



"We must reach a very difficult balance between the need to be open to the world, to be comprehensive and at the same time respecting their own culture"

Faced with globalization, there is a need for integration between universities all over the world, while English is strengthened as the new lingua franca. However this should not mean an imposition. An effective process of collaboration between the stronger and weaker universities should establish a dialogue between both sides.

By Carla Estrada Jopia

What is global campus?

We are experiencing a process of globalization. No one knows exactly what it means, but we know that there is a growing interpenetration in many areas, such as capital flows, the right of people to move more easily to other countries and a growing exchange of ideas. This is due to several factors, including a new phase of development of the international economy, which requires economic, social and labour mobility. This means that a country must be prepared according to the needs of the market. This creates on us the need to develop joint programs with students, so it can pursue degrees that are recognized not only at home.

One of the methods that have been used at universities is what I call, exaggerating a bit, a Global Campus. It is the assimilation of teaching and pedagogy techniques, as well as the capacity to adapt to the market demands, which has created the development of a number of integration factors between universities.

One of the most popular formulas are the joint programs, but it brings many difficulties, many needs to adapt, then there is the issue that some most powerful institutions enforce their university policies and programs over the other institutions. Against that, the less powerful or weak, as it might be a young university as Hoa Sen, have no choice but to adopt the franchise technique, which is to take up what certain well stabilised university have developed. Even, in many times they proposed to send their teachers, impose its curricula and then, collect a huge amount of money through the use of a name. This McDonald's technique in my opinion, does not seem the most appropriate. If we want that the process of collaboration between the stronger and weaker universities to be effective, we will have to establish a dialogue between the two sides, as well as an adaptation from the part of the most powerful universities, in order to attend the smaller universities demands.

Many large universities may say, well why do I have to adjust? Well I think there are not many answers to that, except to exploit the political and technological opportunities that it implies.

But of course these technological opportunities also bring some problems, first the technology we have for communication is the internet, a media that can be done in many languages, but mostly is in English. Moreover, for many

reasons, the British and the American universities have a leadership that would be absurd to deny, they have made spectacular advances in technology, human relations, policy decision making. To cut the story short, these universities have an undisputed leadership.

If we move towards a global campus, we need both the teachers and the students to be able to communicate with their English, otherwise, there would not be possible to achieve all the potential gains and benefits that such programs could bring. This would mean a significant loss for both the students and the universities. At the same time, this can become a comparative advantage; since students that can speak English have no trouble going by the world. It could be a way to force other to do the same and learn the relevant language, so they can also be understood. But after all, the world is far more complex than that and in that sense, students that learn English, although their mother language is other, have a comparative advantage. Here in Vietnam they can compete with the "American" or the "English" that come here, but they also speak Vietnamese, that is an advantage over English-speaking students who are poorly taught, because if everything is so easy, they believe there is no need to learn different languages.

The strong presence of English is not only a technical issue, we must also consider that an institution like a university has a very strong presence in the cultural life of a society and you cannot ask them to abandon their culture or their way of acting. We must reach a very difficult balance between the need to be open to the world, to be comprehensive and at the same time respecting their own culture. I imagine that if in Vietnam, for instance, we impose that most courses are taught in English, there would be a series of reactions from students, their families and perhaps academic authorities, saying that we are contributing to the recomposition of the colonialism, or that we are asking them to abandon their traditions without giving anything in return.

How does this affect the contents and procedures in education?

The contents will have to change, they will have to adapt to the needs of what is required as competences or skills in the world. I do not know the Vietnamese education system well, I have been here only six weeks, but I fear that is very similar to the Chinese, with the teacher having a very dominant and with the idea that they know everything, apart from the difficulties that most teachers have to let the students discuss their own mind. I go to China quite often and I experience that at first hand, my students do not dare to speak; do not dare to ask questions, because what the teacher says "is the law". So there is no doubt that this process will require a change in the rules of operation and it will bring a lot of resistance from teachers who are not used to work that way.

Furthermore, we must encourage students to become more active, to get them used to question, not in order to weaken the teacher's authority, but to understand that the system has to be more collaborative. There would be the need to motivate group work and class discussions.

Finally, an opportunity that arise with the development of new technologies, is that the use of electronic devices are becoming cheaper, not just internet but also computers. The Kindle (handheld device to store and read digital books), for instance, makes knowledge increasingly more accessible. Even knowing, for example, that for some Vietnamese teachers and students spend US\$280 on a Kindle is not that simple, we have to look for ways for the universities to buy Kindles or to libraries to provide it. In short, we must be find a way.

This means a very strong commitment from the universities...

The universities have to make an important economic bet in order to support this process. In Vietnam and in other countries textbooks are expensive and are pirated, which brings problems even between countries. However, through a Kindle, for example, you can download one book and then lend it to a group of students; this means that the access to knowledge could be expected to be cheaper.

Then there are things that are coming and that will be part of our future, for example, access to basic textbooks of

culture that students must read, the Project Gutenberg of the European Union (electronic library of free books that already exist physically) means that the books are almost free.

All technologies are very beneficial to the global campus, their prices have already gone down and each time they will be cheaper and easier access.

Can the global campus take advantage of e-learning?

Yes, in the U.S. it is gaining ground in almost all universities. It has enormous advantages in terms of flexibility. My students in the U.S. , for instance, worked about 20 or 25 hours a week and had no time to go to class, then if you have the class in a Power Point or video and supported by texts, things are much easier for them. However, you have to require them to write a lot, especially on practical cases, because one of the problems of e-learning is that people can copy their work online. The flexibility is greater, but has the problem of alienation from teachers. In my opinion, in medium term, it will bring a huge decline in traditional teaching. This will change the teaching as we know, with a stable workforce with many years of training, people like me are going to disappear, well, it all depends on how we adapt. Anyway I think the university as we know now, will change fundamentally within the next 10 years and if we want institutions with quality that attempt to achieve "excellence", we have to adapt to all these transformations. This is a necessity especially for developing countries.

We listened Katryn Morhman today, from Arizona, she says: to maintain good medical schools, we must spend 1,500 million dollars a year. Obviously that's impossible, and then we will have to seek ways to transfer knowledge. Perhaps hard sciences or the laboratory will continue to be absolutely essential and it will be more like traditional education, but the area of social science will suffer a dramatic shock.

How does the use of these technologies affect interpersonal relationships?

I think that this is finished and we must not magnify the image of the teacher, a good teacher is the person who has given many courses, which has been formed, which strives to be at day, that seeks to know and help students to find paths. All this can be done differently through these technologies. There is much talk that the teacher is someone who plays moral roles, man!, We try to teach students not to cheat, try to be honest in how we teach, but do we have to be bearers of moral roles? I have my doubts; I think the moral roles should learn in families and primary groups of friends, not necessarily at the university. In any case, I believe that human dimension will disappear.

How do you see the Hoa Sen University in this process?

Hoa Sen is making a bet to define itself. It has 4 years as a university, an educational body of very different range of ages, where there seem to be a more traditional sector who resent developments and another very young, very curious and eager to learn from abroad that would be more logically willing to defend an open activity.

It is important that this educational group go and find out what they want to build. They have made a difficult bet in Vietnam, which is the recruitment of foreign teachers and our role here is to contribute to this discussion on where we need to go.

I've been called to collaborate on a project of change and I like working in a developing country, because I think in Vietnam, what I learned throughout my life may be more useful than in a country like the U.S.

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