

Andrews University

School of Education

DIVERSITY IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TOWARD GLOBALIZATION AND
INTERNATIONALIZATION

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Introduction

My visit to China and Japan has shifted the paradigm for me in various areas of life. Based on the warm welcoming that we have received from the Chinese and Japanese people, be it in the hotels, on the streets, in the educational institutions or during our study tour, I have come to realize that we are all people regardless of our diversity. On a spiritual level, this study tour has given me the opportunity to reflect on God's love and creation that points out to our similarities and differences as children of God in spite of our diverse nationalities. On a social echelon, I understand that we do not necessarily need languages to communicate and interact with others though we may be of different ethnic groups. On an educational intensity, the need to learn and succeed in becoming useful, productive, and self-sufficient pillars in our societal settings appears to be universal, allowing this notion of diversity to play an imperative role in the global educational arena. Reflectively, I would like to provide a sample of a diverse university in the body of Andrews University through a workshop program for freshmen to serve as a model for the American educational system.

Historical Overview

In our visits to Peking, Zhejiang, ShangHai, Jiaotong in China, and Tokyo and Saniku Gakuin in Japan universities, we have learned many aspects that are similar and different from our educational system in the United States. For instance, we found out that they all provide bachelor, as well as master and PhD degrees. They all accept international students. However, in China, it appears that international students are treated differently due to the fact that their fees are higher than native students. Their credit systems, nevetheless, differ from the American

educational system in that, students can take somewhere between thirty eight to fifty one credits per semester. Their credit system is attributed to the number of hours spent in the classroom. Another difference that magnetized my attention relates to the lack of encouragement for adult education, especially in China, as opposed to the american educational system that grants learning opportunities to all.

They also require standardized testing for students to be admitted to colleges, a problematic similarity to the American educational system. However, they encourage and support extracurricular activities, an area that does not seem to show increased interest in the United States. In the States, Zhao (2009) is warning us that US schools are less creative than China's because they have given priority to math, reading and writing, thus neglecting the other subjects that could enable students to show their ingenious talents. As Florida (2005) asserted, "To succeed and to prosper in the creative age, the United States and other nations and regions around the world will need to make the transition from industrial to creative societies by investing in their people, building up their creative capital and remaining open, tolerant societies" (p. 145). To remain tolerant societies, educators and policy makers must understand, value, and celebrate the significance of diversity in our educational system.

One of the characteristics that had particularly caught my attention is the diversity of students attending the universities both in China and Japan. Although we are accustomed to diversity in the United States, especially at Andrews University, being the eight most diverse universities in the States, I did not really expect to see that variety in China and Japan. This factor represents a clear indication that globalization and internationalization are following their course at an uncontrollable rate. As Zhao (2009) posited, "As citizens of the globe, we need to

help our students to adopt a global view in their thinking... to care about people in distant places... to understand the nature of global economic integration, to be aware of the global nature of societal issues...to respect and protect cultural diversity ...” (p. 112, 113).

Governing System

Diversity seems to find very little room in China where the governing system seems to remain in the hands of the government that decides for the students’ future with the country’s economy as the point of focus. As a communist country, I was not surprised to learn that the government makes all the decisions in every domain, including the educational system. In fact, most of the universities are government owned. Nevertheless, China, Japan, and other countries are reforming their systems to be more like the American educational system by infusing and extending extracurricular activities that permit their students to become more innovative and diverse. They understand that “different talents complement each other. Economic productivity or any large-scale projects, such as wars, require a multitude of talents...talents diversity breeds innovation and encourages innovators. They bring different and often fresh perspectives and prepare societies for change” (Zhao, 2009).

In Japan, the educational system is moving toward implementing three objectives in their educational plan for the 21th Century: “Enhancing emotional education, realizing a school system that helps children develop their individuality and gives them diverse choices and promoting a system in which the school’s autonomy is respected” (Iwao, 2000). While the United States is moving toward more standardization and centralization, the Asian countries are working hard to allow more flexibility and autonomy at the local level. “While the United States is investing resources to ensure that all students take the same courses and pass the same tests,

the Asian countries are advocating for more individualization and attending to emotions, creativity, and other skills. While the United States is raising the stakes on testing, the Asian countries are exerting great efforts to reduce the power and pressure of testing” (Zhao, 2009). As diverse as America is, the educational system should not solely be governed by the government and policy makers. Parents and students should be treated and considered as stakeholders by being given a voice in the educational policy making.

This issue of cultural diversity is increasingly felt in every layer of our society as worldviews are significantly changing. These changes that are attached to globalization and internationalization in the 21st multicultural century, are begging for a better taste of diversity in our society, especially in our universities. “The universities of the 21st century should serve the new knowledge society which European society has become ... The aim of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is for the universities of the new millennium to be able to respond to the new demands of society” (Salomon, 2008). While globalization is requiring every part of the world to pay attention and act accordingly, the US higher education and the European system don’t seem to face the demands of society in a similar fashion.

The European System versus the US Higher Education System

The world has seen a global reform in the educational system especially in Europe and the United States. In the Universities that we have visited, one major concern resides in the ability for students to pass the entrance exam in order to be accepted. For instance, we met a former student from Andrews Academy in the Sunika College in Japan. He is striving to learn the Japanese language while trying to get ready to pass the entrance test in order to be accepted to Tokyo University which is considered the equivalent to Harvard in the States. In other words,

while students are competing to be accepted by top schools, the best students are being targeted by top schools. This competition becomes a major key in globalization and internationalization where cultural diversity demands our attention.

A number of countries in Europe such as, France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom have made changes in their educational system, to face the challenges of globalization and internationalization specifically to enhance mobility and necessitate harmonization. In most European universities, students are required to speak and write English at the master's and doctoral levels. Two political movements have surfaced as recourse to face the challenges: Sorbonne (1998) and Bologna (1999) with the objectives to define the architecture of a system of tertiary (higher education) for the Union of Europe. It will result in the removal of barriers and the development of a framework for teaching and learning which would enhance mobility and an ever closer co-operation. In terms of harmonization, attention was mostly given to changes in the content of learning in terms of quality versus quantity for a solid background operation. Harmonization involves the collaboration and changes in teaching methodologies for a more solid preparation for both teachers and students (Vicentini in Pinar, 2003).

France, for instance, has been operating changes in their educational system through the European perspective with the main goals of accomplishing twenty two achievements in their three level of education: primary school, secondary school and higher education. Such achievements include but are not limited to the fight against illiteracy, higher centralization of educational system and the development of cultural diversity... However, their three major overviews consist of the content of curriculum, architecture of curriculum, methodology in teaching, learning, and research (Egea-Kuehne in Pinar, 2003).

According to Wikipedia (2010), the French educational system comprises of three levels, primary, secondary and higher education and is currently ranked as the 25th best in the world. Understanding the France educational system can be very challenging. As Mialaret (1976) stated, “One must recognize that a great disorder rules the terminology and that interferences and confusions among teaching, education, pedagogy, and so on are numerous and complex” (p.3). In 2009, the Bologna Process in Europe helped France to redefine its educational system and face the challenges in a newer light.

Italy is another example where changes are being operated in the area of teaching methodologies such as the use of educational research results, computer aided instruction, use of multimedia, peer instruction, interactive teaching in general, evaluation procedures, and development of communication skills... The process of these changes will include a clear definition of an educational contract between the students and the university, some kind of competition among universities with a plurality of offerings and flexibility in the curriculum, the adaptation of the credits system for the mobility of students, stimulating bottom up innovations and the evaluation of educational offerings... (Vincenti in Pinar, 2003). We need to change because of the heavy increase diversity of enrolling students all over the world. Just like the European educational system had to come up with strategies to meet the increasing changes of globalization and internationalization, the American educational system must do the same.

More than any other country in the world, the US Higher Education system has been blessed with cultural diversity. Milligan (2001) in an article invited us to view our diverse student populations. He also encouraged us to consider the affects of cultural diversity on the

stability of the country. His point was for our colleges and universities to make plans with cultural diversity in mind.

In analyzing the issue of cultural diversity in the US Higher Education system, Orfield (1991) asserted,

“To many researchers, the benefits of diversity seemed self-evident, so they focused on examining how best to encourage it. [Affirmative action was overturned in California and Texas in 1996, and the resulting] ... anti-affirmative-action lawsuits and referenda proliferating throughout the country have roused educational leaders into clear awareness of the importance of research [into the benefits of cultural diversity]” (p. 2).

Zhao (2009) posits that technology has brought massive challenges in our physical, psychological, economical, political, and social world that need to be faced. The author is concerned about our students’ learning and teaching skills to deal with the challenges as they are becoming increasingly real (p. 129). We need to teach our students and teachers about diversity so that they can develop tolerance for each other as the world is increasingly globalizing and internationalizing. Only then can we expect them to develop their talents, accept, and appreciate others.

We need to have a system that encourages our students to discover their talents and unfold their full potential not just for them but for their country and society in general.

Comscore (2008) reports that 132 million people use Facebook, which is worth about \$8 billion. Thirty nine percent of online Americans use the internet in relation to political campaign events. (Smith and Rainie, 2008). In other words, “Our children, in spite of our “digital native” label attached to them, are not necessarily knowledgeable enough to fully participate in the virtual

world (Zhao, 2009, 132). Barack Obama (2009) in a speech shared, "... Education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity and success, it is a prerequisite for success." As education is becoming a mind set, we must show tolerance for diversity. America, as Zhao (2009) plainly puts it, must be leading instead of catching up because of its leading position in the world and diversity. In a similar vein, to meet the needs of globalization and internationalization, Andrews University should practice diversity in a higher level to better serve its multiculturally diverse students. If America is going to successfully remain positioned as the leader in the educational system race as opposed to China and Japan, every university will have to become conscious of the necessity to recognize diversity as the main force to face the challenges of globalization and internationalization. Efforts must be made on every university level to strategize in making diversity visible and attainable for all stakeholders.

Personal Reflections on Learning Experiences/Application

In reflecting on America's need to understand and appreciate and position diversity especially in the educational system, I have come to realize that Andrews University, as being the eight diverse university in the States, should make plans to embrace diversity and helps it grow in response to globalization and internationalization. This program, if successfully implemented, could turn Andrews University into the model needed for other universities in the United States to emulate in becoming the shining lights of the world. I propose a diversity program development to create a workshop program for freshmen at Andrews University to foster a more diverse community for students, faculty and staff. This proposal is intended to serve as a model for other universities in the United States and the world to emulate in celebrating diversity as the basis for globalization and internationalization to continue to grow.

This project will cover the areas of context, goals, objectives, budget, outcomes, plan and assessment.

Population Analysis

According to the *U.S. News & World Report* (2009), Andrews University is the eighth most racially diverse national university and seventh among national universities in its percentage of international students. The final fall census reports that 2009–2010 enrollment numbers for Andrews University are up. Currently, 3,589 students are enrolled, an increase of 170 students or 5% over the previous high-enrollment school year. Overall, headcount enrollment has increased by more than 30% over the last eight years. Additionally, the undergraduate enrollment of 1,816 students—the highest undergraduate enrollment since 1984—and 377 FTIAC (First-Time-In-Any-College) students, and 483 freshmen overall (the highest in more than a decade) continues to flourish.

Context

To promote diversity at Andrews University, I would create a workshop program for freshmen at Andrews University to foster a more diverse community for students, faculty, and staff. The assistance of all departments will be needed in order for it to become reality. It will originate from the office of student affairs. The office of academics will need to approve the proposal and authorize all departments to give their cooperation to the office of student affairs. They will have to educate them on the value and the need of establishing this diversity plan by offering them a lecture on the whys and hows of diversity. Faculty and staff will need to place this diversity plan next to biblical teachings to give it a chance to successfully reach its accomplishments. It will also include examples of effective pedagogical techniques for diverse

classrooms. Diversity workshops for upper echelon administrators will focus on topics like future-envisioning, policy-making, crisis management, or media relations. Deans and department chairs' workshops will practically concentrate on creating and improving diversity-related initiatives or on increasing faculty, staff, and student diversity. Workshops for administrators will address ways to link community, academic, and student affairs approaches to diversity. Workshops for advisers and staff will focus on ways to help students pursue more effective careers and become more constructive and self-sufficient parts of an increasingly multicultural society. The diversity plan for faculty and staff will cover the theme "Model it, students will get it." The long plan project is to provide workshops on diversity to the macro and micro levels starting from the president to the last student. However, the student affairs would like to start with an orientation workshop for freshmen.

Goals

The goals of this project would be to provide essential institutional services and links for the integration of knowledge between the curriculum and the co-curriculum. The theme of this event would be: "Diverse but Related." Though my goal is to promote diversity in every layer of the university, existing students, faculty, and staff, my concentration will be on the freshmen to set the tone. This will be accomplished while other plans will be made to educate existing students.

Objectives

All freshmen would receive, in the orientation package, a reflective and informative workshop on diversity, teaching them how to embrace diversity and interact with others. The workshop would feature Dr. Leslie Pollard, Vice President for community partnerships and

diversity at Loma Linda University, as the guest speaker. He is the author of *Embracing Diversity*.

The workshop would consist of a two hour session. Dr. Pollard would discuss his last book on diversity, *Embracing Diversity*, for the first half and hour and will reserve twenty minutes for questions and answers. Then he would take ten minutes to have students complete a diversity questionnaire. There would be a ten minute break period before games and activities start.

The second hour would be spent on a special activity which will play a vital role in facilitating constructive intergroup conversations and fostering intercultural understanding. Students would be divided in groups of ten to fifteen, according to their age group, and would be given a topic based on education, food, finance, entertainment, theology, psychology, language, economics, law, agriculture etc... Students would be asked to write their experiences under the given topic. After completion, similarities and differences would be compared and contrasted. Students would be asked to share their particular experiences and what they've learned. They would have the opportunity to see and realize that they have more similarities than differences. This would be measured through attendance and in comparison with the number of entering and registering students.

Budget

For such a large number of freshmen (483), I would need to use the Howard Performance Center facility to conduct the workshop orientation. I would invite Dr. Leslie Pollard, vice-president of Diversity at Loma Linda University and author of *Embracing Diversity*. I would spend \$1,000.00 for his fee, \$2,000.00 for his transportation, meals and

lodging. I would probably spend \$750 on refreshments and I would allocate \$200.00 for materials (copies to students) and I would reserve \$200.00 toward miscellaneous.

Outcomes

- In One year, 90% of freshmen would have a different understanding of diversity and will establish early contact and interactions with their schoolmates and roommates.
- In two years, 80% of freshmen would demonstrate tolerance, familiarity, and acceptance of others that are different from them.
- In two years, 70% of the campus would show mixed groups. The appreciation of diversity will be visible on campus.
- In five years, the need to understand and know about diversity will become a normal part of the living experience at Andrews University.

Plan

This workshop is intended to succeed and accomplish its goals. Freshmen at Andrews will show appreciation of diversity to the point they will start modeling it and make it visible to the existing students. This diversity workshop will become an integral part of the orientation package for all freshmen. It is also considered a precursor to more subsequent programs for existing students. For instance, existing students will attend a yearly workshop session on multicultural diversity as part of their graduation requirement. The workshop will address the concepts of differences, communication, and relationship to others, as required in the co-curriculum core courses. In addition, certain courses will address multiculturalism, preparing them for a society of unity and diversity. This will be measured through attendance and registered completion of certificates.

In terms of resources, funding would come from student organization fees, grants, gifts, profits and donations. Regarding personnel, the program will be realized with the collaboration of the student office affairs and the office of academics. The student affairs will handle the reservation of the place (equipment, parking ect...), the completion of the program, contacting the guest speaker (transportation, lodging and food). The office of academics will carry the responsibility of contacting the various places to ensure that the program is financially secure. The achievement of this project will depend on a solid collaboration between the departments of student affairs, Human Resources and academic division.

Assessment

I will request a questionnaire tool from Dr. Pollard to be completed and collected at the end of his lecture on his book. I will also use an attendance sheet which will be compared to the registration form. The office of student affairs will develop an evaluation tool (a survey type with satisfaction, improvements, and successes of the program) for entering students as part of the orientation package. Based on the outcomes, I will decide on the continuation, modification or abandonment of the program. I surely hope that the outcome will prompt us to continue to provide this diversity workshop to all freshmen at Andrews University.

Conclusion

Many universities are cognizant of the magnitude of diversity's role and provide workshops and seminars to meet the visible needs. Providing diversity training to upper administration, faculty, staff and students, is a critical initiative and a smart investment that will turn into an asset for Andrews University. Seddigi (2009) asserts, "Adjusting instruction to accommodate the learning styles of different types of students had increased both achievement

and enjoyment of learning” (p. 117). Canatan (2009) posits, “Multiculturalism refers to a positive attitude towards the diversity in the society” (p. 82). In an effort to prepare its students to excel in a diverse world, Columbia Encyclopedia (2010) in an article reports that Purdue University in Fort Wayne offers a diverse environment to their students with the collaborative efforts of the office of student affairs and the academic student achievement program. The realization of Purdue University helps us to anticipate that the workshop program is doable and we can expect Andrews University to actually become one of the most diverse universities in the world.

I am very grateful that I was given the golden opportunity to have visited China and Japan which has opened my eyes and changed forever my worldviews. I have benefited from this study tour more than I expected. My visits to the universities have greatly enhanced my understanding of the educational system and the direction that it is taking toward globalization and internationalization. I am appreciative to have been able to combine my learning and impressions to use them toward a fresh look at Andrews University in instilling diversity as the major focus in my discovery. As globalization and internationalization are rising, Andrews University will become stronger in terms of diversity, which will undeniably increase its global and international visibility not just in the educational system but in the virtual world. I hope that as Andrews University is becoming more diverse, it will make plans to position itself strongly to lead in the new trend of globalization and internationalization and will continue to be a model of diversity for the American educational system and the global world.

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