Global Issues INST 200

Educating The Globe

Steps Towards an Internationalized Education System

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The age of technology is bringing about new and ever changing opportunities for people, organizations, and governments to interact across national and continental borders. As the professional generations in nations around the world are learning and creating this system of globalization, it is fundamental to the success of the global economy that the international community takes strong steps towards an education system that is fully integrating international policies and programs. This paper will first analyze the current state of globalization and internationalism and then propose steps for nations to take in order to bring their current education system to a competitive place in the future of globalized education.

According to Yong Zhao in "A World at Risk: An Imperative for a Paradigm Shift to Cultivate 21st Century Learners", the world is currently facing significant risks that impair our ability to successfully and effectively reform education. First, the world is facing a record breaking youth unemployment rate. Zhao references a 2015 article from The Economist in which they state that "Nearly half of the world's young people are either outside the formal economy or contributing less productively than they could" (Zhao 131). This statistic outlines the struggle of nations around the world to prepare the young people in their nation for the global economy. Furthermore, it addresses the magnitude of the disaster that is youth unemployment. This problem is disproportionately affecting youth in the Middle East and in North Africa where "1 out every 4 youth aged 15-25 are jobless" (Zhao 131).

Zhao goes on to sketch a picture of the lack of substantial employment of college graduates in the global community. Large numbers of graduates in nations such as Korea, China and The United States are left working in positions that historically have not required a college degree or are left without employment all together.

Possibly the risk factor discussion with the most impact on this paper is Zhao's discussion of a global shortage of talent. As the world sees more and more unemployed youth, skilled positions remain unfilled as a result of a global talent shortage. Zhao references Has Global Skills Index 2013 when he says "Out of the 30 world's major economies, 18 are experiencing talent shortages" (Zhao 131). When looking specifically at the United States talent shortage, Zhao states that "25 million workers will be needed to add to the U. S. talent base to sustain its economic growth. " (Zhao 131)

The global talent shortage combined with substantial global youth unemployment rates makes for a frustrated global future. These two risk factors present a paradox that is intent on prohibiting the further growth of the globalized economy. To best continue the growth and interaction within nations around the world, these two symbiotic risk factors must be addressed by way of the global education system.

The current state of the world's education system is heavily reliant on standardized tests at each level of a student's community. Students today are tested to meet local standards, state standards, national standards, and, when looking at college applications, international standards. The highest jurisdiction of these standards is the jurisdiction of the international community. In order to truly internationalize the education systems of the world, the standards of the international education systems must be adopted at the national, state, and local level. If we, as an international community, adopt a comprehensive base knowledge we expect every student to comprehend we can expect to see malleability in the boundaries of our education systems. In an attempt to foster creativity and a competitive market, these standards must be based on only a portion of an educator's hours.

It is easy to assume that an increased focus on standardized results will only produce employees and not the creative thinking entrepreneurs. In fact, currently this is how the universities and private secondary schools in developed countries are divided. Liberal arts schools typically focus on cultivating the creative to become an entrepreneur while technical schools focus on developing the skills a future employer may desire. As an alternate approach a support of both standards and educational freedom would allow each student an opportunity to pursue creative and individualized education plans. A global community that creates, implements, and integrates educational standards would succeed if first they base standards off of the number of hours an average educator would take to teach the standards and second, they accommodate for a chunk of each educator's time to be dedicated to the cultivation of the entrepreneurial brain. For example, global standards should be based on the amount of knowledge the average internationalized teacher could teach in 65% percent of her teaching hours. This will allow the remaining 35% of the average teacher's hours to be spent on the creative and independent studies of her students.

When looking at standards, it is also important to address that many teachers will be able to teach their students these standards in less than 65% of their educational hours and likewise teachers teaching in less promising environments will require more than 65% of their educational hours to teach these standards. This natural division that exists in each community will create a global population that has met the same standards while still supporting a competitive market.   In a publication that focuses on analyzing the relationship of creative destruction and globalization, Jerald M. Liss references the recommendations of both the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the National Research Council. Jerald discusses that the two organizations, both of whom are responsible for developing

education standards, see a successful future as one that focuses "on a narrower number of standards per grade level, with an emphasis on identifying only the most significant state standards. " (Liss 559) Liss goes on to explain that the downfall of the current education system is not standards in practice but is instead the massive number of standards imposed by states.

Internationally, examples of standards on education prove possible. The World Bank and UNESCO consistently fund the Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA) and use it as a means to take a snapshot of the achievement of students in a country. This assessment does not measure an individual's knowledge but instead takes a snapshot of a nation and compares the knowledge of the young people in the nation to the knowledge of the young people in the more than 65 participating nations. This set of standards is currently being used in countries as a template for reform. In an attempt to understand the impact of the PISA on a nation, Liss discovered that nations such as Germany and Japan are adapting their policies in an attempt to better align with the standards deemed appropriate by the global community. Further, Liss analyzed a report by the Organisation for Co-operation and Development which found a correlation between a nation's PISA scores and the nation's economy. Liss stated "a 25-point increase in PISA scores over 20 years would have a dramatic effect on a country's GDP. " (Liss 564) He then uses the example of the United States, "the United States, with a current annual GDP of more than $14 trillion would see growth of nearly $41 trillion in GDP over 80 years, with a 25-point gain achieved within the next 20 years"(Liss 564). The success of the PISA in an international education setting demonstrates the potential for standardized driven improvement in the movement towards an

international education system and the financial backing of the World Bank and UNESCO

illustrates the global desire to unite the education systems around the world.

For a nation to engage in the internationalization of the world's education system, they

must first address disproportionalities in their nation. Before the global community can

provide support, the schools in each nation must be receiving equitable support. If we look at

the United States for example, we will see a disproportionate success rate among schools

across the nation. Schools in socioeconomically poor districts consistently perform poorly on

tests and continue to produce disproportionately low results. For a nation with vast

disproportionalities to compete in an internationalized education system, they must first face

their own shortcomings and begin addressing the achievement gaps within their borders. This

topic is one that deserves considerably more attention, but for the sake of this argument it is

only important that each nation reduce their achievement gaps before any intervention of the

international standards can improve the nation's international participation.

To further promote globalization, post-secondary education systems around the world

must take steps towards adopting a standardized admission process. The primary goal of an

international education system is to promote equal knowledge across national borders. This

adjustment will result in an insurgence of students applying to universities abroad. To

accommodate, the global public university system needs to adopt specific application

standards that address the admission process and the way that they treat the knowledge the

students enter the system with.

For an education system to be holistically international, the policies and concepts must

be integrated through each and every education method at the school. It is not enough to

simply introduce ad hoc international courses and foreign languages. In an observational study of schools in Mexico and Columbia working towards internationalized curriculum, Berry and Taylor observed that an ad hoc approach to internationalization is not efficient and will leave the students in the school behind the competitive wave of the future. To remedy this problem, the schools must integrate the process at a policy, educator, and curriculum level. To integrate at a policy level, the schools will have to ensure that their policies are preparing students for the likelihood that they will work in a global community. The policies must also embrace the culturally variant students that will be participating in the programs. At an educator level, the schools must participate in a global exchange of educators. To further this level of internationalism, students studying to become teachers must be required to student teach abroad. Finally, the curriculum in the schools must be based off of the objective standards set aside in PISA while introducing subjective training. If a school system working towards internationalism successfully integrates at a policy level, an educator level, and a curriculum level they will be able to compete in the future international education system.

In the true age of education, the progression of digital coursework is helping to fuel the internationalization of education. In a comparative study of online coursework, Liss references the adoption of online course work as an expectation among California universities. Liss sites the biggest advantage to be "avoiding duplication of courses across campuses, thus providing economic advantages when delivered on a scale as large as this. " (Liss 560) On the contrary to the advantages is the lack of preparation available to new teachers. While a mass scaling of online courses, if paired with a comprehensive credit system, is promising, it needs to be accompanied by a substantial reform of the way educators

receive their degrees. The potential of expanding online course work in this mass manner would substantially decrease the economic oppression the internationalization of education would have on developing nations, especially those in Africa and in Central America.

When it comes to digital course collaboration, Liss referenced a startup company founded by two Stanford professors. They have developed a platform, Coursera, which not only encourages universities to work together when providing coursework, but also provides the means to do so. Coursera is just one example of a successful Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). Acording to Liss there were more than 450 examples of platforms and projects similar to Coursera.

Beyond the incredible benefits internationalization would have on the students in each country, the influence it would have on the research community would also be highly positive. In their study of the importance of international research among universities, Berry and Taylor outlined the importance both private and public universities placed on the collaboration. In their study of types of international activities, international collaboration scored higher than any other line measured with the exception of a tie with student mobility. As the students in the universities increase the ways they communicate and collaborate, so too will the researchers in the universities and this will unite not only the education system as it moves towards internationalization, but also fields like medicine and science.

The global face of education is changing and the internationalization of education is bringing about substantial improvement opportunities for nations at all stages in their development. To prevent further international education gaps, the international community needs to create appropriate and focused standards that address the needs of the future

generations of students and promote both objective and subjective education. The changes

must take place at a local level as well as a global level. In addition, each nation must take

steps to address the achievement gaps within its borders. Furthermore, post-secondary

schools must adopt standard admission processes and internationalism must be integrated

throughout a school. If the global education community successfully takes these steps,

nations around the world will thrive in a competitive and international education system.

Works Cited

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