

Higher Education Collaboration with International Partners: Critical Perspectives

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Abstract

Many questions and concerns emerge whenever higher education institutions engage in international collaborations. These partnerships can be riddled with inequity and forward inequitable and colonial relations. Colonialism is established from the onset when partners have a limited and deficit view of international contexts and collaborators. This mindset can ensure an arrogant “train and fix” approach that does not consider assets, knowledge, values, pedagogies and practices international partners have developed as a result of their contexts. A deficit lens does not recognize, respond to or foster agency and autonomy, but rather imposes agendas and ethnocentric approaches. This oral presentation offers a frame developed as a result of international collaboration I have been fortunate enough to establish and build since 2017. The frame illustrates what needs to be critically considered in cultivating the type of partnership vital to establish when engaging in international education focussed collaborations; responsiveness, research, respect, reciprocity, reflexivity and resources. The frame is informed by critical theories and pedagogies that focus on addressing the complex and collaborative ways people and power operate within organizations toward social justice focussed ends. Session participants will have a clearer sense of the components of the frame, how they are intertwined and what they mean for truly collaborative and potentially transformative education focused initiatives and partnerships.

Index Terms

Higher Education; International Partnerships; Critical Approaches; Collaborative Relations