

RADARS for problematic patterns of curriculum internationalization

Sharon Stein

Redemption-seeking – Acting from a place of wanting to look, feel, and be seen as good (having one's innocence or benevolence affirmed), rather than from a place of responsibility for complicity in epistemicide, and respect for the gifts of marginalized ways of knowing and being.

- **Disposition to develop: Complicity** – Accepting that responsibility for individual and structural implication in system violence does not go away once one takes a critical stance.
- Questions for self-/institutional-inquiry: *What is motivating the effort to internationalize my curriculum? How might I be making this about me, rather than about addressing the impacts of historical and ongoing epistemicide, and engaging the gifts (and limits) of all ways of knowing and being? How might my own assumptions about my 'good intentions' be part of the problem I am trying to address? What do I do when I make a mistake in relation to my efforts to engage and incorporate non-Western knowledges? How am I accounting for possible resistance, and creating scaffolding for respectful student engagements with these knowledges, rather than simply including them as a means to signal my criticality?*

Appropriative – Claiming mastery and expertise over a knowledge system that one has not been socialized into, particularly when that knowledge system and its knowledge keepers have been systemically marginalized and oppressed by one's own knowledge system.

- **Disposition to develop: Respect** – Recognizing the depth, complexity, and internal integrity of all knowledges, and the violence of claiming ownership over others knowledge systems.
- Questions for self-/institutional-inquiry: *Am I engaging other knowledge systems from a place of respect, reciprocity, and humility, and inviting my students to do the same? How might members of marginalized knowledge communities view these engagements? How might my engagements play a part in the further colonization and commodification of these knowledges? How can I support the continued production and transmission of marginalized knowledges by members of those knowledge communities, especially their elders, both materially and in other ways, both within higher education and beyond?*

Depoliticizing/dehistoricizing – Ignoring or minimizing the ways that different knowledge systems hold unequal institutional power in systemic, historical, and ongoing ways

- **Disposition to develop: Contextualization** – Attending to and attempting to interrupt the colonial dynamics that shape how knowledges are differentially received and valued
- Questions for self-/institutional-inquiry: *How has my field/discipline participated in/benefited from colonial violence (material and epistemic)? How has my institution participated in/benefited from colonial violence? How are non-western knowledges generally received and valued in my field and institution? How can I interrupt the systemic, historical, and ongoing unequal epistemic power of different communities in my courses, my department, my field, and my institution? How am I responding to the fact that my racialized and Indigenous colleagues receive pushback from white colleagues and white students for teaching from their own knowledge traditions?*

Additive – Including a few elements of non-western content in in a tokenistic fashion, often as an afterthought, in order to ‘tick’ the box of internationalization

- **Disposition to develop: Integration** – Thoughtfully integrating different knowledges and ways of knowing throughout the entirety of a course, project, or program in intentional ways that significantly impact its overall direction, intention, and outcomes.
- Questions for self-/institutional-inquiry: *How can we attend to the need for deeper transformation across our programs, rather than it being confined to a single course or reading or program? What are the risks involved in these efforts? What kinds of policy and practice changes do we need at the departmental and institutional levels in order for more substantive and equitable integration to be possible? What might have to be decentered/de-emphasized to create space for other knowledges and perspectives? How are we preparing for or pre-empting possible backlash against these efforts, particularly in ways that shield the most vulnerable who are often the targets of this backlash?*

Reductive – Reproducing and renaturalizing narratives and representations that homogenize and objectify whole communities, peoples, and knowledge systems (whether in negative, pathologizing ways, or in “positive,” romanticizing/idealizing ways).

- **Disposition to develop: Complexity** – Holding space for the internal complexities, nuances, contradictions, heterogeneities, and tensions that are present in all communities, peoples, and knowledge systems, including marginalized ones.
- Questions for self-/institutional-inquiry: *How might my own narratives, and the representations that I chose to include in the course, about non-western communities, people, and knowledge be reproducing uni-dimensional and stereotypical representations? What are the different dangers of pathologizing narratives and romanticizing narratives? How can I acknowledge and engage the complexities, nuances, contradictions, heterogeneities, and tensions that are present within all communities and the individuals within them? How am I attending to the ways that these the complexities, nuances, contradictions, heterogeneities, and tensions of non-western communities can be weaponized to rationalize continued western epistemic hegemony and other violences, and therefore being cautious about when and how they are introduced and addressed?*

Selective engagement – Extracting and decontextualizing non-Western knowledges (epistemologies) from their ontologies, in order to fit them into Western frames/narratives

- **Disposition to develop: Humility** – Understanding that one cannot become an ‘expert’ in a knowledge system one was socialized outside of, and recognizing the risks of reading other knowledges through one’s own frames in an ethnocentric way.
- Questions for self-/institutional-inquiry: *How am I encouraging students to hold space for what they might not understand or might be missing when engaging other knowledge systems? How am I encouraging students to attend to how unequal epistemic power, as well as Western epistemic arrogance, can shape how other knowledges are received? How can I encourage students to encounter knowledges from a place of humility about their ability to comprehend them, as well as a willingness to be surprised or confused by them, rather than a will to ‘understand’? How am I encouraging students to consider what is lost, but also what harmful patterns might be reproduced, when we presume that we can understand?*

Different of orientations and implications of curriculum internationalization

	Curriculum internationalization for national hegemony in the world	Curriculum internationalization for improving the world	Curriculum internationalization for radically remaking the world	Curriculum internationalization 'for the end of the world as we know it'
Orienting concerns	Maintain or reclaim national political and economic advantage	Help make the existing world a more equitable and sustainable place	Change the world based on the knowledge of oppressed peoples	Prepare for transformative shifts without knowing what will come after
Implications for learning	Learn about different peoples and places in order understand (and neutralize) threats and maximize opportunities for the nation-state	Learn about more different peoples and places in order to appreciate human diversity and make the world a better, more peaceful place	Challenge dominant frameworks, and learn different ways of knowing (especially what is marginalized), to find new blueprints	Learn to encounter different ways of knowing without projecting onto, appropriating, or consuming them for one's own ends
Implications for knowledge	Knowledge should be perpetually accumulated to arrive at fuller truths and certainties with which to predict, order, and organize the world	Knowledge is a collective resource that should be made available to all but should be adapted to the specificities of local contexts	Because Eurocentric knowledge cannot solve the problems it has created, we need suppressed knowledges to craft different futures	All knowledges have contextual (rather than universal) relevance, both gifts and limitations; knowledge is important but does not define existence
Implications for the Western nation-state	The nation-state has earned its position of global power and economic advantage, and should defend/reclaim it	The nation-state should wield its influence in more positive ways, e.g. international aid	The nation-state should enact redress for its historical wrongs by re-distributing power and resources	The nation-state was founded and continues to be sustained through colonial violence, and thus it cannot be reformed
Implications for the dominant global imaginary	Organizing the world according to the dominant global imaginary is the most advanced/evolved form of human existence	The dominant global imaginary should be adjusted depending on the local context to ensure respect for cultural difference	The dominant global imaginary should be replaced by the imaginaries of marginalized communities	The dominant global imaginary needs to end so that we can welcome other possibilities for collective existence

Stein, S. (in press). Internationalizing the curriculum in the shadow of US hegemony: Conceptual orientations and practical implications. In J. J. Lee (Ed.), *Critical international higher education and power: How US internationalization is not neutral*. Rutgers University Press.