

## **Nursing Practice and Scholarship: Approaches to Effective International Alliances**

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### **Introduction**

I feel very honoured to have been invited to give the opening address at this important meeting and before such a distinguished group of participants. I look forward to a very productive day and I am sure I speak on behalf of everyone here in thanking Shake for her vision and leadership in the work she is doing for INDEN and in making this event possible.

In addressing the topic of my paper I am very conscious of the theme of this conference. I think it is timely for us to consider issues surrounding the social mandate of nursing and the contribution of scholarship and doctoral education to this mandate. It is always timely to stop and reflect upon this issue because it is so easy for the intellectual enterprise to become caught up in demands that take its activities away from this mandate. Ever since nursing entered the academy there have been concerns about tensions, rifts and gaps between theory and practice, between education and service, between the imperatives of the university and those of the health agency. I have written about this previously (Parker and Rickard 1999) and described it as the town/gown tension.

However, it is particularly timely for us now because today we work within a milieu profoundly affected by the current imperatives of globalisation. In a recently published paper (Parker 2001) I have argued that there is a global trend towards convergence of both health and education policies made possible by the increasing global acceptance of economically based imperatives of rationalisation. Health and education reforms are taking place that are focusing on means (i.e. economic rationalisation) rather than ends (i.e. improvements in health and access to services and improved learning environments). Many academics and clinicians/managers working in either health or education have been so caught up in the turmoil of the reforms that have occurred that it has been extremely difficult for them to focus on ends or purposes, on the social mandate of their activities. Thus we have now a perhaps even more insidious imperative that contributes not only to wider separation between town and gown, between health service and professional education, but also to the separation of the ends of both education and health service from the means that are utilised ostensibly to achieve these ends. In this paper I want to explore how participation in international alliances may be an important strategy for addressing these issues. How effective they are or will prove to be I cannot say. The studies to determine the effectiveness of these initiatives have not been done as yet. However, it is important that we keep issues of effectiveness to the forefront as we consider the range of international alliances that are now proliferating. INDEN has been at the forefront of electronically based international alliances in nursing and we may soon be able to judge its effectiveness on a number of measures.

Today I want to consider some of the issues surrounding why international alliances are emerging in higher education. I will then outline two other international alliances in which I am involved, Universitas 21 and the International Academic Nursing Alliance. I will then explore some implications of globalisation for nursing practice and scholarship and finally consider the issue of effectiveness.

### **Why are international alliances emerging in higher education?**

- Universities around the world are facing revolutionary change.
- The shift to mass education has resulted in inexorably strong demand pressures
- inherited monopolies are now challenged by new providers, using new technologies and new modes of service provision.
- The engine of change is the intersection of the virtual and the real.
- Internet based higher education of a quality now expected by consumers requires massive funds and hence is only viable on a large scale.

We need to consider how these pressures are impacting upon longstanding notions of the University as a

- scholarly place where truth is pursued through reasoned disciplined inquiry, and knowledge valued, preserved, transmitted, advanced and applied?
- cultural bridge across generations?
- chartered or licensed monopoly for assessment and certification of higher learning?
- physical place, home to a face to face learning community?

We are witnessing a move towards workplace learning and the idea that scholarship can be pursued in places other than universities. Around the world we are seeing a decline in arts faculties and the loss of history as a significant scholarly discipline. There are many contenders for assessing and certifying education programs and we are witnessing in part a shift from “brick” to “click” as internet based education proliferates.

As Professor Alan Gilbert, Vice Chancellor of the University of Melbourne observed recently; “Although universities are among history’s most robust institutions, it has not been through one defining ‘idea of a university’ that they have worked their civilising alchemy for more than 900 years; it is through many evolving ideas about what a university is and what it stands for”.

Some of the contemporary changes underway and the evolving notions of the idea of a university are very consistent, in my view, with current agendas for developing nursing practice and scholarship in the Academy. Nursing requires the town/gown separation that I referred to earlier to be managed. As I have written elsewhere,

“Nursing... is situated in uneasy ambiguity in the hybrid space created by the overlapping margins of town and gown (Parker 1997). Historically nursing practice has been portrayed as a-theoretical in this space, resulting in a split or fragmentation between nursing knowledge and nursing practice. Exploring this space allows us to discern the knowledge embedded in practice and the shifting and changing relationships between nursing knowledge and nursing practice (Parker and Wiltshire 1995). It enables understanding that the heart and centre of a practice discipline such as nursing lies at the overlapping boundaries, in the hybrid space of what have previously been understood as separate endeavours.” (Parker and Rickard 1997).

Thus I do not believe that we need to be pessimistic about how global agendas for higher education may impact upon nursing in this respect. There are many opportunities that can be grasped if we work in the context of these overlapping boundaries and do not lose sight of the relationship between nursing scholarship and health improvement, between academia and the social mandate of nursing. What is of greater concern, in my view, are the broader imperatives of economic rationalisation that may force those of us working in the academy to focus on means rather than ends, on issues such as increased student numbers at the expense of optimising learning environments, on developing learning packages rather than engaging in research and so on. It is in addressing these matters that I think international alliances may prove helpful.

## **What is the scope of international alliances?**

I first want to briefly identify three different models of internationalisation and then move onto a consideration of two case studies based on one of these models. Universities engage in a number of internationalising strategies and these include self-replication (having campuses in other countries), franchising (offering the qualification of a particular well known university award at a number of universities, and the network approach (looking for partners). Some universities may be involved in all three types of internationalisation and there are strengths and limitations to each model. The first two are based firmly under the control of the university in question. The network model is very much a partnership of like universities. The case study of Universitas 21 belongs to this network model.

Professional organisations may also engage in similar models of internationalisation. The International Academic Nursing Alliance, which is the second case study I will discuss, has been developed specifically as a network model.

## **Universitas 21**

- A company incorporated in the UK with a network of 18 universities in 10 countries
- 500,000 enrolments p/a
- Some 44,000 academics and researchers
- Operating budget of almost \$US9 billion
- This network provides a framework for member universities to pursue agendas that would be beyond their individual capabilities, capitalising on the established reputation and operational reach of each member.
- Collaborative projects and activities
- Student exchange program
- Learning resources catalogue
- Professional portability project
- Student network
- Research collaboration
- Meetings of Deans, Heads, Librarians
- Administrative benchmarking and transfer of good practices (research mgmt, admin information systems, facilities mgmt)
- Continuing education and professional development with a focus on international issues
- Developing virtual libraries to support e learning initiatives
- Fostering international debate on global policy issues

## **Member Universities**

- McGill University
- University of British Columbia
- University of Michigan
- University of Virginia
- New York University
- University of Birmingham
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Glasgow
- University of Nottingham
- Lund University
- Albert-Ludwigs University Freiburg
- National University of Singapore
- University of Hong Kong
- University of Peking
- Fudan University
- University of Melbourne
- University of New South Wales
- University of Queensland
- University of Auckland

## **Universitas 21 Global**

A joint initiative with Thomson Learning

### **Thomson Learning**

- Course design
- Content development
- Testing and assessment
- Student database management
- Translation (English, Spanish, Mandarin)

### **Universitas 21**

- International recognition and reputation of partner universities
- Best available academic expertise
- Credible quality assurance
- Multi-jurisdictional certification

### **International Academic Nursing Alliance (I.A.N.A.)**

- An electronic network of university nursing schools with an aim of linking nurses to promote high standards of nursing education, and ultimately improve the health of people around the world.
- Will connect university-based nursing education programs electronically to enhance networking, mentoring programs, research and faculty development worldwide.
- Run by a steering committee of 31 nurses leaders from around the world
- Officially launched in June 2001 in Denmark
- Consists of member University Schools, and managed by a management committee
- Logistical support provided by the Honour Society for Nurses, Sigma Theta Tau International

### **I.A.N.A. Mission**

- United globally by the ideals, culture of caring, and goals held in common by our profession, we commit ourselves to scholarship, collaboration, exchanges, support and dissemination through active participation in the academic nursing electronic alliance.

### **I.A.N.A. Vision**

- Vigorously strive to make strategic use of partnerships, opportunities, and resources made available by and through this alliance to raise standards, scholarship, and delivery of nursing education worldwide, toward improving nursing practice to meet the health care needs of all people.
- Excellence and quality
- Linkages among university schools of nursing
- Equity and sharing
- Toward growth of staff and students in university schools
- Global inclusiveness
- Expert, rigorous, reliable
- Satisfaction of users
- Increase health of populations

Once fully functioning I.A.N.A. will offer its members:

- Databases of higher education programs in nursing from around the globe
- Directories, including funding sources for research and education
- Repositories of doctoral abstracts; country-specific briefs about nursing education; postgraduate research abstracts and reports of collaborations that have occurred
- IANA web page will include: educational initiatives with links to school pages; international sabbaticals, postdoctoral programs and online education
- Chat rooms for faculties, deans, staff, graduate and undergraduate students

- Bulletin boards will include: upcoming events and conferences; advertisements; faculty and student exchange; culturally specific issues and clinical practice exchange
- Online Activities including: faculty professional development, research seminars and distance education

Stakeholders will be groups, organisations and individuals that have an interest in or have resources that are consistent with the purpose and services of the alliance. These may be:

- Government agencies
- Universities
- Faculty
- Schools of nursing, collaborating centres
- Students, nurses, academic associates

Sigma Theta Tau International will be a major stakeholder of the I.A.N.A. due to its pivotal position in providing a central communication point for the alliance

### **I.A.N.A. Membership**

To be institutional, not individual

Institutions:

- with higher academic degree programs or aspiring to such
- the capability to bring in international partners, and
- willing to commit time and resources to the global development of nursing education

Consist of:

- Universities
- Schools
- Colleges
- Programs
- Either offering or developing academic degree programs in nursing/midwifery, fostering international exchanges and experiences, dedicated to international partnering and collaboration, and willing to contribute resources toward global development.

### **I.A.N.A. Language**

For IANA to be truly international it needs to be easily accessible by the majority of the population hence multilingual dissemination is required.

## **What are the implications of globalisation for nursing practice and scholarship? Globalisation**

Social and economic imperatives of a global market economy with demands for accountability and “performativity” in contestable and shifting contexts characterised by advanced communication and information systems.

### **Paradoxical Implications**

- Trend towards systematisation, standardisation and collaboration across various previously discrete professional, practice and geographic boundaries
- Work environments lacking clear definition and characterised by ambiguity, instability, volatility, shifting alliances

### **Implications of globalisation for nursing practice.**

#### **Global reform agendas require:**

- Evidence based practice
- Team approach to care
- Consumer led care
- Advanced practice roles
- Internationally mobile careers

#### **International nursing professional agendas require in addition:**

- Issues of equity and access to services to be addressed
- Regional and remote area issues to be addressed

- Reliable information about nursing worldwide
- Cultural, political, professional issues to be addressed and strategies identified
- Global nursing workforce to be addressed within framework of local needs

#### **Implications of globalisation for nursing scholarship.**

##### **University internationalising agendas require:**

- Changing methods of teaching and learning to satisfy technologically sophisticated consumers
- Researching effectiveness of new teaching and learning technologies
- Strengthening linkages for international collaborations in research and teaching

##### **University internationalising agendas require:**

- Sharing resources
- Provision of opportunities for students and faculty to forge links with wider world
- Provision of professional development and continuing education opportunities for faculty

##### **International nursing academic agendas require in addition:**

- Issues surrounding colonising agendas to be addressed
- Issues surrounding linkages between universities and service providers to be addressed
- Issues surrounding linkages with health consumers to be addressed

#### **How will we know if international alliances are effective?**

##### **Necessary conditions for effectiveness:**

- Sound infrastructure
- Leadership committed to the vision
- Support for local initiatives
- Aims that are achievable in terms of human and financial resources, and a clearly identified timetable for achievable aims
- Clearly defined and measurable objectives
- Recognition of the possibility of unexpected and unintended consequences that may demonstrate effectiveness in ways that have not been identified

##### **MOST IMPORTANTLY**

- Individual willingness to commit to an uncertain future.

## **Conclusion**

In this presentation I have drawn upon two case studies of international alliances to consider issues surrounding the contribution of scholarship and doctoral education to the social mandate of nursing in a context of globalisation. These two examples give insight into the breadth and scope of issues to be considered in international alliances. The collaborative opportunities available through networks such as these, will I believe help to balance the imperatives towards focusing on means rather than ends and have much to offer us. Their effectiveness however, is still to be determined.

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