A CRITICAL READING OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES’ PROGRAMMING – AND EXPERIMENTATION WITH ALTERNATIVES

Internationalizing Higher Education 2016

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OVERVIEW

• Place of Mind: Who am I and where am I?
• Theoretical framework:
  • Critical global citizenship education
• Program critique
• New possibilities
• Navigating my place of mind
PLACE OF MIND: WHO AM I AND WHERE AM I?
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
CRITICAL GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

- encourage students to engage with multiple perspectives in order to learn and transform their own views, identities, and relationships
- expose and address assumptions, biases, contexts, imbalances, injustices, relationships and structures that maintain the privilege of some at the expense of others
- promote experimentation with other ways of thinking and relating to others, rather than prescribing behaviors

Andreotti, 2006; Pike, 2008; Richardson, 2008; Schultz, 2007; Taylor, 2011
PROGRAM CRITIQUE
INTERCULTURAL/DIVERSITY INITIATIVES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Co-facilitation of such workshops as:
• Students: “Vital skills for success in the Canadian workplace”
• Staff/faculty: “Intercultural fluency workshop - maximizing the benefits of diversity”

Campus consulting:
• Campus partners: i.e. increase the number of international students who use the gym; manage international students in residence
• Faculty: i.e. increase spoken participation of international students in my class

Public relations:
• Feature diverse cultures on our campus; demonstrate internationalization via visuals of food/dress/performances; highlight increasing numbers of international students
SOME GOOD WORK BEING DONE

• Workshops and consultation demonstrate responsibility to our diverse student population - to support learning and community
• Showcasing diverse perspectives and cultures through UBC’s stories demonstrates a desire to move beyond a “single story”
CRITICAL GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION CRITIQUE

• intercultural initiatives framed in terms of “our” own success, leaving little room for “us” to be challenged
  • Workshop question: to what extent will working with, communicating with culturally different people be part of your success?*
  • Media stories selectively demonstrate the diversity of our campus
    • Global Fest cultural celebration
    • Disaster relief efforts

* From “Intercultural fluency workshop - maximizing the benefits of diversity”
International students are taught to fit into mainstream ways of being/knowing and are seen to be a “challenge” when they don’t fit. There is little space to question mainstream norms.

Many workshops open with: “what is an intercultural challenge you would like to resolve”?

Lack of student participation in class attributed to “their” issues fitting in, rather than “our” issues in adapting pedagogy for alternative ways of knowing/being.

*Image from “Vital skills for success in the Canadian workplace”*
CRITICAL GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION CRITIQUE

• Focus on dichotomies and categories without space to deconstruct these or acknowledge intersectionality

  • Carrie, can you please provide “some explanation of high-context/low-context communicators, linear/circular, direct/indirect, etc. Are you able to …provide some tips on how to manage when communicating to someone of the opposite style?”
CRITICAL GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION CRITIQUE

- intercultural learning as acquisition of knowledge and skills (think: gain, cultural capital, achievable), rather than an iterative, relational learning practice
  - Learning about vs. learning from
  - Sense that another person is knowable
  - Follow the model and your problems are solved!
NEW POSSIBILITIES – CRITICAL GCE FRAMEWORK
CRITICAL GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

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*NEW* INTERCULTURAL/DIVERSITY INITIATIVES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

• Foster emergence of oppositional student voices/perspectives that challenge the mainstream
  • Hire and train student staff with critical standpoint
  • Work with students from multiple positions to develop alternative curriculum and pedagogy for intercultural workshops
  • Publish student stories via blog and department publications/reports
  • Support oppositional student initiatives
E.G.
OPPOSITIONAL STUDENT INITIATIVES

The Privilege Project
- Jada Larkin
*NEW* INTERCULTURAL/DIVERSITY INITIATIVES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

• Support the expression of multiple voices and perspectives in transformational settings (i.e. counterstories)
  • Leverage student networks to develop initiatives, programs and services
  • Hire international and Canadian students within our office
  • Establish structured/ongoing collaboration with student clubs and course unions, other UBC units such as Aboriginal Programs and Services, and academic programs/faculty such as Cultural Studies
    • Intercultural Committee
E.G.
FEATURING STUDENTS’ CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS

The Other Side
- Mirabelle Arodi
*NEW* INTERCULTURAL/DIVERSITY INITIATIVES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Create intentional spaces for critical dialogue and creative expressions – where assumptions are challenged and students can experiment with alternative ways of being and relating
  - Intercultural committee
  - International Programs and Serview space
    - Decorated with oppositional student art
    - Hosts debates and discussions
  - Online spaces – i.e. blog, social media campaigns
Student-directed, facilitated and promoted, with support of intercultural educator

Questions mainstream perspectives and introducing alternative ways of being/relating to what may be represented through official channels

Example topics:
- Feminism in diverse contexts around the world
- Africa: Many voices or one story?

www.theglobalspectrum.org
NAVIGATING MY PLACE OF MIND
CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

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REFERENCES


Habacon, A. (2016). Intercultural fluency workshop - maximizing the benefits of diversity. [presentation notes]


