Improving Higher Education Through User-inspired Research: Findings from Multi-national Needs Assessments

Joseph B. Berger
University of Massachusetts - Amherst, joseph.berger@umb.edu

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IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH USER-INSPIRED RESEARCH: FINDINGS FROM MULTI-NATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Presented by Joseph B. Berger, University of Massachusetts Amherst

at the III INTERCULTURAL MANAGEMENT CONGRESS
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Higher education is rapidly expanding around the globe

Increasingly cross-cultural

There is a need to enhance and development these efforts in authentic and sustainable ways (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002)

There is a lack of practical research be conducted in higher education that directly informs policy and practice (Boyer, 1990; Terenzini, 1996; Rhoades, 2006; Milem, 2009)
Project and Research Sites

- Malawi
- Northwest China
- Egypt
- Afghanistan
- Russia
- East Africa (Tanzania, Kenya & Uganda)
Guiding Principles

- Recognizing that education is an “applied, multi-disciplinary field”

- Engaging in Cross-cultural work requires humility and “collaboratively shared expertise”

- Facilitating the “adapting, rather than adopting”, of models, concepts and tools from our culture into another culture
Guiding Principles

- Building projects on the basis of “meaningful collaboration”

- “Acting with and valuing intentionality and integrity”

- Recognizing the ubiquitous nature of “Trade-offs” in decision-making and acting

- Striving for “responsive leading, managing and organizing”
“Use-inspired Research”

Adapted from Stokes (1997) and Price & Behrens (2003)
User-Inspired Research Process

Guiding Principles

Enhancing Capacity
- Systems
- People
- Selves

Assessing Needs
- Technical
- Cultural
- Relational

Producing Outcomes
- Scholarly Papers
- Academic Courses
- Training Modules
- Assessments

Engaging Work
- Implementing
- Teaching & Training
- Researching & Assessing
- Active Reflecting
Purpose of Needs Assessments

- Technical
- Cultural
- Relational
Engaging in Work

- Implementing
- Teaching & Training
- Researching & Assessing
- Active Reflecting
Producing Positive Outcomes

- Scholarly Papers
- Academic Courses
- Training Modules
- Assessments
Enhancing Sustainable Capacity

- Systems
- People
- Selves
Scholarly Knowledge

- Area Specific Studies (e.g. “How Universities Work in China”; “Pashtunwalli and Organizational Development in Afghanistan”)
- Theoretical Models (e.g. “Enduring Paradoxes in Higher Education”)
Training and Workshops

Graduate Certificate - Leadership in Higher Education

Pedagogical Innovations for problem-based learning in cross-cultural contexts

Multi-use Adaptable Modules
Sustainable Capacity

- Institutional Development
- Leadership Training Seminars
- Assessment and Data Management Systems
- Master’s of Education Programs
  - Malawi
  - Afghanistan
  - Egypt
Thank You

Joseph B. Berger,
University of Massachusetts Amherst
jbberger@educ.umass.edu