European Higher Education and the Process of Change

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European higher education has experienced substantial changes as a result of the ongoing implementation of the *Bologna Process*. Twenty nine (29) European countries signed the *Bologna Declaration* in 1999 committing themselves to transform, through cooperation, an archaic and separated assortment of higher education institutions. In 2010 the participant countries, which had increased to forty seven (47), evaluated the progress made and set up a new agenda for the next decade. This paper outlines the ambitious objectives of the *Bologna Process*; analyzes the challenges faced; and the significant changes that have taken place in the *European Higher Education Area*. The possible impact on higher education around the world is considered. The analysis is based on a review of the literature and selected documents published by key stakeholders in the process of transformation.

Keywords: Bologna Process; Higher Education; Europe; Quality Assurance.

Introduction

As an academic interested in quality in higher education, the impact of accreditation processes on higher education institutions not only in this country but abroad, has been part of my research agenda. Almost 15 years ago, while exploring how higher education systems in other countries have resorted to quality assurance processes, I came across the interesting higher education reforms that were simmering throughout Europe. Being aware of how challenging it is to negotiate changes or introduce innovations to organizations in which the traditions are deeply rooted or that have maintained the status quo for long intervals; I wondered to what extent the discussed European reforms were achievable. Furthermore, I thought of the many factors and stakeholders involved; knowing that when intended change is not circumscribed to a particular institution but is envisioned for a number of dissimilar organizations across national borders, the obstacles are even greater.

Many events have occurred in the interval; the world in which we live now is certainly more globalized and new technologies have influenced the delivery of knowledge. Analyzing what has happened in European higher education in this period of time is the purpose of this paper. Review of the literature demonstrates the widespread interest that the issue has generated. There has been an outburst of publications; and different sub-fields of study on related issues continue to appear. The transformation of European higher education is an unparalleled, major event; with many facets and repercussions, and each aspect deserves an in-depth scholarship.

The scope of my discussion is limited to an overview of the initial objectives of what has been called the *Bologna Process;* and the transformation that has taken place in recent years to higher education in

Europe. In addition, my analysis raises questions about possible consequences, not only in Europe, but for university systems across the Atlantic as well. It is necessary to recognize that I based my discussion on a review of selected documents published by key stakeholders. Due to the length and scope of the paper; I had to set limits on the sources reviewed. Not being a member of the European professoriate, restricts to a certain extent my experience and perspective.

Visionary Leadership

On June 19, 1999, European Ministers of Education from twenty-nine (29) countries signed the *Bologna Declaration*; planning important reforms to higher education in Europe. This meeting in Bologna was not the initial encounter of higher education stakeholders seeking reforms; there had been a previous declaration in Paris, during the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the Sorbonne University, in May, 1998. The Ministers of Education of France, Italy, Great Britain and Germany, attending the celebration, signed the *Joint Declaration on Harmonisation [sic] of the Architecture of the European Higher Education System* which proposed an "open European area for higher learning" (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998, para. 4), and outlined a framework of existing challenges and possible solutions. The *Sorbonne Declaration* is an important document that reflects pride about their higher education institutions and the urgency of radical changes.

The *Sorbonne Declaration* is a proclamation about the imperative necessity of transformation; describes how the world is in a time of transformation; and how universities must respond to the challenges. It states: "We owe our students, and our

society at large, a higher education system in which they are given the best opportunities to seek and find their own area of excellence" (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998, para. 3). Another important aspect which the *Sorbonne Declaration* addresses is the necessity of increasing international academic experiences, both for students and faculty members. The document describes that historically, academic exchanges had been part of the tradition of European universities; and suggests that it is essential to re-establish that lost tradition: "Universities were born in Europe, some three-quarters of a millennium ago. … In those times, students and academics would freely circulate and rapidly disseminate knowledge throughout the continent" (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998, para. 2). The concern about limited opportunities of international academic exchanges was expressed: "Nowadays, too many of our students still graduate without having had the benefit of a study period outside of national boundaries" (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998, para. 2).

The *Sorbonne Declaration* shows that the drafters envisioned a Europe, where students have a range of opportunities to study abroad; and where more faculty and researchers transport their knowledge across national borders: "At both undergraduate and graduate level, students would be encouraged to spend at least one semester in universities outside their own country … more teaching and research staff should be working in European countries other than their own" (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998, para. 10).

The ministers concluded the *Sorbonne Declaration* with a call to all universities in Europe and other interested stakeholders to come together and engage in a process of change; to become a recognized higher

education area; and to strengthen the standing of European universities in the view of the world (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998).

The four Ministers of Education signers of the *Sorbonne Declaration* were: Claude Allegre, Minister for National Education, Research and Technology, from France; Luigi Berlinguer, Minister for Public Instruction, University and Research, representing Italy; Tessa Blackstone, Minister for Higher Education, from the United Kingdom; and on behalf of Germany, Jürgen Rüttgers, Minister for Education, Sciences, Research and Technology. The *Sorbonne Declaration* is a brief, but powerful document that deserves further scrutiny as an example of how visionary leaders can foster change.

The concerns that lead to the *Sorbonne Declaration* had been developing for a period of time. A year before the *Sorbonne Declaration*, in April 1997, the *Lisbon Recognition Convention* had discussed and adopted resolutions relative to the recognition of higher education qualifications. Since then, the resolutions taken in Lisbon have been ratified by the majority of the European countries. Recognizing degrees earned across borders and accepting qualifications to have access to universities throughout Europe was an important initial step that has been considered crucial not only to increase mobility, but in the overall transformation process (Lisbon Recognition Convention, 1997).

The past and the future meet at Bologna

In response to the call for action made in Paris, Ministers of Education representing 29 European countries met in June, 1999, with the objective of addressing the challenges and opportunities that European universities were facing; and to continue to examine the issues that had been raised the previous year in the *Sorbonne Declaration*. The 1999 meeting took place at the University of Bologna in Italy. This university is considered the oldest European university, founded at the end of the eleventh century. You could say that there was some symbolism in the selection of this setting. The meeting was about profound changes, and resulted in a joint agreement, with very specific objectives, detailed in the *Bologna Declaration*. The resolutions taken in Bologna can be considered of historical significance. Universities that had developed for centuries in different ways would become part of "the European area of higher education" (Bologna Declaration 1999, para. 1); and would work together to reach common grounds, overcoming differences in missions, traditions, languages of instruction, cultures, and many other factors.

The numerous challenges that European higher education faced were complex. Given the extraordinary socio-political changes that Europe had experienced in recent years; it was time for higher education to become involved and add the dimension of *Knowledge* to the process of change. The *Bologna Declaration* refers to the *Europe of Knowledge* as a crucial aspect in the overall process of transformation. The creation and distribution of knowledge is certainly the realm of the university; and the document stresses its importance: "we are witnessing a growing awareness … of the need to establish a more complete and far-reaching Europe, in particular building upon and strengthening its intellectual, cultural, social and scientific and technological dimensions" (Bologna Declaration 1999, para. 1).

European university stakeholders had been concerned about several perceived problems that included: higher education systems across Europe were incompatible; degrees awarded were not equivalent; time to degree completion varied from country to country; there was no common or compatible system of credits; the differences made mobility difficult; quality assurance methods were needed; and there were many other issues that had derived from historical and national factors.

The *Bologna Declaration* set clear and ambitious objectives. A fundamental aim was the creation of a European area of higher education; which had not existed in the past. This was a vital objective necessary to further other important objectives, such as to: facilitate mobility and international exchanges; and become more competitive in the academic world. The document reads: "European higher education institutions, for their part, have accepted the challenge and taken up a main role in constructing the European area of higher education" (Bologna Declaration 1999, para. 6). The declaration continues stressing the importance of world-wide recognition and competitiveness: "We must … ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions" (Bologna Declaration 1999, para. 8).

Specific objectives included: the adoption of comparable degrees across Europe; establishment of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in all countries; implementation of a credit system to permit transferability; embracing equivalent methods and criteria for quality assurance; facilitating international mobility for students, faculty, researchers, and university administrators (EU Rectors & CRE, 2000, p. 4).

The Ministers of Education of the 29 countries who signed the *Bologna Declaration* agreed to collaborate and unify higher education in Europe; and made a voluntary commitment to transform, through cooperation, an archaic and separated assortment of higher education institutions into a European area of higher education. These are the countries originally involved in the *Bologna Declaration*: Austria, Belgium (Flemish and French Communities), Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Swiss Confederation, and the United Kingdom (Bologna Declaration 1999).

The Academic Voice: Rectors Speak

As academics studying the *Bologna Process*, it is natural to wonder if the changes were driven just by Higher Education Ministers, which in some way are representatives of the governments; and to question where in the process is the academic voice.

There was a reaction from the universities to the Bologna Declaration. University Rectors (a Rector is the equivalent of a university president) responded to the *Bologna Declaration* with a document prepared by the *Confederation of European University Rectors Conference* and the *Association of European Universities (CRE)*. The Rectors acknowledged the importance of the *Bologna Declaration* affirming: "The Declaration is a **key document** which marks a **turning point** in the development of

European higher education" [emphasis in the original] (EU Rectors & CRE, 2000, p. 3).

Furthermore, the Rectors asserted their position as direct leaders of the European universities, insisting that universities should have a voice in the matter: "In order to respond to the invitation contained in the Bologna Declaration, the higher education community needs to be able to tell Ministers in a convincing way what kind of European space for higher education it wants and is willing to promote" (EU Rectors & CRE, 2000, p. 6). It is apparent that the Rectors considered that the reform should not be driven solely by the Ministers, but also by university administrators and academics; represented by the Rectors of higher education institutions. The Rectors state: **"Universities and other institutions of higher education can choose to be actors, rather than objects, of this essential process of change**" [emphasis in the original] (EU Rectors & CRE, 2000, p. 6).

As representatives of the academic community, the Rectors insisted that universities would be in charge of decisions about the curricula, program development, and preserve their autonomy. The Rectors affirmed that universities would "profile their own curricula, in accordance with the emerging post-Bologna environment...." (EU Rectors & CRE, 2000, p. 6). The Rectors also stated that the decisions about creation of new courses and programs would be made by the universities "in particular through the introduction of bachelor courses in systems where they have not traditionally existed, and through the creation of master courses meeting the needs of mobile postgraduate students from around the world" (EU Rectors & CRE, 2000, p. 6).

Moreover, the Rectors asserted that the universities were the ones that would: "activate their networks in key areas such as joint curriculum development, joint ventures overseas or worldwide mobility schemes" (EU Rectors & CRE, 2000, p. 6). Finally, the Rectors, as the academic leaders of higher education, offered to "contribute individually and collectively to the next steps in the process" (EU Rectors & CRE, 2000, p. 6). The Rectors and the *Association of European Universities* organized a convention of European universities to be involved in the process and to ensure having the academic voice included. The meeting took place in Salamanca, Spain in March 2001. In the same month, there was a Convention of European Students in Göteborg, Sweden; documents reviewed demonstrate that the different associations of students have been actively involved in the process of change (Prague Communiqué, 2001).

The Students Reaction

Even before the university Rectors, there was an immediate response from the students to the *Bologna Declaration*. The students' document is titled *Bologna Students Joint Declaration*, and is dated the same day of the *Bologna Declaration*, June 19, 1999. The *National Unions of Students in Europe,* representing at that point, 37 national unions from 31 countries, issued the response. In addition to regretting having been excluded from the discussions, the students contributed important insights.

The students' declaration raised the issues of access and equity, which had not been considered in depth by the Ministers; and that later on would become the *Social Dimension,* and an important item in the *Bologna Process.* The students reaffirmed their commitment to "quality education open

to the largest number of students. It is a duty of Europe and European governments to permanently raise the level of knowledge of its entire population" (Bologna ESIB, 1999, para. 2). The students insisted that the *Bologna Process* should not become a way to limit "the access to higher education" (para. 2). The students also indicated that *Mobility* should be a right for every student; and listed some obstacles to its achievement, including lack of scholarship funds (para. 3-5).

The students complained: "we deeply regret that the students were not involved with the drafting of the Sorbonne and Bologna declarations and to the definition of their objectives even though we are one of the most important populations concerned by the potential reforms" (Bologna ESIB, 1999, para. 7). The *Bologna Students Joint Declaration* ends with the assertion that European students expect to be part of future Bologna discussions.

Since their initial declaration European students have been actively involved in the *Bologna Process*. The prompt response of the students, and their interest in contributing to the process of transformation, indicates the vitality of student organizations in Europe. In addition to the *Bologna Students Joint Declaration,* the European Students' Union (ESU) has issued several formal statements such as the *Student Göteborg Declaration*; the *Brussels Student Declaration*; the *Luxembourg Student Declaration*; the *Berlin Student Declaration*; and several others (Göteborg ESIB, 2001; Brussels ESIB, 2001; Luxembourg ESIB, 2005; Berlin ESIB, 2007).

The umbrella organization of European students was, for many years, named *National Unions of Students in Europe;* previously known as the *European Student Information Bureau (ESIB).* The organization changed its name to *European Students' Union (ESU)* in 2007. ESU is an umbrella entity, currently representing 45 National Unions of Students (NUS) in 38 countries (ESU, 2011, p. 1). The organization has produced, since 1999, many Policy Papers. Space does not permit listing all of these Policy Papers, but a few examples are noted: *Student Welfare into the New Millennium*, 1999; *Vertical Mobility,* 2000; *European Structures for Qualifications,* 2001; *Joint Degrees in the context of the Bologna Process,* 2002; *Quality Assurance and Accreditation,* 2003; *Brain Mobility,* 2004; *Financing of Higher Education,* 2005; *Governance in Higher Education,* 2006; *Degree Structures,* 2007; *Towards 2020: A Student-Centered Bologna Process,* 2008; *Equal Opportunities,* 2009; *Lifelong Learning,* 2010; and many others (ESIB Policy Paper, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007; ESU Policy Paper, 2008, 2009, 2010). The Board of the *European Students' Union* selects the topics, and students' representatives prepare the documents.

In addition to the Policy Papers the *European Students' Union* has issued several major research publications, which contain the results of extensive surveys in relation to the Bologna Process implementation. These publications include: *Bologna with Student Eyes*, 2003; *Bologna with Student Eyes*, 2005; *Bologna with Student Eyes*, 2007 (ESIB Bologna Process Committee, 2003, 2005, 2007). The *European Student's Union* also published *Bologna with Student Eyes*, 2009; and *Bologna at the Finish Line*, 2010. In these late publications, after having worked in the Bologna implementation for ten years, the students evaluate the results and call attention to the many aspects that

still remain to be completed (ESU Bologna Process Committee 2009, 2010).

The broad range and depth of the material published by the European students is impressive; which denotes not only desire to positively contribute to the process of improving their universities; but then again reveals student involvement; and scholarship. An in-depth analysis of these publications is material for further study.

On the other hand, students have also been involved in demonstrations and protests against different aspects of the *Bologna Process*. Concerns about not being included in the decision making process have prompted students complaints. In the recent *Student Budapest Declaration,* issued by the ESU in February 2011, students regret that "the pursuit of international competitiveness … resulted in changes in governance structures that lead to the dilution of student representation in higher education institutions" (ESU Budapest, 2011, para. 3). There have been apprehensions about alleged impacts that the Bologna changes might produce, such as: increase in the cost of the studies; commercialization of higher education; limitation of programs of study; devaluation of the degrees; negative impact on future employability, etc. *The Black Book of the Bologna Process* (2005) presents the students' perspective on what in their view are adverse aspects of the *Bologna Process*; and their own experiences on problems encountered during its implementation (ESIB, 2005).

Implementation

The implementation of the *Bologna Declaration* has been called the *Bologna Process*. From the beginning it included multiple levels of organization and undertakings. Some of the countries had to

resort to legislative reforms or government actions. Many international committees, consultative groups and other groups were formed. Extensive research studies, meetings and discussions were organized by the participant countries; or by universities, academic associations, and other interested entities. It is important to keep in mind the number of stakeholders affected by the proposed reforms, to understand how challenging it was to arrive at a consensus on many of the proposed changes. Data from the European Commission reveals that there are about 4000 higher education institutions in Europe; with approximately 1.5 million faculty members and other staff; serving a population of more than 19 million students (European Commission, 2011, para. 1).

As the implementation of the declared objectives proceeded; the scholarship on many issues derived or related to the *Bologna Process* has proliferated. There are extensive research studies and a substantive body of research data. In addition to the documents containing the Ministerial Declarations and Communiqués, there are important documents produced as the process has evolved. For example the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (2005), is the result of the development and adoption of a Europe-wide system for Quality Assurance (EAQA, 2005). Being familiar with regional accreditation criteria in the United States, I found the European multi-level system very creative and carefully designed. Another important document is *A Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area*, which focuses on "learning achievements rather than procedures when assessing qualifications" (Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, 2005, p. 191).

Anyone involved in the assessment of student learning outcomes will find this extensive document valuable. The European Commission followed with *The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning* (2008), which features a multi-level framework that was adopted in 2008, for implementation across Europe. This framework was produced by an Expert Group and involved extensive consultation with stakeholders. The framework is focused "on learning outcomes aiming to facilitate the transparency and portability of qualifications and to support lifelong learning" (European Commission, 2008, p. 3).

Zgaga (2006) prepared a very comprehensive background report titled: *Looking out: The Bologna Process in a Global Setting.* This report informed the *Bologna External Dimension Working Group* to decide which strategies would be included in their recommendations. The *European Higher Education in a Global Setting: A Strategy for the External Dimension of the Bologna Process*; is a brief five page strategic plan to promote and enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education world-wide. The *Strategy* was adopted at the 2007 Bologna Ministerial meeting (Strategy, 2007, p. 3).

There are many other relevant documents, published by different interested entities or scholars. I will mention here just a selection: *National Reports* (2005, 2007 & 2009) from the participant countries; *General Reports* that were meant to inform ministerial conferences; *Stocktaking Reports* (2005, 2007 & 2009), these are evaluative analyses of the data included in the *National Reports* to assess overall progress; a working group was assigned to complete the stocktaking evaluation. Several working groups produced reports on various topics.

Representing the higher education community, the European University Association (EUA) published the following reports, which include comprehensive field research and data about the establishment of the *Bologna Process* reforms: *Trends I: Trends in Learning Structures in Higher Education* (Haug & Kirstein, 1999); *Trends II: Towards the European Higher Education Area - survey of main reforms from Bologna to Prague* (Haug & Tauch, 2001); *Trends III: Progress towards the European Higher Education Area* (Reichert & Tauch, 2003); *Trends IV: European Universities Implementing Bologna* (Reichert & Tauch, 2005); and *Trends V: Universities shaping the European Higher Education Area* (Crosier, Purser & Smidt, 2007). The last report in the series was *Trends 2010: A decade of change in European Higher Education* (Sursock, A., & Smidt, H. (2010). This last report presents the perspective of the higher education institutions after a decade of change.

The *Bologna Declaration* set up the timeframe of a decade for establishing what they called "the European area of higher education" and included the disposition of meeting biannually for progress evaluation and further planning. The countries involved have rotated leadership; and have kept meeting every two years and tracking progress. In these biannual meetings many other issues and agendas have emerged. There have been several important resolutions and statements about critical issues. Since the signing of the *Bologna Declaration* Europe and the world have changed; new challenges, social, political and economic have emerged.

The biannual meetings have taken place in the following cities: Prague, 2001;

Berlin, 2003; Bergen, 2005; London, 2007; Leuven, 2009; Budapest and Vienna, 2010. The next meeting is scheduled in Romania in 2012.

Prague 2001

The Prague meeting was held in May 2001. Representatives of 32 countries attended the meeting. Croatia, Cyprus and Turkey were added to the initial roster. During the Prague convention it was reported that the development of the quality assurance system was advancing. Higher education institutions were asked to collaborate with the *European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)* to determine the indicators and processes of quality and "in establishing a common framework of reference and to disseminate best practice" (Prague Communiqué, 2001, p.2). My own experience and research on accreditation in American higher education has made me aware of how difficult it is to agree on quality criteria for accreditation purposes. Through the years, our regional accrediting bodies have found it impossible to agree on setting national criteria for institutional accreditation.

The recognition of the role of students, both as members of the higher education community and as participants in the *Bologna Process,* was one of the highlights of the Prague meeting. The Ministers asserted "that students should participate in and influence the organisation [sic] and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions" (Prague Communiqué, 2001, p. 3). In response to the students' request of considering the *social dimension,* the Communiqué "reaffirmed the need, recalled by students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process" (Prague

Communiqué, 2001, p. 3). The *social dimension* had not been denoted in the original *Bologna Declaration.*

The importance of the universities' contributions to the process was recognized as well: "Ministers stressed that the involvement of universities and other higher education institutions and of students as competent, active and constructive partners in the establishment and shaping of a European Higher Education Area is needed and welcomed" (Prague Communiqué, 2001, pp. 2-3). During the Prague meeting special emphasis was placed on the concept of *lifelong learning.* The Prague Communiqué explains: "Lifelong learning is an essential element of the European Higher Education Area. In the future Europe, built upon a knowledge-based society and economy, lifelong learning strategies are necessary to face the challenges" (p. 2).

The Prague Communiqué reaffirms the objectives established in the *Bologna Declaration*, with the additions mentioned above, which are: the social dimension, lifelong learning, and student involvement. The document also restates the plan of launching the *European Higher Education Area* by 2010.

Berlin 2003

With the purpose of reviewing the progress achieved and to continue advancing the *Bologna Process;* the Ministers of higher education from 33 European countries met in Berlin in September, 2003. During the meeting it was announced that there would be 40 countries involved in the *Bologna Process*; the following new members had been accepted to the organization: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, and "the former Yugoslav Republic of

Macedonia" (Berlin Communiqué, 2003, p. 8).

In the Berlin Communiqué the Ministers stressed the importance of further linking the *European Research Area* and the *Higher Education Area*; with the purpose of firming up the *Europe of Knowledge*. It emphasized "the importance of research and research training and the promotion of interdisciplinarity in maintaining and improving the quality of higher education and in enhancing the competitiveness of European higher education more generally" (Berlin Communiqué, 2003, p. 7). The document states that the intention "is to preserve Europe's cultural richness and linguistic diversity, based on its heritage of diversified traditions, and to foster its potential of innovation and social and economic development" (p. 2).

In relation to Quality Assurance, a goal was set that by 2005 there would be quality assurance systems in each participant country. The systems would have in place a "definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved; Evaluation of programmes [sic] or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results; a system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures; international participation.…" (Berlin Communiqué, 2003, p. 3).

A follow-up structure was created to continuously track progress of the *Bologna Process* at the different levels of implementation. The tracking of progress was delegated to a Follow-up Group that would prepare progress reports and could convene special working groups as needed. "Participating countries will, furthermore, be prepared to allow access to the necessary information for research on higher education relating to the objectives of the Bologna Process. Access to data banks on ongoing research and research results shall be facilitated" (Berlin Communiqué, 2003, p. 7).

Representatives from Latin America and Caribbean higher education were guests to the Berlin meeting. The European Ministers were pleased by the worldwide interest that the *Bologna Process* had generated (Berlin Communiqué, 2003, p. 2).

Bergen 2005

The next meeting took place in Bergen, Norway in May 2005. This was considered a mid-term progress review conference; in the process of achieving the objectives set for 2010. The countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were welcomed as new members. With the addition of these countries the *Bologna Process* reached a membership of 45 countries (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, p. 1).

An important item in the Bergen meeting was the acknowledgement of the partners in the process of transformation. The hard work of higher education institutions and the faculty in revising the curricula and adopting new strategies for improving teaching and learning was recognized. The participation of students and other stakeholders was also praised (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, p. 1).

The progress report submitted by the Follow-up Group described substantial progress in the following three priorities: implementation of the degree system; adoption of a quality assurance system; and recognition of degrees and studies across borders. (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, pp. 2-3).

Challenges and new priorities were discussed; including the importance of advancing research and training future

researchers. The alignment of the qualifications for doctoral programs was considered of the highest importance to advance knowledge. "We urge universities to ensure that their doctoral programmes [sic] promote interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills … We need to achieve an overall increase in the numbers of doctoral candidates taking up research careers" (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, p. 4). Transparency in supervision and assessment was mentioned; and the cautionary statement of avoiding "overregulation" of doctoral studies was included.

In relation to the *Social Dimension* the vow of "making quality higher education equally accessible to all" was reiterated (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, p. 4). Access and equity were considered central to the *Social Dimension* of the *Bologna Process.* The Bergen Communiqué states that "The social dimension includes measures taken by governments to help students, especially from socially disadvantaged groups, in financial and economic aspects and to provide them with guidance and counselling [sic] services with a view to widening access" (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, p. 4).

The Ministers emphasized the vision of European higher education in partnerships with different regions of the world; and the desire of sharing the experiences gained in the *Bologna Process* with others, outside the European area. The follow-up Group was requested to look into the issue and plan strategies for what was called the "External Dimension" (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, p. 5).

London 2007

In 2007 the meeting took place in London. The Republic of Montenegro was introduced as a new member. There were, at

this point, 46 countries working to fulfill the objectives of the *Bologna Process.* The contributions of the different working groups involved in the process were acknowledged; and there was a reaffirmation to the commitments of the *Bologna Process:* "We reaffirm our commitment to increasing the compatibility and comparability of our higher education systems, whilst at the same time respecting their diversity" (London Communiqué, 2007, p. 1).

Reports on the progress achieved in the different aspects of the process were presented and discussed; it was also accepted that there were many difficulties to overcome. Referring to *Mobility* the Ministers stated that: "Some progress has been made since 1999, but many challenges remain. Among the obstacles to mobility, issues relating to immigration, recognition, insufficient financial incentives and inflexible pension arrangements feature prominently" (London Communiqué, 2007, p. 2).

The importance of the adoption of qualifications frameworks was underlined; and the difficulties in implementing the frameworks at the national and system wide levels were mentioned: "some initial progress has been made towards the implementation of national qualifications frameworks, but that much more effort is required" (London Communiqué, 2007, p. 3). It was also reported that all the participant countries were in the process of implementing the adopted *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance* (p. 4).

Among the priorities set for 2009, was the recognition of improving the collection of data to verify progress. The London Communiqué mentions "the need to improve the availability of data on both mobility and the social dimension across all

the countries participating in the Bologna Process" (London Communiqué, 2007, p. 6). It is apparent that the collection of accurate comparable data to measure progress was one of the greatest challenges faced; given the many facets of the transformation; the assortment of the institutions involved; and the disparities across countries.

Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve 2009

In April 2009, the meeting of the Ministers of higher education was held in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. The 46 countries who were then members of the *Bologna Process* were represented. The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate the progress made. On this occasion, setting priorities for the following decade was part of the agenda.

The challenges that European higher education would face in the next decade were analyzed; and the importance of bringing together research and education was discussed. In reference to the worldwide financial crisis it was stated that to "bring about sustainable economic recovery and development, a dynamic and flexible European higher education will strive for innovation on the basis of the integration between education and research at all levels" (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009, para. 3).

In the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (2009), the Ministers reiterated that higher education was a public responsibility; and asserted that higher education institutions serve society "through the diversity of their missions" (para. 4). The Ministers continued with an evaluation of the progress made: "Over the past decade we have developed the European Higher Education Area ensuring that it remains firmly rooted in Europe's intellectual, scientific and cultural heritage and

ambitions.…" (para. 5). It was asserted that to a large extent, system wide compatibility was attained, which has helped mobility. The three-cycle degree structure approved during the *Bologna Process* was a key step in the modernization of the higher education system. The use of the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance* across Europe; and the establishment of the *European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)*, were mentioned as part of the accomplishments.

The Ministers outlined a working agenda for the next decade. The *Social Dimension* was considered a priority: "Each participating country will set measurable targets for widening overall participation and increasing participation of under-represented groups in higher education, to be reached by the end of the next decade" (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009, para. 9). Several other priorities were discussed, such as: *Lifelong Learning, Mobility, Student Centered Education; Research and Innovation; and Data Collection.* A meeting was scheduled for the Bologna anniversary on March 2010; the next Ministerial conference for April 2012; and in 2015, 2018 and 2020.

New Declaration 2010-2020

For the tenth anniversary of the *Bologna Declaration* a reunion was organized in the cities of Budapest and Vienna. During this assembly, Kazakhstan was introduced as a newly admitted country to the accord. Kazakhstan brought to 47 the number of participating countries. As a decade of implementing the *Bologna Declaration* had concluded; the 47 Ministers responsible for European higher Education issued a new declaration covering the decade 2010-2020. This new declaration is a follow-up to the *Bologna Declaration* and is

titled: *Budapest-Vienna Declaration on the European Higher Education Area.* The name of "The European Higher Education Area (EHEA)" was officially adopted to designate their joined partnership, *as envisaged in the Bologna Declaration of 1999* (Budapest-Vienna Declaration, 2010, para. 1).

The Budapest-Vienna Declaration (2010) denotes the substantial progress achieved since 1999 working as partners in the process of transformation. It is stated that the process has "made European higher education more visible on the global map" (para. 5).

Given that there had been some public protests about aspects of the *Bologna Process*; the Ministers acknowledged that the implementation did not always proceed as expected: "Some of the Bologna aims and reforms have not been properly implemented and explained. We acknowledge and will listen to the critical voices raised among staff and students" (Budapest-Vienna Declaration, 2010, para. 6).

The ministers expressed their commitment to the objectives agreed the previous year (2009), in the *Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué* and restated the importance of academic freedom; higher education autonomy; and accountability. In reference to the access and equity, the Ministers pledge to "increase our efforts on the social dimension in order to provide equal opportunities to quality education, paying particular attention to underrepresented groups" (Budapest-Vienna Declaration, 2010, para. 11). The *Budapest-Vienna Declaration* will guide the European transformation until 2020.

Conclusion

This paper has presented a selective overview of the ambitious endeavor that the stakeholders of European higher education have been pursuing through the *Bologna Process*. As we have discussed, the *Sorbonne Declaration* signed in 1998 by representatives of only four countries became an organized process of transformation. Subsequently, forty-seven (47) countries have joined the accord.

In about 12 years, the implementation of the *Bologna Process* has certainly had an unprecedented impact in European Higher Education. There have been controversial issues as you would expect in a process involving change and many stakeholders.

In reviewing recent reports on the *Bologna Process* accomplishments; and the literature about the changes and challenges that European higher education institutions have experienced as a result of the *Bologna Process*; I have found many interesting issues. Apparently universities have been working hard in the implementation of difficult changes at many levels. From my perspective, the major accomplishments include the realization of the need for change; and the establishment of working connections across international boundaries. As mentioned at the beginning, universities that had been established centuries ago, and that had evolved following different traditions; became partners in the quest for improvement. While the initial objectives set in 1999 were not totally fulfilled; and there were glitches and unexpected results during the initial decade of the *Bologna Process*; there are important results that should be recognized.

Europe has now an established and functioning Quality Assurance system. The negotiation, development, adoption, and implementation of the European standards

and processes for quality assurance; has been a major accomplishment. The establishment of a Register for accrediting agencies was crucial. This is an overarching organization with functions similar to the *Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)* in the U.S.

For a decade European higher education institutions have gone to a process of continuous curriculum reform. The newly adopted framework of comparable degrees and new system of transferability of credits; must have required difficult decision making and negotiations. The curricula are the realm of the faculty; in other words, the Faculty owns the curricula. As academics we know all the issues involved in modifying the curricula. This paper has not included details of the professoriate experiences during the *Bologna Process*; this is certainly an item for future research.

Regional accrediting agencies and specialized accrediting bodies in the U.S. have required for decades the assessment of learning outcomes. The emphasis on improving learning and teaching; and assessing learning outcomes has been part of the European transformation and has become pervasive. European students through their declarations and publications seem very aware of active pedagogical approaches; requesting student centered education; and demanding to be part of the academic decisions.

European students have maintained their commitment to the *Social Dimension*: seeking access, equity and quality higher education for all. Recent occurrences in Europe demonstrate that there are social inequalities that must be addressed. There is some data about improvement in access and participation rates. However, the *Bologna Process* seems to have caused the collateral effect of increasing the cost of some

programs of study. This should be the topic for another study.

From the beginning of the *Bologna Process* international *Mobility* was considered essential. The benefits of international experiences were widely discussed and agreed. *Mobility* comprises not only the academic exchanges within the European higher education area; but with universities around the world. The objective of attracting students worldwide and becoming more competitive internationally has been part of the *Mobility* agenda from early on. Most universities have established policies on *Mobility*. The goals of these policies are similar for each country; increase the number of international exchanges. However, the implementation of these policies is still uneven (Eurydice Network, 2010, pp. 38-43).

Obstacles to *Mobility* have been identified by different stakeholders. There are many issues related to *Mobility* that deserve further study: financial aspects; portability of grants and loans; language proficiency; brain-drain; and several others (Brus & Scholz, 2007). There is a new Mobility benchmark. In the year 2020, it is expected, that 20% of graduates will have had an academic international experience. "In 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad" (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009 para. 18).

European universities continue to seek International competitiveness, with the goal of attracting students world-wide. The creation of the *European Higher Education Area* is part of the marketing and promotion of the many new Master programs. A quick survey of the offerings demonstrates the growth of Masters Programs, delivered in English, in different areas of knowledge.

European universities are recruiting students in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and all over the world. International students have more choices. Will this influence the number of international students coming to the U.S.?

Despite the fact that a decade of the *Bologna Process* has concluded, it is not over; overall, there are many accomplishments but the progress varies from country to country. There are of course issues that have not worked out as planned. This is not surprising in such an enormous endeavor. Many questions about different issues are still in the air including further impact on institutional autonomy, academic freedom, accountability, and increasing struggles for achieving social equity. There is no doubt that in our globalized world the transformation of European higher education will eventually influence other higher education systems. Higher education institutions in the U.S. should be alert, and learn from the European experience.

As Curry (1992) has stated "Change seldom progresses smoothly or without problems in the real world" (p. 60). With the launching of *The European Higher Education Area (EHEA)*, during the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Bologna Declaration, new objectives for 2020 were set. We could state that it is a process, not an event. Universities, faculty members, students and other stakeholders will continue working in the transformation of European higher education.

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Making Learning Meaningful: International Perspectives on Teaching Children Considered to be "At-Risk" for School Failure

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This interdisciplinary cross-cultural research project surveyed teachers in elementary schools in five countries: South Africa, Australia, Jamaica, England, and the United States. This study attempted to define and identify best practices used in teaching children considered to be "at-risk" in these five countries: Three research questions guided this study 1). How do classroom teachers define children "at-risk" in their culture and country? 2). How do classroom teachers identify children "at-risk" in their classrooms? 3). What educational strategies do teachers implement to make learning meaningful for children "at-risk" for academic failure in their classrooms.

An extensive cross-cultural literature review was conducted by the research team and a summary of the most frequently cited best practices for teaching children considered to be "at-risk" from the five countries was presented. In addition, detailed responses by classroom teacher study participants that addressed the three key research questions were also included.[1]

Keywords: International Education, Students "At-Risk", Teacher Preparation

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[1] *Note: Initial data from this research study were included in a presentation given at the International Conference on Education, Research and Innovation (iCERI) in Madrid Spain, November 15-17, 2010 which appears in the conference proceedings CD.*

Introduction

The term "*at risk*" has its genesis in the publication of a report commissioned by the United States Government that was submitted by the *National Commission on Excellence in Education to the United States Department of Education* (Gardner, 1983). The report entitled, *A Nation at Risk*, indicated that the quality of education in the United States was lacking and subsequently the term "at risk" became part of everyday vocabulary in many educational reports and educational reform movements in the United States (Vaughn, Bos and Schumm, 1997). However, recognizing that the term "at risk," was broad in its definition, Swadener and Lubeck (1995), argued that 'since children belonging to specified ethnic and language groups have been added as major 'risk' categories,' they therefore must become a major focus of social concern and public responsibility (Laosa as cited in Swadener, 1995, pp.26-27).   Consequently, in the past two decades, there has been increased interest in the well-being and status of children in the United States and Worldwide who might be described "at risk." (Heydon & Iannacci, 2008; Kominski, Jamieson, and Martinez, 2001; Vaughn, Bos & Schumm, 1997).

Since the seminal study in 1983, much has been written about disadvantage, social exclusion and income inequality among children. Indeed, several studies have found that nationally and internationally, child poverty rates among many of these children are higher than those of the general population (Harding, Lloyd & Greenwell 2001; UNICEF 2005). However, while some researchers and educators argue that all children are at risk in some way or another and others emphasize that some children face much higher risks than do other children, simply being "*at risk*" does not imply certainty of failure in education (Anderson-Moore, 2006; Sutherland, 2005).

What is certain however, is that most researchers and educators agree that children who are considered to be "*at risk*" are more likely to have difficulty and struggle in school settings, display poor learning and social skills, demonstrate low self-esteem, have higher incidences of ill health and experience a greater degree of social exclusion and discrimination (Al-Yaman, Bryant & Sargeant, 2002; Tanton, Harding, Daly, McNamara &Yap, 2006).

Despite the volume of research that exists regarding children classified as being "*at risk*",* much research remains to be done in understanding and integrating these findings into the pedagogical curriculum for pre-service teachers and providing this information to in-service teachers who may not have easy access to the literature that currently exists.

Context of the Study

This interdisciplinary research project was an outgrowth of Elmhurst College's *Total Quality Enhancement Curriculum Transformation Initiative,* and addresses two of the major tenets of the mission of Elmhurst College; first, engaging students in issues related to globalization and social justice and, second, encouraging students to participate in a wide range of study away programs.

At the present time, there are four specific interdisciplinary international travel and service courses offered at Elmhurst College that provide our pre-service education students with opportunities to engage in teaching children in high needs schools. These courses provides student with the opportunity to teach in South Africa, Australia, Jamaica, England.   Several other pre-service courses provide similar teaching opportunities in the United States. In order for

our students to have successful and meaningful experiences in these school sites it is imperative that they have an understanding of the culture of the country in which they teach, and the teaching strategies used by teachers. To address these concerns and to gain insight into these teaching strategies, this research project focused on how teachers define 'risk' cross-culturally and on identifying strategies used by these elementary teachers to teach children considered to be "at-risk" in the South Africa, Australia, Jamaica, England and the United States.

Purpose of Study

This study had several purposes. The first was to examine the cross-cultural context of children "*at risk*" in each of the five countries. The researchers engaged in extensive reviews of the research literature related to children "*at-risk*" in South Africa, Australia, Jamaica, England and the United States to identify best organizational and instructional practices used by teachers who teach students considered to be "*at-risk.*" The second purpose was to design and pilot a teacher questionnaire to investigate how primary school teachers in each country defined and identified children considered to be "*at-risk*" in their classrooms. The third purpose was to identify what teaching-learning strategies the teachers in these communities used in their classrooms to make learning meaningful for children previously identified as being "*at-risk*". The final purpose was to infuse these "identified best practice strategies" for teaching children "*at-risk*" into the pre-service teacher education program curriculum at Elmhurst College.

Cross-Cultural Literature Review

After reviewing the research literature in the 5 countries, the research team compiled a summary of both organizational and instructional strategies that were cited most frequently as being the best practices for working with children considered to be "*at-risk.*"

Organizational / Systems Strategies

Cross-cultural organizational / systems strategies cited for better serving children "at-risk" varied across the literature by country. The most frequently cited strategies included:

- Creating partnerships with parents to increase parental involvement in their child's learning; (U.S., South Africa, England, Australia, Jamaica)
- Reducing class size (U.S. & South Africa)
- Providing bilingual classroom instruction and supports (U.S., & England)
- Creating partnerships with community organizations, health organizations and businesses to enhance resources for school programs; (U.S., South Africa, England, Australia, Jamaica)
- Tapping into government grants to assist in supplementing school programs (Australia)
- Providing appropriate instructional materials as identified by respected professionals; (U.S., South Africa, England, Australia, Jamaica)
- Providing classroom teaching assistants to focus on children "at-risk" (Jamaica & England)
- Implementing early intervention by creating school readiness programs for preschoolers; (U.S., South Africa, England, Australia, Jamaica)
- Providing ongoing in-services for classroom teachers on working

with students "at-risk" for school failure; (U.S., South Africa, England, Australia, Jamaica)

- Developing national prevention strategies for HIV/AIDS pandemic; (South Africa)
- Implementing a model of "progressive mainstreaming" for children with learning disabilities and developmental delays; (South Africa)
- Conducting research on the impact of cultural and racial issues on student learning outcomes; (South Africa & England)

Instructional Strategies

Specific cross-cultural instructional strategies considered to be best practices also varied by country. Again, the most frequently cited instructional strategies across cultures included:

- Providing English Language Learning (ELL) specialists in classrooms for children who are bilingual; (U.S., South Africa, England, Australia, Jamaica)
- Integrating technology into classrooms and providing individual instruction; (U.S., Jamaica, South Africa)
- Engaging in cooperative learning activities in small groups; (U.S., South Africa, England, Australia, Jamaica)
- Using Multiple Intelligence Theory and accommodating for individual learning style differences in students; (U.S. & Australia)
- Using problem-based learning activities that connect in meaningful ways to children's lives; (US, South Africa, England, Australia, Jamaica)

- Implementing HIV/AIDS education in the classroom; (South Africa)
- Providing direct teaching of learning strategies and basic skills to children; (U.S., South Africa, England, Australia, Jamaica)
- Creating lessons with precise student learning outcomes; (England & U.S.)
- Providing gender appropriate role models to enhance the personal identity of children; (U.S., South Africa, England, Australia, Jamaica)
- Engaging in peer-mediated instruction (peer coaching-peer tutoring); (U.S., Africa and Jamaica)
- Establishing alternative curriculum-based assessments to better determine student learning outcomes; (U.S., South Africa, England, Australia, Jamaica)
- Establishing culturally connected, caring relationships with students. (U.S., England, Jamaica, South Africa, Australia)

Methodology
Setting

A total of ten publically funded elementary schools from the five countries listed were selected as data collection sites for this research project. The schools were selected because the researchers and Elmhurst College had and continues to have professional and personal relationships with administrators and teachers at each school. Each of the schools selected served a population of children who were considered by teachers and administrators to be "*at-risk*" for school failure. The geographic distribution of ten schools was: South Africa (two

schools), Australia (one school), Jamaica (one school), England (two schools), and the United States (four schools in Chicago and suburbs).

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of twenty (20) elementary school teachers from across five countries who volunteered to participate in this study. The participants were: South Africa (5 teachers), Australia (3 teachers), Jamaica (3 teachers), England (3 teachers), and the United States (6 teachers). The teaching experience of the participants ranged from 2-35 years, and the grade levels taught by the teachers ranged from kindergarten to seventh grade. All twenty teachers indicated that they had previous experience teaching at multiple grades in elementary schools.

Data Collection

Data collection in each country occurred across a one week time period at each school commencing in June of 2007 and ending in July of 2009. An interview questionnaire that addressed the research questions that guided our study was developed and piloted before the complete data set was collected. There were a total of 17 open ended questions in the questionnaire. (See appendix 1: At-Risk Questionnaire).

The interview questionnaire included four sections: Section I. Demographic questions designed to obtain relevant information about the teacher respondents; Section II. Questions asking teachers to define children "at-risk"; Section III. Questions asking teachers how they identify children "at-risk"; Section IV. Questions asking teachers to identify instructional strategies for teaching children "at-risk".

Classroom teachers at each school site in the 5 countries were interviewed by faculty research team members during the time

period of the study away programs for pre-service teachers who engaged in teaching and service work within each of the school buildings. Individual teacher interviews took place over lunch periods and before and after school. Each interview took about 45 minutes to administer to each teacher. Faculty research team members collected qualitative research data by transcribing each teacher's answers to the open-ended questions on the interview questionnaire.

Data Analysis

We chose a qualitative, semi-structured interview process because qualitative data sources offered the opportunity to capture the expressed views of participants, to describe that information and develop themes, and then to situate those themes within the larger context of our research questions (Creswell, 2008). After reviewing each participant's interview questionnaire, the researchers met to establish and condense preliminary themes that emerged from the data into sub-themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Stake, 2005). Using inductive open coding to search for patterns in the data, commonalities across themes separately identified by the respondents were identified (Wolcott, 1994). These multiple sub-themes were collapsed into broader global themes that were shared across participants. Ultimately, the data were integrated across all cases to elicit findings in response to the research questions. Our collaborative analysis process and our use of the multiple participant perspectives of the teachers represented in their own words help make our interpretations of the data meaningful and trustworthy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The common themes and distinctive cultural responses from the teachers in each specific country were in the results section below.

Results

The results from the teacher questionnaires in each of the 5 countries will be described as they relate to the specific research questions that guided this study.

Research Question # 1. How do teachers define children considered to be "at-risk?"

All teachers were asked to define children who they considered to be "at-risk". After collapsing the cross-cultural data sets there were 7 primary themes or risk categories that emerged from the 20 teacher interviews conducted across the 5 countries. A list of each of these 7 risk factors and specific statements from teachers interviewed in each of the 5 countries will follow. See Table 1.

Socio-economic risk factors.
All 20 teacher participants indicated that children whose lives were impacted by some sort of socio-economic condition were more likely to be "at risk" for not being successful in school. For example, teachers in the United States, Australia and South Africa reported that many children who came from "low-income families" and "children who are living in poverty" were more likely to be children they considered "at risk." Teachers in Jamaica mentioned children "who had not had breakfast" as a risk factor, while

Table 1: Cross-Cultural Definitions of Risk

Definition of Risk	South Africa	Australia	Jamaica	England	United States (Chicago)
Socio-economic Risk-Factors	A child living in poverty	Children who are affected by their socio-economic, gender or skill-based level	A child who has not had breakfast	A child who is neglected	A child from a low-income family
Academic Risk-Factors	A child who exhibits delays in academic skills (writing, reading, speaking and numeracy)	A child who is not achieving his/her full potential; underachieving	A child who is not functioning at his/her grade level academically	A child who is two or more levels behind academically	A child not making grade-level benchmarks
Social Risk-Factors	A child who is emotionally withdrawn	A child who is discontented	A child who is not functioning at his/her grade level socially	A child who is withdrawn or who exhibits emotionally aggressive behavior or a child who is emotionally withdrawn	A child who has social / family circumstances that affect learning
Physical Risk-Factors	A child who is physically neglected (violence in the home), neglected, or emotionally ignored	A child who is neglected		A child who is physically, sexually, or emotionally abused	Life factors that influence school success (no parent involvement, foster care, abuse)
Developmental Risk-Factors	A child who has limited English speaking skills		A child with difficulty reading		No access to literature at home
Family Risk-Factors	A child from a single parent	A child from a different cultural background			A child whose parent/parents are not involved at school
Health Risk-Factors	A child who is physically ill			A child with poor hygiene	A child who appears unkempt
Attendance Risk-Factors	A child who fails to attend school		A child with inconsistent school attendance	A child who has erratic school attendance or is excessively tardy	A child who lacks the "tools" to be successful in school A child with a low record of attendance

teachers in England mentioned children who were "neglected" were most frequently "at risk" for failure.

Academic risk factors.
All 20 teachers included a child's failure to meet some recognized academic assessment or academic criteria in their definition of risk. Most teachers indicated that delays in a child's academic achievement or a child's failure to meet benchmarks, including exhibiting "delays in academic skill areas" including writing, reading, speaking/language and numeracy, (teachers in South Africa and America), or "not functioning at grade level" and "being delayed one or two levels academically," were strong indicators of a child's potential for being *"at risk."* (Teachers in Australia, Jamaica and England).

Social-behavioral risk factors. The influence or presence of some negative social factors contributing to a child being "at-risk" was also a common response for all 20 teachers. Some of the characteristics of social-behavioral risk factors included: "children who were emotionally withdrawn," (teachers in England and South Africa), "children who presented with behavior problems and were overly aggressive," (teachers in the United States and Jamaica), and "children who were discontented" (teachers from Australia).

Attendance risk factors. Fifteen teachers from all five countries mentioned erratic, inconsistent attendance or failure to attend school at all were major risk factors leading to academic failure.

Physical risk factors. Twelve teachers from three countries; South Africa, the United States and England, mentioned physical risk factors as part of their definition of risk.

For example, "a child living with violence in the home" (South Africa), "a child who is physically or sexually abused" (United States, South Africa and England), and "a child who is emotionally neglected or ignored" were specific teacher's comments reported by teachers from South Africa and England. Teachers from the United States described negative "life factors (e.g., no parent involvement, abuse and being in foster care) as physical risk-factors.

Family risk factors. Six teachers from 2 countries mentioned family factors in their definition of risk. Three teachers in South Africa mentioned "a child being from a single parent family" as a risk factor, while three teachers from the United States described "a child whose parents are not involved at school" as being "at risk."

Health risk factors. Five teachers mentioned health factors in their definition of risk. Four of the teachers in South Africa highlighted the "physically ill child" as one who is "at risk," one teacher in England talked about "poor overall hygiene" as a risk factor for children, and a teacher from the United States indicated that a child who "appears unkempt" was one who was "at risk."

Research Question # 2. How do teachers identify children considered to be "at-risk?"
The second research question focused on understanding how teachers identified children they considered to be "at-risk" in their classroom settings. There were a variety of methods, from informal strategies to formal assessment procedures that were cited by the teachers as being useful for identifying children "at risk." See Table 2.

Table 2: Methods for Identifying Children Considered to be "At Risk"

Method	South Africa	Australia	Jamaica	England	United States (Chicago)
Initial Identification	Initial evaluation of child by school personnel	Interview all incoming children	Informal observation		ISEL Test given to determine children "at risk."
Informal Identification	Teacher observation of child in classroom		Teacher observes anti-social behavior refers to counselor	Teacher observes child in class and completes "Cause for concern" form. Identifies concerns	Referral and anecdotal data from previous grade teacher
Formal Testing		Administer an oral language test Administer age-appropriate "word-recognition" test	National tests at grades 1, 3, 5, & 6	Administer academically appropriate tests.	DIBELS Literacy Test of letter recognition and word fluency) Woodcock Johnson Test administered
Placement after Identification	Appropriate Educational Specialists (O.T., P.T., Social worker, Speech therapist, Special educator) are contacted	Establish baseline literacy	Placement in computer-based reading programs	Children 2 levels behind are placed on "Special Education Register and served either within or outside school	Placement based on test results
External Input	Teachers negotiate with specialists an appropriate intervention process or program to use in classroom			Child removed from home and placed in foster care	Child study team can be requested
Other Assessments		Administer a series of "kinesthetic assessments "Explore "number-sense" of children			Intervention provided after study team assessments completed

Informal Strategies for Identifying Children "At-Risk"

All 20 teachers interviewed across the five countries responded that their primary role in the identification and assessment process for children "at-risk" involved the following: making careful classroom observations of individual children; collecting data on students; discussing information and knowledge about a child's strengths and needs with their school study teams and specialist staff; and working directly on the skills and specific areas of need identified with students individually in their classrooms. Once classroom teachers identified a child who was considered "vulnerable" (England) or "at-risk", a referral process was then put into place which involved utilizing more formal assessment procedures and tools.

Formal Procedures for Identifying Children "At-Risk"

Each of the 20 teachers interviewed reported that there were initial formal and ongoing assessment and referral protocols for identifying, assessing and referring children considered to be "at-risk" at their schools. Australian teachers conducted initial screening interviews on all 4-5 year old preschool children as they entered school. They established a literacy baseline by administering oral language and word recognition tests, numeracy baselines, and conducted kinesthetic assessments focusing on balance, coordination and directionality. Based on this initial screening process, children who presented with the greatest needs were referred to the Special Education Division within the district.

Teachers in England reported placing "vulnerable" children on a Children At Risk Register and monitoring their social-emotional needs by meeting every 2-3 weeks with parents. Children who were 2 or more levels behind academically were put on a Special Education Needs Register that had three tiers of intervention ranging from services provided within the school classroom, services provided outside the school and finally culminating in a legal statement of Special Education Needs being created.

Jamaican teachers reported that they administer formal diagnostic tests in grade 1, 3, 4 and 6 each year to monitor the academic progress of children. Children who fail these tests can be selected to participate in a computer-based Reading remediation type program.

Teachers in South Africa reported that once teacher observations of a child were completed and there seemed to be delays in either academic or emotional levels of that child, the building principal then contacted appropriate specialists (psychologist, social worker, counselor, special education teacher) to do further evaluation. Referral for ongoing services were then made based on the specialist evaluation results.

Finally, in the United States, the 6 teachers interviewed reported that they administered several formal assessments in the reading-literacy area, and used standardized test scores to identify children "at-risk". Much like the teachers in South Africa, US teachers reported that referrals to specialists were made on the recommendation of child study teams located in each school building.

Research Question # 3. What types of remedial programs and instructional strategies do teachers use to make learning meaningful for children "at-risk?"

The third research question asked all teacher participants in this study to identify

any remedial programs that their schools offered for teaching children determined to be "at-risk". It also inquired about any specific instructional strategies that teachers used in their classrooms to make learning meaningful for children they considered to be "at-risk". A brief description of the various remedial programs and instructional strategies identified by the 20 teachers interviewed will follow. See Table 3.

Remedial Programs

Vaughn, Bos and Schumm (1997) describe remedial programs (remediation) as "additional instruction for students who do not demonstrate competency in basic skills in Reading, writing, and mathematics at an expected rate." In both South Africa and Australia teachers reported that literacy resource centers that provided base-line literacy testing at the start of each school year for all grade 1 students were established in their schools. Students who were considered to be "at-risk" for language and literacy were scheduled to be seen weekly in the literacy centers. These children received individual and small group tutoring on reading, writing, spelling and speaking skills. There were also qualified teachers at each of the two schools who worked in the academic areas in which children were performing at or below grade level. These "remedial programs" were conducted on a part-time basis (3 days weekly).

In the United States and England teachers reported that they used reading tutors and reading coaches in Reading Recovery Programs at their schools. They also reported that after school homework clubs were available to students who needed extra assistance with homework and parent workshops were offered to encourage family participation in supporting their children's academic and emotional development at home.

Jamaican teachers reported using computer based remedial programs to assist in bringing up the reading and math levels of their students. Other types of remedial programs listed by teachers included social skills programs (Australia, England), dance and music programs (Australia), and behavioral specialist consultation (England).

Instructional Strategies Used by Classroom Teachers

Australian teachers. Specific instructional strategies that the three Australian teacher respondents reported using in their classrooms to make learning meaningful for children identified as being "at-risk" included: making individual modifications based on a child's ability level; engaging in small group work; providing one-on-one tutoring using parent volunteers; offering rewards programs for individual achievement; and working with specialist staff on incorporating programs specifically to address a child's needs. All three Australian teachers reported that they felt they received adequate formal support / assistance in working with children "at-risk" in their classrooms. They indicated that they received the following types of assistance: reading assistance vouchers; reading, writing and numeracy aides for children in grade 2; an Intervention program for children in grades 4-7; and a government grant for literacy for upper primary aged students grades 6 & 7.

Jamaican teachers. The three Jamaican teachers reported using the following instructional strategies to address the learning

needs of children they identified as being "at-risk" in their classrooms: engaging in cooperative learning groups to help with anti-social behaviors of students; using individual computer programs to address problems students have in the areas of literacy and numeracy skill development; and offering a group activity called "peer counseling" which was very effective in assisting students to readily relate to their peers. The three teachers reported that they did receive some formal support / assistance in working with children "at-risk" in their classrooms. They also indicated that they received games designed to support literacy development in their classrooms.

English teachers.   Specific instructional strategies for students considered to be "vulnerable" or "at-risk" used in the classrooms by the three teachers in England included: small group and one-on-one instruction; differentiated tasks, assignments, classes; teacher assistant (required in every class for Year 3 and below); circle time to discuss behavioral issues; confidence building/positive reinforcement; scaffolding concepts; and the use of visual prompts. These teachers also reported that "venerable" students also received the following formal support/assistance when needed: speech and language therapists, occupational and physical therapists, behavior specialist, educational psychologist, parent support advisors, and numeracy and literacy programs.

South African teachers.   Specific instructional strategies that the South African teacher respondents reported using in their classrooms to make learning meaningful for children identified as being "at-risk" included: creating ability grouping for math,

reading and writing using hands-on materials; pairing above average learners with struggling learners (peer-mediated learning); making individual modifications of curriculum based on a child's ability level; engaging in small group work; providing one-on-one after school tutoring using teacher and parent volunteers; offering rewards programs (stickers or praise) as a motivational tools for individual achievement; working with specialist staff on incorporating programs specifically to address a child's needs in the classroom; repeating tasks across developmental domains using a variety of approaches (sensory, manipulative, auditory, visual) and breaking down learning tasks into teachable steps (task analysis).

All five South African teachers indicated that they received the following types of classroom assistance in teaching children identified as being "at-risk," a limited amount of In-service professional development training opportunities on a variety of topics including: inclusion, anti-bias curriculum and part-time language aids in classrooms in grades Pre-K-3 to help work with children who are non-English speakers when they come to school.

Table 3: Remedial programs and instructional strategies used to make learning meaningful for children "at-risk"

Method	South Africa	Australia	Jamaica	England	United States (Chicago)
Remediation	One-on-one after school tutoring	Small group work		Small group work and one-on-one tutoring	High school tutors in one-on-one instruction
Formal Intervention	Modifications to curriculum for individual students	Specialist staff for child's specific needs	Instructional strategies developed by school head and classroom teacher	Teacher observes child in class and completes "Cause for concern" form. Identifies concerns	Whole group phonics and phoneme awareness program (Haggerty Program)
Informal Interventions	Place "above-average" learners with 'struggling' learners	Heterogeneous small group activities	Peer counseling and positive feedback about positive social behaviors	"Circle-time" to discuss behavioral issues	Learning buddies
Reward Systems		Offering rewards (e.g., book selection, free time)	Participate in co-operative games and role-play activities		
Other Remedial /Reinforcement Strategies	Create ability groups who use hands-on materials for math, Reading and writing activities	Kinesthetic activities (physical activities)	Co-operative learning games (chess, dominoes, cards)	Use scaffolding concepts to engage learners	Use manipulatives for Reading, math, writing

U.S. teachers. Specific instructional strategies to make learning meaningful for children identified as being "at-risk" reported by the six U.S. / Chicago area teacher respondents included the following: providing direct one–on–one instruction; whole group phonics and phonemic awareness programs, small group work on basic skills; guided reading; peer-tutoring (Learning Buddies); and setting up learning centers that address different learning styles of children.

In one or more Chicago school settings, high school students assisted with students in one-on-one and cooperative groups in the classroom; used math manipulative to help students comprehend math concepts at a faster rate; taught techniques of appropriate behaviors and expectations; provided the predictability of daily activity that many children do not get in their home lives; used graphic organizers; used cooperative learning groups to teach abstract concepts that require introducing learning vs. mastery-learning; used task analysis to break down learning tasks into teachable steps, and provided structure in the daily schedule of activities for students.

Four of the six U.S./Chicago-area teachers indicated that they received the following type of direct classroom assistance in teaching children identified as being "at-risk": Reading coaches were supplied, and children identified as being "at-risk" were either excused from the classroom for tutoring or supported by a tutor in the classroom (N=3).

Discussion

When asked to define a child "at risk," all twenty teachers identified similarities among the backgrounds and characteristics of children of the same age, the same grade, that contribute to placing a child "at risk." In particular, socio-economic, academic, social–behavioral status of children were mentioned by all teacher participants as being key factors in determining which children were "at-risk" for academic failure. Poor school attendance and physical risk factors also seemed to be critically important variables used by teachers to define children "at risk" in their classrooms. All twenty teachers agreed that they face similar challenges in doing what is needed to meet the diverse needs of these children. Examples of some of the common challenges include a high student-teacher ratio in classrooms, a lack of sufficient personnel to accommodate the specific learning needs of children in classrooms, and a lack of good medical follow-up on children who needed it.

All twenty teachers reported using both informal and formal measures to identify children "at-risk" in their classroom and administered a variety of formal developmental screenings and assessment protocols to determine specific areas of delay in their students. More importantly, to gain greater insight into the needs of "at risk" children, they regularly engaged in specific observations of these children in their classrooms. All teachers in this study tried to mitigate the recognized factors that contribute to a child being "at-risk" by utilizing a variety of instructional strategies in their classroom.

Ten instructional strategies emerged as the most commonly utilized strategies across the data sets from all 5 countries. They included:

1) Providing small group instruction when teaching basic skills (e.g., reading, numeracy)

2)   Making modifications to curriculum to meet the needs of individual students and differentiated instruction
3)   Using cooperative learning groups (e.g., reading out loud)
4)   Using peer-tutoring by pairing above average learners with struggling learners
5)   Scaffolding concepts by breaking down learning tasks into teachable steps (e.g., using task analysis)
6)   Presenting graphic organizers to students (e. g., visual prompts)
7)   Engaging in hands-on learning experiences including using math manipulatives, creative drama / role-play to act out concepts, and computer programs to support basic skill practice and application
8)   Providing direct phonics instruction (e.g., focusing on phonemic awareness)
9)   Utilizing reading tutors
10) Providing structure by engaging in predictable daily classroom routines (e.g. daily calendar and schedule written on chalk board).

It is interesting to note that all of these ten most used instructional strategies were consistent with the best practice strategies identified in the research literature bases across the five countries studied.

The levels of formal assistance (i.e., qualified teacher-aides) provided to classroom teachers to assist in working with children considered to be "at-risk" varied greatly between each of the countries. The most consistent and universal form of assistance provided to the teachers in the study were remediation programs in language and literacy development. Using parent and community volunteers who acted as reading coaches or tutors for individual or small groups of delayed readers and writers occurred in each of the 5 countries. Some teachers in the United States & England reported being able to utilize specialists in speech pathology, occupational and physical therapy, educational psychology and social work to assist them in meeting the needs of these children in their schools. While other teachers in Australia and South Africa indicated that classroom aides were able to assist them in providing more individualized instruction to students "at-risk".

Teacher participants in this study were also asked to identify what specific information they would like to have known before working with a child "at-risk" in their classrooms. Their responses included the following:

- Basic background information about a child's family
- Knowledge about factors that influence a child's learning (medical issues, illness, hearing, vision, auditory processing)
- Knowledge about where a child is functioning academically
- Knowledge about factors that impede a child emotionally (e.g., socio-economic status, physical abuse, and neglect)
- Knowledge of "how" to adapt their curriculum to meet the individual needs of a child "at-risk"
- Ongoing professional development that focused on children "at-risk"

Perhaps not surprisingly, and most encouraging, it was interesting to note at all twenty teachers interviewed indicated that they believe it is ultimately the classroom

teacher who makes the most impact on the success of children considered to be "at-risk" for school failure. This perspective was captured in the following comments from several of the teachers in the five countries we studied. A teacher in Jamaica stated:

I believe that teaching is a calling. If you do not love to teach you should consider this before you go into the profession. Our students have many needs and they are looking to their teachers to assist them in tangible ways.

A classroom teacher in a middle school in Chicago, Illinois put it this way:

A teacher needs to really evaluate his or her commitment to teaching students considered to be "at-risk. These students often require 2-3 times the amount of a teacher's time and attention. It is the teacher's job to identify and remediate learning gaps in students and do so in creative and caring ways so that students stay motivated to learn and develop their potentials.

Finally a teacher in a Junior Primary School in South Africa commented:

All children are different and special so they should be treated accordingly with love. Also every child can learn and very child must learn. I believe school is all about children and helping them learn. Therefore teachers should do everything they can to help each child be successful.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, the sample of teachers was not a random sample but one of convenience. Our faculty research team members had developed relationships with school personnel in each of the five countries and utilized teachers in these settings who volunteered to par-

ticipate in the interviews. Second, the sample size was small (N=20) so this would limit the generalizations of results to other settings. Third, the qualitative nature of the teacher interview data collected also limits its generalizability across settings. Finally, the authors readily recognize the importance of communication as it relates to a child's ability to speak, read, write and listen in an academic setting. Thus if this study was done again, survey questions would be rewritten or added so as to elicit specific teacher responses reflective of each of these four communication areas that may put children 'at risk" for school failure.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this research project was to investigate how teachers in elementary schools in five countries: South Africa, Australia, Jamaica, England and the United States define and identify children 'at-risk" and the best practices used in teaching children considered to be "at-risk". A secondary purpose was to embed identified theory and best practice strategies for teaching children "at-risk" into our interdisciplinary international teaching and service courses in South Africa, Australia, Jamaica, England and the United States. By including these findings into our teacher education program curriculum, pre-service students could use what was learned from the project when they travel and teach in these schools. The findings of this study have provided the researchers with "real-life" data we can incorporate into our pre-service curriculum.

We have put an increased focus on teaching our pre-service education students how to engage in differentiation of instruction and curriculum and how these adaptations can better meet the needs of all the di-

verse students in their classrooms. Second, we have concentrated on expanding our students' knowledge of both informal and formal assessment procedures for identifying students "at-risk" in their classrooms, including the administration of specific diagnostic tests in reading, math, adaptive behavior, and curriculum-based assessment measures. Third, we have infused five aspects of cultural competence into our international service-learning and instructional methods courses. These are: 1). an awareness of one's own cultural limitations; 2). Openness, appreciation, and respect for cultural differences; 3). Viewing intercultural interactions as learning opportunities; 4). the ability to use cultural resources in interventions; and 5). Acknowledging the integrity and value of all cultures (Lynch & Hanson, 1992, p.356). The authors believe that in order to attain optimum communication and interaction with all children, pre-service teacher education students must learn and become comfortable with the above five critical aspects of cultural competence.

When we began this project, we tried not to forget "who" we were studying. We tried to remember that every day teachers teach children "at-risk" who go to schools all around the globe. Sadly, for some children, simply attending school or not being able to go to school puts them at even greater risk. To keep this perspective, we adopted the ecological systems perspective on developmental risk championed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Garbarino (1992). Their work encouraged us to "look beyond the individual" and to the environment for both the questions and the explanations about individual behavior and development. This research project allowed us to enter the classrooms of those who strive daily to

make a difference in children's lives and consequently we have become better able to understand the challenges that all teachers face as they attempt to reach and teach all children around the world.

Throughout the implementation of this research, we were constantly reminded that a child's development results from the interplay of biology and society, from the characteristics that children bring with them into the world, and perhaps most importantly, by the way the world treats them. Further, the results of this study certainly echo the thoughts of Dunn and Debollo (1999) and Dunn and Blake (2008) who make the point that "teachers are unlikely to impact successfully on poverty and how children's parents behave, however when provided with adequate financial and intellectual resources, they can certainly teach them to read well, to speak their language fluently and succeed in learning."

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"The Italianate Englishman:" The Italian Influence in Elizabethan Literature

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Whether it was thought of positively or negatively, Italy is a popular topic of discussion in Elizabethan literature. Some Elizabethan writers mimic Italian writers and incorporate Italian ideas into their own works, while other writers alter Italian literary conventions and openly attack Italian morals. This range of positive and negative sentiments towards Italy ultimately reveals the existence of a love-hate relationship between England and the Italian Renaissance that became a foundation of Elizabethan literature. My paper illustrates how various Elizabethan writers, including Sir Thomas Wyatt, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare, demonstrate their awe for the Italian Renaissance by imitating Italy's greatest poets and integrating Italian ideas into their texts, reveal their feelings of inferiority and jealously towards Italy's literary and social progress through their efforts to improve upon Italian literature, and show a genuine fear of Italy's negative influence on English morals and values by using their works to warn against Italians' immoral natures.

Keywords: Italy, England, Elizabethan Literature, Love-hate relationship

Whether it is described as "'the Apothecary-shop of poison for all Nations'" (Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse, His Supplication to the Divell*, 1592, as cited in Jones 251) or "'the fairest Lady, yea the richest Paragon and Queene of Christendome"' (Thomas Coryat, *In Praise of Venice*, 1611, as cited in Bate 160), Italy is a popular topic of discussion in Elizabethan literature. Some Elizabethan writers mimic Italian writers and incorporate Italian ideas into their own works, while other writers alter Italian literary conventions and openly attack Italian morals. The range of positive and negative sentiments towards Italy ultimately reveals the existence of a love-hate relationship between England and the Italian Renaissance, a relationship that greatly influenced Elizabethan literature. A closer look at Elizabethan literature shows that Italian culture influenced England society by serving as an inspiration for creativity and as an outlet for criticism. Elizabethan writers treat Italian culture in three main ways: they demonstrate their awe for the Italian Renaissance by imitating Italy's greatest poets and integrating Italian ideas into their texts; they reveal their feelings of inferiority and jealously towards Italy's literary and social progress through their efforts to improve upon Italian literature; and they show a genuine fear of Italy's negative influence on English morals and values by using their works to warn against Italians' immoral natures.

When England was first exposed to the Italian Renaissance, the country was

impressed and inspired by Italian literature, and Elizabethan writers show their support for Italian culture by mimicking Italian literary structure and promoting Italian ideals, particularly those of love, in their texts. One such Elizabethan writer is Sir Thomas Wyatt, who is recognized for introducing Italian conventions into English literature. Wyatt greatly impacted Elizabethan literature by becoming the first major English writer to translate Italian poetry into English. Wyatt's translations introduced England to Italy's understanding and conventions of love, and these revolutionary ideas enlightened English writers. Jonathan Bate confirms this idea by arguing that Italy provided illumination for the English:

> The Italian mirror was a strong, sometimes a distorting one, but what it reflected back to the Elizabethans were some of the supremely influential images of their age […] The English Renaissance began when sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey discovered, translated and imitated the poetry of Petrarch. (p. 71)

Bate credits Wyatt with initiating the English Renaissance because he exposed England to Italian society by translating Francesco Petrarch, who was and still is considered one of Italy's greatest poets. Petrarch is famous for a number of different works, but one of his most influential pieces was *Rime sparse*, a collection of 366 lyric poems revering a woman named Laura. Petrarch idolized Laura through specific love metaphors and turned her into a symbol for the ideal woman, which became the conventional norm when his lyrical poetry was popularized. His poetic style ultimately "gave rise to Petrarchism in the

Renaissance, which was the main medium of poetic dialogue in countries as far away from Italy as Portugal and the Czech Republic" (Finucci, 2005, p. 457). Writers throughout Europe were inspired by Petrarch's work and popularized his style by using his metaphors in their own love poetry. By translating Petrarch's poetry, Wyatt introduced the Italian sonnet to England and started a trend of exalting the Italian idea of love through imitation. Wyatt himself honors Italian love conventions by imitating Petrarch; He helped popularize Petrarchan conventions and imagery in Elizabethan poetry by using them in his own poems. In his sonnet "Farewell, Love," Wyatt incorporates Petrarchan love imagery, such as references to Cupid's arrows, and echoes Petrarch's view that being in love is painful: "Farewell Love, and all thy laws forever, / Thy baited hooks shall tangle me no more" (as cited in Greenblatt and Abrams, 2006, p. 596.1-2). Wyatt began a movement by inspiring numerous English poets to honor Italy by imitating Petrarchan sonnets.

One of the numerous English poets influenced by Petrarch was Sir Philip Sidney. Sidney styles his great sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella* on Petrarchan sonnets; he not only copies Italian sonnet structure but also endorses the Italian concept of Neoplatonism, a religious philosophy based on the teachings of Plato. One aspect of Neoplatonism is the concept that the search for love is a quest towards spiritual enlightenment: "the final revelation in the Greater Mysteries of Love—the vision of the Beautiful itself—will be disclosed only to those who follow a particular path of eroticism" (Ferrari, 1992, p. 256). Neoplatonism is illustrated in "Sonnet 5" from *Astrophil and Stella*:

> True, that true beauty virtue is indeed,
> Whereof this beauty can be but a shade,

Which elements with mortal mixture
breed;
True that on earth we are but pilgrims
made,
And should in soul up to our country
move. (As cited in Greenblatt and
Abrams, 2006, p. 976.9-13)

In this sonnet, Sidney discusses the concept of the three levels of Platonic love, which is the idea that love is a journey from the senses (the body) to reason (the mind) and from reason to the highest level of understanding (the soul). By incorporating the Italian concept of Platonic love into his poetry, Sidney shows a respect for Italian ideals. Like Wyatt, Sidney helped to praise and spread Italian culture to England through his work.

Support for Italian culture and ideas also made its way into Elizabethan prose. The most famous example is Sir Thomas Hoby's translation of Castiglione's Italian masterpiece *The Courtier* into English, which introduced the concept of Platonic love and proper courtly behavior to Elizabethan society. In Hoby's time, the British admired Italy as "the birthplace of new learning and the rediscovery of classical civilization" (Partridge, 2007, p. 772), and the English elite hoped to achieve the same level of Italian sophistication by mimicking Italy's courts. Hoby translated *The Courtier* because he believed it "offered an excitingly expansive vision of what a Renaissance courtier could, and should, be" (Partridge). *The Courtier*'s influence on the English court is best exemplified by Sidney himself, as he was considered the ideal English courtier by how he demonstrated the desired courtly traits found in Castiglione's work. Thus in both poetry and prose, Elizabethan writers exhibit their admiration for Italian literature by imitating Italy's celebrated authors and assimilating Italian philosophy into their texts.

As Italy's influence grew in England, many Englishmen became jealous of its impact. The Italian Renaissance put Italy years ahead of England in many fields, and the English began to suffer from what was essentially an inferiority complex, as they were concerned that English literature was viewed as poor in comparison with that of Italy by the rest of the world. This led to a new trend in Elizabethan literature where English writers built upon and directly challenged Italian poetic conventions, particularly those established by Petrarch, in an effort to improve upon Italian literature and establish the greatness of their own country's work.

The inclination to improve upon Petrarchan poetic conventions is found in Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*. Sidney's imitation of Petrarch did honor Italian concepts of love, but he also deviated from Petrarchan structure in order to break away from Italy's control on poetry. *The Norton Anthology*'s (Greenblatt and Abrams, 2006) introduction to *Astrophil and Stella* elaborates on this idea:

Petrarch had deployed a series of ingenious metaphors […] but by Sidney's time the metaphors – love as a freezing fire, the beloved's glance as an arrow striking the lover's heart, and so forth – had through endless repetition become familiar and predictable, less a revelation than a role. Sidney, in the role of Astrophil, protests that he uses no standard conventional phrases that his verse is original and comes from his heart (p. 975).

Sidney uses Petrarch as a starting point, but he makes a conscious effort to be unique by breaking away from Petrarchan conventions, which were considered overdone during his lifetime. Sidney was able to reduce the hold

that Italy had over Elizabethan literature by using new ideas – English ideas – in his work. By working to transform Italian conventions, Sidney created his own original conventions that succeeded in highlighting and encouraging Elizabethan creativity.

Another example of the movement to break away from Italy's and Petrarch's influence in order to showcase English creativity is illustrated in the poetry of Edmund Spenser. Spenser strived to become England's greatest epic poet, and like Sidney, he was inspired by Italian poetry but altered Italian conventions to create works more unique to England. In his sonnet sequence, *Amoretti*, Spenser borrowed Petrarch's conventional love lament but transformed it by giving the sonnet sequence a happy ending in which the lovers unite. In "Sonnet 74," Spenser writes about three revered women in his life but shows that he treasures his lover the most:

> The third my love, my lives last ornament,
> By whom my spirit out of dust was raysed:
> To speake her prayse and glory excellent,
> Of all alive most worthy to be praysed.
> Ye three Elizabeths for ever live,
> That three such graces did unto me give (As cited in Greenblatt and Abrams, 2006, p. 906.9-14).

The speaker says that his lover, Elizabeth, is a gift from the graces, suggesting that she is a gift he actually possesses. This implies that he and his lover are united in bliss rather than separated in misery as typically portrayed in Petrarchan love poetry. "Sonnet 75" upholds this idea, as the speaker promises to immortalize his lover in his work. By altering Petrarchan conventions in his poetry, Spenser challenged Italy's

literary influence and highlighted England's creativity.

Perhaps the most famous example of anti-Petrarchan poetry is William Shakespeare's sonnets. Throughout his collection of 154 sonnets, Shakespeare repeatedly breaks away from the literary precedent established by Italian poets and both creates his own metaphors for love and twists typical love conventions popularized by Petrarch. A prime example of how Shakespeare blatantly contradicts Petrarchan love conventions is Sonnet 130, in which the narrator cross-examines his lover's description to Petrarch's portrayal of the ideal woman and "mocks the standard vocabulary of praise" (Edmondson and Wells, 2004, p. 15):

> My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun,
> Coral is far more red than her lips red,
> If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun,
> If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
> I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
> But no such roses see I in her cheeks,
> And in some perfumes is there more delight
> Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
> I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
> That music hath a far more pleasing sound.
> I grant I never saw a goddess go:
> My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.
> And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
> As any she belied with false compare.
> (As cited in Greenblatt and Abrams, 2006, p. 305.1-14).

Shakespeare uses this sonnet to directly attack Petrarchan conventions. Shakespeare reverses the Petrarchan image of the idealized and unattainable blond, blue-eyed goddess (conventions established through Petrarch's description of Laura) and describes his mistress as being the opposite of Petrarchan imagery; she has dark-colored hair, skin tone, and eyes; her voice is not musical; her step is not light; her breath is not sweet. At first reading, it appears as though the speaker is insulting his mistress, as he repeatedly concludes that she falls short of the Petrarchan ideal; but by comparing his mistress to "the litany of Petrarchan metaphors, the poet declares his love as beautiful as any woman ever described with such hyperbole*" (Callaghan, 2007, p. 145). The speaker makes it clear that his mistress is better than Petrarch's superhuman lover because his mistress is real and not an unrealistic fantasy. The poet suggests that Petrarch's perfect woman doesn't exist; therefore, his love is greater and more extraordinary because he loves his mistress for exactly who she is, flaws included.

Shakespeare also directly opposes Petrarchan poetic conventions by dedicating a majority of his sonnets to the adoration of a fair young man rather than a fair young lady as typically idolized in Italian love poetry. Petrarch's poetry is known for its adoration of women, but in Shakespeare's first 126 sonnets, "the Petrarchan poet-lover is ostensibly in love with a member of 'the opposite sex'" (Hedley, 1994, p. 2), thereby contradicting a major Petrarchan construction. Shakespeare defied Petrarchism by ignoring or directly opposing Italian love constructs in his work, and the popularity of his poetry helped establish both himself and England as literary greats. By altering and building upon Italian literary conventions, Petrarchan conventions in particular, Elizabethan writers, like Sidney,

Spenser, and Shakespeare, express a desire to rise above the Italian influence and establish the English Renaissance as a worthy period in literature.

Over time, a general envy of Italy evolved into open condemnation and a genuine fear of Italy's negative influence. England grew to fear Italy's corrupting influence (particularly Italy's support for violent revenge and Catholicism) on English morals and values, and Elizabethan writers began using their works to caution England against Italy's immoral nature.

An example of how Englishmen are cautioned against the vices of Italy is Roger Ascham's *The Schoolmaster*. Ascham devotes a section of *The Schoolmaster* to explain in detail the negative consequences of Italy's influence on a typical Englishman:

> He that by living and traveling in Italy bringeth home into England out of Italy the religion, the learning, the policy, the experience, the manners of Italy. That is to say, for religion, papistry or worse; for learning, less, commonly, than they carried out with them; for policy, a factious heart, a discoursing head, a mind to meddle in all men's matters; for experience, plenty of new mischiefs never known in England before; for manners, variety of vanities and change of filthy living (As cited in Greenblatt and Abrams, 2006, p. 644).

Ascham openly criticizes Italy for being a blasphemous, ignorant, conflicting, mischievous, and vain society that hides behind an enchanting façade and bewitching words. Ascham voices England's concern that Italy attracts good Englishmen with the intent to destroy their values; he hoped to expose Protestant students to Italy's vices and power of corruption so that they "might defend themselves against the Devil's and

Rome's rhetoric before the world ends, for the sake of their own salvation as well as England's" (Stark, 2008, p. 518). Ascham's essay serves as a warning to prevent Englishmen from becoming *Inglese italianato è un diavolo incarnato* (as cited in Greenblatt and Abrams, 2006, p. 643) and going astray.

One English author who was particularly outspoken against Italy's negative influence was Spenser. In his great epic *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser reshaped the Italian canto format to create his own unique English poetic structure. Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* was partially inspired by Italian works, as he was "the first English poet to divide his poem by the *canto*, like the Italians, and to use that term" (Giamatti, 1975, p. 33); yet like his contemporaries, Spenser altered traditional Italian poetry in an effort to demonstrate England's literary prowess. Spenser took the octave format found in Italian chivalric romance and fashioned his own stanza format that included a ninth line, known as an Alexandrine line. By altering Italian poetic structure, Spenser reflected England's negative mentality towards Italian literature and made an effort to overpower Italian poetic authority by replacing it with his own.

Spenser also revealed a negative disposition towards Italy by turning Book I of *The Faerie Queene* into anti-Catholic propaganda. One of the allegories for Redcrosse's journey "from faith to unfaith and back again*"* (Evans, 1970, p. 109) in Book I is of England's real-life conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism, and Spenser reveals an almost hateful denunciation of the Catholic faith through his treatment of Catholic and biblical imagery. One example is Spenser's description of the beast Error, who functions as a direct metaphor for Catholicism's own evil propaganda. Error is a foul beast – half serpent, half woman – who feeds a thousand

young offspring and whose vomit consists of books and papers. She is a direct symbol for the evil monster that is Catholicism and how Catholicism breeds and supports a multitude of wicked followers with its poisonous message of false faith. Error's vomit is also a metaphor for the literal propaganda that Catholicism creates to share its wicked message; like actual vomit, the Catholic word is disgusting and spreads like a sickness. Spenser further reiterates Error as a symbol for false religion through his account of how the offspring feast on their mother's corpse until they burst:

> To see th' unkindly Impes of heaven accurst,
> Devoure their dam; on whom while so he gazd,
> Having all satisfide their bloudy thurst,
> Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse burst (as cited in Greenblatt and Abrams, 2006, Bk. I.i. p. 726.227-30).

Once again, the offspring represent Catholic followers who feed on false faith, but Spenser also suggests that Catholics are so dependent on false doctrine that they will continue to feast on Catholicism until it kills them, without ever satisfying their thirst for holiness and redemption. By repeatedly referencing false faith and Catholic imagery in his description of Error and its offspring, Spenser uses Error to represent Italian Catholicism as a dangerous false religion that will cause significant harm to England.

Spenser uses negative religious imagery in other character descriptions to reveal and reject Catholicism's wickedness as well. He associates the villain Archimago with Catholic priests through Archimago's use of *Ave Maria* prayers and sermons, and he uses Archimago's deception of Redcrosse as a parable to criticize how Catholic priests trick followers into believing in a false faith, a

faith that takes them further away from the true holiness of "godly Protestantism" (Heale, 1987, p. 4). Spenser also compares the evil Duessa to the Whore of Babylon from the Book of Revelations in the bible, which was interpreted by Protestants as the Catholic Church (Heale), to make her a metaphor for how Catholicism sells itself in an attempt to entice followers and defeat Protestantism. He also uses Duessa's downfall to foreshadow the ultimate defeat of Catholicism at the hand of Protestantism. Spenser's negative spin on Catholic imagery in his character descriptions in *The Faerie Queene* makes Book I anti-Catholic propaganda that exposes Catholicism's and Italy's evil nature and potential negative impact on Protestant English society.

Another text that portrays Italy in a negative light is John Lyly's *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*. Lyly describes the Italian city of Naples as "(a place of more pleasure than profit, and yet of more profit than piety), the very walls and windows whereof shewed it rather to be the Tabernacle of Venus than the Temple of Vesta" (as cited in Greenblatt and Abrams, 2006, p. 945). By associating Naples with Venus' passion and sexuality and not Vesta's chastity, Lyly portrays Naples as a lustful, immoral, and impious city and in turn discourages the

English from traveling there. Like Ascham, Lyly contributes to the widespread fear of Italy's influence by vilifying Italy in his work. Motivated by a fear of Italy's powerful and corruptive control over England, Elizabethan writers, including Ascham, Spenser, and Lyly, use their works as cautionary tales against Italy's wicked society.

Through the poetry and prose of Elizabethan writers, Italy and Italian culture are treated both positively and negatively in Elizabethan works, revealing England's love-hate relationship with the Italian Renaissance. English writers were inspired by Italy and its progressive thoughts, particularly the country's ideas and treatment of love; but Englishmen were also jealous and fearful of Italy's growth and impact on the world, and thus made efforts to improve upon Italian literature and denounce Italian religion and culture in order to promote and demonstrate England's prowess in the world. Regardless of whether it was thought of positively or negatively, the Italian Renaissance had a powerful and lasting effect on Elizabethan England that became a foundation of Elizabethan literature.

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Ukraine's Participation in the Bologna Process: Has it Resulted in More Transparency in Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions?

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In the beginning of the 21st century, Ukraine finds itself in a complex position as it continues with the post-Soviet transition. The country faces tasks of national identity formation and nation building. Due to its location at the geopolitical crossroads between Russia to the East and the European Union to the West, Ukraine is also faced with the need to assert its independence and to strategically reposition itself within the contexts of globalization.

Education, and particularly higher education, is central in addressing these strategic objectives. Having joined the Bologna Process in 2005, Ukraine hopes to strengthen its relationships with the EU through participation in European Commission-sponsored projects, and to increase its own research capabilities and build the capacity of its higher education system. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, higher education has become one of the most corrupt areas in Ukraine.

This paper analyses the impact of the Bologna Process reforms on Ukrainian higher education institutions. It explores Ukrainian educational policies during 2005-2009 period and aims to answer the question of whether the Bologna Process agreements have resulted in more transparency within Ukraine's higher education institutions.

Key Words: Ukraine, Education, Reform, Bologna Process, Policy

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Introduction

Ukraine began its transition to a market economy shortly after gaining its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Today, in the beginning of the 21st century, Ukraine finds itself in a complex position as it continues with the post-Soviet transition. The country faces tasks of national identity formation and nation building. Due to its location at the geopolitical crossroads between Russia to the East and the European Union (EU) to the West, Ukraine is also faced with the need to assert its independence and to strategically reposition itself within the contexts of globalization. On the one hand, Ukraine for the first time in its history functions as an independent state. On the other hand, as the world is becoming smaller and more interconnected in the age of globalization, Ukraine sees its future within the frameworks of collaborative concerted responses to global market forces – through its cooperative agreements with EU (and its hopeful but questionable prospect of EU membership) and Russia.

Education, and particularly higher education, plays an important role in addressing Ukraine's strategic objectives. The government of independent Ukraine as early as 1991 viewed its system of education as a central element of the nation building process (Verhovna Rada, 1991; Education Act, 1996; State National Program 'Education,' 1994; National Doctrine, 2002). With the European integration and formation of the European Union in 1993 and creation of the European Higher Education Area under the Bologna Process agreements of 1999, the task of reforming the Soviet educational system was enlarged to include the global repositioning and local relevance of Ukraine's educational system within the context of the Bologna Process reforms (Na-

tional University of State Tax Service of Ukraine, n.d.).

Having joined the Bologna Process in 2005, Ukraine hopes to strengthen its relationships with EU through participation in European Commission-sponsored projects, and to increase its own research capabilities and build the capacity of its higher education system (European Commission, 2009; Koval, 2007; Kremen & Nikolajenko, 2006; Kremen, 2004; Makogon & Orekhova, 2007; OECD, n.d.). However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, higher education has become one of the most corrupt areas in Ukraine (Osipian, 2008; Pasechnik, 2009). One wonders whether Ukraine's own post-Soviet reforms in the context of larger, European reforms, will result in more transparency and less corruption in higher education institutions (HEIs).

This paper analyses the impact of the Bologna Process reforms on Ukrainian HEIs during the 2005-2009 period that immediately followed the Orange Revolution of 2004-2005. It aims to answer a question of whether or not these reforms resulted in more transparency within Ukraine's HEIs. Although concerned with the issue of corruption in Ukraine's higher education (Valentino , 2007; Osipian, 2008), this paper does not directly address it and focuses only on analyzing Bologna process mechanisms as the means of affecting transparency within HEIs. It explores whether the Bologna agreements rendered formulation of new national policies, particularly policies that are aimed at creating an atmosphere of transparency and an internal culture of quality in HEIs. It compares and contrasts Bologna process goals with goals for higher education reforms as articulated in Ukraine's government documents, policy briefs, reports submitted as part of the Bologna Process, addresses by the key figures in

Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Sciences (MES), and reflections of leaders of the HEIs that were actively involved in the European Commission funded projects under its Trans-European Mobility Program for University Studies (Tempus program, n.d.).

Context of Post-Soviet Ukraine: A Country in Transition

A young democracy, Ukraine became an independent state in 1991, after centuries of domination by Poland-Lithuania, the Ottoman and Russian Empires, and most recently the USSR. It is located in Eastern Europe and borders Romania, and Moldova to the south; Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland to the West, Belarus to the North, and Russia to the East. It is strategically located at the crossroads between Europe and Asia and is the second largest country in Europe (The Word Factbook, 2009). During the Soviet era, Ukraine was second to Russia in its contribution to the Soviet Union's economy. Following the country's independence, the government set out to liberalize its state-run economy and political system by aligning them with the values of market capitalism and democracy.

Ukraine's foreign policy towards Euro-Atlantic integration and the 2009 EU decision to launch its Eastern Partnership initiative are critical to sustaining Ukraine's progress in meeting its strategic goals (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 2009). However, between 2005 and 2009 Ukrainian people and the world witnessed a long-lasting political infighting between President Yushchenko and the Prime Minister Tymoshenko, former 2004 Orange Revolution allies. It created a deep sense of uncertainty, as Ukraine's ability to make fruitful steps in this direction highly depends on individual political players and contributed to a slow pace of democratic reforms within the country (Telpukhovska, 2006). Despite the uncertainty, at the dawn of the 21st century, Ukraine's economy was booming due to a global demand and high prices for steel. However, declining steel prices and the global financial crisis of 2008–2009 in addition to the internal political turmoil have brought the country's economy close to the point of national default (World Factbook, 2009). The situation in Ukraine's education system reflects the larger crisis.

Educational System of Ukraine

Ukraine has a centralized national system of education, which includes educational levels, from preschool through the Ph.D. (System, 2001; European Commission, n.d.). As with many nation-states, education plays a central role in the nation building process of the young Ukrainian state. There is a double pressure on the educational system to not only inculcate its citizens with what it means to be Ukrainian, but to also discover and recover from the nation's cultural and religious traditions its identity as an independent nation. Additional pressures arise from the global context discussed above. The Ukrainian system of education faces goals of remaining relevant in how it prepares citizens for life in the new realities of a global economy (Bastero, Bathuag, Prates, & Pryrula, 2009; Etokova, 2005) as well as the need to rethink its philosophy (and purposes) of education and embrace the transformational goals articulated in the Bologna Process agreements.

Needed shift from skills-focused to competencies-focused higher education.
The present system of higher education inherited from the Soviet Union a great emphasis on the theoretical. Even in applied fields as economics and business studies that are in high demand in Ukraine's labor market, students acquire in-depth theoretical

knowledge that is often not accompanied by the development of practical skills (Gorobets, 2008). This reality is complicated by the cultural value of having in one's possession a degree document, regardless of the depth and quality of actual knowledge and competencies a person may in fact display (Hofstede, 1986; Gorobets, 2008). This cultural value plays an important role in a widely spread "diploma mills" phenomenon and other corrupt practices in Ukraine's higher education (Johns, 2004; Osipian, 2008; Stetar & Berezkina, 2002). Multiple accounts have been documented about the dollar amounts in bribes such degrees may cost (Belyakov, Cremonini, Mfusi, & Rippner, 2009; Pasechnik, 2009)), and corruption schemes were recently uncovered that involved MES employees and even a former vice-minister of education.

Overdue reform in quality assurance (assessment, licensing and accreditation) practices.

In addition, the current practices of quality assurance are also a source and arena of corruption (Osipian, 2008). External quality assurance takes place in the form of state-controlled accreditation of institutions and program licensing by the MES. The process lacks the transparency and accountability normally found in the evaluation mechanisms within independent accrediting agencies in the USA and other countries. It is often used as an avenue for extortion and control of competition (Hallak, J. & Poisson, M., 2007), particularly against a growing number of new private institutions that are perceived as a threat by the state-run institutions (Stetar & Berezkina, 2002). Internal quality assurance mechanisms and academic rewards systems are not based on international standards common to developed democracies (Schiermeier, 2006). As publication in international peer-reviewed journals

and conference participation do not serve as a basis for an academic career, Ukrainian higher educators are not motivated to develop professionally, including learning the foreign languages necessary for conducting research and literature reviews in other languages (Gorobets, 2008; Osipian, 2008) and for hands-on research and educational collaboration with the international research community.

Declining Quality of Ukraine's Higher Education and Post-Soviet Reforms

Since its independence, Ukrainian HEIs have seen an increase in student population. The number of private higher educational institutions is growing, as is the number of graduates holding Ph.D degrees (Gorobets, 2008). However, the quality of higher education has declined. Ukraine's economic crisis of the 1990's led to a decline in the financing of education, including research and development (Gorobets, 2008). Despite the sharp growth in the number of graduate students and persons with Ph.D. degrees, the number of researchers per 1,000,000 inhabitants in Ukraine continued to decline (Gorobets, 2008). The economic crisis has had a tremendous negative impact on the educational system of Ukraine leading to the mass immigration of educated people (Gorobets, 2008) and the marketization of higher education. These factors, combined with the increasing levels of corruption in Ukrainian society, Soviet-style higher education, and lack of transparency mechanisms in Ukrainian higher education at all levels, have led to skyrocketing corruption in higher education, declining quality, and to the education that is not able to prepare a young person for life in a new, democratic Ukraine and in an increasingly global world.

Thus, as Ukraine became in 2005 one of the signatory members of the Bologna Process, it was not only faced with the tasks

of aligning the Soviet-style programs, structure, and processes within its system of higher education along the Bologna principles and mechanisms. It was also needed to transform the internal culture within its system of higher education from autocracy, corruption, and academic stagnation to democracy, transparency, academic rigor, innovation, and cross-border collaboration. The next section presents the aspects of the Bologna Process which could serve as external motivators for such a cultural change within Ukraine's HEIs. It also analyzes how these factors are being understood and whether they rendered educational policy decisions aimed at creating internationally acceptable transparency mechanisms and at developing an internal culture of quality in Ukrainian higher education institutions.

Bologna Process Mechanisms with Potential to Increase Institutional Transparency of Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions

What is known today as the Bologna Process is a result of the 1999 concerted decision by the European nations to address the changing role and realities of higher education in the globalization era. European nations agreed to preserve the value of higher education as a public good and to prevent it from being reduced to merely another commodity in global markets. Today, the Bologna Process has 46 signatory countries, which include EU members and non-EU partner states. As it is stated on the Bologna Process web portal, a key to success of the reforms is that the process involves such international entities as the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO-CEPES, as well as representatives of HEIs, students, staff, employers and quality assurance agencies (Bologna Process, 2007).

Principles and Main Components of the Bologna Process

The aim of the Bologna Process is to undertake a series of higher education reforms in EU and partner nations that, by 2010, led to the creation of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Foundational principles of the EHEA are international cooperation and academic exchange among European students and staff as well as among students and staff from other parts of the world. It was envisaged that the EHEA would:

- facilitate the mobility of students, graduates and higher education staff;
- prepare students for their future careers and for life as active citizens in democratic societies, and support their personal development;
- offer broad access to high-quality higher education, based on democratic principles and academic freedom (Bologna Process, 2007).

Quality Assurance in the Bologna Process

Although each of these key aspects of the Bologna Process reforms have the potential to increase the transparency in Ukraine's HEIs, the quality assurance component is critical to the external transformation of Ukraine's educational system, as well as of its internal culture (Brief, n.d.; Tempus program, n.d.; Tempus program, 2008). From reading the Bologna Process documents, an interesting observation can be made that there is no division between external and internal transformation. The process seems very holistic in nature and has an underlying value of education as a public good. However, what comes clear from reading Ukrainian documents (both government communiqués, as well as authored publications) that analyze and address the progress of the Bologna

Process in Ukraine, is language that reflects external, mechanistic compliance that is not accompanied by an emphasis on the internal transformation of values and culture in Ukraine's higher education system. This external-internal tension can be possibly explained by the dramatic commoditization of Ukraine's higher education that took place after 1991, as a result of market reforms, decreased financing of higher education, and rampant corruption. Thus, Europe and Ukraine entered the Bologna Process with different sets of values (Bologna Process, n.d.; Nyborg, 2003). Therefore, although every aspect of the Bologna Process can contribute to the transparency of Ukrainian higher education, quality assurance is the only Bologna Process mechanism that is powerful enough to address external compliance with Bologna Process standards (or *modernization*, as it is often defined in Ukrainian documents) and lead to the internal transformation of the system's values from autocratic to democratic.

The Bologna Process web site defines the meaning of the term "quality assurance" in higher education as "all the policies, ongoing review processes and actions designed to ensure that institutions, programmes and qualifications meet and maintain specified standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure" (Bologna Process, 2007). It provides higher education institutions and stake holders accountability mechanisms that guarantee certain levels of educational quality, as well as serves as an instrument for "enhancement and improvement of higher education system, institution, or programme" (Bologna Process, 2007).

In 2008, the participating countries created the first legal entity of the Bologna Process, the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), a register of national quality assurance agencies. European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance serve as operational criteria for EQAR and for membership in the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) and provide information on quality assurance agencies that meet the standards of the common European framework (Bologna Process, 2007).

Quality Assurance Implementation within the Bologna Process

Quality assurance within the Bologna Process framework is implemented through establishing national qualification frameworks that fit the overall European qualification framework for the three-cycle system; through development of national independent accreditation agencies that must meet shared standards and be members in ENQA and be reflected on the European Quality Assurance Registry; and through the process of external and internal evaluation in HEIs. Qualifications frameworks describe the qualifications of an education system and how they interconnect. National qualifications frameworks describe learning outcomes for each qualification and how learners can move from one qualification to another within a system. National qualifications frameworks are compatible with the European Qualifications Framework adopted in 2005 by the participating nations (Crosier, Purser, & Smidt, 2007).

Reforms of Ukraine's Higher Education under the Bologna Process: Clash of Values

Analysis of Ukrainian sources (Bologna Pocess, 2009; Kremen & Nikolajenko, 2006; NUSTSU, n.d.; Shynkaruk, n,d.) indicates the presence of explicitly articulated purposes for educational reforms under the Bologna Process, as well hidden goals (The Bologna Process in Central Europe, n.d.).

The documents state the importance of higher education to build Ukraine as a nation and democratic society, to increase

the nation's competitiveness in the knowledge-based global economy, and to develop 21st century competencies (Bastero, Bathuag, Prates, & Prytula, 2009). At the same time, the texts indicate a concern about a possibility for Ukraine being left behind and a need to catch up (Shynkaruk, n.d.). The notion of catching up comes across very strongly when analyzing the language used to describe the importance of and ways to comply with the Bologna Process. This catching up seems to equate with external changes: mechanistic compliance with the "Bologna requirements" (Rashkevych, 2008), without actually embracing the set of values behind the Bologna Process that view education as a public good and a force for development and empowerment in the fast changing age of globalization. The documents tend to use such terms as "Bologna Process requirements," when, in reality, these are *agreements*. They seem to not communicate at all the Bologna Process value of education as a public good (Nyborg, 2003) and often reduce the essence of Bologna reforms to a set of standards (ECTS, QA, etc.) to comply with. Whether this is a language issue, operationalization of the reform language by the still prevailing Soviet "apparatchik" (member of the autocratic administrative structure) mentality, or a misunderstanding of the central role of the values stated in the Bologna Process, such oversight leads to nothing less than miscommunication of the goals of the Bologna Process reforms and their substitution by Ukraine's own nation building goals (Telpukhovska, 2006; Tempus Program, n.d.; Shestavina, n.d.). Sadly, there is a sense that these goals may be seen as competing, when in fact, national goals could be seen as an integral and complementary part of the European reforms and the goals of the European reform, in turn, could be seen as integral to Ukraine's nation building goals.

This may be due to the fact that Ukraine joined the process only in 2005, as opposed to being there in 1999, and did not take part in the values-based development of the process (Rashkevych, 2008). However, when communication of the reform goals does not relate the language of values and does not communicate their global context and nature, reforms are often met with resistance by Ukrainian higher educators (Rashkevych, 2008; Telpukhovska, 2006). The exception is the schools where leadership has had exposure to Western education, is fluent in English, and has capacity to understand and interpret the global dynamics that inform the Bologna Process reforms (including the benefits for Ukraine).

The following is a mini-case study of attempted reforms in quality assurance in Ukraine's higher education system. It analyses the MES formal 2009 report to the Bologna Process, contrasts it with issues raised by the Minister of Education and Science, and with the goals set for further reforms in Ukraine's higher education through the European Commission's Tempus program (Tempus Program, 2008; Usher, 2009). In his 2008 address regarding Ukraine's progress in the Bologna Process, the Minister of Education and Science, Ivan Vakarchuk, indicated the system's resistance to change, expressed his concern with this clash of cultures, and called for a real change (Vakarchuk, 2008).

The Level of Quality Assurance Reforms in Ukraine's Higher Education

Ukraine's 2009 Bologna Process report (Bologna Process, 2009) was completed using a standard template. It addressed the ways the country meets the Bologna Process goals for quality assurance reforms (Rauhvargers, 2004; Reyes, Candeas, Reche, & Galan, 2008; Sellin, 2007; SCQ, 2009). The report indicates that Ukraine has reformed

its National Qualification Framework to meet the European standards. However, Minister of Education and Science Vakarchuk (Vakarchuck, 2008) indicated the irony of the "simplification" that grew the number of qualifications from 76 to 146. According to the report (Bologna Process, 2009), Ukraine has reformed the process of accreditation to meet the guidelines and standards of the Bologna Process. It states that Ukraine has created a state-independent accrediting agency. However, the independence of this state-controlled agency is in fact questionable, as in a government- independent accreditation agency, in a culture that heavily depends on relational networks, the risk is high that it would be dependent on individuals who are affiliated with the main state-run universities (Osipian, 2008; Stetar & Berezkina, 2002). The report also indicates that Ukraine has in place mechanisms for external and internal evaluation. However, the issue of internal evaluation and, in particular, creating an internal culture of quality, was stated as one of the key priorities for the current Tempus IV funding cycle in the domain of structural reforms in Ukraine's higher education (Brief, n.d.; Joint European Projects, n.d.; Tempus Program, 2008; Tempus Program, 2009). It appears that the report interprets as internal quality assurance the process of internal reviews conducted during the accreditation (and re-accreditation) process. There is no indication of the ways of addressing institutional culture and mechanisms that would emphasize codes of ethics, institutional transparency, and an internal culture of quality. Some of the ideas about the ways to increase institutional transparency are articulated by the education minister Ivan Vakarchuk (Vakarchuck, 2008).

Direction articulated by the Minister of Education and Science Vakarchuck.

In his 2008 address to the MES collegiums on the Bologna Process progress, the minister stressed the need for authentic reforms that moved beyond external compliance with the Bologna Process ECTS and that focused instead on getting educational programs to meet the standards and achieve authentic compatibility (and comparability) with the Bologna Process's three cycles of higher education. He emphasized the need for institutional autonomy of Ukraine's HEIs from a tight control by the MES structures as instrumental to development of initiative, capacity, and creativity. Currently, as a result of the higher education reforms, there are three types of universities based on the level of their autonomy from the national government. The majority of the institutions still fall into the Soviet-type state-controlled category with almost no autonomy in decision making. These colleges and universities are required to have the MES approve all their decisions concerned with program development, assessment, and funding sources. There is also a new group of state-run universities that have acquired the status of "National University," which gives them such decision making autonomy, allows them to develop and offer their own doctoral programs (the area traditionally controlled and administered by the MES), and become centers of research (European Commission, n.d.; Kremen & Nikolajenko, 2006). Finally, there is a growing number of private HEIs that have to meet the state accreditation and licensing requirements, while maintaining autonomy from the government in their decision making process.

In light of the high levels of corruption in Ukraine's HEIs, the lack of institutional autonomy interconnects with the lack of transparency in system-wide and institutional quality assurance mechanisms (NTUU, 2004). Minister Vakarchuk emphasized the need to continue in the direction of

granting autonomy to HEIs and to systematically address existing roadblocks. One of such roadblock is in the area of legal frameworks that address the financing of HEIs. Current Ukrainian laws define educational institutions as nonprofit entities. However, this definition prohibits organizations with a nonprofit status to conduct any revenue-generating activities, even though these revenues would be put back into the educational institution and not bring any business profit at the end of the day. Ukraine's legislature (Verhovna Rada) needs to urgently address these legislative gaps, explicitly define fee-based nonprofit activity as a legitimate source of higher educational financing, and encourage HEIs to incorporate these into school budgets, along with the allocations from the state budget (which normally do not cover institutional budgetary needs). The minister underscored the existence of a "paradoxical situation",[when], on the one hand, the state [did] not allocate funding that was sufficient for meeting the institutional needs. And on the other hand, the HIEs are not allowed to make profit from selling their inventions, because by doing so they lose their non-profit status (Vakarchuck, 2008).

In 2008, the minister Vakarchuck initiated a set of experiments that would pilot a new financing model in eight universities that have been granted autonomy from the MES. However, this initiative faced resistance justified by the above gaps in the legal framework. The minister took a different approach and, using Ukraine's signatory status under the Bologna Process agreements, initiated a change in the Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education* in a way that would communicate adherence to the Bologna Process standard for institutional autonomy. (Vackarchuck, 2008). He also stressed the importance for the HIEs' board of governors to move beyond a "ritualistic gesture" of compliance with reforms. The minister em-phasized the crucial need for developing a new model for quality assurance control of HEIs and to develop new performance evaluation criteria of HEIs that would not be artificial but meet international standards for assessment and evaluation (Vakarchuck, 2008). An additional element of institutional autonomy is the mandate to increase student participation in the administration of HEIs through development of student government that goes beyond butaforical compliance with the Bologna Process agreements.

This snapshot of key ideas in the minister Vakarchuck's address regarding Ukraine's Bologna Process progress strongly suggests that, in 2005-2009 period, quality assurance remained one of the critical issues in Ukraine's higher education reforms. It illustrates that for Ukraine to meet the Bologna Process objectives regarding quality assurance (particularly, internal quality assurance), national policies needed to be put in place to encourage and reward an internal culture of excellence and innovation (NTUU, 2004). Additionally, it would positively impact educational reforms, if private HEIs deliberately used their autonomy for evolving as flexible, competitive, and socially responsible organizations (Tempus Program, 2008; Tempus Program, 2009). This, in turn, called for another policy change that would clearly define and enhance transparency within the state-private higher education relationship. The national policies could be also instrumental if they incorporated the Bologna Process values and explicitly encouraged HEIs towards institutional (national and international) collaboration, exchange, and partnerships and promote a culture of quality in all institutional dimensions. Policy instruments could also be instrumental in recognizing, rewarding, and enhancing institutional cultures toward greater quality and transparency.

Has or Has not Ukraine's Participation in the Bologna Process Led to More Transparency?

There are many reasons to believe that, in the context of policy reforms and national strategic objectives, post-2009 Ukraine could continue more whole-heartedly with the Bologna Process. This paper presented policy aspects of the Bologna Process that could have been instrumental to developing national policies that encourage transparency through quality assurance, evaluation, and investment by HEIs in an internal culture of quality. Participation of Ukrainian educators in exchanges and first-hand experience of the transparency and internal culture of quality in European Universities (in projects funded through the Tempus program) also brought positive and hopeful results (Tempus Program, 2008). However, in 2005-2009, these programs affected a comparatively small number of individual faculty members and universities - too small to sustain a systemic change in quality assurance throughout Ukraine's higher education. Additionally, although the Tempus program had an active stream of funding in 2009 that was aimed at addressing structural changes (including institutional quality assurance), very few Ukrainian HEIs applied for these programs. Ukraine's government could have addressed this disconnect by encouraging educators to be strategically involved in internationalization that goes beyond partnership and collaboration at the level of colleges and universities, and by incorporating this emphasis into strategic national priorities for developing the capacity and research potential of Ukraine's higher education.

Given that Ukraine has a centralized system of education, it is crucial that such change is facilitated by the central structures. At the same time, their involvement has to go beyond the mechanistic translation of the degrees offered by the old higher education system, towards meeting the standards and goals articulated by the Bologna process agreements. This means that in 2009, the MES and its leadership (beyond minister Vakarchuck) needed to reconsider their own leadership philosophy and take on a more facilitative role that would encourage bottom-up involvement and participatory, collaborative approach, in order to create interest and a sense of urgency in committed participation by the HEIs.

Unfortunately, as indicated at the beginning of this paper, Ukrainian politics still heavily depends on individuals in key positions. Minister of Education and Science Vakarchuck was a true reformer, who understood the global and local dimensions of the Bologna Process. The instability of Ukrainian politics and the outcomes of the 2010 presidential elections brought to power a new and controversial (Kuzio, 2010) Minister of Education and Science Dmytro Tabachnyk (whose formal title later became *Minister of Education, Science, Family, and Sport*). Minister Tabachnyk is not as determined, as his predecessor, to implement Bologna Process reforms and create a more transparent higher education in Ukraine. On the contrary, the recent policy decisions indicate the move in the opposite direction. These include changes in the Independent Testing System that would allow colleges and universities "consider" the testing results and making admission process more vulnerable to subjective views of the reportedly corrupt university admission committees. In addition, in 2011, for the first time, students who have attended preparatory college programs will be privileged with 20 bonus points in addition to their independent testing scores during the admissions process at the intended university of students' choice (Orobets', 2010. Tsjats'ko, 2010). This, in fact, legalizes the university preparatory tu-

toring making admissions nepotism appear totally appropriate. Among other examples are the new minister's policy decisions to limit the number of government subsidized spots at public universities. On the one hand, the ministry needs to address the fact that currently, Ukrainian HEIs produce in great numbers graduates with degrees that do not meet the needs of Ukraine's economy and demands of its labor market. On the other hand, the means it chooses to decrease this number by 10% nationwide (and thus decrease direct financing to HEIs) seem to lie along the political lines. For example, while progressive Lviv National University is facing cuts in the number of government subsidized spots by 20,5% in on-campus and by 55% in distance education, instead of the 10–15% cuts promised by the ministry (Svidomo Agency, 2011). In contrast, Kyiv National University that has a similar number of students - but a more conformist leadership – lost to this funding decrease only 17,9% (Svidomo Agency, 2011).

Finally, the Ministry of Education, Science, Family, and Sport under the minister Tabachnyk's leadership has produced a controversial "Draft of Law on Education", which has been criticized by the opposition, as well as by the ruling Party of Regions representatives. According to the president Yanukovych's representative in the Ukrainian Parliament, Yuriy Myroshnychenko, "the draft is regulatory in nature, which increases HEIs' dependence from the ministry and decreases motivation of employers in collaboration. It does not provide for creation of a competitive environment in the educational market, for higher quality of teaching, and is not aimed at reforming of higher education" (Osvita Portal, 2011). Criticism has also come from the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Science, as the Draft of Law on Education does not resound the calls of the president to provide

for HEIs' autonomy and to move Ukrainian universities in to the ranks of the world's best universities (Osvita Portal, 2011).

Although Ukraine's attempts to reform it higher education are yet to become an authentic movement (Atanasov, 2011), many Ukrainian educational leaders and researchers have a wealth of ideas and experience to move the higher education reform in the direction that would benefit the country as whole and its people. Many of these educators took part in the educational forum titled *Educational reforms and the Bologna Process and autonomy of HEIs* in March, 2011. Studying views of such individual thinkers and practitioners on educational transformations in Ukraine, as well as transformational leadership practices applied by a small number of leaders in Ukraine's universities and aimed at greater transparency and democratization of higher education are recommended for the future research, in order to navigate the mechanisms for democratic transition in education and development of educational policy in Ukraine and, possibly, in other post-Soviet states.

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China's Re-Emergence: Sociolinguistic Challenges Faced by Chinese International Students Enrolled in U.S. Universities

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In the 21st century, the People's Republic of China (PRC) is reemerging and reengaging in the world on all fronts. One area of this reengagement is the huge increase in the number of Chinese students who are studying abroad. This paper discusses and analyzes the academic experiences of the growing number of Chinese international students who are enrolled in institutions of higher education (IHE) in the United States of America (US). Specifically, it reports the results of ongoing qualitative research on the sociolinguistic experiences and challenges faced by PRC students who are participating in international programs at the Commonwealth of Virginia's George Mason University (GMU). The paper focuses on the academic English language challenges experienced by both undergraduate and graduate Chinese students at GMU as they transition from their home universities in the PRC and continue their higher education in the US, and it suggests an approach for achieving cultural awareness in the classroom that may impact their teaching and learning.

Keywords: globalization of higher education, international higher education, Chinese students, culturally responsive teaching.

Introduction

This paper reports the results of ongoing qualitative research on the sociolinguistic experiences and challenges faced by both undergraduate and graduate international students from the People's Republic of China (PRC) enrolled at Northern Virginia's George Mason University (GMU). It focuses on the academic English language challenges faced by these international students as they transition from their home universities in the PRC to study in the United States of America (US) and return to the PRC. Specifically, it discusses the socio-linguistic

challenges faced by PRC international students at GMU and suggests an approach for achieving cultural awareness in the classroom that may impact their teaching and learning.

The relevance of this study relies on the fact that the US continues to be a top destination for PRC students seeking higher education overseas; that although GMU is one of the most diverse institutions of higher education (IHE) in the US, only at the beginning of the 21st century it launched and implemented specialized undergraduate dual degree and graduate-level teacher education programs for non-immigrant students from the PRC (GMU-China 121, 2010; GMU-Chinese Lic., 2010). It was a new experience for both the PRC students as well as for GMU faculty members and administrators. As part of this innovative experience, the university had to make the necessary adaptations and accommodations to facilitate and

guarantee the academic success and well-being of these international students.

Although the history of PRC higher education exchanges with the US dates back to 1872, when the Qing Court sent thirteen students to study in the US, these were interrupted in 1949 when Chinese revolution virtually transformed every aspect of US-PRC relations. From 1949 until 1978, academic and educational flows between the two countries were halted (Chu, 2004; Orleans, 1988). It was only after the US and the PRC signed a memorandum of understanding on student exchanges in October 1978 that a new group of PRC students was authorized to travel to the US. Since then, the number of PRC students in US higher education has grown rapidly, reaching an all-time high of 127,628 students in 2009/10 (IIE-Network, 2010a).

Understanding the academic challenges and adjustments of international students is an important priority for the globalization of higher education. Research shows that international Chinese students are usually academically successful when they study abroad, but also they face sociolinguistic challenges and adjustments that can affect their teaching and learning (Durkin, 2004; Scollon, 1999; Sun & Chen, 1997; Yang, 2001; Zawacki, Hajabbasi, Habib, Antram, & Das, 2007). In addition, research shows that addressing differences in the classroom requires adjustments by both students and instructors (Dunn, 2006; Durkin, 2008; Holmes, 2004; Miao, Badger, and Zhen, 2006; Osterling and Fox, 2004; Pearce and Lin, 2007; Zang, 2007).

The purpose of this paper is to identify the sociolinguistic challenges and adjustments experienced by Chinese international students enrolled at GMU. Based on a summary of two ongoing case studies, both of which were reviewed and approved by the GMU Human Subjects Review Board, this paper presents a discussion of the sociolinguistic challenges and adjustments faced by PRC students enrolled in the *Sino-American 1+2+1 Dual Degree Program* (China 121) and the *Chinese Language Licensure Program* (CLLP) at GMU. It focuses especially on their academic English language experiences and suggests an approach for achieving cultural awareness in the classroom that may impact their teaching and learning.

Background of the Study

During the past one hundred and fifty years, the PRC witnessed significant changes in its political, economic and socio-cultural structures that substantially transformed it. Today, the PRC is the world's second-largest economy and has a population of 1.338 billion, or one in every five of the earth's population (Jefferson, 2006; PRB, 2010; World Bank, 2010). As the PRC economy and population continue to grow, it is expected that the number of PRC students seeking higher education overseas will continue to increase as well.

As highlighted by the Institute of International Education (IIE-Network, 2010b), the PRC sent no students to the US from 1950 until 1978, when they normalized their relations. Between 1979 and 1983, there were 19,000 Chinese scholars in the US, and by 1996, there were 42,503 PRC students enrolled in US IHE. In 2009/10, there were 127,628 Chinese students in the US, making the PRC the leading place of origin for international students in the US (IIE-Network, 2010a). The growing number of PRC students enrolled in US IHE is a reflection not only of the Chinese people's traditional high value on education but also of the affluence of their growing middle class (Shuangcheng, 2009).

As will be discussed in this paper, Chinese students face unique sociolinguistic challenges in their transition to western institutions of higher education (Chen, 2003; Durkin, 2004; Holmes, 2004; Pearce & Lin, 2007; Scollon, 1999; Sun & Chen, 1997; Yang, 2001). Students rapidly discover that the Chinese education system is very different from the US education system in the structuring of classes, curriculum and administration, materials, teaching styles, and student expectations (Holmes, 2004; Scollon, 1999).

Although generalizations are often misleading and inaccurate, it is fair to suggest that Confucianism continues to influence the Chinese education system. As a result, once enrolled in a US IHE Chinese international students rapidly find themselves in a more open, student-centered, academic environment, which values critical thinking rather than rote learning and conformity. Also, they find that their English language proficiency (both oral and written) is insufficient to participate in US classrooms and seminars conducted in academic English.

According to Yang (2001), this situation is due to ideological, cultural and linguistic differences between Chinese and English language discourse development, especially in writing. Yang found that in the US "…Chinese students find it difficult to do critical writing because they are used to writing in conformity with the political and academic mainstreams…." and "schooling still focuses on conveying established knowledge instead of cultivating individuality or critical thinking abilities, which revealed in writing is the absence of self-expression" (Yang, 2001, p. 5).

Sociolinguistic Challenges Faced by Chinese International Students Enrolled in U.S. Universities

Research on international students' experiences continues to indicate that language problems, cultural differences, social isolation, and stress factors limit their ability to participate both academically and socially in the campus community. In the specific case of PRC international students, they are bilingual in *Putonghua* (Mandarin-Chinese) and English. However, *Putonghua* (Mandarin-Chinese) and English languages have little in common (see Appendix, Table 1). Mandarin-Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family of languages and is a non-alphabetic, tonal language with more than 47,000 characters. On the other hand, English belongs to the Indo-European linguistic family of languages, has a Roman alphabet and uses stress on syllables to express meaning. Today, English is required as part of the PRC core curriculum and students typically study English throughout their secondary school years and university education (Feng, 2009, p. 89-90).

Research Design

This study reports the results of on-going qualitative research on the sociolinguistic experiences and challenges faced by PRC students participating in two international programs at the Commonwealth of Virginia's George Mason University (GMU): the *US Chinese Language Licensure Program* (CLLP) and the *Sino-American 1+2+1 Dual Degree Program* (China 121). The objective of the CLLP is to address the critical shortage of Chinese language teachers in the US by educating PRC graduate students to be teachers of Chinese as a foreign language (GMU-Chinese Lic, 2010) while the US-China 121 joint academic program brings US and Chinese universities together to offer dual degrees to Chinese undergraduate students. China 121 students spend their freshman year in a Chinese uni-

versity, their sophomore and junior years at an American university and their senior year back home at their PRC university (GMU-China 121, 2010).

The following questions guided the research of these two case studies:

a) What were the lived experiences of the mainland Chinese international undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at GMU?

b) As bilingual *Putonghua* (Mandarin-Chinese) and English students, how did they perceive their lived experiences as university students in English language classroom environments?

c) How did they perceive their development of intercultural, academic, and linguistic competencies?

The participants in the *US Chinese Language Licensure Program* (CLLP) study included the entire cohort of CLLP graduate students: ten females and one male, aged 22 to 32 years old. They were all bilingual in *Putonghua* (Mandarin-Chinese) and English in addition to their regional dialect. They all held bachelor degrees from their home PRC universities, had passed their Chinese and US English language proficiency exams, and had passed the US PRAXIS-1 test required for acceptance into an approved US teacher education program. Each CLLP participant applied to GMU individually and traveled to the US independently without receiving financial aid, loans, grants or scholarships. They entered the US on non-immigrant F1 student visas, enrolled full-time (minimum 9 graduate credit hours per semester), and successfully pursued the requirements to obtain a state teaching certificate. These eleven participating CLLP graduate students were interviewed, reviews were made of their academic work, participating faculty and staff were interviewed, data was collected, coded, and analyzed for emerging themes, and triangulation was applied to improve the validity of the results. A limitation of the CLLP case study was the prior student-teacher relationships of the researchers to the participants.

The five undergraduate participants in the US-China 121 case study were purposively selected, three males and two females. They were bilingual in *Putonghua* (Mandarin-Chinese) and English, in addition to their regional dialects, and had entered the US on J1 exchange student visas. Utilizing a protocol that allowed student-directed conversational threads with interviewer restatement clarifications, they were asked to reflect on and relate their personal experiences in reading, writing, listening and speaking in English before they arrived in the US to attend GMU, when they first arrived at GMU, and at the time of the interview near the end of their academic programs at GMU.

Findings

Socioeconomically, all participating students were from middle to upper class urban families and had benefitted from the PRC's newly reformed education system. They were all bilingual in *Putonghua* (Mandarin-Chinese) and English, and several of them were fluent in a local dialect. Nonetheless, these students initially encountered difficulty speaking academic English, understanding lectures, participating in class discussions and making oral presentations. Several of them, particularly those undergraduate students who had not passed the TOEFL exam, were required to raise their level of English language skills in courses at GMU's English Language Institute (ELI). However, in most cases, these students rapidly acquired the needed academic English

language skills and moved into full-time undergraduate course work at GMU. Tables 2 and 3 in the Appendix present summaries of the PRC student experiences and sociolinguistic differences.

Pre-departure preparations for study in the US were done individually with the help of a professional Chinese educational agent or a program coordinator, who assisted them with admissions, administrative tasks, travel and lodging arrangements, legal issues, and other needs related to their study abroad experience.

Upon arrival at GMU, most participants encountered unexpected difficulties in academic, personal, socio-cultural, and environmental areas. Language and communication appeared to be the most challenging areas, mostly due to differences in accents, enunciation and the use of slang. However, coping with cultural differences, social integration, loneliness, and academic stress were other areas of difficulty. In addition, several students perceived that the institutional academic and social support systems were either not readily available to them or nonexistent, leading them to develop informal peer support groups.

Overall, we found that the participants overcame their challenges and ultimately succeeded, or excelled, in their respective programs. Some of the values and strengths they brought to their GMU experience included a foundational knowledge of the English language, an appreciation of hard work, ability to study proficiently, awareness of course requirements and time constraints, a determination to adapt, and support from their families, friends and home universities. Their values and strengths were augmented by a total immersion English language experience at GMU. In addition, the University provided resources, such as tutoring, workshops and seminars from

the ELI and Writing Center, academic advising, organized activities through campus student organizations, and special events that helped them improve their spoken English and provided acculturation experiences.

Discussion of Findings

PRC international students are an asset to GMU's undergraduate and graduate programs, adding new ideas, perspectives and cultures to our diverse university. The challenges they encounter at GMU and the solutions they devise to achieve improvements rely on their cultural strengths and determination. In many ways, our research findings are similar to those encountered in other parts of the world. For example, in a study of Chinese students enrolled in a New Zealand university, Holmes (2004) found that these students' efforts and willpower were equated to success, even when they were confused with their classroom experiences. When faced with confusion, these students would *...reconstruct and renegotiate their primary culture learning and communication styles to accommodate another way* (Holmes, 2004, p. 303).

The authors of this paper suggest that globalization of higher education requires a culturally responsive approach to teaching and learning. Gay (2002) presents five essential elements of culturally responsive teaching: a cultural diversity knowledge base, culturally relevant curricula, a cultural caring learning community, cross-cultural communications, and cultural congruity in classroom instruction. In order to develop a responsive environment for PRC students, Holmes (2004) states: "The primary challenge is for teachers to move from the mindset of **deficit to a difference** view of Chinese learning and teaching methods" (Holmes, 2004, p. 304).

Recent movements towards developing a culturally responsive teaching and learning environment at GMU are exemplified by the research of Osterling and Fox (2004) and Zawacki, Hajabbasi, Habib, Antram, and Das (2007). Osterling and Fox revised a graduate-level teacher education course by incorporating a culturally responsive pedagogy. The teachers and students exchanged roles and developed a community of learners where the teacher candidates learned how to interpret the culture of each of the students. By participating in this transformative process, the traditional classroom environment became an effective culturally responsive environment where the students prepared to practice culturally sensitive pedagogy. Zawacki, et al. (2007) found that the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of GMU's international students impact their writing in academic English. For example, the concept of plagiarism has diverse meanings depending on the student's culture.

> *[The] ...divergent definition of critical thinking is at the heart of the non-native English speaker's relationship to citation....they are not familiar with the concept of plagiarism as it is defined in the American academy* (Zawacki, 2007, p. 27).

One Mason undergraduate student from China stated, "Here thesis is very obvious, but in Chinese, we don't write something so obviously. We like to allow the reader to think about it" (Zawacki, 2007, p. 36). Understanding these differences in teaching and learning could help reduce confusion and miscommunication between Chinese students, their peers and their GMU instructors.

As the economy and population in the PRC continue to grow over the next decades, it is expected that the number of PRC students seeking higher education in the US will continue to grow as well, requiring US IHE to proactively address the sociolinguistic challenges and adjustments that international students face when they study at US colleges and universities. In concluding, we posit that the most effective approach to assuring successful learning outcomes for our diverse university populations will be through the development of university-wide culturally responsive teaching and learning environments that address the strengths that these students bring to our campuses.

Appendix

Table 1: A brief comparison between Mandarin-Chinese and English

Mandarin-Chinese	**English**
Sino-Tibetan family of languages	Indo-European family of languages
Logographic writing system with over 47,000 characters *Pinyin*	Roman alphabetic writing system with only 26 letters
Non-alphabetic characters represent words	Alphabetic characters represent words
Monosyllable	Strong and weak syllables
Tonal language	Phoneme stressed language
Questions conveyed by intonation	Questions conveyed by inverted subject and verb
Few grammatical rules	Specific grammar rules
No articles	Has articles
No verb tenses; no time	Verb tenses
Use of shared understanding of context	Citations required for all

Table 2: Experiences of PRC graduate and undergraduate students in the two studies at George Mason University

Graduate students in the CLLP	**Undergraduates students in the China 121**
Bilingual in Mandarin-Chinese and English; local dialects at home	Bilingual in Mandarin-Chinese and English; local dialects at home
Teaching to the test for English language; TOEFL and PRAXIS-I exams required	Teaching to the test for English language; TOEFL not required; Comprehensive English Language Test (CELT) at GMU's English Language Institute (ELI)
Parents value education and are willing to make big financial sacrifices to send their only son/daughter to study abroad	Parents valued education; they encouraged study abroad and worked for years to send their only son/daughter overseas for higher education
Pre-departure done on an individual basis with help of professional Chinese Education Agent;	Pre-departure done by China Center for International Educational Exchange; pre-departure

F1 visas to the US	orientation; J1 visas to the US
Traveled to the U.S independently	Traveled to the U.S. in a group of 30+ China 121 students
Experienced difficulty with spoken English on arrival	Experienced difficulty with spoken English on arrival
Individual students perceived as a homogeneous group who shared same socio-cultural, educational and economic backgrounds	Organized as an annual cohort of 30+ international Chinese students who arrive at Mason and pursue their degrees together as a group
Early experiences impetus for participants to bond into a close symbiotic relationship	Bonding occurs in the ELI classroom, UNIV 100, cohort activities

Table 3: Sociolinguistic differences experienced by PRC students in the two studies at George Mason University

People's Republic of China (PRC)	United States of America (US)
21st Century Confucian thought	Socratic thought
One child family policy	No family size policy
Modern, urban, middle class	Modern, urban, middle class
Newly developed education system	Established education system
Social capitalism; western cultural influences	Capitalism; multicultural influences
Mass media; computer technology; western movies	Mass media; computer technology; western movies
Teacher-centered classroom; rote memorization; knowledge transmission	Student-centered classroom; critical thinking
Putonghua (Mandarin-Chinese)	English

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The First Experience of International Travel: Contributing to Global Nursing

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Providing experiences for international travel is an important aspect of higher education, and creating high-quality international exchanges can be a challenge. Developing appropriate experiences for nursing students may be especially difficult due to the complexity of regulatory and accreditation requirements. However, it is possible to find like-minded educators and provide students with enriching opportunities to compare healthcare and nursing practice. This article describes the development of a successful multi-dimensional nursing research partnership between three universities in California, Karlstad, Sweden, and Gjovik, Norway. An additional partnership between Karlstad University in Karlstad, Sweden and California State University San Bernardino includes student and faculty exchanges.

Keywords: International travel, nursing education, nursing diagnosis, nursing student research

Starting the International Dialogue

Three faculty members met in the United States at a 2006 international conference. The focus: using patient simulators to teach nurses how to care for patients throughout the lifespan. After informal conversations about mutual interests, the idea of forming a research partnership around the subject of palliative care led to the first visit of the US nursing faculty member to visit Norway. The visit then progressed to visiting Sweden the following year.

Ultimately, a three-year longitudinal research study on nursing students' concerns about dying was initiated, and has since completed data collection. Student exchanges to and from Karlstad University then followed. These exchanges continue on an annual basis.

Faculty Perspective

International partnership. The most important requirement for the success of this partnership was agreement on a focus area. In this case, it was palliative care. Determining a research design that was culturally appropriate and a match to each faculty member's career goals and the Department of Nursing mission ensured the greatest chance of success. Meeting at research conferences, having informal opportunities to become acquainted with each other, and choosing a focus were essential in determining the right fit for all.

In this organic, from-the-ground-up approach to the partnership, all activities were negotiable. The research did not proceed until ethical standards for the three institutions and other issues were understood. An important area to understand is the order of authors for the publications that will result from the research. The sequence of im-

portance of authors' names varies from country to country. Prior to initiating research, it is critical to determine the sequence that best fits all faculty.

Other important aspects of the partnership included a matching of universities with similar size and missions. Because all three universities in this partnership are relatively small, there are no formal agreements between the universities: rather the Departments of Nursing take responsibility for determining the activities of students and faculty.

Each faculty member benefited from utilizing existing university resources, both financially and organizationally, in terms of assisting the faculty to plan, conduct, and evaluate the exchanges. Understanding how international scholarship enhanced the promotion and tenure process also helped to encourage the development of the exchanges.

From research to student exchanges. Once the faculty partnership was in place, deepening the relationship to include student exchanges came next. Six US students visited Karlstad University in 2010. Two Karlstad students visited the US school in 2010, followed by a second visit of US students to Karlstad in 2011.

Student Perspective

Deciding to travel. Upon hearing about the nursing exchange program with Sweden, I was first in line to sign up. I had never participated in any type of international exchange, but knew I would learn in ways that would contribute to my future profession as a nurse.

Preparing to travel. Nursing school is very stressful, and staying current with all that is required is a challenge. Utilizing an organizer was the only way to simultaneously prepare for Sweden and meet my university and family responsibilities. The amount

of preparation seemed daunting at first: obtaining a passport, arranging school schedules, obtaining the money to pay for the trip, coordinating family activities in my absence, and shopping for all things necessary to travel abroad.

I began feeling apprehensive as the time to leave drew near. The thought of being so far from home and family, and in a foreign country, suddenly became overwhelming. These fears were diminished by the support of the faculty who organized preparatory meetings. These meetings included basic information on financial issues, housing, customs, and expectations during the trip.

Arriving in Karlstad. I stepped off the train in Karlstad, Sweden filled with anticipation and excitement and ready for my first experience in international exchange. Once we were immersed in the program and experiencing Swedish healthcare, it became apparent that both our US community and the Karlstad community shared the same concerns about healthcare, the needs of dying patients, and the experiences of nursing students. We all had common concerns and goals. Nurses, no matter what their nationality or ethnic origin, are devoted to delivering the best care they can. We sometimes travel different roads to get there, but in the end, we all have the same destination, which is restored health and function when possible, and peaceful death when it is not.

The experience. Learning about alternatives to our healthcare system is an important part of the national debate. An international exchange fosters critical thinking and helps create an attitude of caring and sharing. In our discussions with Swedish nurses and students, I was able to observe a different healthcare system and explore the advantages and disadvantages of the Swedish system. Critically analyzing different healthcare systems helped to clarify what the best sys-

tem possible might be. Our activities were based around this idea of common caring and sharing in order to enhance our skills in our chosen profession (Smith-Stoner, 2008).

One of the planned activities was a workshop on care planning and nursing diagnosis (taxonomy nurses in the US use these to describe patient care needs), which is an emerging science in Sweden. At one of the care plan workshops, I had an experience that would change my perspective on what it meant to be a nurse.

As I found myself teaching how the American nurse plans care for a patient using nursing diagnosis, I discovered that my view of my role as a nurse was growing. My local viewpoint slowly expanded and I began to have a profound understanding of the importance of global nursing. I came to the realization that I can contribute significantly not only to my own community, but I can have a global impact by sharing my knowledge. By helping Swedish students learn new ways of thinking like a nurse, I had just possibly improved the lives of countless Swedish people. It was the first ripple in the pond.

Research and subsequent return to Karlstad. During the first international exchange, I was strongly motivated by my experiences. Once I returned home, I decided to conduct my own qualitative research study on the techniques that nursing students felt helped them learn to use nursing diagnosis. The study took several months, and was primarily completed over and above my other nursing studies. The following year I returned to Karlstad and presented my research, *The Learning Journey: The Students Perception of Learning Nursing Diagnosis,* to nurses, students, and faculty.

Although I initially saw the trip as a way to become familiar with nursing in another country, the actual outcomes far ex-

ceeded my expectations. I personally contributed to the expansion of nursing science and to the use of nursing diagnosis in Sweden. The greatest gift of the trip was the change in my identity from being a baccalaureate nurse to seeing myself as a future leader in the world of global nursing.

Faculty Perspective

Outcomes: The outcomes of international travel can be difficult to measure. In our case, the outcomes for faculty were integrated into the exchange program. These outcomes included the completion of research with presentations and publications. Since international exchange is part of the university's strategic plan, exchanges are also considered an important part of improvements in teaching and service. In order to be awarded tenure a faculty member must demonstrate ongoing professional development in multiple areas. The two most important at this university are teaching and scholarship. International travel provides a rich opportunity to collaborate in research (Smith-Stoner, Hall-Lord, Hedelin & Petzäll, 2011) and publish original research. Second, teaching is enhanced when students are actively engaged in learning about the world and in our case, health issues.

Student outcomes were also measurable. Since the mission of higher education is to promote student intellectual development, one undergraduate student's passion about doing her own (mentored) research is directly attributed to the first trip. She now desires to continue with her education and obtain a graduate degree. Her activities before, during, and after this exchange led to her selection as the outstanding undergraduate in the Department of Nursing. A new wave of interest in international travel has been infused into our nursing program bringing with it a delightful level of intellectual curiosity by many students.

Recommendations

Organizing teaching responsibility. In order to plan, develop, and conduct an international exchange, many supporters contributed to the success of the program. Our university's international institute (http://ii.csusb.edu) is the center of travel planning. Although they do not find the partner institutions for most faculty, they generally provide the expertise and support for travel. Within the nursing department, teaching assignments need to be coordinated many months in advance. Due to the severe shortage of nursing faculty, there is little ability to find a substitute for taking over a class for any length of time. However, for faculty who may want to initiate their first travel experience, remaining connected to students in a distance class is possible. In addition to learning management systems, phone connections can be accomplished using a very low-cost service such as Skype or real-time video streaming using many free tools such as Ustream.

Subsequent visits require planning similar to the first. Each visit requires careful attention to detail with students and faculty willing to provide much of the funding for the trip. Keypal relationships developed from the first exchanges through Facebook (Maas-Garcia, 2009) to develop relationships between students. Utilizing social networking also helps to communicate with students before, during, and after the trip by creating closed groups in Facebook.

Including the university Media Affairs Office is also important to letting the community know about the commitment to global education. Publicity representatives will help faculty plan for creating the most effective photographs and video recordings while in country. The resources can then be combined with interviews and other media for important presentations to local media. One example is the "Eye on the Desert Show," highlighting the second trip and future trips.

Summary

One international exchange between two small universities relatively new to international exchanges in the nursing departments continue to produce a cascade of impressive outcomes. Igniting the possibilities of being a global nurse by that first visit of the first nursing student to take the chance and go to another country is igniting the enthusiasm of many students. Every international exchange involves a partnership with the partner university and collaboration with campus international experts. There are many regulatory challenges nursing students and faculty must work through in order to meet their educational requirements while away, although there is no doubt about the value of travel in terms of enhanced patient care.

Table 1: Timeline of outcomes from initial 2006 meeting

Year	Event	Activity
2006	Nursing Simulation Conference	Faculty meet for the first time, funded in part by internal grant money
2007	Visit to Norway	Faculty travel to Gjøvik, Norway for presentation on simulation and death and dying
2008	Visit to Karlstad, Sweden	Faculty visit to Karlstad, Sweden to propose idea of international exchange
2009	Research continues	Data collection continues on three-year study
2010	First Exchange with Sweden	Students from <campus name> travel to Karlstad, Sweden
2010	Visit from colleagues	Faculty from Karlstad University visit <campus name>
2010	First students from Karlstad arrive	First two students come for five weeks for community nursing experience
	Undergraduate research study conducted	Student conducts research study within the framework of a research class and mentorship with another faculty
2011	Faculty Scholarly presentation, first year of data analysis	Budapest, Hungary: first International Conference on Palliative Care
2011	Presentation	Phi Beta Delta Annual Conference, Long Beach, student first experience of travel
2011	Second trip to Karlstad	Second student trip to Karlstad University to present student research study to students, faculty, nurses Submitted initial publication from three-year study on nursing student concerns about dying
2011	Expanding to other Nordic countries planned: Visit to Trondheim Norway to discuss expanding Nordic partnership	Invited (faculty) to give presentation on simulation and initiate additional faculty and student exchanges
2011	Publication of first research manuscript	International Journal of Palliative Nursing publishes first article in a series related to the longitudinal study on nursing students concerns about dying. Vol. 17, Iss. 6, 24 Jun 2011, pp 271 - 277

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