INTERNATIONALIZING HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION

IN THE UNITED STATES

by Forrest G. Moore*

Urged on by foundation grants, by their views of what international education should be in the 20th century, by the presence of ever larger numbers of foreign students on their campuses, and by U.S. government contracts to stimulate economic development, universities are dashing headlong into an era of internationalizing education from top to bottom. What is international education and by what means does an educational institution, a college, or a department in a university transform its program so that it becomes an international one?

In the past international education has been referred to as:

the attempt to create in students what is sometimes called the international mind... the phrase may mean trying to train sensible intellectual attitudes toward other nations and helping people to escape from foolish or wicked forms of national pride.¹

This is not what we mean today by the term. We are now concerned with the means by which an educational institution or an academic discipline restructures its principles and content so that its teachers can train students whose ability to move from culture to culture and practice their vocation successfully and with felicitous results is unquestioned.

University Practices and Some Issues in International Education

To give focus to their efforts to internationalize, many universities are in the process of making a self-study of needed changes or have already appointed an international dean. His functions vary from campus to campus, but in general, he does the following:

1. Serves as a coordinator of the institution's involvements in international programs.
2. Serves as a stimulator of faculty and department involvement in international program activities.
3. Takes charge of screening and presenting proposals to appropriate sponsors of international programs.
4. Manages grant funds allocated to the institution for international programs.

*Dr. Moore is associate professor of education and director, Office of the Adviser to Foreign Students, University of Minnesota.

¹Paul Van Dyke in personal discussions with John E. Harley and quoted in International Understanding; Agencies Educating for a New World, Stanford University Press, 1931.
5. Serves as liaison officer with foundations and federal agencies disbursing funds for international programs.

In the larger universities, there is an even greater decentralization of functions. Colleges have appointed individual coordinators of international programs or have named committees to represent the interests of the colleges.

The problem of all our present approaches to internationalizing of education is suggested in the Ford Foundation report, *The University and World Affairs*. In this report it is pointed out that we must be alert if we are to avoid international education becoming an accretion on present structures rather than a vital dimension of them. The report goes on to state:

The crux of any effort must be the broadening of the competence and the outlook of faculties. Only if faculty members are enabled to add knowledge of other areas and cultures, only if they have time to rework and develop courses to draw upon their foreign experience, only if they can strengthen contacts with scholars of other countries, and only if their efforts are reinforced by the addition of specialists in relevant departments and by library resources and other materials, can they develop effectively this frontier of American higher education.  

The elements in a program for international education (as proposed by the Ford Foundation report) that need to be considered as colleges and universities go about making changes are:

1. **Consideration of curriculum changes.** It is suggested that during undergraduate life, all students should get an introduction to a culture and a language other than their own, that part of each student's life be spent overseas, that graduate training include an emphasis on the problems of the vocation that are international in their scope, and that thesis research be done on just such problems.

2. **The training of foreign nationals.** The educational experience of foreign students must be made relevant to the environment in which the training will be used.

3. **The universities' involvement overseas.** Institutions should undertake assignments within their competence, relating these assignments to their present interests and strengths.

4. **Continuing education in world affairs.** Colleges and universities must assure that there is widespread citizen understanding and support for the role of educational institutions in international education.

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While the institution must focus at the top administrative level on its international responsibilities, it will fail to achieve its goal of meeting them unless international education is recognized as an element in all education. We must recognize that it is not a discipline, but an element in each discipline. This calls for total involvement. It calls not for the appointment of a dean, but the assuming by each faculty member and administrator of a share of the task of making education international. One of the most difficult decisions we face lies in teaching methods. In the same class can we teach:

The American who expects to be home country-bound and cares little about other than a narrow view of the world?

The American who wants to know about other cultures for the purpose of teaching others about cultural likenesses and differences?

The American who expects to spend most of his life in positions that call for a thorough understanding of another culture?

The foreign student who needs to initiate the changes that his own culture will tolerate?

We are doing this whether we like it or not, and we really have little idea as to which student is getting the least for his money. Some would say that training the foreign student as if he were to spend his life in the U. S. best prepares him for long range leadership in his own country. But will he still be in his own country when its ready for his brand of leadership? Pretty doubtful!

Others take the view that the foreign student should be completely separated from his American counterpart. They argue that he should be taught through a curriculum that is especially designed to provide him with techniques that can be used at once and effectively in his home setting. Obviously the right mix of these two ideas is what we are really looking for.

And what of home economics -- does it have a role in international education? Like every other discipline it is heavily involved in all of the ways mentioned above in the internationalizing of education.

The Elements of the Universities' Involvement in International Education

The numbers of foreign students in the United States in the field of home economics has continued to increase. Data for the years 1955 to 1964 is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total of Foreign Students</th>
<th>Number in Home Economics</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>34,232</td>
<td>445</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>36,494</td>
<td>500</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total of Foreign Students</th>
<th>Number in Home Economics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>40,666</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>43,391</td>
<td>535</td>
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<td>1959</td>
<td>47,245</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>48,486</td>
<td>584</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>53,107</td>
<td>579</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>58,086</td>
<td>628</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>64,705</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>74,814</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The direct affiliation of American universities providing technical assistance to foreign universities as listed by Paul Bodeman in 1957 included:

Colorado A & M with University of Peshawar - 1954-1957
Purdue University with Rural University of the State of Minas Gerais -1954-?
University of Tennessee with the Government of India - 1955-1958
Texas A & M with the University of Dacca - 1956-?

The Michigan State Survey listed these four programs and three additional ones:

University of Maine with the Dept. of Education, St. Johns, Newfoundland
Cornell University with Servicio Cooperativo Interamericano de Salud Publica, Lima, Peru
University of Puerto Rico with Turrialba Institute, Costa Rica

When it comes to making curriculum changes we find little that we can refer to as guideline material. Here and there we may find a course title to which has been appended the word "international" or the course which includes comparative materials. But no one apparently attempted the thorough reshaping of the materials, ideas, and bibliography needed to make a course of maximum effectiveness for both American and foreign students.

This also seems true in the broader field of extension home economics education. It is estimated, for example, that 10-15,000 of the foreign students in this country have wives and children with them; yet there are few attempts to utilize the skills and insights of home economics for their more fruitful and satisfying existence here as well as for their use when they return home. Perhaps the problem lies in our failure to use the experience we already have as a corrective in planning how to deal with the acculturation process that is involved in educating those who are to spend their professional lives in a setting other than that in which they are taught.

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Let us now look briefly at the record of our involvement overseas:

In his study of U.S. programs overseas, Weidner indicates that in general better results were obtained when we emphasized institution building rather than when we emphasized direct help. Innovations in courses and curricula were successful in some countries and rejected in others. New adaptations in certain fields of study were more readily accepted than in others. Innovations in courses in agriculture, teacher education, and applied sciences were numerous; there was less success in programs that had to do with the professions and the fundamental disciplines.7

The attempt to make methods of teaching more democratic, providing a helping relationship between student and professor, has largely failed. There has been some use of the case method with local materials; but the lecture to large classes is still the norm, and emphasis on memorization still continues. American examination methods have not been welcome. The teaching technique with greatest success has been the use of reading materials to supplement class work. Libraries are improving and formal text books are more in use.

Efforts to train faculty members and give them better experience often floundered on the problems of working with part-time faculty members who were poorly paid and had no hope of getting higher salaries if they did a better job of teaching.

The University of Tennessee reports that the success it enjoyed in India was due to its plan of counterpart relationships. Home service was a new field, really just beginning in India in the early 1950's and women's education was being pushed rapidly. Thus home science found a ready market, schools were built, and curricula were established. However, there is still a critical need for home science textbooks and other teaching materials based on Indian home and family life. American materials are still being adapted to local conditions -- and with only limited success since most of the teachers making adaptations are young and inexperienced.8

Henry Hart, in his critique of the home science project, also points out that the University of Tennessee's India project began when home science was new to India. Six years before, only one institution offered courses in home economics and home management and these were held in low repute. When the University of Tennessee began its project, only Madras, with four colleges, Delhi University's Lady Irwin College, and Baroda offered courses. At Baroda in 1954 there were three graduate students in home management and child development -- the only graduate students in this field in all of India.

Hart says this program had an impact on this new and formative discipline not matched by any other contract program in India. The team helped lay out building plans, assisted with a thorough revision of curriculum in six institutions, made deliberate arrangements for the development of the younger staff at its host institutions, and helped initiate and plan meetings of the entire profession in India.\footnote{9}

Hart points out that the home economics program was an example of an effort designed to reach an entire country. However, he sees the home economics project as less well thought out when compared to the secondary education project. The home economics project, for example, was modified as it progressed. This could be good or bad in its effect. Hart felt that there were few real counterpart persons -- such persons are viewed as necessary in effective cross-cultural change. Of the nine colleges involved, two did not fully understand or agree with what was being done!

The contracting university was committed; five of the eight home economists came from the University of Tennessee, three being department heads. They did use a team approach to decide policy and strategy to get a clearer view of the job to be done; they did meet to plan how to overcome specific objections to their work and to counter their spatial isolation. Hart points out what appears to be three very good reasons why the team approach may be a necessity overseas even though it is discounted at home:

1. Frustrations need to be explained to oneself with a sympathetic audience (other team members).

2. The individual must be allowed to redefine his goals in a worthwhile frame of reference. Perhaps only a term can affect anything so diffuse as a discipline, such as home economics in an entire country.

3. The team approach demonstrates and encourages better than any other technique can do the technique of "cooperation not ordered by a superior authority."

A consultant from the University of Illinois overseas team cited the importance of making sure that what happens is seen as a mission of Indian educators. This team's determination to make sure this happened was symbolized by its agreement "never to make a speech about how it's done in America." If the success of the program is measured by whether one is asked to return, the home economics team in India was eminently successful. Hart thinks a more relevant question is whether the work once started moved toward long-term goals as effectively as possible within the resources provided. Contract teams working overseas often suffer from myopia on two counts:

They are ordinarily isolated from the process of self criticism which gives a surer sense of direction to an academic discipline -- one hesitates to criticize when so much is undergoing change.

\footnote{9}{Henry C. Hart, \textit{Campus India}, Michigan State University Press, 1961.}
\footnote{10}{Ibid.}
They are often separated from "continual and systematic contact with the needs of the people." 10

Problems in Creating an International Dimension in the Disciplines of Higher Education

Since it is difficult to distinguish between international education and intercultural understanding, it might be useful to define these two terms. Weidner defines international education as "the discovery of new knowledge through cross-cultural contacts." 11 DuBois defines intercultural understanding as the ability to bring both intuition (affective learning) and knowledge (cognitive learning) to bear in cross-cultural situations. In her article in Education and Anthropology, DuBois gives us a good general description of the problems and conditions that face us in achieving intercultural understanding. International education at its best -- though obviously not a congruent term with intercultural understanding -- will meet conditions described by DuBois:

For a learner to achieve intercultural understanding certain sufficient conditions must exist: Intercultural understanding must have positive value attached to it; rewards should be perceivable for such learning; cultural differences must have been experienced; the experiences must be self-related; the sequences between the self and the learned must be left unresolved. In the monocultural learner the crucial problems are when and for how long to stage in cross-cultural experiences. In the bicultural learner the crucial problem is how to establish the coherent linkages between the self and secondary groupings of two or more cultures. Educators' and teachers' roles in respect to learners are threefold; first, to encourage an expanding system of self-relatedness; second, to supply the affective learning resources essential to intuition; and third, to provide the cognitive-rational materials necessary for systematic knowledge.

Remove supportive personal elements, skip too widely and too early in the learner's life experience over the sequence of expanding self-relatedness, cut too short the time allowed to absorb new ways and objectively appraise new values, fail to provide the opportunities for experiential learning or fail to establish it as a habit of learning, distort or fail to supply systematic cross-cultural knowledge, and the learner is unlikely to achieve international understanding.

For educators and teachers to perform their necessary role in this process, they must themselves possess intercultural understanding, but also they must conceive their function to be neither solely that of cultural transmitters nor solely that of innovators. Rather, their function is to translate cultural realities to individual learners whose capacities and incapacities for intercultural understanding will vary greatly not only between learner but also at various periods in the learner's life. 12

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10 Ibid.
For a more direct approach to the problems of restructuring a discipline to meet the criteria of international or intercultural, we can turn to the conference proceedings of the November 1961 meeting of the Council on Social Work Education.

In his paper at that conference Beck points up a number of the difficulties experienced by foreign students in learning situations as seen by their professors:13

1. Severe handicap in English
2. The degree mania
3. Disappointment with the American educational system
4. Lack of a detailed syllabus for courses
5. Too much theory in lectures and readings

Turning to theoretical considerations, Beck points out that our problems of constructing curriculum may well hinge on our understanding of the way in which culture conditions the foreign student's perception of life and his ego involvement in maintaining his perceptions.

DuBois maintains that cross-cultural learning, or for that matter any learning, is inhibited or promoted by one's state of mind. The foreign student who is disturbed by a statement is likely to find that particular item of information difficult to learn.

When we review the evidence we find that most foreign students do well if their preparation for study in the United States leads them to acquire the habit of managing data in statistical terms. The evidence of what happens to learning in the face of feelings and emotions is not so readily checked; yet it is clear that cognitive learning is interfered with by feelings. This state of mind is often referred to by foreign student advisers as "fighting the system." There seems to be little direct relationship between it and level of intelligence, field of study, or country of origin.

Creating and International Dimension in Home Economics Education

It seems clear then that home economics, as other disciplines, can and should have an international dimension. Do we know enough about the system of creating this dimension to set about doing it? Only those who have have experience in the particular professional field can finally answer the question. We who work with the individual student can offer only hints about the problems and hypothesize about solutions.

It seems reasonable that if we are to create such a dimension we will need to begin by postulating the family and home situation in a specific country and then teach, prepare materials, and design research problems that will in fact train American or foreign students to perform in such a

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way so as to reach, in the selected environment, the goals of home economics education. Anthropologists, sociologists, and persons specializing the the study of the foreign country concerned will all have useful insights to offer.

The home economists will first need to state the area of their responsibility. Beck quotes Baldwin as saying:

The province of home economics is ... the application of the principles (of) many basic disciplines to the welfare of families...At different points home economics overlaps with the fields of nutrition, social work, family law, architecture, interior design, education, and consumer economics, as well as with the technological fields concerned with the development and evaluation of textiles, foods and equipment.  

If we look again at India as an example Margaret Cormack reminds us that:

the Indian family is remarkable in its stability, in its emotional nurture. But

1. There is a lot of myth about the Indian family. Despite its sanctity it has always had its dark side and does now.

2. Authority clashes are increasing and are likely to increase still more. The paternalistic pattern becomes unacceptable to older youth when they become educated, when they learn a lot about the world, when they begin to feel they are "selves."

3. The Indian family is increasingly failing as a "social security system." Individuals and other institutions take over much of this function.

4. The Indian family is increasingly failing as an "emotional security system" though it may regain this function. Adult life is more complex than in the past, and children must be helped to grow into adulthood. "The innocence of childhood" may be a sweet concept, but innocence and over-protection are not guarantors of happiness.  

Indian education is also rapidly changing. More and more of its total population of school age children are in school and more and more of these are young women. Not only is family life changing, but the conception of what is appropriate for women is changing as well. And the educated in India approve of these changes and expect and want even greater changes. Students study-

ing in the United States -- as described in general by Morris and Davidsen\textsuperscript{16} in specifics (Indian students by Lambert and Bressler\textsuperscript{17} and the Useems\textsuperscript{18}... while critical of the pace and content of changes in the United States, often become the foremost advocates of change once they have returned home.

Here we also find one of our greatest dilemmas in the construction of training programs. To train thoroughly and to the highest level is to make it likely that the individual on return may be impatient, unwilling to bide his time, and unable to affect markedly what is happening in his field. Also he becomes the targets of recruiters in educational institutions and industries in the United States. He is so well trained that he is wooed by employers in the U.S. and it in fact discouraged from going home and encouraged to remain here.

Those who espouse training to a lower level, the master's degree and the special certificate, do not count the cost of attitudes this may bring in a country that proclaims that it educates to the highest level of the individual's ability. Training ended at a lower level may be held in low regard at home and the individual may have little or no chance to demonstrate what he can do. Or his training may be so little different than that given in the home country that its value as a stimulus to necessary change is nil. What affect should these facts have on our plans for internationalizing education?

A study of returned foreign students made in 1959 showed a surprising number of these foreign alumni in positions of middle level leadership and on the way up. There were the failures, of course, and dissatisfied persons--although most were dissatisfied in a good way at the level of rationality that promoted changes.\textsuperscript{19}

Those who were asked about their training, i.e., whether they would do the same thing again if they had it to do over, responded by saying that they would now attempt to broaden their education, that they found themselves too specialized for their field of work on return. Most commented that the foreign trained should expect to become managers of programs and that as such it was important to know how higher education and government were organized in the United States and other parts of the world in order to make comparative judgements about these systems and their applicability in the "back home" setting. But the overwhelming response was one of satisfaction with their United States education and a desire to keep their professional contacts current in order to continue their education.

\textsuperscript{17}Richard D. Lambert and Marvin Bressler, \textit{Indian Students on an American Campus}, University Of Minnesota Press, 1966.
Where are we then in the process of internationalizing education? Ever increasing numbers of foreign students are coming to the United States, and more Americans are serving overseas. Fewer foreign students are returning home; yet those who do are having a vital influence on their countries. There is a need for a structured curriculum; yet changes in undeveloped countries are taking place so swiftly that one scarcely knows where to begin. A larger and more highly trained staff in the university is devoted to planning and executing programs, but only spasmodic efforts are being made to get the entire faculty involved, or to bring to bear on the problems of underdeveloped countries the fund of knowledge that has already been accumulated.

How might we alter the training of all foreign and American students to include an international dimension? Some suggestions can be cited. In a paper prepared for the guidance of AID officials interested in training young leaders of foreign countries in the skills necessary to manage cross-cultural situations it is suggested that coverage of the content areas listed below would be the most fruitful:

1. The process of cross-cultural communication
2. The theories and determinants of economic development
3. The process of assimilation and adaptation in cultural change including methods for inducing constructive, orderly change
4. The local, area, and regional human resources position of their respective countries
5. The use of comparative methods in evaluating the needs of a country and in formulating the processes by which these needs are met
6. An understanding, in depth, of the relevance of the American experience to the evolving of modern political, social, and economic institutions

And from where do we draw the guidance to assist us in describing the content that will provide this kind of training? I can only suggest a bibliography of some proportions as a starting point for those whose interests lie in this direction. I will not take the time to detail it here, but merely indicate that it includes materials intended to sharpen our insights into American culture and personality as well as the understanding of culture and cultural and social change. The list provides materials that give us the beginnings of a more scientific comparative method in education as well as the most recent findings in what is described by Franci L.K. Hsu as "psychological anthropology," the study of the effect of society and culture on personality characteristics in the development, formation, and change of culture and society. These references are given at the end of this paper.

If this exposition has merely clouded your thinking without contributing to your motivation, I regret it. If the problem seems complex and confusing it is! If I seem to have given you little or no help with your problems it is because only those of you who are willing to take the time to become expert in another country or a region of the world will be able to provide the insights necessary to internationalize home economics for yourselves and for upcoming generations of American and foreign students!

Bibliography of Readings Suggested for Those Interested in Internationalizing Education


