

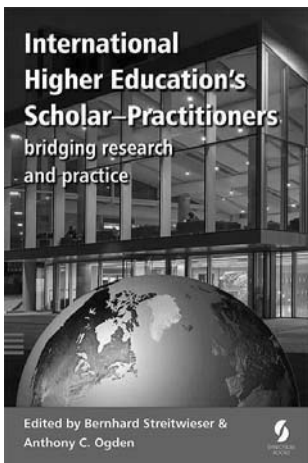
Book Review

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## **International Higher Education's Scholar-Practitioners: Bridging Research and Practice**

Edited by BERNHARD STREITWIESER & ANTHONY C. OGDEN  
Oxford, UK: Symposium Books Ltd  
2016 paperback 340 pages, £42.00 ISBN 978-1-873927-77-9

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The number of international students around the world has increased from below two million in 2000 to five million plus in 2016, and it is projected to exceed 7 million in less than a decade. Of that, the US hosts more than a million now, and the number is (or, likely, was) rising. The internationalization of higher education in the United States—both in terms of students arriving here and going for education abroad, as well as in terms of responding to globalization through curriculum/pedagogy and student support—could be impacted by ongoing political volatility here and around the world. For instance, if political tensions heighten between the US and China (which is a source of one-third of all international students here) or, worse, with all major Asian countries that are collectively a source of more than two-thirds of a million plus students, then the 15-year trend in the internationalization by numbers could be dramatically impacted. The same geopolitical dynamics could also undermine American universities' ability for internationalization by impacting research funding in this area, making it harder to advocate for a more global view of education or prohibiting support for international students as well as reducing funding for domestic students' study abroad.

In response to dynamics like the above, readers expect international higher education research and scholarship to be situated in the broader global context and address geopolitical dynamics on transnational scales.

Unfortunately, in the United States, scholarly responses to changing global dynamics are usually slow and weak. The convention here is for scholars to discuss “internationalization” in the abstract without situating national discourses in the international context or using transnational perspectives. The exception is for a few scholars in the UK and Canada to be included and for edited collections to assume that the contexts and challenges in these places are all the same, perhaps adopting a cultural grand narrative while ignoring educational contexts and issues/perspectives (from) beyond this triangle.

The edited collection *International Higher Education’s Scholar-Practitioners: Bridging Research and Practice* continues the mainstream tradition of American scholars’ accounting of the internationalization of higher education here. In spite that classic problem, however, this collection of essays is insightful as it covers a significant range of issues on a focused topic: bridging the scholar-practitioner dichotomy. The book is quite strong in the central argument that the gap between what the academics learn (and teach) versus how the administrative workforce implements that knowledge must be brought together by creating a new cadre of “scholar-practitioners.” This volume explores diverse approaches and perspectives of different scholar/practitioners working to promote internationalization of higher education in their institutions. Editors Bernhard Streitwieser and Anthony Ogden frame the collection by situating their advocacy for the “hybrid professional in today’s higher education context . . . propos[ing] a model and definitions of the scholar-practitioner’s role” (p. 19). The hybrid practitioner’s role is illustrated in the personal experience shared in the book’s preface by Hans De Wit: “I left the practitioner function of [senior international officer] and became a full-time scholar as a professor of internationalization of higher education, culminating in my current position as director/ professor of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College” (p. 12). Such personal-professional experiences, which permeate the book, make the collection both engaging to read and a useful as a resource to students, instructors, advisors, and administrative staff—including those who aspire to be future leaders in international higher education.

The first few chapters offer definitions and theoretical perspectives, including the book’s key proposals, with two of them also providing a historical background behind the central problem. The contributors offer insights about how hybrid professionals can create meaningful knowledge “particularly in newer areas of research, such as around the substance, methods and outcomes of mobility, internationalizing curricula, cross-cultural learning and skill building, and others” (Hudzik, p. 52). The second section focuses on the perspectives and problems related to international students, community colleges, non-academic

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research organization. In this section, Giselda Beaudin and Louis Berends emphasize the need to empower and encourage scholar-practitioners by recognizing and rewarding their roles “within higher and international education internally, on campuses and in organizations, and externally, particularly in professional organizations and publications” (112). Stories and reflections of scholar-practitioners are again included, followed by chapters about cost, curriculum, and innovation in academic support (such as interdisciplinary models). The book then moves to instructional theories and practices in a few chapters, including issues about graduate education, research/scholarship, and the future trajectory of international education. A brief and unique section at the end includes personal narratives of the contributors who describe “diverse pathways that [they have] taken to becoming scholar-practitioner[s]” today. These narratives also highlight non-linear academic journeys, implying that the field needs more diversity in the future. The narratives also help to encourage new professionals to follow this profession by illustrating it as a promising field.

With visuals and numbers (alongside narratives and examples), the book is engaging enough to finish reading it 340 pages in a few sittings. The format and layout of the print are also done well, making reading fast and easy. If anything is lacking/disappointing, then it is the book’s failure to really even define “internationalization” in concrete terms—not to mention glossing over the one million international students with a mention or two and never truly addressing issues like how institutions engage domestic students with their international counterparts as part of “internationalization” right here at home. The book doesn’t really fulfill the promise of a globe on the cover page, set against the background of an American university in the background in the cover.

There are a few places in the book where the authors write thought-provokingly about the broader/global and cross-cultural dynamic of international higher education, even as they primarily focus on the local. Michael Woolf, for instance, describes the American higher education as “conservative,” urging the scholar-practitioner to “critically interrogate the unholy trinity” of the “traditional ways of defining knowledge,” the reliance on notions of culture that “distorts learning objectives” and benchmarking as incapable of facilitating “intrinsically innovative educational models” for internationalized higher education (p. 222).

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