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

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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
Lodz, Poland
November 20, 2009
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)
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
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)
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
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”)
Educational Innovations

- Training and Workshops
- Graduate Certificate - Leadership in Higher Education
- Pedagogical Innovations for problem-based learning in cross-cultural contexts
- Multi-use Adaptable Modules
Institutional Development

Leadership Training Seminars

Assessment and Data Management Systems

Master’s of Education Programs
  - Malawi
  - Afghanistan
  - Egypt
Thank You

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