Internationalization and Globally Networked Learning

The (in)compatibilities of Institutional Strategies aimed at Global Positioning

Melanie Wilson
Department of Integrated Studies in Education
McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Overview

- Defining Internationalization
- Institutional Strategies intended to Internationalize campuses.
- Enabling Strategies
- Constraining Strategies
- Suggested way forward for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
“Internationalization [...] is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education.” (J. Knight, 2003)
What Internationalization is NOT

• “Globalization”
  – increased flow of goods, services, people etc. *which can*...
  – reinforce existing global inequities *and is* ...
  – experienced by institutions differently across the globe, raising different issues etc.

• “Neo-liberalism”
  – Economic framework that treats education as a service, supports privatization, and has resulted in increased corporatization of HEIs.
  – With HEIs treated as a private good, public funds and *raison d’être* (i.e. program offerings) are impacted.
Internationalization Strategies

• Study Abroad (outbound)
• International Student Recruitment (inbound)
• Globalized Curriculum (Intercultural competencies – ICC)
• Student and Faculty Exchanges (e.g. Fulbright)
• Exchange 2.0 (aka. GNLEs?)
Research Concern

What internationalization strategies enable and constrain faculty partner’s GNL work?

- Content negotiation
- Collaborative assignment development
- Communicating with students
- Grading student work
- Managing conflicts
- Adding content in LMS
- Revising content
- Negotiating teaching preferences
- Online partner meetings
- Preparing for face-to-face lectures
- Travel for face-to-face partner meeting
- Troubleshooting technical constraints
- Managing conflicts
Multi-Case Study

- Three cases (inter-continental partnerships)
- Data included interviews with faculty partners and university administrators
- Other data included internationalization policy documents, their shared online learning environment (SOLE), syllabi used, syllabi templates and related policies.
• Internationalization strategies focused on developing ICCs tended to enable faculty partner work.
• Internationalization strategies aligned with dominant neo-liberal economic framework tended to constrain faculty partner work.
• Many internationalization strategies were contradictory enabling some aspects of faculty partner work, whilst constraining others.
Enabling Strategy 1: Funding for Faculty travel (f-2-f meetings)

- Facilitated negotiation of content
- Helped to enrich partner relationship (trust-building)
- Provided opportunity for students to meet partner faculty face-to-face (enriching partnered aspect of collaboration).
Enabling Strategy 2: Internal Faculty Awards

- Helped provide faculty reward (and future incentives) to counter constraining strategies.
- Helped make case for renewal of contract as instructor (when part-time or adjunct).
Constraining Strategy 1: Changes in academic labour policies

- No direct alignment with tenure review process, so incentives were somewhat altruistic and benefits were unintended.
- Faculty partners without tenure had no job protection (compromising sustainability of partnership).
- For faculty partners working with contested topics or in potentially contested (but important for ICC) partnerships, again, no protection.
Constraining Strategy 2: Increasingly rigid syllabus policies

• Serve to reinforce the contractual purpose of the syllabus led to:
  – Reduced usability within the GNLE.
  – Increased faculty partner work (the creation of one syllabus to comply with institutional rules, and a separate, more fluid ‘syllabus’ for the GNL (in the SOLE).

• Use of SOLE has implications in terms student and faculty cross-border data protection (Politics of code!)
Implications for Institutions

• Internationalization strategies enable faculty partner work (and hence GNL) so should be supported and renewed.

• Internationalization strategies that can be traced to neo-liberal policies should be avoided as they undermine the integrity of faculty partner work and can serve to endanger faculty who work in contested fields or with contested partnerships.
Way forward for Institutions

GNL as a sustainable and powerful means to internationalize

Align tenure process to include GN work

Faculty development programs should include a review of issues related to the politics of code, so faculty are aware of the critical issues that may arise when using a SOLE

Ensure academic freedom for instructors engaged in GNL (regardless of rank!)

Continue to fund faculty travel for inter-institutional partner work

Recognize the additional work required for GN courses through internal awards
Thank you!

Contact Info: melanie.wilson@mail.mcgill.ca