A Pedagogy of Student Mobility: Facilitating humanistic outcomes in internationalization and student mobility

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Background to the Study

Over the last several decades, universities around the world have initiated processes of internationalization in an effort to respond to the growing influence of globalization and remain leaders in the vastly competitive space of higher education (Helms, Brajkovic, and Struthers 2017; Knight 2012). While internationalization is a complex and diverse term, it broadly describes "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education" (Knight 2003, p. 2). This includes efforts to integrate global and international perspectives, courses, curricula, learning outcomes, and people (e.g. students, scholars, and staff) into the university. However, more so than any other activity, universities have focused their internationalization efforts on student mobility (i.e. the sending and receiving of students to/from foreign destinations while enrolled in a degree program) with the belief that the act of mixing international and domestic students on campuses most effectively, or perhaps most easily, contributes to their missions of educating the next generation of global citizens who are aware and appreciative of the world and its many people, countries, and cultures (Burn 1990; Helms, Brajkovic, and Struthers 2017; Knight 2012).

Student mobility typically refers to two types of students: those who are seeking a full degree abroad (i.e. international students) and those students who are participating in a short-term, semester or year-long abroad programs (i.e. international exchange students) (Knight 2012). For the purposes of this article, I refer to both student groups simply as 'international students,' highlighting the common characteristic of studying outside of their home country and in this case, inside the United States. While I fully acknowledge that conceptualizing international students together as a singular group is often problematic, as I will discuss later, I group them together here for a specific reason. Though there are certainly differences between all students who study abroad, particularly between those who pursue short versus long term programs, they all bring with them backgrounds, areas of knowledge, and perspectives that are valuable to the goals of internationalization and they share the experience of studying in a foreign country, both of which are central features of concern in this paper.

While the number of international students studying abroad has increased from 238,000 to 4.8 million over the last 50 years (UNESCO 2018), the US has remained the world's largest and most sought after destination for international students. In 2019, the number of international students studying abroad in the US reached an all-time high of over 1.09 million (IIE 2019). Even given current international tensions involving the US, the increase of international students is unsurprising, as 72 percent of US universities report an acceleration of internationalization activities in the last several years. The vast majority of which list student mobility as the most important/pursued activity of internationalization (Helms, Brajkovic, and Struthers 2017). Though international student enrollment has fluctuated in recent years, data from 2018-2019 suggests that international student enrollment has steadied, and it is clear that student mobility will continue to be a central component of US higher education the foreseeable future (IIE 2019).

Accompanying the growth of international students has been a rising acknowledgement of the importance of student mobility on US higher education. As a result, there has been a wave of research looking at the impacts of internationalization on students and campuses over the past 15-20 years (Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner, and Nelson 1999; Ho, Bulman-Fleming, and Mitchell 2003; Urban and Palmer 2014). However, much of this scholarship has been focused on the *outcomes* of such programs, rather than the process of learning that takes place within them. The result has been a relative lack of exploration into international student programs through the lens of educational theory and the types of pedagogy that would best facilitate the objectives of internationalization. In response, this paper puts forth an initial articulation of a pedagogy of student mobility aimed at improving the effectiveness of such programs in fostering humanistic outcomes, such as global engagement, awareness, and understanding.

To provide the necessary context for why a pedagogy of student mobility is needed, I first lay out the benefits that motivate universities to invest in student mobility programs in order better understand the implicit learning outcomes that universities anticipate. I then provide an overview of the areas in which student mobility falls short of these expectations to highlight the need for improvement. Finally, I conclude with an articulate of what a pedagogy of student mobility must look like if the shortcomings of student mobility are to be addressed.

Motivations for Student Mobility: From the University Perspective

Before a pedagogy of any activity can be designed, the purpose and objectives of it must be clear. In the case of student mobility, several scholars have provided helpful starting points from which to understand why universities pursue student mobility programs and what they hope students will learn through them (Matthews 1989; Knight 2004). Building off this knowledge, I have constructed a typology of motivations for student mobility that highlights the two underlying motivations and goals behind any university's efforts to pursue or enhance activities relating to student mobility, including international admissions and study abroad.

Strategic Motivation

The strategic motivation for student mobility is one represented by the notion that self-interest and "economic motivations associated with positioning students to be successful in the new knowledge economy" are the key drivers of student mobility (Heron 2007; Jorgenson 2015; Larsen 2016, p. 59). Such an approach seeks to provide advantages to a person, community or state in relation to others, and is rooted within the neoliberal view of globalization and development (Larsen 2016; Parker 2008, 2011). These motivations are supported by research that points to the vast benefit that international and exchange students bring to their host countries in areas such as tuition, living expenses, and tourism (Farrugia, Chow, and Bhandari 2012), as well as benefits to their domestic peers in the form of intercultural skills and perspectives that enhance their human capital and success in the global economy (Cheney 2001; Luo and Jamieson-Drake 2013; Montgomery 2009). International students are definitively beneficial to universities in terms of enhancing their own reputations, rankings, and budgets, and it is this reality that defines the strategic motivation of universities pursuing student mobility.

Humanistic Motivation

While the strategic motivation is central and ever present in the field of student mobility, it exists alongside a humanistic motivation, which is encapsulated in various academic concepts, including international mindedness, global citizenship, cultural competence, learning to live together, global learning, or education for a better world (Hill 2015; Horey et al. 2018). While these terms differ in some ways or focus on different aspects of student development, they share a common broad perspective on the goal of student mobility: to reduce prejudice and ignorance thereby leading to the development of global citizens who are able to actively contribute to a better world (Bringle and Hatcher 2011; Larsen 2014; Lewin 2009; Plater et al. 2009). Through this lens, many universities are motivated to enroll international students in the hopes of creating "opportunities for domestic students to engage with those coming from different cultures, which, in turn, allow them to shed stereotypes, explore new

perspectives, and gain intercultural skills" (Pandit 2013, p. 131). Affirming this approach, researchers have found evidence that student mobility does have humanistic-oriented benefits including increased intercultural competencies among both international and domestic students (Chapdelaine and Alexitch 2004; Gurin et al. 2002), improved cultural awareness and proficiency (Clarke et al. 2009; Douglas and Jones-Rikkers 2001; Kitsantas 2004) and enhanced international and intercultural skills (Geelhoed, Abe, and Talbot 2003).

Therefore, what distinguishes the humanistic motivation is an emphasis on pursuing student mobility in order to facilitate greater global competencies in a manner that is mutually-beneficial and enhances international understanding, rather than for one's own, relative benefit (financial or otherwise). However, such a distinction does not indicate that these two motivations are mutually exclusive, in fact, they can and often do exist simultaneously. Still, recognizing this distinction is important because each demands different commitments, methods, and strategies to be successful.

Shortcomings of Student Mobility: Understanding the Need for Pedagogy

While there are numerous humanistic-oriented benefits that result from student mobility, these benefits are too often taken for granted by universities and are realized more by way of chance than intentional design and facilitation (Leask 2009). As a result of humanistic-benefits being assumed as automatic, there is exist great shortcomings and indeed failures that are pervasive across universities and colleges, which have caused student mobility programs to fall short of their full potential. The most significant of these shortcomings is the consistent lack of meaningful interaction and engagement that takes place between international and domestic students (Leask 2009).

Despite numerous studies pointing to the importance of interaction among international and domestic students in realizing the benefits of student mobility (Breuning 2007; Braskamp, Braskamp, and Engberg 2014; Glass, Wongtrirat and Buus 2015; Merrill, Braskamp, and Braskamp 2012; Waters Leung 2013), universities have continued to struggle to find ways to improve opportunities for interaction. International students choose to spend most of their time with other international students and their relations with domestic students or locals in the community tend to be superficial and brief at best or negative and combative at worst (Campbell 2016; Chisholm 2003; Waters and Leung 2013; Ogden 2008). This is true despite the fact that international students often desire interaction with host students (Allen and Herron 2003; Campbell 2016; Grey 2002; Hernandez 2010; Magnan and Back 2007; Mendelson 2004). Unsurprisingly, this lack of engagement between international and domestic students not only disappoints international students, who often have expectations of larger interactions, but also hinders their ability to create relationships and thus the potential for their presence to serve the humanistic goals of internationalization and student mobility (Allen and Herron 2003; Magnan and Back 2007; Tanaka 2007; Urban and Palmer 2014).

Even though there are demonstrated benefits of having international students on campus, the lack of international-domestic student interaction is a strong indication of the failure of student mobility programs to meet their own potential. Such a failure is a consequence of a type of magical thinking characterized by the assumption that bringing students onto the same campus will lead to beneficial outcomes of the highest degree (Chang, Chang, and Ledesma 2005). The spirit of magical thinking can be found in the literature on student mobility which has almost exclusively conceptualized international students as cultural resources or passive actors that bring cultural benefits to their campuses simply by showing up (Larsen 2016). This conceptualization has led to an overemphasis on the number of students studying internationally over the quality of engagement and interactions they have while abroad. Such an approach sees mobility as an end goal rather than the first step towards generating the humanistic-benefits that such programs can, and should, provide.

Towards a Pedagogy of Student Mobility

In place of magical thinking, I offer a pedagogy for approaching and designing student mobility programs and services in a manner that can better fulfill the humanistic potential they hold. While 'pedagogy' is a term with various meanings across fields and geographies, it broadly refers to one's approach to or theory of teaching. More specifically, I've chosen to use the term in a manner that most closely reflects Peter Mortimore's (1999) definition of pedagogy as "any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another" (p. 17). Thus, a pedagogy of student mobility is a framework for designing and facilitating activities to enhance humanistic learning among all students. The framework I put forward is directed at university and college administrators (working both within and outside of international offices) and is intended to serve as a guide in the development of programs and structures for both domestic and international students, such as orientations, academic workshops, professional trainings, curricula and course requirements, and departmental or university-wide events. It may also serve as a helpful resource for faculty and instructors in developing courses, learning modules, and curricula that are consistent with the internationalization mission of their university or college.

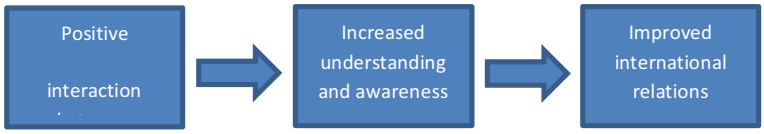
To develop this pedagogy of student mobility, an exhaustive literature review was conducted via online and published sources to first understand the shortcomings of student mobility and to then gain insight into the general question: what are effective approaches to addressing the current deficiencies of student mobility? (Fink 2019). Drawing off of my background as an interdisciplinary education scholar as well as my forthcoming research exploring the diplomatic experiences of international students on US campuses, this literature review purposefully drew knowledge from multiple fields and disciplines in order to build a framework that is not restricted by any single disciplinary perspective. By borrowing from resources across disciplines, the pedagogy of student mobility proposed here uses the political science concept of citizen diplomacy to better understand the influence that international students have on campus, and integrates it with educational and learning theories. In the following, I articulate the four tenets of this pedagogy and provide resources for each that can assist university and college administrators in their implementation.

Tenet 1: Communicating the Purpose of Student Mobility

Resource: Citizen Diplomacy

The first component of the pedagogy of student mobility, as with any learning activity, is to articulate the desired learning outcomes. If a major goal of student mobility is to facilitate global learning and to create international understanding, then the participants (i.e. students) are not only better prepared, but empowered, through a clear communication of these intentions. In other words, if we want or expect student mobility programs to effectively produce humanistic outcomes, students need to be fully aware of what the university is asking of them. For this task, the literature on citizen diplomacy is a helpful resource. Citizen diplomacy is a concept that describes the role that individuals play in creating better world relations through personal connections and engagements with other individuals (Figure 1) (Mathews-Aydinli 2016; Izadi 2016). It is a type of grassroots diplomacy distinguished by its emphasis on individual, informal forms of engagement, such as student interactions. With its vision of creating a more peaceful and understanding world, the humanistic motivation of student mobility is inherently rooted in the conceptualization of students, both international and domestic, as citizen diplomats. Clearly communicating this concept and the expectations associated with it must be the first step of any university motivated by and seeking the humanistic benefits of student mobility.

Figure 1: Citizen diplomacy at universities



In addition, universities and colleges must also help students develop the skills that will enable them to be successful citizen diplomats. Gordon Allport (1958) reminds us that not all contact is beneficial contact, and it is therefore an absolute necessity to ensure that students are in positions to have beneficial contact as much and as often as possible (Putnam 2007). As such it is the responsibility of the university to provide training and education opportunities that will provide the skills needed for students to have these interactions. After all, if we do not send our government diplomats to foreign countries without first providing cultural and communication training, why would we continue to do so with our student diplomats?

In this regard, the most important and widely applied skill universities can teach students is how to interact and communicate between cultures, which includes developing an understanding of how identity, representation, and stereotypes can inform such interactions. To do so, universities can create learning/training activities in which students develop their abilities before being thrown into foreign environments or in front of foreign students and communities. Workshops and trainings on topics such as high context vs. low context communication or body language differences can help students better communicate with and understand each other. However, developing communication skills is just part of the equation, these programs must also touch upon larger questions of identity and representation on campus.

In addition to more basic communication skills and strategies, proper international engagement preparation should highlight the stereotypes, representations, and identities that students bring with them into their new environments and be honest about how these things can result in both opportunities and challenges to create connections with others. For example, in my forthcoming research, I find that when coming to the US many international students are not fully aware of nor prepared for the ways in which domestic students often assume that they (i.e. the way they look, act, or behave) represent the entirety of their home country or region. As such, students should be given spaces to practice talking about their new identities in the US and become comfortable engaging with others who may see them as representatives of their country.

Tenet 2: Acknowledging International Student Agency and Identity

Resource: Social Identity Approach

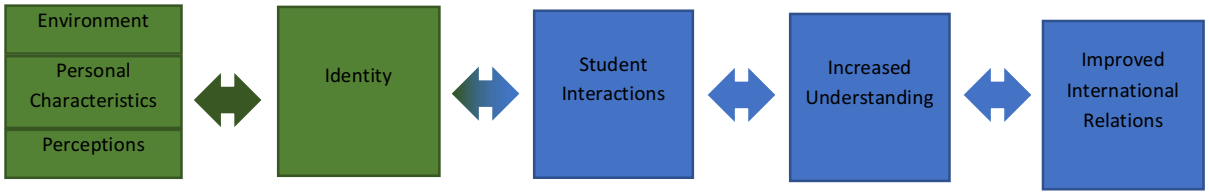
Despite varying motivations for internationalization, most universities, and scholars, conceptualize international students as cultural resources: resources for diversifying student populations, aiding the development of US students, increasing revenue, or in general, bringing benefit to the host universities' reputation, campus, and students (Breuning 2007; Glass, Wongtrirat and Buus 2015; Jayakumar 2008; Urban and Palmer 2014). This conceptualization of international students is problematic in two consequential ways. First, it pacifies the role that international students play in internationalization and assumes that just by being on campus, they are contributing to global awareness or understanding. Indeed, international students surely provide cultural diversity, but their presence alone does not automatically result in the cultural and global learning and sharing that defines the humanistic goals of student mobility. The cultural resources that students bring to campus are shared with others only through engagement and interaction, such as class discussions, forming friendships, or working on group projects; all activities that require action and effort on behalf of individual students. To see international students as passive resources removes the university from any further responsibility thereby mistakenly equating the presence of international students with improved global learning and understanding.

Second, this conceptualization propagates a notion of international students as a cohesive group rather than a collection of diverse individuals. This group-first approach is detrimental to the humanistic motivation of student mobility insofar as it makes being international the most important aspect of international students' identity, neglecting intersectionality and the fact that there are other, potentially more important, identities or combination of identities that each student holds. It is this mentality that explains why so many universities operate on an international-domestic student dichotomy that often leads to separation in housing, support services, and social clubs. By identifying students

solely, or predominately, by their international status rather than by their academic, personal, or social interests, universities effectively contribute to the separation of international and domestic students.

To overcome these problematic approaches, international students need to be seen and acknowledged as more than just international students. To do so, universities should adopt a social identity approach (Mavor, Platow, and Bizumic 2017) in engaging international students by acknowledging that they are not all the same, and that a student's identity, experiences, and campus environment will all play a role in how that student behaves and interacts with others (Figure 2). Student identity is complex and intersectional, and each student's unique identity will inform the experiences and interactions they have at the university; a fact that is of great consequence to the successfulness of student mobility programs. Recognizing international students as unique individuals whose agency and identity will ultimately determine their contributions to global outcomes is a necessary step in creating space for citizen diplomacy thrive.

Figure 2: Understanding how identity plays a role in citizen diplomacy



In practice, universities must create an environment in which this message is communicated to students and which reinforces their identity as part of, not separate from, the rest of campus. Currently, in many universities, international students congregate together largely because of the understandable feeling that they have similarities with one another. However, this feeling is also perpetuated by university communications and services that can reinforce feelings of difference and separation. By integrating international student outreach and services across campus, and by training departments, centers, and clubs to connect with and offer services to international students based upon their academic, social, or professional identities, rather than just their citizenship, it will be easier for international students to find connections and engage outside of their own group.

Tenet 3: Breaking Down the Global-Local Divide

Resource: Relational Learning

Universities must begin to move beyond the distinction between internationalization *at home* and internationalization *abroad*, by understanding that internationalization is less about geographic location and more about the participants involved (Soria and Troisi 2014). A domestic student interacting with an international student is having no less of an international experience than his/her international counterpart, which highlights the relational nature that demarcates international student mobility and exchange. To overcome the global-local division requires universities to break down the barriers that exist to separate international and domestic students and to begin to structure programs in ways that appreciate the connectedness rather than just the distinctiveness that defines global learning. In practice, this means that domestic students need to be seen as active participants in internationalization and student mobility, not just bystanders. To do so is to integrate all students into the design of internationalization programming and to reinforce the reciprocal nature of student mobility and the benefits it provides.

To break down this divide, universities should replace their emphasis on individualistic assessments, outcomes and learning styles (Larsen 2016) with relationship learning approaches that emphasize the importance of our influence on and connection to others (Hill 2015; Larsen 2016). The individual focus that dominates most universities manifests in internationalization with a disproportionate focus on either international students coming to campus or domestic students going abroad, but pays little attention to the roles, responsibilities, and impacts of domestic students on campus and how they are able to interact and engage with international students (Larsen 2016). As such, when

designing student mobility programs that seek to facilitate international student integration into campus or interaction with domestic students, we should also be designing programs and opportunities that encourage or incentivize domestic students to do the same. Mixed international-domestic student courses or general education courses on intercultural communication and engagement are just some ways in which universities can better prepare domestic students to engage with our international students and bring them into the internationalization conversation (Chang 2008). In the end, student mobility is not just about benefiting the individual student, but rather about fostering positive relationships between both international and domestic students that result in improvement and growth for all.

Tenet 4: Moving from Contact to Dialogue

Resource: Freirean Pedagogy

Shifting from a focus on individual learning to relational learning means that interaction must not just come by chance, but that universities must facilitate interaction between domestic and international students. But what should these efforts be aimed at doing? The pedagogy of student mobility stresses the importance of dialogue, and emphasizes that universities must help students to learn and practice ways of communicating and engaging effectively. To do so universities must incorporate a critical perspective into student mobility that moves the field beyond the notion of contact (Allport 1958) and towards an appreciation for the need of respectful interaction, dialogue, and exchange to take place between individuals.

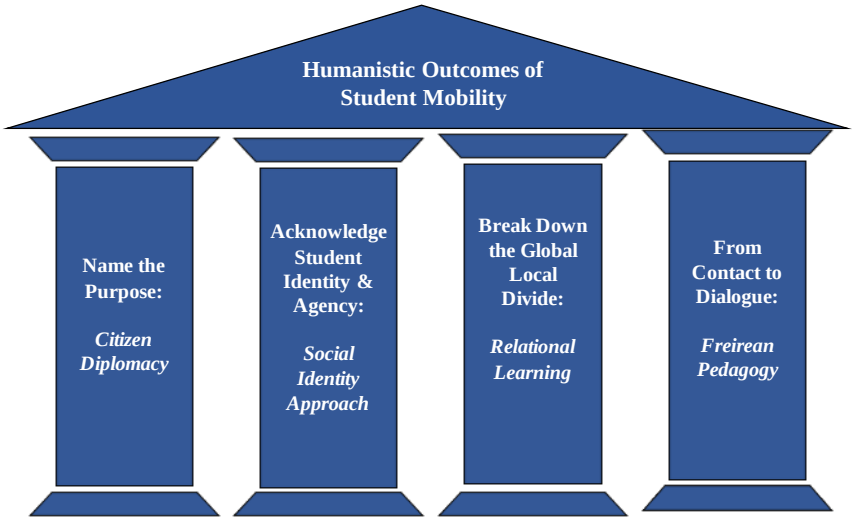
In her influential 2007 article, public diplomacy scholar Kathy Fitzpatrick writes at length about the need for two-way, symmetric forms of communication based upon the notion of genuine dialogue, between countries and people in order to create greater international understanding (Fitzpatrick 2007). Genuine dialogue in the way that Fitzpatrick describes it is a type of interaction that fosters mutual understanding; it is a process of learning. However, Fitzpatrick notes that the term genuine dialogue remains an unexcavated notion, still lacking in a full comprehension of what such dialogue entails. This is particularly true in the context of internationalization. Fortunately, universities can use the work of Paulo Freire as a guide.

Borrowing from Freire, universities should see interaction between international and domestic students as striving to reproduce what Freire referred to as true dialogue; dialogue that is based upon respect, truth and love for people and the world (Freire 1996). Genuine dialogue must be a mutual form of dialogue where neither side is imposing information, but rather, both sides are simultaneously student and teacher in a continual process of learning. Within genuine dialogue there must be value for each participant's unique experiences and perspectives on the world and respect for differing opinions. Practically speaking, this may include the creation of courses that are focused less on academic content and more on the *process* through which students engage and learn from one another. Or alternatively, university committees or groups in which international students play a central role in leadership and are given a space for their concerns and perspectives to be heard and respected, along with their domestic counterparts.

While the perception of inadequate language skills may be a concern for international students and others seeking to facilitate dialogue, Betty Leask (2009) reminds us it is often not the case that an international student's language skills are inadequate, but more often that they don't feel comfortable speaking or see it as inappropriate. This discomfort is understandable as many universities tend to burden international students with the full responsibly of integrating into the community rather than appreciating the value and knowledge they can share with their domestic counterparts (Dervin and Layne 2013). Thus, by consciously giving students the space, support, and encouragement to engage and speak, regardless of level of fluency, the university will not only facilitate dialogue but will create a sense of international student ownership and belonging at the university. To have student mobility programs that do not facilitate genuine dialogue, whether in academic courses, requirements, leadership, or extra-curricular activities, is to design programs that undermine the full potential of citizen diplomacy and humanistic efforts to create international understanding, awareness, and trust.

Conclusion

Figure 3: Tenets of a pedagogy of student mobility



Student mobility programs have and continue to be vitally important programs to the goals of internationalization and the promotion of international engagement and understanding. Yet, undoubtedly, the full diplomatic and global potential of student mobility programs has yet to be fulfilled. As long as international-domestic student interaction remains low and the chance of negative contact and reified stereotypes remains substantial, then universities have work to do. In order to overcome the obstacles and shortcomings of current approaches to student mobility, this paper has put forth a pedagogy of student mobility as a framework to assist universities in the design and facilitation of student mobility programs that truly meet their potential. By framing student mobility as an educational activity, characterized by learning between international and domestic students, and universities (and their associated employees) as facilitators of knowledge, the presented framework uses citizen diplomacy, social identity, relational learning, and Freirean pedagogy as central tenets in creating environments and programs that can truly realize the humanistic benefits of internationalization.

Though universities have no legal mandate to improve international understanding on their campuses or to contribute to the betterment of global relations, by admitting international students and growing their international presence, universities are assuming a role in international relations, a role that must come with responsibility and integrity. To realize their accountability to these students, the countries from which they hail, and to the world, universities should be responsible for more than just bringing international students onto their campuses. Whether short-term exchange students or full-enrollment international students, universities are responsible for the environments in which these students will study and live, and ultimately, for the extent to which they gain the humanistic learning outcomes that may, in very tangible ways, contribute to a more peaceful and understanding world.

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