

Comparative and International Education Éducation comparée et internationale



Ideal Types and Ideal(ized) students in Internationalized Postsecondary Pedagogy Types idéaux et l'étudiant idéal(isé) dans la pédagogie postsecondaire internationalisée

Jennifer Walsh Marr

Volume 51, numéro 2, 2023

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1105820ar>
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5206/cie-eci.v51i2.14794>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

University of Western Ontario

ISSN

2369-2634 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Walsh Marr, J. (2023). Ideal Types and Ideal(ized) students in Internationalized Postsecondary Pedagogy. *Comparative and International Education / Éducation comparée et internationale*, 51(2), 99–109.
<https://doi.org/10.5206/cie-eci.v51i2.14794>

Résumé de l'article

Cet article explore la pertinence du concept socioculturel des types idéaux de Weber dans le contexte de l'enseignement postsecondaire canadien moderne. Les types idéaux sont des représentations simplifiées ou distillées des valeurs socioculturelles qui sont pertinentes pour diverses analyses sociales (Prandy, 2002) et éducatives (Hayhoe, 2007; Hayhoe et Li, 2017; Wong et Chiu, 2021). Cet article élabore sur la comparaison de Hayhoe et Li (2017) entre les types idéaux confucéens et les types idéaux occidentaux, en se concentrant sur les implications pour l'éducation internationalisée et les valeurs implicites qui s'y rattachent. L'article explore les mises en garde de la pensée réductrice concernant les cultures, notamment en considérant la culture comme un substitut de la race lorsque les valeurs diffèrent. Il revisite aussi la recherche qui explore les étudiants occidentaux poursuivant leurs études dans un contexte est-asiatique et les étudiants est-asiatiques poursuivant leurs études dans un contexte occidental (Chen, 2014; Maton & Chen, 2020) à l'aide des types idéaux comme lentille d'analyse pour les valeurs sous-jacentes et les écarts au niveau des attentes. Plus précisément, elle examine les implications pédagogiques des différentes cultures et valeurs éducatives représentées par les types idéaux occidentaux et les types idéaux confucéens, et la façon dont une appréciation plus vaste pourrait compléter les approches pédagogiques fondées sur l'un ou l'autre type afin de les rendre plus inclusives et bénéfiques pour les divers apprenants de l'enseignement supérieur canadien.

© Jennifer Walsh Marr, 2023



Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

érudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

March 2023

Ideal Types and Ideal(ized) Students in Internationalized Postsecondary Pedagogy

Jennifer Walsh Marr

University of British Columbia

jennifer.walshmarr@ubc.ca

Recommended Citation

Walsh Marr, J. (2023). Ideal types and ideal(ized) students in international postsecondary pedagogy. *Comparative and International Education / Éducation Comparée et Internationale*. 51(2). 99-109. <http://doi.org/10.5206/cie-eci.v51i2.14794>

Ideal Types and Ideal(ized) students in Internationalized Postsecondary Pedagogy Types idéaux et l'étudiant idéal(isé) dans la pédagogie postsecondaire internationalisée

Jennifer Walsh Marr, University of British Columbia

Abstract

This article explores the relevance of Weber's sociocultural concept of ideal types in the context of modern Canadian postsecondary education. Ideal types are simplified or distilled representations of sociocultural values, with relevance to various social (Prandy, 2002) and educational (Hayhoe, 2007; Hayhoe & Li, 2017; Wong & Chiu, 2021) analyses. This article builds upon Hayhoe and Li's (2017) comparison of Confucian and Western ideal types, focusing on implications for internationalized education and implicit values within. The article explores the caveats of reductive thinking regarding cultures, particularly considering culture as a proxy for race where values differ. It revisits research exploring Western students studying in an East Asian context and East Asian students studying in a Western context (Chen, 2014; Maton & Chen, 2020), using ideal types as an analytical lens for underlying values and gaps in expectations. Specifically, it considers the pedagogical implications of the differing educational cultures and values as represented by Western and Confucian ideal types, and how a broader appreciation might supplement teaching approaches founded on either type to be more inclusive and beneficial for the various learners in Canadian higher education.

Résumé

Cet article explore la pertinence du concept socioculturel des types idéaux de Weber dans le contexte de l'enseignement postsecondaire canadien moderne. Les types idéaux sont des représentations simplifiées ou distillées des valeurs socioculturelles qui sont pertinentes pour diverses analyses sociales (Prandy, 2002) et éducatives (Hayhoe, 2007; Hayhoe et Li, 2017; Wong et Chiu, 2021). Cet article élabore sur la comparaison de Hayhoe et Li (2017) entre les types idéaux confucéens et les types idéaux occidentaux, en se concentrant sur les implications pour l'éducation internationalisée et les valeurs implicites qui s'y rattachent. L'article explore les mises en garde de la pensée réductrice concernant les cultures, notamment en considérant la culture comme un substitut de la race lorsque les valeurs diffèrent. Il revisite aussi la recherche qui explore les étudiants occidentaux poursuivant leurs études dans un contexte est-asiatique et les étudiants est-asiatiques poursuivant leurs études dans un contexte occidental (Chen, 2014; Maton & Chen, 2020) à l'aide des types idéaux comme lentille d'analyse pour les valeurs sous-jacentes et les écarts au niveau des attentes. Plus précisément, elle examine les implications pédagogiques des différentes cultures et valeurs éducatives représentées par les types idéaux occidentaux et les types idéaux confucéens, et la façon dont une appréciation plus vaste pourrait compléter les approches pédagogiques fondées sur l'un ou l'autre type afin de les rendre plus inclusives et bénéfiques pour les divers apprenants de l'enseignement supérieur canadien.

Keywords: ideal types, comparative education, postsecondary pedagogy, educational cultures, intercultural learning

Mots clés : idéaux-types, éducation comparée, pédagogie postsecondaire, cultures éducatives, apprentissage interculturel

Ideal Types and Ideal(ized) Students in Internationalized Postsecondary Pedagogy

Education systems typically function as sites of social reproduction, enculturating the young with the values of the dominant culture (Demarrais et al., 1999; Hayhoe, 2007). While schools certainly develop students' cognitive, economic, and political potential, these developments are situated within social values of the culture. The social influence extends to postsecondary or higher education (Schofer et al., 2021) which has been transformed in recent decades by international student mobility and the phenomenon of internationalization itself. The movement of students,

instructors, pedagogies, and policies has made for much more heterogeneous university classrooms than in previous decades, with the opportunity for both intercultural learning and frustration. As a means of interrogating some of those differences, frustrations, and opportunities, this piece seeks to use Weber's sociological concept of "ideal types" (Hayhoe, 2007; Hayhoe & Li, 2017; Prandy, 2002; Wong & Chiu, 2021) as a conceptual lens to articulate underlying educational philosophies and values that inform both instructors' and students' dispositions in formal educational contexts. It seeks to interrogate what role recognizing "ideal types" might have in building inclusive intercultural learning experiences in internationalized higher education classrooms while acknowledging caveats in their application.

Internationalization of Higher Education

Higher education has seen a tremendous increase in international student mobility around the world in recent years (OECD, 2021) with several participants in this phenomenon. There are national interests, institutions, partnerships, and individuals (students, staff, and faculty), each of which inhabit cultural values and are encompassed within cultural discourses. Several countries rely on the income of international students to fund their postsecondary institutions, and others attract international students as a means of asserting their legitimacy on the world stage (Waldow, 2017). Much of the discourse around international education has shifted from outward-looking values of enhanced capacity building and intercultural understanding to more inward-looking priorities of prestige and competition for funds (Knight, 2014). These seemingly contradictory goals of competition and expanded worldviews can lead to conflict in discourses around internationalization itself, as well as how individuals understand and engage in more immediate interactions.

In Canada, the percentage of international student enrollment in universities is seventh highest in the world (OECD, 2021) with the majority of international postsecondary students coming from China (CBIE, 2018). This represents both an opportunity and challenge to learning for all involved, particularly in consideration of the underlying cultural values that inform educational dispositions, or epistemologies. These values can manifest in pedagogical content, expectations of engagement, and assessment practices. Further, they deserve a deeper sociological analysis to better appreciate where and why there are conflicts, and how enhanced understanding can lead to deeper learning.

Ideal Types as Analytical Lens

The concept of "ideal types" is an analytical lens through which to observe and account for philosophical underpinnings, or ontologies, informing educational thought. Ideal types are based in social-historical observation and Weber's sociological work to tease out "distinctive contributions of differing religious and philosophical value systems to the process of social change" (Hayhoe & Li, 2017, p. 29). Weber (1949) describes ideal types thus:

An ideal type is formed by the one-sided *accentuation* of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent *concrete individual* phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified *analytical* construct. In its conceptual purity, this mental construct cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. (emphasis in the original, in Prandy, 2002, p. 587)

Applied to education, ideal types recognize the "profoundly different implications" differing socioculturally bound ontologies and epistemologies might have. Hayhoe and Li (2017) claim that

ideal types are “not to simplify complex educational phenomena, rather to identify deep-rooted differences, and interpret educational debates at a profound level” (p. 31). This deeper understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of different cultural actors has transformative potential in the context of international education, particularly in the classroom. As students from North America and East Asia make up the largest cultural communities represented in international education in Canada (CBIE, 2018), this next section examines the ideal types of Western and Confucian education traditions.

Western Ideal Types

Western ideal types are constructed in the legacy of classic European philosophers, beginning with Plato (Hayhoe & Li, 2017). Plato outlined classes of people in society, with the working class attending to operationalizing society’s needs, and warriors to regulating it. At the top were “philosopher kings” (p. 31), unencumbered by familial responsibilities, reserving their time and energy for thought that was abstract and logical, untethered to quotidian constraints. Society was bound by external laws (rather than familial structures and traditions) that reinforced social hierarchies. These social hierarchies were further strengthened with the belief that intelligence was hereditary and society should support the continuance of intellectual inheritance. This belief in “innate qualities and abilities that no amount of education can change” (p. 32) is a persistent ontology of Western philosophy. Following from this, universities stemmed from papal decrees and participation was limited to particular classes of individuals (White male elites), only gradually expanding through social, political, and economic upheaval.

Instead of Plato’s stance that the capacities of men’s minds were set, American educational theorist John Dewey saw the intellectual value in engaging in observation, in problem solving, and with others. Instead of stable bodies of knowledge, learning was developing means of engaging with the outside world, “a reflective individual in a changing environment” (Hayhoe & Li, 2017, p. 34), cultivating a disposition rather than accumulating information. We see this manifest in a priority on process and discovery learning rather than rote memorization in modern Western classrooms.

Eastern Ideal Types

Hayhoe and Li (2017) situate the construction of Eastern ideal types on classic Chinese philosophers, focusing on Confucius. The key tenets of Confucian thought begin with the primacy of the family, a kinship structure that mirrors the hierarchy and authority of the broader society, and as the primary source of virtue and morality. Further, these social relations are reinscribed through kinship rites. Knowledge was to be pursued by all and to be an accumulation of “empirical particulars” (p. 32) (essentially, “details”) to later connect to self, society, and fundamental principles. The pursuit of knowledge for knowledge’s sake was noble and should be accessible to every and anyone for their development. While there were social classes within traditional Chinese society, education was expected to be equal and part of an individual’s development. Significantly, the historical, competitive civil service exam of the 6th century was an impetus for social mobility in China, signifying an important cultural shift, yet reinforced the Confucian philosophy of “equal opportunity for all,” as exams are considered objective, standardized, and equalizing. Through centuries of upheaval, an allegiance to “the perfectibility of each person, if maximum effort is put into learning, with full support from family and community” (p. 33) undergirds Confucian heritage cultures’ (or CHC) ideals of education and knowledge and the family’s supportive role.

Ideal types serve as a mechanism for attending to cultural impact on social change, and

particularly their underlying social values, over time. They form an analytical lens for social processes beyond political science and economics (Hayhoe, 2007) to consider how historical values can permeate different educational contexts. Further, ideal types suggest how behaviours can be representative of deeply held cultural values, which is useful when expected norms come into conflict across intercultural contexts. Recognizing difference is an important antidote to universalisms that erase (or assimilate) values (Marginson & Mollis, 2001), as insights into others' values can generate intercultural learning, mutual respect, and expanded realms of understanding. In the context of internationalized higher education, an awareness of differing cultural values and ideal types can help expand pedagogical practices and get us all closer to broadened worldviews.

Caveats

As insightful as ideal types may be, we need to be cautious not to lapse into essentialist thinking. It is lazy thinking to reduce cultures, and those we might see as representatives of them, into tidy categories of types and capabilities. While this is certainly not being advocated, the tendency is understandable, particularly in a world that values simplification. In critiquing the use of ideal types in the examination of employment and social class in the United Kingdom, Prandy (2002) defines and discusses “stereotypification,”

Sets of characteristics are bundled together, so that possession of one is seen as a valid basis for predicting possession of the others. It is a means by which a ‘multifaceted and complex phenomenon’ can be simplified and rendered less certain. Stereotypes are applied to both to those classes with which people may identify and to those from which they wish to distance themselves ... To a certain degree, stereotypes play a useful, and probably unavoidable, part in everyday thought, although they may become dangerous when they prevent an adequate understanding of a more complex reality. (p. 589)

In the context of postsecondary students in the modern era, some attempt has been made to recognize the hybridity of student identities, represented, by example, by the term “Generation 1.5”. What the term originally intended was to formalize a hybrid space between “local” and “international” (or foreign) identities, but its very parameters are more static than the fluid reality of many students today (Marshall & Lee, 2017). There is significant variation within this hybrid group of students, not least of which is their identification with nation, language, and culture.

Culture deserves an even closer look, as even within well-intentioned postsecondary instruction, uncritical forays into intercultural communication may reinforce “[c]onceptualisations of culture that collapse cultural and racial identity with nation-state identity” (Lee, 2015, p. 83). Further, the discussion of race in this context is also important. Race and racism are recognized as historically and socially constructed problems, and yet they persist. They persist in how we see people, group them, and assume characteristics of them. Couched in “cultural” terms, “the everyday terminology of culture and cultural difference enables an avoidance of the clearly more controversial terminology of race” which “continue[s] to pervade invisibly in our everyday classroom discourses” (p. 82). In essence, we need to be mindful of how often “culture” is shorthand for “race” (Lin & Kubota, 2021). No one really wants to acknowledge race or racism, particularly in their ongoing role in international education (Sriprakash et al., 2020). Racism manifests in “a failure to recognise indigenous [sic] knowledge systems, to a persistent Eurocentric bias in formal curricula, and language of instruction policies that favour ‘global’ (read colonial) languages” (p. 680). It can also manifest in the “permanent otherness” (Leung et al., 1997, p. 547) of ethnic minority groups. While it is common and often relevant to nation-building to draw on

cultural values to structure educational infrastructure, it is also important to interrogate how “useful” stereotypes and their effects may be.

Simplifying or stereotyping peoples based on race, culture, or values may be too blunt a tool with which to engage a modern, globalized world and the hybrid identities it produces. By extension, the simple acceptance of globalization itself as a monolithic, inevitable process is also too facile (Beck, 2012). Conceiving of a more fluid “eduscape reflects a multi-flow, more nuanced, diverse interaction with various elements of the cultural, social, political, and economic dimensions relating to internationalization” (p. 142) and might better leave room for nuance and growth within postsecondary education. A more fluid “eduscape” might also be more inclusive of widening participation in higher education beyond the traditional demographics of elites within the home culture.

While the quantifiable metrics of the modern, globalized university student demographic have changed considerably over the past many years (Klinger & Murray, 2012), the tacit underpinnings of pedagogy can be slow to catch up. Assumptions about “idealized native speakers” (Leung et al., 1997), what makes an “ideal student” (Wong & Chiu, 2021), and differing articulations of “quality” and the necessary academic literacy skills to succeed (Klinger & Murray, 2012, p. 31) suggest the practice of idealizing participants has a powerful hold on modern postsecondary education. While some of these challenges to assumptions are attributable to widening postsecondary participation within domestic communities (as varied as these may be), much of that tension is also attributable to an influx of students from different educational cultures. In Western universities, this tension is perhaps heightened due to hierarchical underpinnings of Western ideal types and the history of exclusion at universities.

All this is not to say that ideal types should be discarded or discredited. Far from it, they are an analytical tool with which to investigate deep-rooted values that underpin cultural beliefs and educational practices. I would suggest that an awareness of ideal types can lead to recognizing one’s own (often tacit) values as a starting point. This is a step towards recognizing and accepting not only how other cultural groups might believe and behave differently, but what their ideal type and underpinning values are. This might be best seen through contrast, as it is typical to perceive one’s own culture and values as “normal” (if we can perceive them at all). The next section offers two studies that synthesize experiences of Western and East Asian tertiary students studying in one another’s educational systems and the challenges encountered. The direct comparison of East Asian and Western students and pedagogies shows how cultures and their underlying ideal types can inform our educational expectations.

Case Studies

I shift the attention here from conceptual framing to a direct comparison of two specific studies of educational culture clashes to illuminate how an understanding of ideal types may offer insight and enhanced appreciation to enacted pedagogy and learner experience. I purposefully chose research representing learners’ experiences of pedagogical practices rather than facile deficit framing of international students (Madge et al., 2015) and studies that are mirror images of one another. Each describes the context and pedagogical approaches before recounting student perspectives and any gaps or conflicts. In light of the caveats discussed above, it is worth acknowledging the categorizations of participants and learning contexts in these studies; the teaching contexts are referred to as Australian and East-Asian teaching practices, and the students as either Chinese or Western learners. This risks essentializing attributes across participants and contexts. The focus of the studies is on pedagogic practices and the types of knowledge (and

values) these represent; the studies describe themes in each, and individuals' reported experiences. Both case studies are (co-)authored by the same Taiwanese educational researcher who completed doctoral studies in Australia, representing deep familiarity with educational cultures and a more nuanced perspective than polar emic and etic (McNess et al., 2016). The analysis is principled, but without reference to ideal types.

The first case is a qualitative investigation of "Western" learners' experiences in the Far East, focusing on "educational values" and pedagogic practices (Chen, 2014, p. 26). This study is situated in Taiwan and draws from semi-structured interviews with 22 undergraduate and graduate international students from northern Europe, South, Central and North America. Taiwan aims to increase its international student enrollment primarily from neighbouring East Asian countries and has incorporated educational reforms to position Asian students as competitive on the world stage. To this end, they have begun to incorporate "generic skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving and independent learning abilities" (Chen, 2014, p. 27), more in line with what are seen as Western pedagogical practices.

Chen (2014) depicts the traditional East-Asian pedagogy in Taiwan as following a "transmission model" where "the teacher, as a respectable authority in their field, imparts knowledge to learners through predetermined procedures. Good teaching is epitomized in a carefully prepared lecture that captures the gist of the textbook" (p. 27). Pedagogy is summarized as "a highly structured pedagogic approach characterized by strong teacher control, manifested through a lecture-dominated teaching style, and closely circumscribed class interaction" (p. 33). Instructors see this as being responsible to cover as much content as efficiently as possible, preventing learning from veering off their plan through rogue discussions amongst students.

Student participants from outside this education tradition complained about the volume of information covered (rather than how to find and/or interpret it), and a disconnect from "real life," both in terms of relevant examples and instructors' broader professional lives. Chen suggests the instructors' underlying Confucian philosophy of education informed their focus on acquiring significant breadth and depth of knowledge, manifest as "content." The application of this content is not necessarily considered part of university education, as "real-life application takes place *after* one leaves formal education" (p. 31, emphasis in the original). Further, in the context of delivery, the (Western) students complained about the lack of interaction in class, with the instructor "removed" from engaging with students. Students craved "a more interactive and negotiated discussion" (p. 32). Any opportunities for student interaction were perfunctory, reflecting an accommodationist perspective towards including "Western" teaching practices that nonetheless hold "silence and introspection as essential for thinking" (p. 34) as paramount. This is in conflict with learners from Western contexts who were accustomed to the "teacher challenging students to think independently and critically about the content being taught through a variety of teaching methods" (p. 34).

The second study looks at Chinese students completing an online education course designed and hosted at an Australian university, drawing on focus groups with 16 graduate student participants, a series of follow-up interviews with seven individual students through the term, and interviews with eight instructors, all within the Faculty of education (Maton & Chen, 2020).

Interviews with teaching faculty and analysis of course module content indicated purposeful flexibility so as to make learning relevant to individual students. This meant there was flexibility in course readings and a push for individual student interpretation rather than an instructor explicitly synthesizing key concepts. The Australian instructors deliberately distanced themselves from "instructivist" roles, portraying themselves as responsible for "creating and

maintaining an environment that was conducive to learner engagement” (p. 46) by “providing minimal guidance and providing online space for discussion among students” (p. 47). Learning communities relied on students sharing their real-life experiences and expertise, and assessments avoided “explicit evaluative criteria” so as to make room for students to “construct their own personal understanding and to reflect on their own learning” (p. 47). Instructors valued students’ experience and dispositions, particularly those who were “independent, self-directed, confident and reflective” (p. 48).

The Chinese students found these expectations nebulous and frustrating, out of alignment with their own expectations and values. The students indicated they “could not see what knowledge they should be learning” (p. 53) and did not value personal perspectives (their own or their peers’) as legitimate course content as they did not have the expertise they expected of instructors. They scoured instructor responses to discussion posts for teaching content and assessment criteria and maintained academic practices that had made them successful in China: careful and extensive reading and referencing their instructors’ points in their own assignments. The pedagogy was perceived as “a vacuum” (p. 49), “teaching without a systematic plan and without a supporting structure” and with a “lack of specificity in assessment criteria” (p. 50).

Both cases demonstrate a lack of intercultural awareness of the “pedagogic intention” (Chen, 2014, p. 34). The Chinese students in the Australian university “did not gain a different educational experience” (Maton & Chen, 2020, p. 53) as it was so far removed from their ideals of education that they did not recognize the Western values underpinning the pedagogy. The Western students studying in Taiwan “could not identify with these teaching methods” (Chen, 2014, p. 34). None of the participants experienced the broadened horizons and intercultural learning that internationalized higher education is purported to facilitate (Jones, 2022; Knight, 2014; Madge et al., 2015).

Implications

In comparing these two studies, we see some frustrations brought about by fissures in expectations. But instead of retreating from frustrations, we need to tolerate and explore them further, as “[B]eing tolerant means to authentically and respectfully engage with difference and disagreement to learn from each other” (Nieto Ángel et al., 2020, p. 145). Education is not ideologically neutral (Demarrais et al., 1999; Nieto Ángel et al., 2020) and a shift towards “value explicit” (Hayhoe, 2007, p. 191) work makes connections between education practices and the values of the communities they educate. Ideal types get at “identifying cultural factors embedded in educational systems” (p. 195) so as to better engage with them.

For those of us teaching in postsecondary educational institutions in the West, we could begin by recognizing there are values within Confucian heritage cultures’ ideal type we might wish for ourselves: there is a deep respect for the responsibility of the instructor, there is familial investment and support for the learner, and there is an underlying belief that hard work is the key to success. There is also a respect for knowledge and learning for learning’s sake. In making room for mutual learning, we might also consider the benefit to students who aren’t travelling around the world. In expanding pedagogical practices to be more representative of different ideal types and values, we offer an opportunity for intercultural learning and breaking out of “academic ethnocentrism” (Mestenhauser, 2002 in Jones, 2022). We might also acknowledge how few university instructors have dedicated pedagogic training, with most teaching how we have witnessed and experienced ourselves (Chen, 2014). Some humility is also required; in recognizing ideal types are an “*analytical* construct” that do not empirically exist outside their “conceptual

purity” (Weber, 1949 in Prandy, 2002, p. 587), we should also acknowledge that few of us were actually “ideal students” ourselves, particularly if we took up the challenge to study abroad.

Revisiting Beck’s (2012) critique of globalization in higher education, she claims, “it would be important in the conceptualization of internationalization and its practices to recognize the porousness of the boundaries between global and local in moving to a more fluid understanding of internationalization” (p. 139). That fluidity requires not only learning from others but having the humility to recognize that our preferred methods, or the values that inform them, may not be universal. To put it plainly, our own ideal types may not be idealized by all. We need to beware of a neo-colonial assertion of “epistemic dominance” (Stein, 2017), as “globalisation has acquired a new meta-ideology, or the global hegemonic meta-ideology that carries strong elements of Western ideologies” (Zajda, 2020, p. 3). We need to resist the simplistic lure of “best practices” as “this thinking relies on dichotomies and binary oppositions to produce meaning” (Blaise et al., 2013, p. 13). Instead, we might deliberately work towards creating “third spaces” that move us beyond reductionist, binary contrasting (Robinson-Pant, 2016) to recognizing what we can learn from one another and embrace an enhanced and broadened understanding.

We need to contextualize our educational approaches (Farrell, 2007), not only to our student demographics, but to our “small c” disciplinary cultures as well (Hayhoe, 2007). In the case of the Chinese students studying at the Australian university, it is worth pointing out that they were studying education, a field particularly aligned with constructivist epistemologies. This learner-centred co-construction of knowledge can appear to be an abdication of instructor responsibility and is not necessarily experienced as “universally empowering” (Maton & Chen, 2020, p. 53). In their focused critique of learner-centred pedagogies (LCP), Thomas and Schweisfurth (2021) highlight a “remarkable misalignment” (p. 231) with the cultural context in which LCP might be implemented or imposed, and advocate for a more nuanced, contextualized consideration of educational values, features, resources, and expectations. They challenge the assumption that LCP is a “best practice” or “travelling policy” (p. 299) and suggest more should “step back from pedagogical prescriptions” (p. 232). In international partnerships, we need to remember that “teachers and other local actors sometimes resist and always transform the official models they are handed” (Anderson-Levitt, 2003, p. 4) and that “the same repertoires [to] produce very different kinds of lessons” (p. 3). These postcolonial analyses are far more respectful of the many layers of context and meaning required to sustain educational initiatives, including internationalization. In domestic classrooms, instead of relying on LCP that assume a confidence in learners’ existing knowledge (and reminiscent of the Western ideals of inherited intelligence and access to learning), instructors can ensure the foundational knowledge is covered through focused instruction, not just student discovery and discussion. In terms of accumulating detailed content knowledge “versus” real-life applicability, we can acknowledge that both have value *in concert*, and work to make the connections accessible and relevant to students.

Instead of recommending a wholesale adoption of Western teaching practices, Chen (2014) advocates for a heightened awareness of what instructors’ and their students’ underlying educational expectations and values are so as to “make informed pedagogic decision appropriate to most of their learners” (p. 35). Rizvi (2007) calls to “renovate the curriculum” (p. 390) towards “epistemic virtues” (p. 391, 401) that are responsive to context. In advocating for a “critical pedagogy of the global” (p. 185) De Lissoy (2020) calls for a “consciously transnational perspective” (p. 186). Jones (2022) claims we should “concern ourselves with the curriculum of all our students, focusing on the opportunities of diversity and alternative knowledge paradigms which may be evident in society more locally” (p. iii, emphasis in the original). All these require

“self-knowledge as well as knowledge of the other” (Hayhoe, 2007, p. 201) as recognizing (and articulating) one’s own values is an important step towards more inclusive, less colonial pedagogical practices and a “way to sketch out the vision of a preferred future” (p. 203).

Using ideal types as part of a broad conceptualization of culture, inclusive of intellectual development and engagement, is particularly well suited to analyses of higher education. It is important to not only recognize, but accept and learn from the values of others, as “our ability to be in relation to others is what identifies us as social, ethical and political beings” (Nieto Ángel et al., 2020, p. 141). Shared affinities and genuine respect for difference may well be our way forward learning from one another and together.

References

- Anderson-Levitt, K. M. (2003). A world culture of schooling? In K. M. Anderson-Levitt (Ed.), *Local meanings, global schooling: Anthropology and world culture theory* (pp. 1–26). Palgrave MacMillan.
- Beck, K. (2012). Globalization/s: Reproduction and resistance in the internationalization of higher education. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 35(3), 133–148.
- Blaise, M., Leung, V. W., & Sun, C. (2013). Views from somewhere: Situated knowledges and partial perspectives in a Hong Kong kindergarten classroom. *Global Studies of Childhood*, 3(1), 12–25.
- Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE). (2018). CBIE research in brief number 10: International students in Canada. <https://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/International-Students-in-Canada-ENG.pdf>
- Chen, R. T-C. (2014). East-Asian teaching practices through the eyes of Western learners. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19(1), 26–37, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2013.827652>
- De Lissovoy, N. (2020). Toward a critical pedagogy of the global. In S. Macrine (Ed.), *Critical pedagogy in uncertain times: Hope and possibilities* (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Demarrais, K. B., & LeCompte, M. D. (1999). Theoretical and historical overview of the purposes of schooling. In K. Demarrais & M. D. LeCompte (Eds.), *How schools work: A sociological analysis of education* (pp. 1–33). Longman.
- Farrell, J. (2007). Equality of education: A half century of comparative evidence seen from a new millennium. In R. Arnone & C. Torres (Eds.), *Comparative education: The dialectic of the global and the local* (pp. 146–175). Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Hayhoe, R. (2007). The use of ideal types in comparative education: A personal reflection. *Comparative Education*, 43(2), 189–205.
- Hayhoe, R., & Li, J. (2017). Philosophy and comparative education: What can we learn from East Asia? In K. Bickmore, R. Hayhoe, C. Manion, K. Mundy, & R. Read, (Eds.), *Comparative and international education: Issues for teachers* (2nd ed., pp. 29–45). Canadian Scholars Press.
- Jones, E. (2022). Problematizing the idea of curriculum ‘internationalization’. *Journal of International Students*, 12(1), i–v.
- Klinger, C., & Murray, N. (2012). Tensions in higher education: Widening participation, student diversity and the challenge of academic language/literacy. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 14(1), 27–44.
- Knight, J. (2014). Is internationalisation of higher education having an identity crisis? In A. Maldonado-Maldonado & R. M. Bassett (Eds.), *The forefront of international higher education: A festschrift in honor of Philip G. Altbach* (pp. 75–87). Springer Dordrecht.
- Lee, E. (2015). Doing culture, doing race: Everyday discourses of ‘culture’ and ‘cultural difference’ in the English as a second language classroom. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 36(1), 80–93.
- Leung, C., Harris, R., & Rampton, B. (1997). The idealised native speaker, reified ethnicities, and classroom realities. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(3), 543–560. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587837>
- Lin, A., & Kubota, R. (2021). Discourse and race. *The Bloomsbury handbook of discourse analysis*. Bloomsbury.
- Madge, C., Raghuram, P., & Noxolo, P. (2015). Conceptualizing international education: From international student to international study. *Progress in Human Geography*, 39, 681–701.
- Marginson, S., & Mollis, M. (2001). The door opens and the tiger leaps: Theories and reflexivities of comparative education for a global millennium. *Comparative Education Review*, 45(4), 581–615.
- Marshall, S., & Lee, E. (2017). Chinese students in Canadian higher education: A case for reining in our use of the term “Generation 1.5”. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 73(2), 133–157.
- Maton, K., & Chen, R. T-H. (2020). Specialization codes: Knowledge, knowers and student success. In J. R. Martin, K. Maton, & Y. J. Doran (Eds.), *Accessing academic discourse: Systemic functional linguistics and legitimation code theory*. Routledge.
- McNess, E., Arthur, L., & Crossley, M. (2016). ‘Ethnographic dazzle’ and the construction of the ‘other’: Shifting boundaries between the insider and the outsider. In M. Crossley, L. Arthur, & E. McNess (Eds.), *Revisiting insider-outsider research in comparative and international education* (pp. 21–38). Oxford: Symposium.
- Nieto Ángel, M. C., Maciel Vahl, M., & Farrell, B. (2020). Critical pedagogy, dialogue and tolerance: A learning to disagree framework. In S. Macrine (Ed.), *Critical pedagogy in uncertain times: Hope and possibilities* (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- OECD. (2021). Education at a glance: International student mobility (indicator). <https://doi.org/10.1787/4bcf6fc3-en> (Accessed on 22 October 2021).
- Prandy, K. (2002). Ideal types, stereotypes and classes. *British Journal of Sociology*, 53(4), 583–601.
- Rizvi, F. (2007). Internationalization of curriculum: A critical perspective. In M. Hayden, J. Levy, & J. Thompson (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of research in international education*. (pp. 390–403). SAGE Publications.

- Robinson-Pant, A. (2016). Exploring the concept of Insider-Outsider in comparative and international research: Essentialising culture or culturally essential? In M. Crossley, L. Arthur, & E. McNess (Eds.), *Revisiting insider-outsider research in comparative and international education* (pp. 39–55). Symposium Books.
- Schofer, E., Ramirez, F. O., & Meyer, J. W. (2021). The societal consequences of higher education. *Sociology of Education*, 94(1), 1–19.
- Sriprakash, A., Tikly, L., & Walker, S. (2020). The erasures of racism in education and international development: Re-reading the ‘global learning crisis’. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 50(5), 676–692.
- Stein, S. (2017). The persistent challenges of addressing epistemic dominance in higher education: Considering the case of curriculum internationalization. *Comparative Education Review*, 61(S1), S25–S50. <https://doi.org/10.1086/690456>
- Thomas, M. A., & Schweisfurth, M. (2021). Constructivism and learner-centeredness in comparative and international education: Where theories meet practice. In T. D. Jules, R. Shields, & M. A. M. Thomas, (Eds.), *The Bloomsbury handbook of theory in comparative and international education*, (pp. 299–312).
- Waldow, F. (2017). *Commentary to part III: Why is “Being international” so attractive? “Being international” as a source of legitimacy and distinction* (pp. 247–253). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-59966-3_15
- Wong, B., & Chiu, Y. L. T. (2021). Exploring the concept of ‘ideal’ university student. *Studies in Higher Education*, 46(3), 497–508.
- Zajda, J. (2020). Globalization and education reforms: Emerging research issues. In J. Zajda (Ed.), *Globalization, ideology and education reforms* (pp. 1–11). Springer.

Jennifer Walsh Marr is an academic English lecturer at the University of British Columbia’s Vantage College. She holds a BA in applied linguistics and Japanese studies, an MA in curriculum & instruction, and is a doctoral student in language & literacy education at the University of Toronto’s Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). Her research work has looked at intersections of power, identity, and language in the academy, particularly with regards to Indigenous and settler histories in Canada, and incorporating Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) and genre research into pedagogical practice. She draws on critical pedagogy and discourse analysis to help make implicit patterns and values more explicit and accessible to both teachers and students. [ORCID 0000-0002-1688-4707]