

Chapter 13

Open, Flexible and Participatory Pedagogy in the Era of Globalisation: Technology, Open Education and International E-Learning

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ABSTRACT

The socio-political and economic conditions of the world signal that the global society is moving towards an era of international, cross-border collaboration in education. International higher education by its very nature sits at an intersection of socio-cultural, economic, and geopolitical variables. Over the years, we have seen the complex interaction of the factors that influence patterns of student mobility, institutional strategies and economic forces. Worldwide, institutions of higher education (IHEs) are including global and international themes in their mission statements, courses, and strategic plans. Internationalization is seen as the integration of an international/intercultural dimension into teaching, research, and service of an institution. Internationalizing educational delivery can require significant change and is systematically complex, requiring faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community members who aspire to communicate with, understand, and connect with the diverse 21st-century global community. In this globally connected millennium, as institutions are moving towards Open Access and the use of OER (Open Education Resources) to widen participation and access to higher education, there is a consequent need to redesign pedagogy, teacher roles, and the use of technology to support learning.

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INTRODUCTION: EDUCATIONAL PRESSURES IN THE GLOBAL ERA

The demands and challenges posed by the global economy help explain the growing importance of the internationalization of higher education in national and institutional educational arenas. While the catalysts for internationalization are primarily economic factors, and an emphasis on mobility, standards and skills, this chapter considers internationalization in relation to the aims, values and the purpose of higher education and socio-cultural forces in the digital age. In addition, the changing dynamics brought about by the Open Educational Resources movement (OER), and more recently MOOCS (massive, open, online courses) are part of the educational landscape. Furthermore, the changes relating to technology and the uptake and use of social networking sites (SNSs) by individuals and organizations has prompted scholars from a number of fields to ask why, how and to what purpose these sites can be used to support internationalization of education. For example, Facebook, the largest SNS had over 900 million users, who connect and share ideas across national borders, leading to the creation of cultural and social networks. When considering internationalization and next generation trends, it is clear that such sites enable socially relevant, cross-cultural interaction, sharing and connectivity and are a powerful force in building social and cultural capital (Vitak & Ellison, 2012). This chapter discusses the drivers for change in higher education and technology, skills needed for global participation, digital citizenship and social inclusion, and the changes in educational delivery and pedagogy required for effective participation in the 21st century.

DRIVERS FOR CHANGE: MOBILITY AND UPTAKE OF DIGITAL TOOLS AND SNS'S

The increasing demand for skills in the global knowledge economy signals the need for expanded provision of education and training, had resulted in changes to the delivery of higher education, and an expansion of elearning and blended learning. Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace are all commonly identified as representative of the new wave of social networking tools while the Encyclopedia Britannica, Microsoft Outlook and even learning management systems (LMS's) are seen as portraying old, outdated information sources and educational tools.

On the one hand, Facebook, with 100 million users, and other Web 2.0 sites constitute the most popular pages on the web (Washington and Miller, 2010). In view of this finding, the value of digital, mobile technologies is being tapped by educators, who recognize that social networks provide a versatile, popular and powerful infrastructure for learning. At the same time, institutions of higher learning have been experiencing a time of turbulence and change, with demands for flexible, self-paced learning, personalized options for professional skills development and an increase in demand for cross-border higher education (Daniel, 2013). As the uptake of digital tools and global connectivity increases, it is certain that a high proportion of people worldwide who are in a position to study at a university, already have the skills to use online and mobile technologies at a fairly advanced level. Internationalisation of the curriculum is therefore a feature of curricula worldwide and transnational providers often operate with domestic universities to develop and

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