanding the relationship between modern global community in cultural legal, political and economic relationships with other nations, understanding various aspects of culture about human problems and knowing the role of culture in the formation of those aspects and attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Sharing with other institutes to teach languages, supervising the international experiences of academic members setting intercultural international learning within scientific programs.</td>
<td>Employing Canadian academic members who have international experience and know different languages, supporting the vocational development of academic members, forming workshops about international issues, supplying teaching subsides and research subsides of the academic members, introducing new means of teaching, for example scenario, web-technology, video conferences about international issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Annual evaluation of the courses and programs about internationalization promoting intercultural understanding through educating programs for the teachers and students, encouraging the use of international students as a source of setting a framework for internationalization of curriculum in the courses and programs level, evaluating other universities to receive procedure.</td>
<td>Working with various groups, cultures, people and different values Internationalizing the students in the college campus and through virtual education, preparing a series of internationalization of curriculum with samples from each college, samples from other universities, setting web sites, developing ways for exposing reviewing and evaluating the courses, developing vocational programs including workshops about cultural knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Japanese education. English teaching, short-term exchange, awarding degrees, educating international students before and after their entrance.</td>
<td>Awarding B.A degrees such as dual degrees coordination with countries which are sharing in these cases, Using online experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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