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Investigating Transnational Collaboration of Faculty Development and Learning: An Argument for Making Learning Culturally Relevant

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Abstract

Professional development offered to higher education faculty is meant to enhance pedagogy and improve practice. Inspired by a transnational partnership in Southeast Asia, this study aimed to discover how teacher education faculty perceived faculty development offered to them by university partnership colleagues from the United States. Survey findings indicate that certain faculty development strategies improved teaching and assessment practices and enhanced self-reflection. However, evidence also showed some negative faculty perceptions in relation to the US partner's methodologies, and qualitative responses indicated a lack of relevancy to the Southeastern Asia context. Furthermore, negative correlations were found between faculty development workshops and teacher education faculty teaching subject area endorsement content and their praxis. Very little has been written on the impact of teacher educator professional development offered by transnational academic partnerships. Universities involved as transnational partners must be flexible, culturally sensitive and determine together areas of priority and relevance as a definition of success for partnership effectiveness.

Keywords

Transnational, Professional Development, Internationalization of Higher Education, Teaching and Learning, Cultural Intelligence, Higher Education Partnership

Cover Page Footnote

The terms faculty development and professional development are used interchangeably to refer to university faculty attending seminars to enhance pedagogy, assessment and teaching practices. Deep admiration and warm appreciation is given to the exemplary lecturers teaching in the university partnership in Southeast Asia. So many of us have learned from your excellent teaching, mentoring and service.

Introduction

Our world has become more intertwined, globally interdependent and culturally diverse. While globalization has complexities and tensions, of course, the emerging integrated world also provides “newfound power for individuals to collaborate and compete globally” (Friedman, 2005, p. 10). Higher education is a key part of this larger story of globalization, where institutions must now prepare students and faculty to engage with diverse people groups in cross-cultural environments (Fink, 2013). Such globalization in the academy is developing quickly and in multiple directions. Due to increased, frenetic higher education involvement across borders, a single operationalized variable in the literature has yet to be determined to define global engagement (Naidoo, 2009). Instead, cross-border initiatives reflect a myriad of dynamics, including university partnerships, supportive economic development in third world countries (Croom, 2011; Sarvi, 2011), and faculty development opportunities in both the sending and receiving countries (Fink, 2013; King, Marginson, & Naidoo, 2011; Sakamoto & Chapman, 2011).

Consequently, the delivery of instruction internationally is broadly conceptualized by the given higher education institution (HEI) and involves a wide range of activity based on mission, institutional strategic plans, international need, and faculty research, all of which provide unique institutional purposes for strategic collaboration. At the same time, a common motive across global institutions is the desire to increase learning for students and professional development for faculty in the context of a knowledge-based society. Building educational capacity to meet this desire through innovation and mutual interest will increase university complexity and will require much conversation: “As cross-border partnerships expand in number, size, and complexity, the need to more fully understand the ingredients of success increases” (Sakamoto & Chapman, 2011, p. 4). The implementation of transnational global higher education will continue to increase and diversify and governmental oversight promises be on the rise (Lane & Kinser,

2014). Universities committed to global involvement are now entering the partnership conversation with more scrutiny and interest in finding an international partner with comparable scholarly values and focus on student performance outcomes will insist on faculty with the cultural intelligence and dexterity to productively interact in cultures different than their own (Livermore, 2010; Molinsky, 2013).

An understanding of impact data in transnational and cross-border partnerships is limited due to the relative newness of the phenomena with a lag in research literature. Nonetheless, several studies examined the history and impact of transnational education and have shared findings of interest for institutions collaborating internationally (Dolby & Rahman, 2008; Naidoo, 2009; Vincent-Lancrin, 2011; Weber, 2007). Perhaps the greatest point of wisdom from the research so far is the idea that measures of success ought to certainly include evidence from both the receiving country and the sending country. Specifically, higher education institution (HEI) partnerships must examine perceptions of teaching and learning success from both higher education partners—HEI teaching faculty in the receiving country and the HEI teaching faculty from the sending country.

This study contributes to the knowledge base by exploring the influence of a mid-size private transnational HEI in the northwest United States providing professional development to partnership faculty in a large private university in Southeast Asia over the course of an academic year. Two administrators from the HEI from the US institution traveled to Southeast Asia to provide faculty development seminars three times during the academic year. Faculty development offered was based on the sending or United States HEI's concept of effective higher education pedagogy and practice. Using a survey response, this study explored Southeast Asia faculty perceptions of the professional development received from their transnational partners from the US and the Southeast Asia faculty reflections on changes made to their teaching practices. Nineteen faculty completed all three professional development seminars and completed a survey at the end of each session.

Theoretical Framework

Many professional development efforts fail because they do not spur long-lasting change in instructional practice. Guskey (2000) points out the importance of evaluating professional development activities to probe deeply for evidence of change and impact. Without a well-defined purpose or goals specific to the organization and continuous on-going support, professional development will lack a clear vision (Guskey, 2000, 2002).

The purpose of this descriptive study was to investigate the relationship between faculty professional development programming offered by a sending institution from the United States to the receiving institution's Southeast Asia faculty in a transnational partnership. Specifically, the study attempted to bring to the surface the perceptions of the higher education faculty receiving the professional development from their global partners and the impact of the faculty development seminars on their teaching practice. Simply put, the researcher was exploring whether faculty development approaches from the United States to would work well in a Southeast Asia setting. To this end, the following broad question—adapted from the framework provided by Thomas Guskey (2000) --was explored: How do we determine the effects and effectiveness of activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge and skills of educators? An anonymous survey comprised of 12 closed-ended questions and six open-ended questions targeting participant satisfaction and impact to professional practices was given at the end of each faculty development session. The survey was available in English and in the native Southeast Asia language. Participants were invited to complete the survey in their preferred language and any completed in the primary language were translated for the researcher. The impact of faculty development programming was explored for skill development, effective influence on teaching and learning praxis and perceived relevance; such programming was offered over the course of an academic year in an international setting.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do Southeast Asia faculty indicate satisfaction with the faculty development support from their US international partners?
2. To what extent do Southeast Asia faculty perceive their ability to impact student learning based on the faculty development offered?
3. To what extent does faculty development offered provide Southeast Asia faculty the knowledge and skills needed to alter their instructional behaviors?
4. To what extent is the professional development offered culturally relevant to the Southeast Asia learning context?

Terms

“Cross-border education” is defined as the “movement of people, knowledge, programs, providers, policies, ideas, curricula, projects, research and services across national or regional jurisdictional borders” (Knight, 2005). This phrase is often used interchangeably with “transnational” and “borderless education.” Faculty members who fly in from the sending country to teach students in the receiving or foreign country, or to provide professional development programs, are implementing transnational teaching and are often termed “flying-faculty” (Smith, 2010). The phrase “professional development” is perhaps best defined as a process outlined by Guskey’s (2000, 2002) three characteristics; (a) intentional, (b) ongoing, and (c) systemic. “Faculty development” refers to higher education faculty engaging in professional development.

As higher education institutions answer the demand in developing countries to increase the knowledge base, many are joining with domestic institutions in partnerships for degree offerings. Such partnerships include ‘twinning’ programs where students take one portion of the degree curriculum in the domestic country and the remainder in the partner institution’s country (Croom, 2011). Further arrangements include a more symbiotic relationship of joint or dual degrees, where partner institutions share curriculum oversight and a degree is earned by

the student from the domestic institution and the international partner (Croom, 2011; Knight, 2011).

Cultural Considerations

Teaching and learning is often influenced by the cultural context of the given learning community (Harnza, 2012; Maria & Watkins, 2003; Valiente, 2008; Weber, 2007). Moreover, the classroom context is representative of the governmental aims in the larger society (Weber, 2007), and interactions between teacher-student "...reflects values deeply embedded in the broader societal and sociocultural setting" (Gu, 2005, p. 6). Such cultural dynamic must be considered when teaching in the international setting. For that reason, transnational educators must be prepared to engage with the culture of the country to which they travel, and they must be willing to alter their instruction to meet the learning needs of the culture's educational system.

If learning styles and teaching methods utilized in secondary and post-secondary education in the receiving country are different than those used in the sending country, then perceptions of teaching effectiveness and impact of the educator may be contrary to the research literature most often articulated in Western countries: "All theories developed in Western behavioral science are based on tacit premises of Western culture, usually the middle class..." (Spradley, 1980, p. 14). "Unfortunately, many people see culture as only 'my culture'" (Wink, 2011, p. 62). This generates a conflict in the professional literature describing effective pedagogy, leaving open a question of cultural specificity in learning and teaching. If culturally specific learning styles and teaching practices are not in alignment with the Western research literature definition of effective practice, perceptions of impact may have internal questions of validity in international settings, including learning and teaching received by higher education faculty and students. Higher education faculty engaged internationally must wrestle with this conflict, since teacher work is deeply rooted in the identity of the teacher—regardless of place; "good teaching

cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (Palmer, 1998, p. 10). Teacher identity is based on the values of the teacher and the integrity found in a congruent teaching philosophy. Nevertheless, the teacher’s approach is certainly modified by the contextual influences found in the surrounding social, economic and political community.

Literature Review

Digital technology has provided key platforms for communication and knowledge sharing by bringing international institutions of learning into touch, which broadens the landscape of practicality beyond local or even national environments. (King et al., 2011; Sakamoto & Chapman, 2011; Stromquist, 2007) . Moreover, “The global dimension is not in equilibrium... [globalization] is constantly in motion” (King et al., 2011, p. 15).

Institutions thinking globally while simultaneously building global programs must define global connectivity and cross-border impact to determine program effectiveness, cross-cultural learning and the value of the collaboration. One such example is a case-study on an international partnership dual degree program between a British university and a university in India; the research found partnership planning to require patience and time to navigate cultural norms, differences in expectations of the faculty-student relationship in a hierarchical society and differences in the perceptions of learning styles of the students (Tudor, 2011). These complexities were critically dependent upon a key relationship of understanding from the very beginning, flexibility in planning, institutional support and conversational planning to ensure success. “A key outcome was the learning experiences gained by the [British] team about a range of factors such as cultural norms, understanding more about other subjects, and understanding how other people work” (p. 81). Positive outcomes of transnational partnerships include institutional mission impact, student learning, and the professional development of the faculty involved. Clearly, faculty must be able to negotiate different cultures using effective

communication skills, a willingness to learn and the commitment to self-reflect on personal behaviors (Fink, 2013; Gopel, 2011; Knight, 2011).

Transnational academic partnerships may include academic support ranging from technology, curriculum development, research and professional development. (Knight, 2011). Such partnerships provide opportunity to work toward common goals, ranging from research agendas to combating poverty. While many positive outcomes are the result of such collaboration, complexities exist which require focused attention to navigate success in the dynamic partnership arena. Successful partnerships require a commitment to shared goals, interests and collective work (Beerkens & Derwende, 2007). At the same time, the concentration and definition of work may not be simply replicated from the sending institution to the receiving institution, a point of considerable importance (Gu, 2005).

An experimental study using East Asian adult learners engaged in professional development programs was conducted to investigate the appropriateness of learning theories from a Western perspective. The study questionnaire was extensively adapted for cultural differences and then used to determine some of the motives of Malaysian and Chinese adult learners (Tan, 2011). Findings exhibited an increased reliance in rote memorization techniques with both Malay and Chinese adult learners as the motivation of the learner increased in relation to career goals or grades, "Memorization perceived from the East Asian culture is more than just rote learning...[it] can transcend to the level of understanding and meaningful learning, even in the context of adult learners" (Tan, 2011, p. 137). These findings indicated that adult learners from East Asian cultures are strategic learners who adopt a culturally embedded rote memorization approach to learning. The finding is important to consider when planning professional development and academic courses to Asian adult learners having been taught in the domestic country and most certainly to faculty who teach in the cultural setting as they often will teach the way they were taught (Fink, 2013).

A similar study compared the perceptions of Chinese educators who received professional development from British trainers with the perceptions of Chinese non-participants (Gu, 2005). While participants had a stronger positive attitude towards authentic interactive teaching strategies when compared to their Chinese non-participant counterparts, they did not abandon their traditional teaching practices completely, noting the need to choose practices "suitable for our Chinese students" (p. 10). In other words, teaching practices were highly contextualized and made to conform to the traditional norms and learning behaviors of the Chinese culture. Newly imported ideas were not quickly or easily adopted. The incorporation of new instructional practices, other innovations and organizational changes must take into account the learning culture, context and the perceptions of those implementing the change initiative (Maria & Watkins, 2003).

Institutions of higher education and other adult learning frameworks offering academic preparation or professional development ought to keep in mind cultural differences. The use of rote memorization as a technique by different cultural groups, for example, has proven to be important (Gu, 2005; Tan, 2011). Ignoring or disregarding time-tested cultural techniques may threaten the processing of information and content analysis, and may in fact invite the worst kinds of anxiety in the classroom, ultimately threatening the success for the learner (Gopel, 2011; Harnza, 2012; Maria & Watkins, 2003; Valiente, 2008). Indeed, students preferring a rote memorization technique native to their Asian culture may have difficulty noting requirements and expectations of the Western teacher (Valiente, 2008). Put differently, educators in the global setting will need to change their frames of reference and approaches in the classroom in order to embrace properly the inherited educational theories in the specific cultural settings at issue. Furthermore, educators must be cognizant and sensitive to culturally sensitive perspectives to learning (Harnza, 2012; Maria & Watkins, 2003; Tan, 2011; Valiente, 2008). Educators must fully develop and engage learners consistent with their cultural learning styles opposed to forcing the student to comply with the

learning perspective of the teacher. As Harnza (2012) phrases the topic, "When teaching in a new culture, faculty need to adjust to who is in the classroom; the student should not have to adjust to who teaches the class" (p. 59).

Clearly the learning style of the student must be fostered for positive student learning outcomes. For this reason, educators who embrace the international learning experience themselves will build in cross-cultural awareness, reflect on intrapersonal assumptions (Livermore, 2010; Molinsky, 2013) and rethink their approach in the classroom. Such reflection will result in changes in the educators themselves and their students. Harnza's (2012) qualitative study highlighted the importance of using culturally specific contexts when teaching in the international setting to communicate relevance and show appreciation: "... when you are teaching [in another culture] make sure the examples that you use in your lesson plans are culturally appropriate." (p. 63). Transnational educators from the United States must be aware of the implicit cultural examples when importing curricular ideas, concepts and their assumptions of effectiveness, if educators are to be relevant to the cultural context.

Just as learning styles reflect cultural influences, the teacher's methods tool box can be reflective of the techniques used in their given context. Teacher professional development must allow time for deep engagement rather than reducing teaching to technique "...leaving people who teach differently from feeling devalued, forcing them to measure up to norms not their own" (Palmer, 1998, p. 12). Consider further that implicit knowledge is gained from within the organization "... transferred by the stories people tell to each other, by the trials and errors that occur as people develop knowledge and skill, by inexperienced people watching those more experienced, and by experienced people providing close and constant coaching to newcomers (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000, p. 19). If real learning is based on personal stories and tacit knowledge functional to the organizational context, professional mentoring and learning is then reflective of the culture both surrounding and within the learning organization.

Research Methods

The descriptive study was aimed at examining if practices of faculty development utilized in the United States were effective in strengthening the pedagogical skills of Southeast Asia faculty teaching in a transnational partnership. This study was based on the conceptual framework offered by Guskey (2000) and aimed to determine the impact of professional development and change.

Participants and Setting

In the following survey design study purposive sampling (Creswell, 2009; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006) led to the involvement of nineteen participants in the research project. The nineteen were Southeast Asia HEI teacher educator faculty in a transnational partnership with a university from the United States. Originally 26 participants teaching primary, secondary social science, secondary mathematics, or secondary biology teacher education students were involved in the required faculty development seminars. Due to teaching responsibilities at the university, a total of 19 participants attended all three professional development seminars and data collected is reflective of these participants. The partnership is an undergraduate dual-degree four year teacher education program located in Southeast Asia dedicated to prepare teachers for Southeast Asia village schools. Since a US degree is earned by the students in Southeast Asia, ongoing curriculum oversight is provided by the HEI from the US as required by the US accreditation body and student learning outcome data is evaluated by the US partner. Faculty development is conducted to ensure high quality teaching practices and consistency. The international partner from the US sends education faculty to offer professional development to the receiving Southeast Asia HEI faculty to build capacity, provide latest techniques, conduct faculty research and to build relationship. In addition, the US faculty on occasion have been sent to teach courses to the partner institution's undergraduate students in Southeast Asia.

Instruction occurs in English and, when needed, translated. The oversight of the curriculum, transcription, program assessment and graduation ceremony involves up to five trips per academic year by the sending HEI dean from the US.

In the present study, the US partner provided three different faculty development seminars to the Southeast Asia faculty on separate occasions. All three seminars were taught by two administrators and themed on Creating a Culture of Continuous Improvement. The main topic was program evaluation with underlying subtopics of philosophy of assessment, formative and summative assessment approaches, rubric development and signature key assessments for program accreditation. Southeast Asia university faculty were provided research articles to review a day before the presentation of the given topic. The goal of the three separate faculty development seminars was to create a program assessment plan consistent with the US partner institution's assessment planning. Such focus was built around the US degree granting accreditation requirements of accountability, to provide a deeper understanding of a variety of formative and summative assessment procedures, and to develop authentic, performance-based measures for student assessment. The first faculty development seminar was offered in a plenary format for five full days over the course of a week. In collaboration with the Southeast Asia partner dean, it was decided the subsequent faculty development sessions were to be reduced to four half-day seminars with small group break-out workshops in subject area departments. The change in schedule would allow processing time and discussion in department teams.

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the researcher's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to conducting the study. In addition, the participants were informed of the evaluation of the faculty development through the survey, and they were assured that their identities would be anonymous. The research was entirely consistent with the professional conduct outlined by the American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association, 2009).

Data Analysis

Survey findings were analyzed around the research questions of the perceptions of university faculty in Southeast Asia regarding professional development offered by their transnational partners from the United States. Questions of satisfaction, relevance, skill development and instructional change were used to determine trends. Qualitative answers on the survey were used to triangulate perceived influence of the professional development and cultural relevancy to their instructional practice.

The construct *satisfaction* was developed using five of the survey questions surrounding personal satisfaction with the professional development received. Additionally, the construct *teaching skills* was designed using three of the survey questions reflecting faculty perceptions of teaching skills gained based on the faculty development seminars attended (see Table 1). The scales were subjected to tests of reliability using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences [SPSS] (Arbuckle, 2006). The scales performed well under tests of reliability, yielding strong scores; satisfaction .895; and teaching skills .675. Using SPSS, initial correlations of these constructs and the participant group found the construct *satisfaction* to be positively correlated with the construct *teaching skills* (.638, $p < .01$). This strong positive correlation gave initial indication that the participants reporting satisfaction with the professional development received also perceived an increase in teaching skill development as a result of the faculty development offerings.

Individual open response survey items were investigated to answer fully the inquiry of cultural relevance opposed to using exclusively the closed-response questions. Additional themes were found within these survey questions. The research questions will be used to organize findings.

Table 1. Construct Formation

Dependent Variable: Satisfaction
Professional development was well organized
Professional development objectives were clearly stated.
Professional development activities were relevant to professional development objectives
All necessary material/equipment/resources were provided or made readily available
Overall presenter performance
Dependent Variable: Teaching Skills
The professional development activities increased my teaching skills based on research of effective practice.
The professional development provided information on a variety of assessment theory and skills.
The professional development activities provided skills needed to analyze and use data in decision making for instruction or at all levels of the program

Findings

Data analyzed using individual survey response items indicated differences of perceptions concerning satisfaction with the faculty development sessions. Strong positive relationships were found between several dependent variables. A positive correlation was found between organization of the professional development and clarity of objectives (.855, $p < .01$); organization of the professional development and relevancy of the professional development activities (.826, $p < .01$); and organization of the professional development and presenter performance (.743, $p < .01$). At the same time, an inverse relationship was noted between organization of the professional development and professional development sessions (-.500, $p < .05$). Furthermore, a negative relationship was found between the perceptions of teacher education subject area endorsement faculty and presenter performance (-.507, $p < .05$). See Table 2. A change in the presentation method occurred after the first session of a week-long plenary lecture to two additional sessions of collaborative workshops.

Further data analysis indicated a perception of enhanced knowledge and skills gained from the faculty development seminars, giving rise to the second research question examined. Strong positive relationships indicated the professional development activity provided enhanced assessment knowledge and teaching skills based on effective practices (.676, $p < .01$). Found also was a strong relationship between an enhancement of assessment knowledge and the development of skills needed to analyze and use data in instructional or program-specific decision making (.475, $p < .05$). This finding was further enhanced by a strong positive relationship between an increase in teaching skills based on effective practices and skills needed to use data in instructional or program-specific decision making (.489, $p < .05$).

The construct *satisfaction* positively correlated with participants increased understanding of assessment theory and skills (.577, $p < .01$) and *satisfaction* also had a positive relationship with skills needed to use data in instructional or program-specific decision making (.540, $p < .05$). The strong positive correlations give evidence of an increase in the participants' assessment knowledge and skills to analyze and use data for instructional or program-related decision making (see Table 3).

Finally, in relation to the third research question, overall perceptions of the participants on their ability to impact student learning were examined. Using the developed construct of *satisfaction*, a positive relationship was found with perceptions of deeper reflection and self-assessment of exemplary practices (.540, $p < .05$). Also strong were the participants perceptions of an increase in assessment theory and skills and the ability to think strategically to integrate fully the program vision in course work (.483, $p < .05$).

What was even more notable, however, were the comments offered in the open response questions on the survey. Qualitative responses were used to develop concentrated themes and these comments give additional insight into the Southeast Asia university partner's perceptions of the relevance of faculty

development received from their US partners. Participants were asked (1) how the professional development related to their teaching and provided a review of their practices; (2) what new ideas were gained and how they planned to implement the new ideas; (3) what information was of greatest value; and (4) what, if any, specific suggestions they had to improve the professional development. Open response questions shared the voice of the participants regarding the contextual relevance of faculty development seminars to their professional work on the Southeast Asian partnership campus based on their own lens of effective practice.

Actualizing the Mission and Vision

Using the six open-ended questions, participants noted positively that the professional development did provide an opportunity to reflect on the program mission and the vision. “Professional development provided insights and reminded me about our [program] vision and mission as well as [core beliefs]” (Participant 3) and provided an opportunity to reflect on implementation of assessment philosophy, “epistemology, axiology, and how to implement in [our native language] (Participant 8). Faculty noted that the seminars provided a reminder of their responsibility in making certain the program vision was achieved, “...[we must be] in agreement about achieving the vision and mission; let it not just come from the top, but also bottom up” (Participant 7). “I believe, as a teacher, I must continually be re-charged, and ...need to improve or enhance things related to teaching strategies and activities [to meet] the program vision (Participant 2). Furthermore, the seminars provided time to consider more fully the program vision in specific program outcomes. To this point, it was noted the importance of the program vision in their students as future professional teachers; “By keep introducing [program] mission and vision to students, discussing how they can relate and apply them in the classroom as well as in their own future teaching time” (Participant 1).

Also noted by the participants was the faculty development provided additional skills to help actualize the program mission and vision most especially when a discrepancy is found within program data collection. The professional development seminars provided time to learn, "New methods of teaching and assessing" (Participant 3) and determine that "...a good assessment system is needed by our [program] to meet the program vision (Participant 1). The professional development activities also gave opportunity to learn "how to successfully deal with different assessment evaluations" (Participant 7) and discover "[discrepancies] of key assessment data of students' achievement ...in the practicum classes... to fulfill [the program] mission" (Participant 11)

Relevance to the Cultural Context

Although positive responses were noted in relation to the actualization of the program vision and mission through assessment accountability, participants noted that the professional development presenters failed to take into account the assessment activities already occurring in their context, "So far, even before the professional development, the [authentic assessment] rubric has already been pointing in the required direction" (Participant 2) and "I really expect that there is a time for asking and answering or even discussing about our on-going rubric that have been used here" (Participant 11). "Consistency in assessment is very important for all lecturers in order to have the uniformity in teaching in our culture[al] context" (Participant 5).

Participants were asked what new ideas were gained, how these ideas might be implemented within instruction, and suggestions for improvement. These questions provided the platform for the Southeast Asian faculty to note if the professional development added to their instructional practice or lacked relevancy to their work on the partnership campus consistent with the fourth research question. Almost all comments noted the faculty development presenters lack of

contextualization to the given cultural context and learning styles in Southeast Asia:

The ideas gained do not specifically apply to my teaching; rather provide me with more insights. (Participant 1).

...the ideas learned [will need] to be further developed for [program] context... so I can adjust them (Participant 8).

...You need to make it more concrete and appropriate for [our Southeast Asia] courses (Participant 3).

...when planning PD make it more applicable to the [Southeast Asia] context (Participant 10).

Our culture and context needs reinforcement (Participant 7).

You need to ask about professional development topics from faculty (Participant 11).

...You need more elements for our context (Participant 5).

In PD, you need more examples for our context not just international perspectives (Participant 2).

I suggest that you use various kinds of [the] latest assessment methods for assessing students in our [Southeast Asia] context (Participant 14).

The open participant responses to the faculty development noted the current assessment planning occurring on their own domestic campus and the new skills obtained were both useful to actualize the program vision and mission. Many suggestions were provided by the participants noting the need for the international partners to relate any professional learning and teaching to their Southeast Asia cultural context to make the learning relevant. Cultural context is an element that needs inclusion in future planning opposed to "best practices" from another cultural context. Such implementation efforts warrant additional research.

Discussion

Perceptions of the Southeast Asia higher education faculty indicate a satisfaction with the faculty development received from their international partners in many areas. The dependent variable *satisfaction* included the organization of the time together, clarity of the goals of the professional learning seminars and relevant activities. Interestingly, inverse relationships were found between subject area endorsement faculty, organization of the professional development and the professional development seminars. At the conclusion of the first week-long seminar, the US partners wanted to host collaborative workshops in the specific program areas to develop a program assessment plan. Subsequent assessment seminars were workshop style and did not include lectures. It may be that subject area endorsement faculty perceived this learning time differently, because lecturing was not the methodology used but rather collaborative, shared learning. A collaborative workshop can be perceived as less structured or effective. In the Southeast Asia partner university, faculty promotion is linked to the number and type of professional seminars attended. Points are given and collected for rank change based on scholarly work, which includes professional development seminars. Collaborative workshops are not given the same value as formal, plenary lectures. This is a cultural artifact that almost certainly impacts faculty motivation.

A further note ought to be considered. The US partner's accreditation standards are based on program outputs (outcome-based learning objectives), whereas the Southeast Asia accreditation board offers accreditation based on seat hours or inputs. A lecture-style may be a preferred method, especially since it is engrained in the university culture's accreditation requirements. The faculty development offered was based on concepts congruent with the US partner's HEI definition of effective practice as defined by professional literature and the requirements of the US partner's accreditation body. Cultural learning differences exist not only in higher education pedagogy,

but also in faculty rank policies and accreditation requirements. Such differences may impact perceptions of success, especially when the definition of effectiveness is not based on practices relevant to the university culture.

All 19 participants having attended all three professional development sessions self-reported an increase in the understanding of assessment theory and pedagogy skills. Enhancement in these areas positively correlated with their satisfaction of the faculty development. Participant perceptions of a deepened reflection and self-assessment of exemplary practices resulted in mixed results. Subject area endorsement faculty indicated an inverse relationship of enhanced reflection, whereas other participants self-reported an enhanced ability to reflect on pedagogy and self-assessment of exemplary practices. Thus, this inverse relationship must be noted for future faculty development. Suggestions for faculty development seminars must be solicited based on their own self-reported need for professional growth to develop cultural relevancy and ongoing internal support from the domestic institution based on the systemic context (Guskey, 2000, 2002; Maria & Watkins, 2003). The organizational context will be critical when any change initiative is considered.

Several comments highlighted current work occurring in the Southeast Asia institution's area of assessment. Such recognition of current work is important, because future instruction offered by the transnational partner from the US must be mindful to note and even celebrate current successes in the receiving partner's HEI. The concept of "best practices" also needs further research. It may be that the Southeast Asia faculty and the US partners have a difference of opinion in terms of what constitutes exemplary practice; cultural differences must be articulated and negotiated. This difference in perspective will particularly affect perceptions of efficacy in the classroom and self-assessment.

Study participants agreed that they experienced an increase in their ability to think strategically and to integrate the vision and mission of the HEI program into student coursework.

Perhaps this finding is an outcome of the study to celebrate most. It is imperative that higher education transnational institutional partnerships clearly outline the purpose of the collaboration (Beerkens & Derwende, 2007), and such intentionality must be seamlessly integrated to build internal capacity. A lack of a common framework around a shared vision and mission will not sustain partnership collaboration overtime. This study finding indicates that despite teaching and learning style differences, the two global partners have a shared goal. The partnership was developed based on a common vision and both strive towards actualization. Such finding will be a key of success to sustain partnership efforts (Sakamoto & Chapman, 2011; Sarvi, 2011).

Implications for Higher Education

Learning styles and teaching methods in other cultural contexts are different than those used in Western higher education, and perceptions of teaching effectiveness and impact of westernized professional learning may be contrary to the best-practice research literature based on the Western perspective. Thus, a conflict in the professional development literature exists. If culturally specific learning styles and teaching practices in other countries are not in alignment with the westernized definition of exemplary practice, perceptions of impact using a borrowed definition may not be valid for the given context. This is particularly important for teacher education and other practitioner programs. Thus, is this westernized best-practice teaching and learning literature culturally inadequate for defining effectiveness in international, culturally-rich global contexts? How must transnational educators navigate such a dichotomy?

International partners must think deeply about their transnational cross-border partners and be open to learning from the partner's learning and teaching culture. Relationships will be paramount in developing strong partnerships (Gopel, 2011; Harnza, 2012) and sustaining the impact of the collaboration. In short, "Any attempt to indoctrinate teachers with imported and

decontextualized teaching theory and practice ignores the personalized and contextualized nature of teachers' schemata and is unlikely to result in success" (Gu, 2005, p. 18). Or, as Palmer (1998) notes,

Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves We must find an approach to teaching that respects the diversity of teachers and subjects, which methodological reductionism fails to do. (pp. 11-12)

How then shall transnational HEI collaborate effectively across the globe, given the complex identities of teachers, cultural learning norms and the always-present aim to impact student achievement? Such a question can only be answered based on relationship, a desire for professional growth by both partner institutions and a shared purpose for world impact.

Table 2. Correlation between Professional Development (PD) Sessions and Perceptions of Participant Faculty in Receiving Institution (N=19)

	Sessions	Department	Years of experience	PD organized	PD objectives clear	PD activities relevant	Presenter performance
Sessions	1	.371	.636**	-.500*	-.250	-.365	-.500*
		.118	.003	.029	.301	.125	.029
Department	.371	1	.155	-.380	-.321	-.355	-.507*
	.118		.525	.109	.181	.136	.027
Years of experience	.636**	.155	1	-.332	-.140	-.302	-.384
	.003	.525		.165	.568	.209	.104
PD organized	-.500*	-.380	-.332	1	.855**	.826**	.743**
	.029	.109	.165		.000	.000	.000
PD objectives clear	-.250	-.321	-.140	.855**	1	.803**	.638**
	.301	.181	.568	.000		.000	.003
PD activities relevant	-.365	-.355	-.302	.826**	.803**	1	.706**
	.125	.136	.209	.000	.000		.001
Presenter performance	-.500*	-.507*	-.384	.743**	.638**	.706**	1
	.029	.027	.104	.000	.003	.001	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3. Correlations between Professional Development (PD) Sessions and Perceptions of Participant Faculty Change (N=19)

	Satisfaction	Enhanced knowledge	Increased teaching skills	Theory and skills	Skills to analyze and use data	Think strategically integrate vision	Enhanced reflection and self-assessment
Satisfaction	1	.514*	.389	.577**	.540*	.363	.540*
		.024	.100	.010	.017	.126	.017
Enhanced knowledge	.514*	1	.676**	.298	.475*	.000	.209
	.024		.001	.215	.040	1.000	.390
Increased teaching skills	.389	.676**	1	.351	.489*	.141	.310
	.100	.001		.141	.034	.566	.197
Theory and skills	.577**	.298	.351	1	.357	.483*	.394
	.010	.215	.141		.133	.036	.095
Skills to analyze and use data	.540*	.475*	.489*	.357	1	.000	.074
	.017	.040	.034	.133		1.000	.763
Think strategically integrate vision	.363	.000	.141	.483*	.000	1	.310
	.126	1.000	.566	.036	1.000		.197
Enhanced reflection, self-assessment	.540*	.209	.310	.394	.074	.310	1
	.017	.390	.197	.095	.763	.197	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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