

INTERNATIONALIZING CURRICULUM: FOUNDATION OF MODERN REVOLUTION IN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT: Nowadays giving international prestige to the curriculum of educational organizations and institutes is of great concern for education systems. Today discussing internationalization in education system has created new issues such as reconstructing curriculums, disappearing geographical borders, availability of information, and deconstruction. The main focus of curriculum makers in dealing with above-mentioned issues is design objectives and desirable and effective curriculums. Internationalizing curriculums means designing curriculum by modern approaches in international arena. In fact, Internationalization puts in a great deal of effort to respond to the needs of society and its effect in this fast-changing world by considering political, social, economic, and scientific approaches. Taking the importance of these issues into consideration, this research will investigate the concept of internationalizing curriculum and its reasons by an analytic-descriptive approach, and then, it will provide some solutions to standardize international curriculum.

Keywords: Internationalization, globalization, education, curriculum, international curriculum

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important features of globalization is that it distinguishes the present from the past era. This phenomenon has political, social, economic and cultural aspects which are recognized and have affected curriculum. As Scott mentioned, developing information technology and communications, holding intercontinental teleconference and the essence of science in general show that science and expertise know no boundaries and educational systems are inevitably considered as international institutions (Jang, 2009). However, reform in education coincided with logic of globalization and requires some measures which indicate that globalization has influenced education.

Evidently, globalization means the way all societies reach to an integrated world in which all are considered by global level. In fact, globalization means absolute freedom of business, removing all the obstacles for activity investment feasibly and its involvement in all areas and steady flow of information, financial matters and services and also converging cultural to be integrated and these occur in a global level (Zhan, 2010). Gocel (2005) calls this global movement toward internationalization a

“new paradigm” about curriculum. Motivations and reasons for this kind of orientation are recognized in national and institutional levels.

The most influential powers in national level are human source development, strategic contracting, developing business and income, building nation and organization, cultural-social development and mutual understanding. Five factors have been recognized in institutional level: quality improvement, human resource development, building income, creating strategic relationship, and producing research and knowledge (Knight, 2005). In Kyron's (2005) perspective, there are two main reasons for international orientations of curriculum: one is the fulfilment of national and global needs and the other is the development of individuals from different societies.

Today curriculum internationalization is one of the most significant objectives of educational systems and in some ideologists' perspective, the main element is internationalizing educational system of curriculum (Sanderson, 2008). Internationalizing curriculum means the efforts on giving international prestige to organizations and educational systems' curriculum. Regarding the importance of this, the current research will investigate the concept of and the solution to internationalizing curriculum.

Global or internationalizing curriculum

Understanding the concept of internationalizing curriculum is difficult, broad and complex. However, understanding the concept of curriculum as an international subjects is not negligible with regard to current revolutions in global level (Fathi&Ajargah, Ebrahimzadah et al, 2011)

Lemason (1999) emphasizes on the viewpoint of the global acceptance of internationalizing curriculum. He believes that real acceptance means that learning is a bilateral process among cultures and countries (Bond, 2003). Internationalizing curriculum is the process of developing curriculum and a change that its objective it to combine international aspect with official and operational aspects of curriculum. Official aspect of objectives, course contents, educational materials and operational aspects are related to the learning-teaching methods and evaluation. These aspects are designed for native and foreign students (Shailer, 2006).

Reasons for internationalizing curriculum

Generally, four reasons can be identified for internationalizing education, political reason, economic reasons, social-cultural reasons and scientific reasons.

a) Political reasons: nowadays, education is the fourth dimension of foreign policy and educational cooperation is considered a kind of future investment on diplomatic relationship among nations (Knight, 2004). Now that some of the political elites are chosen among other college students, the increasing of great international scholarship and the acceptance of foreign students are considered to be the representatives of their own culture and society to political leaders and top managers of other nations. Academic relationship can also consolidate the political and economic relations among nations (Dweat, 2002).

b) Economic reasons: from this viewpoint, it is argued that internationalization accelerates the development of nations' knowledge and provides a lot of experience and economic bonds.

c) Scientific and academic reason: It's related to the identification of the objectives and scientific standards of educational centers in the world and is looking for cultural and international prospect in teaching, research, academic outlook development and quality improvement.

d) Social-cultural reasons: internationalizing education and expanding academic exchanges can socially improve academics, because the

amount of experience and knowledge will be expanded among students and a kind of "mutation" will happen in the process of learning, and innovation (Beck, 2008).

Research consequences of internationalizing curriculum (Ginkel, 2008)

- More rapid development of science and better use of commerce and knowledge management
- Development and improvement of abilities in research among students and teachers.
- Doing contrastive research and exchanging data and information in international level.
- Increasing teachers and researchers' motivation in publishing articles in authentic journals.
- Providing more opportunities to make research findings more practical.
- Getting information from new approaches in the area of knowledge production.

Methods of internationalizing curriculum

There are different methods for internationalizing curriculum and some of these important methods are infusing, adding international courses and specialized degree programs. Infusing means including international aspects in subjects*, films, videos, case studies, and additional activities. Adding courses means the prospect foundation and international subjects in the courses of current or new curriculum, or using it at the center of teaching. By reforming curriculum, students and university staff will go beyond their own cultures and get information from other cultures and nations. Teachers should be taught in a way that they could cover international subjects.

In comparison to other internationalizing curriculum, a weakness of this infusing approach is that this method cannot develop the understanding and the concept or skills as it is. Most of international subjects cannot be easily or logically discussed in the form of existing courses. So teachers should have broad deep international tendency in order to put it into practice (Haug and Lin, 2007).

On the other hand, studies show that presence and discussions of international subjects in the form of syllabuses cannot guarantee awareness and international sensitivity among students (Schoorman, 2000).

Success and effectiveness in this method depends on the items like consumed time for discussing international subjects in teaching and curriculum, education quality and profundity of subjects are discussed. To cover international content in curriculum, adding international

courses is a better method. Designing and teaching a complete course about international subjects can develop and improve global understanding of whole international subjects about a field, their relation and effect on what is happening in the world among students. Teachers and students have more time to understand and discover international dimensions and complexities of their own field. Ospin argues that the main purpose is to provide the least understanding from internationalization and at least two or more international subjects are necessary. Designing and performing a specialized international program require more attention and consideration to its official and programming aspect (Ginkel, 2002).

CONCLUSION

It can be inferred from what has mentioned here that Iran's education system has been exposed to the process of internationalization from other education systems and therefore, efforts should be made to take advantage of internationalizing societies' education and measures should be taken in order to reduce its negative impacts so as to preserve cultural heritage and other native features and develop individual capabilities in graduates and time make them familiar with the world and other cultures. Educational institutions must establish a place for teaching and learning in order to hold educational workshops about international subjects and to provide necessary materials and sources for completing education activities and to make efforts for improving teaching and learning. On the whole, decision-makers of education system should set the main goal of internationalizing national higher education and define whether the mentioned goals are in consistency with mission of national higher education? Will performing above-mentioned goals have positive role in production and dissemination of knowledge, improvement and enrichment of culture, and human resource education? To whom or what international groups do curriculum in particular and higher education in general benefit? Who are the participants and relevant people of internationalization of higher education and how much are their share in setting goals, performing approaches and plans and evaluating process?

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