

Chapter 1

Cultivating Global Citizens for the Global Good

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ABSTRACT

Being cognizant of international matters and understanding of cultures other than one's own are standards that indicate global citizen readiness. Cultural competency and international mindfulness inherently fosters opportunities for dialogue and developing relations between countries. Higher education students in the United States are instructed in an English-dominant environment, a hindrance to their global citizenship preparedness. A facet of global citizenship bids competency in a language other than English and limiting students to one language will isolate them from the rest of the world. The question therefore unfolds around the benefits of bi/multilingualism and the accessibility of language particularly in self-proclaimed worldly universities. Ultimately, cultural and developmental language learning in United States is neglected, birthing a second language illiteracy crisis in higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Access to higher education has largely been discussed as domestic issue without consideration of the global impact on student mobility from a domestic and international perspective. With the rise in globalization, higher education institutions are prioritizing internationalization (Garcia, 2014, p. 126; Altbach, 2004). This growing trend includes the development of strategic partnerships and internationalizing campuses (Kinser & Green, 2009); and is motivated by institutional prestige including opportunities for students and faculty to participant in global research (Banks, Nortin, & Siebe-Herbig, 2016). At the same time, we see an institutional shift in colleges and universities not only aiming to serve the needs of our own community, region, and nation, but also the larger global community as both four- and two-year colleges are adapting to push and pull factors (Garcia, 2014; Altbach, 2004). The dynamic of push and pull explains that students are “pushed” to study abroad when there are limited postsecondary opportunities or

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programs in their home country. Similarly, students can also be “pulled” to study in countries that have prestigious institutions and/or have degree options not available in their home nation. These trends may hinder access as students who seek opportunities to matriculate at foreign institutions may be hampered due to language barriers.

Importance of Language Diversity

While the internationalization agenda is relevant and timely, U.S. postsecondary institutions are neglecting a crucial component that graduates need in order to be adequately prepared as professionals and global citizens in the 21st century. While competency in a language other than English is encouraged for admission to a four-year college or university, unless a student is a foreign language major, it is not usually a requirement for graduation. Language edification is under supported in the United States despite the research indicating a plethora of cognitive, social, and cultural aptitudes developed through language learning (Baker, 2011; Garcia, 2009; Nieto, 2009; O’Connell and Norwood, 2007). As the internationalization agenda continues to unfold, proficiency in more than one language is imperative. Language diversity inherently comes with learning of other cultures and is also crucial to the global economic market and international relations (Benson, 2014; Baker, 2011; Garcia, 2009).

Importance of Student Diversity

At the same time, higher education institutions need to make more concerted efforts to diversify their student body (Title IV Civil Rights law) and find ways to make education accessible to students from diverse backgrounds. For example, we know from research that first generation college students, who often come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, are at the highest risk of not completing college (Ishitani, 2006). In addition, court cases such as *Fisher v University of Texas* have questioned allowing universities to use race as an admissions decision. Yet, diversity on college campuses is good for the college, the students, and our country including driving innovation and fostering creativity (Kerby, 2012). Thus, providing access to postsecondary institutions to international students provides the type of cultural dialogue that can promote global understanding.

Chapter Purpose

As much focus has been placed on the need to internationalize campus populations and partnerships, the need to internationalize students’ linguistic abilities merits equal, if not more, attention. This chapter will review the benefits of bilingualism, barriers to bilingualism in the US education system, the current role of language in U.S. Higher Education, and the importance of language diversity within Higher Education. Institutions not only have a responsibility, but also the power to influence a positive multicultural and multinational habitus to promote and develop culturally diverse perspectives. This habitus is founded by cultivating multilingual global citizens. We will also explore strategies for universities to adopt a bilingual and even multilingual habitus and the combat the crisis of linguisticism (Benson, 2013; Benson, 2008; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) to ensure that access is not limited on the basis of language. Indeed, prospective international student applicants may be discouraged from applying to universities if they do not feel confident on the language used at the institution, which hinders access.

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