

Internationalization: From Concept to Implementation

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Abstract: Higher education is in a phase of rapid internationalization, with practices and impacts ranging from curriculum reform to satellite campuses to affiliated partner institutions. Internationally, higher education institutions are increasingly engaged with issues pertaining to technology integration. The primary reason for this is a growing acceptance of the importance of student-centered and heuristic learning, and the emergence of mobile devices as learning tools. The purpose of this case study is to describe and provide evidence for technology integration as an internationalizing practice that promotes and enables mobility for the brand, staff, and students of Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School (BMIHMS). This paper is also concerned to show technology integration as an internationalizing practice that promotes and enables brand, staff, and student mobility. In responding to the nascent trends in technology, and the continuing impacts globalization is having on higher education, BMIHMS has demonstrated that technology integration is an effective internationalizing practice.

Keywords: Internationalizing, technology integration, mobility, learning outcomes, globalization, ITUNESU, sharepoint, podcasting, faculty development

Introduction

The purpose of this case study is to describe and provide evidence for technology integration as an internationalizing practice that promotes and enables mobility for the brand, staff, and students of Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School (BMIHMS). Internationalization will be generally defined as the converging practices derived from globalization (Nerad, 2010). The researchers conducted an evidence based assessment using Chinman, Imm, and Wandersman (2004) to model BMIHMS's technology integration program as an internationalizing practice. The methodology used a common evidence-based assessment that can be applied at other higher education institutions.

Internationalizing in higher education is an effect of globalization. It is evident that, in a global economy, nations use higher education as a means to compete, and this has

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resulted in profound changes to areas such as policy, industry collaboration, and reform (Magzan and Aleksic-Maslac, 2009). Individually, higher education institutions (in particular, those engaged in business education) have increasingly needed to focus on providing employable graduates to a highly competitive global market. For example, Butcher (2008) found that higher education institutions that partnered with industry stakeholders produced a greater number of employable graduates than those institutions that did not.

Internationalizing practices in higher education include curriculum reform, an increase in study abroad programs, satellite campuses, English as medium of instruction in nations where English is not the first or main language, and technology integration (Zupanc & Zupanc, 2009; Yan Yan, 2010). BMIHMS has undertaken all of these internationalizing practices.

It is apparent that, for more than a decade, higher education has been undergoing a rapid process of technology integration (Prensky, 2001; Prensky 2004). However, it is difficult to find data to demonstrate that technology integration is an effective internationalizing practice. Furthermore, of the data that is available, there is little that links technology integration and internationalizing specifically to brand, staff, and student mobility.

Typically, the focus of research has been on student mobility. In Yan Yan's (2010) empirical study of a design school in Hong Kong, transnational education was shown to have promoted mobility, in the sense that students were able to earn a degree from a foreign country without a requirement to study there. This arrangement allowed Hong Kong based students to access quality programs that were unavailable at home, thus supplying qualified local graduates to a knowledge-driven economy (Yan Yan, 2010). Brooks (2011) considered the efficacy of student internationalization by virtue of cross-cultural exchange conducted via online discussions. While brand mobility was implied, there was little discussion of the impacts it might generate, or of how it might be achieved. Magzan and Aleksic-Maslac (2009) linked mobility, internationalizing, and technology, and provided empirical data. They found that information and communication technologies increased communication between schools, and that it facilitated quality assurance. Importantly, Magzan and Aleksic-Maslac found that technology supported student mobility. While their research methodology and information was useful, additional data pertaining to specific technology tools is required.

Considering nascent trends in technology, and the continuing impacts globalization is having on higher education, it seems clear that a process of technology integration that emphasizes connection, and social and collaborative learning (for students, staff, and faculty), or connectivism (Siemens, 2008), is a very effective internationalizing practice. However, such a claim must be supported by a thorough assessment of both an institution's needs, and its available resources (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School (BMIHMS)

BMIHMS provides international business education, specializing in hotel, resort, and event management. In Australia, the flagship qualifications are the Bachelor of Business in International Hotel and Resort Management, the Bachelor of Business in International Event Management, and the Master's Degree in International Hotel Management. In a 2010 TNS Research International survey, BMIHMS was ranked the number one hospitality management school in Australasia.

Prior to 2010, BMIHMS programs were delivered in Australia and China, and its international student body in Australia was drawn from 32 countries. At that time BMIHMS adopted various strategies to internationalize its brand while maintaining academic integrity. A key element of this strategy was a geographic expansion that has resulted in BMIHMS programs presently being offered in six countries (Australia, China, Chile, Mexico, Thailand, and Malaysia), with plans to expand into a further four by 2015 (Executive Group, 2013). Additionally, BMIHMS has expanded the number of markets for student recruitment, and has also targeted pathway opportunities through sister institutions of the Laureate Education network. The successful geographic expansion undertaken by BMIHMS was enabled in part through technology integration.

BMIHMS' efforts towards internationalization have been rewarded. Presently there are some 600 students per annum at the Australian campuses (Sydney and Leura), with more than 2000 students studying BMIHMS programs at affiliated international institutions. Of those studying at the Australian campuses, approximately 80% are international students. At the time of this research, the student body at Sydney and Leura during the preceding twelve months comprised 42 nationalities (Executive Group, 2013). In addition, BMIHMS currently employs 94 permanent full-time, permanent part-time, sessional and/or contract faculty and staff, of which more than a third have a country of origin other than Australia.

Technology Integration and Mobility at BMIHMS

The annual Horizon Reports offer a snapshot of the many reasons why higher education providers should pay attention to innovations in, and the increasing diffusion of, technology. For instance, three years ago the report predicted that mobile computing would be common practice within twelve months (Johnson, Levine, Smith, & Stone, 2010). The following year, there was strong evidence to suggest that learning in higher education was shifting to post pc devices (Murphy, 2011). (See Table 2 for the specific technology tools integrated by BMIHMS in order to promote student engagement and learning.)

Students increasingly use mobile devices for their learning, regardless of an institution's approach to technology integration. In many cases it remains incumbent on institutions to catch up to their students' learning styles and habits by curating suitable materials, and engaging through multiple platforms and channels (Prensky, 2001; Prensky, 2004; Siemens, 2008). If they do not, students will increasingly attempt to acquire knowledge and skills by those means with which they are most familiar (iTunes U, Apps, MOOCs, YouTube, online communities, etc.). In such a scenario, a student's learning becomes at least partially disenfranchised from the institution that issues his or her credential. This, then, is both a self-directed experiment on the behalf of the student in question, a profound challenge to dominant teaching and learning paradigms, and a business risk for higher education providers (in that their revenue models will be challenged by students who perceive greater value elsewhere).

In response to the trends noted above, BMIHMS initiated an aggressive technology program at the beginning of 2012, a 'revamp' that has required significant capital investment, and is still in progress. In the eighteen months to August 2013, BMIHMS introduced e-podiums to all of its classrooms; established an e-learning site; upgraded the SharePoint site (and provided access to staff at partnering institutions); introduced terminal server (enabling virtual access to staff desktops); integrated the Laureate English Program; upgraded its suite of Micros products (used in hotel operations), including Point of Sale and Opera Sales & Catering; and rolled-out iPads and MacBooks to all full-time faculty and managers.

The faculty at BMIHMS now record and upload full lectures to the e-learning site, as well as recording summary podcasts to be uploaded to the e-learning site and/or SharePoint. In addition, in July 2013 BMIHMS began a trial of iTunes U courses and iBooks. In September 2013, the iTunes U trial will move into its second phase, as all new incoming Master's students will be provided with an iPad for a period of one term, ensuring equity of access to the iTunes U course materials for that subject. At the conclusion of the trial, BMIHMS will be in a position to make a business decision with regard to iTunes U and the efficacy of providing iPads to all new incoming students (*N.B.*: greater student engagement and improved learning outcomes must be demonstrated in order for this to occur.) Such technology initiatives require members of faculty and instructional designers to curate course content for effective diffusion through multiple delivery platforms and channels.

An awareness of student-centered and heuristic learning is the primary reason for pursuing technology integration in higher education. However, this paper is also concerned to show technology integration as an internationalizing practice that promotes and enables brand, staff, and student mobility.

As has already been noted, the BMIHMS brand has been internationalized through geographic expansion. New student enrolment into Australia increased by 29% in 2012, and (at the time of this writing) by 38% in 2013 (Executive Group, 2013). There has also been an increased cultural diversity at the Sydney and Leura campuses, from 30 nationalities in 2010 to 42 nationalities in 2013 (Executive Group, 2013). In addition, the number of students studying BMIHMS programs outside of Australia has increased from 300 per annum in 2010 to more than 2000 in 2013 (Executive Group, 2013). The BMIHMS brand has permeated to the extent that students, faculty, and staff at the international partnering institutions feel personally connected to BMIHMS without having studied or worked at the Australian campuses.

The geographic expansion of the BMIHMS brand has also led to improved staff mobility. With increased professional development opportunities, faculty and staff are better able to share knowledge across the international partnering institutions. Professional development has taken two forms: an international exchange program, and the 'virtual professional development' of staff and business capabilities that is possible because of technology integration.

Due to the international exchange program, during the eighteen months to August 2013, 23 of 94 employees have had the opportunity to visit the satellite campus in China, and/or to visit partnering institutions in other international locations. In the same period a smaller but still significant number of faculty and staff have visited the Sydney and Leura campuses from international partnering institutions.

Staff mobility has also been achieved through BMIHMS's increasingly technology-enabled environment. For instance, staff and faculty were able to share course content and professional expertise – for example, of policies and procedures, regulatory and accreditation requirements, and pedagogy – through SharePoint and the e-learning site. Arguably, as the Australia based faculty and the faculty at the international partnering institutions continue to engage and learn from each other, developing what Mishra and Koehler (2006) have termed

technological–pedagogical–content–knowledge (TPCK), they are demonstrating their participation in a domain of learning that Siemens (2008) coined connectivism.

Student mobility through the international partnering schools has been enabled through “geo-bundling”, as Laureate Hospitality Education CEO Michael Huckaby has called it, (personal communication, 2012), whereby a student is able to complete an accredited qualification across multiple geographic locations. For instance, a student can start her qualification in China, complete a second year in Malaysia, and then transition to a final year in Australia. In addition, students are able to complete a dual-degree between BMIHMS and a sister school. Geo-bundling is made possible through the alignment of curriculum between institutions, and by virtue of BMIHMS course content being available on SharePoint. (In this scenario, students gain a local degree as well as an international degree from Australia by completing 50% of their program in Australia.)

The internationalizing of the student body feeds the attributes that BMIHMS fosters in its graduates. For instance, clearly the tourism and hospitality industry requires employees equipped with cultural intelligence (Fitzgerald, 2002). In this regard, BMIHMS’s industry partners recognize in their prospective employees the transformative experience, and the value, of being part of a truly international student body.

Needs Analysis and Assessment of Resources

Chinman, Imm, and Wandersman’s (2004) evidence-based model measures sustainability and demonstrates result-based accountability. The model has been applied to the BMIHMS technology integration program. (See Table 1 and Table 2.)

Table 1. *Needs Assessment (BMIHMS Technology Integration Program)*

STEPS	Tasks	Comments
Step 1:	Assessment Committee (collect data and determine how to use it)	Senior management (Executive Group); Quality and Education Planning Department (QEP); Faculty
Step 2:	Data Examined	Enrolment data, nationality data, student focus groups, i-graduate survey data
Step 3:	Additional Data Needed (additional data collected after first evaluation)	Senior Management Review (Executive Group), Long Range Plan
Step 4:	Data Collection Plan	QEP and Faculty requested data from Executive Group and relevant departments.
Step 5:	Implementation of Data Collection Plan	3 months
Step 6:	Analysis of Data	Collective work: Executive Group to do the initial analysis (Director of Student Services, Director of Sales & Marketing, Director of Academic Affairs)

Step 7: Selected Priority Risk and Protective Factors	Cultural barriers that limit use of technology, technological access barriers, buy-in at the highest level of business leadership, investment, and innovation cycles in misalignment
Step 8: Revision or Necessary intervention	Further research on geographic locations, longitudinal study on links between technology integration and improved engagement/learning outcomes.

The eight-step model outlined above can be applied to a range of environments, including to higher education institutions that have embarked, or are about to embark, on a strategy of internalization in which technology integration will be a critical component. Though the eight-step model is, in theory, a sequential approach, it should be noted that in the case of BMIHMS many of the steps were occurring synchronically, and cyclically. The reason for this was that the technology integration program at BMIHMS was (and is) occurring in a live setting, with all of the contingencies and business decisions that that implies.

Table 2. *Assessment of Resources*

Archival Data	Main Tool	Supplementary Technology Tool	Resource Assessment
23 out of 94 staff from Australia have participated in an international exchange program in the 18 months to August 2013	Professional development program	SharePoint/e-podium/podcasting Other: mobile technology (iPads, MacBooks)	Preparation, sharing, and sustained engagement with course content and professional material
Professional Development through virtual learning	Professional development program	SharePoint/e-learning site	Assisted mobility and quality performance at all geographic locations through sharing knowledge; enabled content and productivity quality loop
Quality Assurance (QA)	SharePoint		Without SharePoint QEP could not guarantee integrity of academic program, and could not conduct 'virtual' QA
Trial of iTunes U in one Level 1 subject, and for the Centre for Academic Learning & Support (CALs)	iTunes U	SharePoint, e-podium, podcasting Other: iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch required	SharePoint acts as the central repository for support materials; iTunes U and podcasting encourage 'mobile' engagement Issue: Equity of access (i.e. not all students use Apple products) Solution: stage 2 iTunes U and iPad trial in one Master's subject

Approximately 90% of lectures at BMIHMS are recorded	e-podium	e-learning site, SharePoint, iTunes U	All classrooms equipped with e-podiums; streamlined process to upload lectures to e-learning site; e-learning site experiences 'spikes' before exams
Flexibility of class delivery	e-learning site	e-podium, SharePoint, iTunes U	Opportunity to 'flip' the classroom; record 'make-up' lectures to cover public holidays, school and industry events, etc.
Quality Management System	SharePoint		All documents on SharePoint are fully auditable (version controlled)

Conclusion

Resistance to change and the potentially mitigating effect of adequate training has been considered throughout the technology integration program at BMIHMS, and valuable lessons have been learned. For instance, for certain technology tools (the introduction of e-podiums in particular), there was a degree of resistance from faculty. However, faced with an innovative practice or new technology, it can be argued that the members of any faculty will be distributed according to the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1983). When considering the categories that Rogers identified – innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards – it is essential also to consider the innovation itself (its nature and domain), the quality of the communication regarding the innovation, the timeframe for implementation and integration, and the culture into which the innovation is being introduced. Put simply, the integration of a new technology tool in a higher education setting requires an organizational culture that is receptive to innovation, has sound leadership, clear vision, and sufficient planning, and can deliver effective communication and training.

The type and nature of effective training warrants comment, however. Throughout the technology integration program at BMIHMS, mass training proved less effective than bespoke training. Indeed, senior management at BMIHMS formed the opinion that 'technology champions' drawn from within the faculty, for example, were more effective change agents than both external and/or internal IT specialists (though the "technology champions" must work closely with those IT specialists).

The technology integration program at BMIHMS, which was launched at the beginning of 2012, was both an important component of BMIHMS' strategy of internationalization and an attempt to respond positively to changes in students' learning styles and habits (beginning with the acknowledgement of student-centered and heuristic learning). As the program has progressed, it has adapted to the emergence and importance of mobile devices as learning tools. As has been demonstrated, technology integration is an internationalizing practice that promotes and enables brand, staff, and student mobility. The program is both continuing and continuous.

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