Borderless, Offshore, Transnational and Cross-border Education: Definition and Data Dilemmas

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Abstract:

The increase in international academic mobility has resulted in new and different terms being used to describe this complex phenomenon. The purpose of this paper is to examine similarities and differences in how various countries and organisations are using the terms borderless, cross-border, transnational, and offshore education and to identify key and common elements. The emphasis is on developing a common understanding of the terms for the purposes of developing policy and regulations, undertaking research and collecting data. A conceptual map in the form of typologies for the different types of providers/institutions delivering education across borders as well as the various modes of program and provider mobility is proposed. Finally, the paper delivers a strong message about the need for institutions, associations and governments to take the collection and analysis of data on programme and provider/institutional mobility more seriously. Without some reliable and valid information on the volume, type and scope of education moving across borders, it is a challenge to develop sound policy and regulations to guide this growing sub-sector of higher education and to monitor new opportunities, risks and benefits.

About the Author:

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1 Introduction

1.1 Growth and complexity of International Education Mobility

In the past decade, the interest and growth in international academic mobility has exploded. It is not only the students, professors and scholars who are moving around the world - different kinds of providers including private companies, traditional academic institutions and professional associations are taking academic programmes to students in their home countries. Various types of programme delivery methods are being used to offer a wide range of courses either through virtual or face to face contact. New types of partnerships including public/private, non-profit/for-profit, local/foreign, and institutions/corporations are being formed to respond to the burgeoning demand for access to higher education, and in many cases, the appeal of a foreign academic qualification. A 2002 report by IDP Australia\(^1\) predicts that the demand for international education will increase 4 fold from 1.8 million students in the year 2000 to 7.2 million students in 2025. These are staggering figures. They help to explain and forecast the growth in worldwide academic mobility. It is highly questionable whether this demand can be met solely through student mobility. The numbers and types of education providers and programmes being delivered across borders will need to grow. Students may welcome foreign education institutions/providers in their home country, as more learners will be able to afford foreign tuition costs if they stay home and avoid the financial burden of travel and accommodation expenses. Furthermore, governments and employers may expect less brain drain if the students study at home.

Given the new challenges and complexities facing academic mobility, one might well ask why a paper addressing the definitions, typologies and collection of data is important. Given the rapid growth rate of education crossing borders, isn’t it more important to discuss concrete issues such as the implications for licensing, quality assurance, access, funding, research, intellectual property, trade policies, recognition of qualifications, joint ownership etc.? These issues are definitely central to the analysis of the new forms of international academic mobility. Nevertheless, it is difficult to address these issues, especially in terms of policies and regulations, if there is confusion about what cross-border, transnational, offshore or borderless education really means and involves. Clarity on definitions for the different types of providers and programmes is more important in light of the diversity of actors involved. Secondly, the dearth of reliable statistical data at the national and regional levels (and often at the institutional level as well) is also becoming more problematic. Without some solid information on the volume, type, destination, impact and trends related to education being delivered across borders, we do not have a foundation to develop national, regional and international regulatory frameworks, nor is there the opportunity to undertake comparative analysis within and between countries and regions.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to analyse different interpretations and uses of terms that are being used to describe or characterise the phenomenon of international higher education mobility. It is not the intention to propose one universal definition. The purpose is to examine differences and similarities between ways various countries and organisations are using the terms and to identify

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key and common elements. This can facilitate a common understanding of what is being debated and more importantly, what is being regulated. Of equal significance is the need for a clearer picture of the parameters and variables used in collecting and analysing data at all levels - institutional, national, regional and international.

In short, increased attention on students, education programmes and institutions/providers moving between countries is needed and welcomed. But, to develop effective policy frameworks and guidelines there needs to be a common understanding of the terms being used and the data being collected. The emphasis is on developing a common understanding of the terms for policy, regulations, research and data collection purposes, not necessarily a common language though the latter does facilitate the former.

1.3 Scope and Focus

It is important to be clear about the scope of this paper. International higher education mobility includes the movement of ideas, information, people, programmes, providers, technology, curricula, values and knowledge. The focus of this paper is on the movement of academic programmes that lead to some type of qualification and on the mobility of institutions/providers. These providers include the more traditional institutions involved in teaching, research and service as well as the new providers who focus more on the delivery of academic courses and educational support services.

Globalisation, in general, has introduced increased mobility and a stronger orientation to the market and trade. This applies to the education sector. This paper intentionally distinguishes between 3 different approaches to international mobility - development cooperation, academic exchange and commercial business. While many of the issues and policies relate to all 3 approaches, the focus of this paper is on fee-based education and commercial approaches to mobility. It should be noted that the term commercial is deliberately chosen as it implies a fee or commercial transaction. It does not differentiate between profit/non-profit purposes or public/private entities, as this is often difficult to assess in light of different rules and conditions among countries. It is also important to recognise that perspectives and issues differ substantially depending on whether one is a receiving (host) country or a sending (source) country. This paper aims to address both perspectives.

Although one of the objectives of this discussion is to make sense of the myriad of new terms that are emerging, it is important to be clear at the outset how key concepts are used. The term ‘providers’ is used in a generic sense and refers to all types of entities and partnerships that deliver education between countries. ‘Providers’ is a term that traditionally, is not frequently used in education parlance. With more private and commercial companies, as well as professional and non-governmental organisations, involved in cross border education delivery, the term provider has recently been introduced. In fact, the term ‘new or alternative providers’ is now being used to describe these new types of entities in order to distinguish them from the more traditional higher education institutions such as universities and colleges. This differentiation is still rather murky, as the boundary between these two categories is blurred. For this discussion, ‘providers’ will refer to all types of deliverers of higher education but in the current transition phase, the term ‘institutions/providers’ will also be used.

1.4 Outline of Paper

The outline of this paper is as follows. The second section addresses the question of definitions and in particular, the similarities and differences between the various terms used to describe education moving between countries. In the third section, a conceptual map, in the form of
typologies, is presented to clarify some of the confusion and misunderstanding related to different types of providers and modes of delivery. The need for concerted and co-ordinated efforts to collect data and become better informed on the volume, types and scope of cross-border education is the focus of section four. Finally, the last section summarises the definitional and data challenges related to the developments in programmes and providers moving across borders and urges more action and analysis of these issues and their implications.

2 Definition and Terms

It is fascinating to see how the vocabulary of international education has evolved in the last decade. Ten or fifteen years ago, we would not have been referring to terms such as globalisation, cross-border education, education providers, or virtual education. Globalisation, the knowledge society and ICTs have had a profound influence on the shape and substance of the higher education sector. As a result, new terms have been introduced into our higher education lexicon. The purpose of this section is to examine some of the more recently coined terms that relate to internationalisation in general and more specifically to international academic mobility. The aim is to wade through the current conceptual maze and bring some clarity to the way terms are used in order to facilitate a common understanding of terms, to encourage data collection that is comparative and reliable, and to develop national, regional, or international guidelines/ regulations.

Table 1 - Evolution of International Education Terminology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Terms Last 15 years</th>
<th>Existing Terms Last 25 years</th>
<th>Traditional Terms Last 40 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generic Terms</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Globalisation</td>
<td>-internationalisation</td>
<td>-international education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-borderless education</td>
<td>-multi-cultural education</td>
<td>-international development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-cross-border education</td>
<td>-inter-cultural education</td>
<td>cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-transnational education</td>
<td>-global education</td>
<td>-comparative education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-virtual education</td>
<td>-distance education</td>
<td>-correspondence education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-internationalisation ‘abroad’</td>
<td>-offshore or overseas education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-internationalisation ‘at home’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Elements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-education providers</td>
<td>-international students</td>
<td>-foreign students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-corporate universities</td>
<td>-study abroad</td>
<td>-student exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-liberalisation of educational services</td>
<td>-institution agreements</td>
<td>-development projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-virtual universities</td>
<td>-partnership projects</td>
<td>-cultural agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-branch campus</td>
<td>-area studies</td>
<td>-language study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-twinning programmes</td>
<td>-double/joint degrees</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-franchising programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-networks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-Global Education Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 1, international cooperation, international relations and international education were the most common terms used 40 years ago. These concepts were usually defined in terms of activities – development projects, foreign students, and international cultural agreements. About 20 years ago, the term internationalisation emerged. It too was defined in
terms of activities such as study abroad, area and language studies and institutional agreements. However, the notion of internationalisation also introduced the concept of ‘process’ and broadened the meaning beyond the activities approach. Internationalisation became a more comprehensive term and included institutional and national level goals, policies, strategies and activities. It was used to refer to the international dimension of all aspects of higher education, not just specific activities. As the term internationalisation was being adopted, the notion of globalisation started to gain more popularity. At first, the two terms were being used interchangeably in the education sector. But soon efforts were made to distinguish between globalisation and internationalisation of education by situating globalisation as a phenomenon that was touching all aspects of society – including education - and internationalisation was situated as both a response to and an agent of globalisation. Without trying to oversimplify the complexity of the debate about these concepts, it can be said that internationalisation stressed the notion of relations between nation, people, culture and globalisation stressed the idea of a world wide flow of people, technology, economy, ideas, knowledge, culture but did not focus on (but nor did it exclude) the relationships between countries. They are closely related and dynamic concepts but are purposely used differently in the context of education.

The impact of globalisation on the international dimension of education is significant. It includes

- an increased demand for tertiary education given the role of the knowledge society and economy
- the introduction of a market and trade approach to international education
- a renewed emphasis on education mobility
- advances in the use of information and communication technologies for delivery of education

All of these changes have helped to focus more attention on the movement of education across borders. As a result, the international education community has begun to refer to two pillars of internationalisation – the ‘at home’ (campus based) aspects and the ‘education abroad’ elements. They are closely intertwined and it is both difficult and ill advised to consider them as distinct or parallel lines of activities. Nevertheless, it is clear that more attention is currently being given to the mobility side of internationalisation as evidenced by the number of different terms included in column one in Table 1. The next sections examine more closely many of the generic terms used to characterise education abroad.

2.1 Transnational and offshore education

Australia was one of the first countries to use the term ‘transnational education’ in the early nineties as it wanted to differentiate between international students recruited to Australian campuses and those who were studying for Australian degrees offshore. Hence, the term transnational education was used to simply describe offshore international student enrolments regardless of whether the offshore students were studying through twinning, franchise, distance or branch campus arrangements. It is interesting to note how the use of terms in Australia has evolved in such a way that ‘international education’ usually refers to foreign students studying in...

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Australia and ‘transnational education’ refers to those studying offshore. In this conceptualisation of the term transnational, the focus is on where the student is studying.

The Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE) was established as an independent organisation in 1995. Over the years GATE has changed in terms of governance and ownership, but it still remains dedicated to disseminating good practices in transnational education and offering certification services. GATE was one of the first organisations to address the issue of quality assurance of education being delivered abroad and developed the following definition:

Transnational education….denotes any teaching or learning activity in which the students are in a different country (the host country) to that in which the institution providing the education is based (the home country). This situation requires that national boundaries be crossed by information about the education, and by staff and/or education materials.⁵

Once again the emphasis rests on the location of the student but a new element is added, which is the location of the institution providing the education. The notion of crossing borders is also made explicit.

UNESCO and the Council of Europe (COE) in their ‘Code of Practice on Transnational Education’ describe transnational education in a similar way to GATE.⁶ Their original 2001 definition was updated in 2005 and defines transnational education to mean:

All types and modes of delivery of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.

This is a comprehensive definition and introduces important elements. All types and modes of delivery are included and it is specified that the learner is in a different country than where the ‘awarding’ institution is based. Thus, the notion of who awards the qualification becomes more important. Reference is also made to ‘stateless’ types of programmes and by inference institutions. These are important additions.

Both the GATE and UNESCO/Council of Europe definitions of transnational education are oriented and applicable to situations where programmes move across a border or where the programme or provider are virtual and delivering by distance. It is unclear whether they cover ‘new types’ of providers, especially those that establish a physical presence in the country and obtain permission from the receiving country to offer ‘recognised’ qualifications. In this scenario, the providers are clearly foreign ‘awarding’ providers, but they are not located in a different country than the student. Is this type of situation included in a definition of transnational education that is based on the student and awarding institution being situated in different locations?

It is interesting to try to pinpoint the difference between international education and transnational education. Clearly, the idea of nation or country is common to both terms, leaving the prepositions “inter” and “trans” as the distinguishing feature. But do the two prepositions really explain the difference between the two concepts? In the Australian case, the literal meaning of

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the prepositions is almost irrelevant as a way to explain the difference between international
students studying in Australia or offshore. In the GATE and the UNESCO/COE cases,
‘transnational education’ describes situations where students are not in the ‘source country’ of
the awarding institution. In other words, the programmes from the awarding institution have been
transported to students in residing in other countries. The logic of why it is ‘trans-national’ rather
than ‘inter-national’ is perhaps based on the need to have a term that differs from international
education rather than from substantially different meanings of ‘trans’ and ‘inter’- unless of
course, ‘trans’ is used to refer to crossing national borders.

2.2 Borderless Education

The term borderless education first appeared in a 2000 Australian report by Cunningham et al.,
and was followed by a similar type of study in the United Kingdom.7 Basically the term
borderless education refers to ‘the blurring of conceptual, disciplinary and geographic borders
traditionally inherent to higher education’.8 The innovative and enlightening feature of this term is
that it goes beyond geographic and jurisdictional boundaries to include temporal, disciplinary
and conceptual borders. This is the strength of the term, but also a possible weakness. Its
contribution is at a conceptual level as it remains fairly abstract and challenging to use in
concrete and applied situations.

It is interesting to juxtapose the concepts of borderless education and cross-border education.
The former term acknowledges the disappearance of borders while the latter term actually
emphasises the existence of borders. Both approaches reflect the reality of today. In this period
of unprecedented growth in distance and e-learning education, geographic borders seem to be
of little consequence. Yet, on the other hand, we can detect a growing importance of borders
when the focus turns to regulatory responsibility, especially related to quality assurance,
accreditation, funding, joint ownership or intellectual copyright. Borderless education does not
seem to be extensively used in operational or applied settings. Nevertheless, it is useful to
capture the notion of the blurring and erosion of traditional conceptual academic boundaries and
for that reason has played an important role in raising awareness about changes and challenges
in the education sector.

2.3 Cross-border Education

In many ways it seems ironic that the role of borders is actually stronger in a globalised world
that encourages the free flow of people, ideas, goods, services, knowledge, capital and
technology. The introduction of new multi-lateral trade rules or immigration laws are examples
where crossing borders into a different jurisdiction has significant implications. Hence, the notion
of jurisdictional boundaries has increasing significance for many sectors including education.
During the last five years, partially in response to the importance of borders, the term cross-
border education has emerged and is becoming more widely used as a comprehensive term. It
includes many aspects of international academic mobility but primarily focuses on students and
education programmes and providers.

For instance, both UNESCO and OECD are giving serious attention to the issues involved in
higher education crossing borders. Many of their recent working groups, fora and publications
have addressed the current challenges facing internationalisation and have used the term cross-

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Borderless Education. Canberra: Australian Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
and Principals.
border education to focus on and capture the major changes related to academic mobility. Another example is the 2004 UNESCO position paper on "Higher Education in a More Globalised World" which makes frequent reference to cross-border education as one key aspect of internationalisation that deserves more attention in terms of quality assurance, research and language of instruction. \(^9\) The Centre for Education, Research and Innovation (CERI) of the OECD has organised 3 regional meetings and produced two new publications that have addressed the quality assurance/consumer protection issues in cross-border education\(^10\) and the trade approach to internationalisation.\(^11\)

Both these organisations have put cross-border education higher on their policy agenda in response to member state interests. They have developed, with key education stakeholders, the UNESCO/OECD “Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education”.\(^12\) The definition of cross-border education in the proposed guidelines is as follows:

[H]igher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, programme, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders. Cross-border education may include higher education by public/private and not-for-profit/ for-profit providers. It encompasses a wide range of modalities in continuum from face-to-face (taking various forms from students traveling abroad and campuses abroad) to distance learning (using a range of technologies and including e-learning.

This is a very comprehensive description and clearly refers to people, programmes, providers, and reference materials crossing borders using a variety of modalities. It differs from transnational education by placing national borders as the central concept as opposed to transnational, which emphasises the learner and the awarding institution being located in different countries. The result may be the same but the conceptualisation is different.

2.4 Codes of Practice

Codes of conduct for education delivered between countries have been developed by several national university associations, quality agencies and government departments. They are usually a set of principles to guide the practice of delivering programmes to other countries and for establishing partnerships with foreign providers. They are related to, but differ from, the codes for international student recruitment, as they focus on the movement of programmes and providers not the learner.

The codes are intended for use by public and private higher education institutions. They have relevance, but no imperative, for other types of providers such as companies and professional associations. The codes differ in substance and perspective but they are similar in spirit and purpose. They aim to assure quality in cross-border academic provision and to maintain the integrity of the academic credit and qualification. It is interesting to note the different terminology used in the titles of the codes. The titles of the codes include overseas, offshore, transnational, \(^9\) UNESCO. (2004). Higher Education in a More Globalised World. Position Paper. Paris: UNESCO.
cross-border and collaborative provision and serve as eloquent testimony to the diversity of
terms currently being used. Examples of these codes include:

- Code of Ethical Practice in the Offshore Provision of Education and the Educational Services
  by Higher Australian Higher Education Institutions – Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee
- Principles of Good Practice for the Educational Programs for Non-US Nationals - New
  England Association of Schools and Colleges - [http://www.neasc.org/cihe/overseas_programs.PDF]
- Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education – UNESCO/CEPES and
  the Council of Europe - [http://www.copes.ro/hed/recogn/groups/transnat/code.htm]
- Code of Conduct for CrossBorder/Transnational Delivery of Higher Education Programs -
  South African Ministry Of Education
- Code of Practice for Overseas Education Institutions Operating in Mauritius – Tertiary
  Education Commission [http://tec.intnet.mu/distancEdu.htm]

2.5 Non-governmental organisations

A review of reports, seminars, and publications from non-governmental organisations and
professional associations from around the world shows increased attention and action directed
to internationalisation and more specifically academic mobility. It is worth noting that in many
instances internationalisation is only being interpreted as academic mobility and, in some cases,
only as commercial or trade oriented activities. While this narrowing of focus often happens
when new trends and issues are being addressed, it is important not to lose sight that
internationalisation is a phenomenon that is much broader than mobility. It relates to the
international, intercultural and global dimensions of teaching, research, service and delivery and
covers campus based activities as well as mobility initiatives between countries. This is
precisely why it is necessary to examine new terms such as transnational and cross-border
education in relation to each other, and in context with existing terms such as
internationalisation.

The heightened awareness about new opportunities and potential risks involved in education
crossing borders has produced declarations such as “Sharing Quality Higher Education across
Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide” (2004). This
statement was developed by four groups: International Association of Universities (IAU),
American Council on Education (ACE) the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA),
and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). Even though this statement
is essentially driven by three North American groups and one international association, the
audience for the statement is higher education institutions, government agencies and non-
governmental associations around the world. The title demonstrates once more the critical role
that the notion of ‘borders’ plays.

National and regional studies are being undertaken and it is clear that individual countries prefer
different terms. For instance, Australia and Europe generally use transnational education, albeit
in different ways. There appear to be more references to transnational education in Latin
America, while North America and the United Kingdom tend to use cross-border education.
Countries in Africa are using the terms cross-border education and transnational education
interchangeably with no clear definition for either term. The new code of practice from South
Africa is a concrete example. This is a sign of the times and it seems that confusion with terminology is perhaps part of progress.

Whether the term is conceptualised in terms of ‘location of learner and the awarding provider’ or the ‘crossing of jurisdictional borders’ may be a subtle difference in terms of semantics, but there are consequences from a regulation point of view. There needs to be clarity and consistency of terms within a country for national regulations to work and for a common understanding of regional/international policies. That said, one is optimistic that the new Cross-border Guidelines developed jointly by UNESCO and OECD will bring some leadership and convergence to the current confusion and dilemma about terminology.

The way that the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) uses the terms is both interesting and revealing. OBHE is arguably the leading authority on borderless education in the world and undertakes/commissions leading edge applied research on a broad spectrum of related issues. A review of OBHE reports and briefing notes demonstrates the panorama of new terminology, particularly in relation to students, programmes and providers moving between countries. Due to the fact that authors of OBHE reports originate from different countries, sectors and disciplines it is not a surprise that a wide diversity of terms exists but it does contribute to the confused terrain. The term borderless education is used in a broad and conceptual way. As an umbrella term it is efficient and covers a very broad spectrum of terms and topics. The problem begins when different meanings are given to the same term in different contexts (such as transnational education) and when related terms are used interchangeably.

2.6 General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)

The introduction of education as a tradable service is relatively new territory for the higher education community. The GATS is a worldwide agreement administered by the World Trade Organisation aiming to further liberalise trade in services. GATS has introduced a new set of rules and principles to govern the import and export of any service - including education - and has developed four principal modes of trade of service. The four modes are as follows:

Mode 1- Cross-border supply focuses on the service crossing the border, which does not require the consumer to physically move. Examples in higher education include distance education and e-learning.

Mode 2- Consumption Abroad refers to the consumer moving to the country of the supplier which in education means students taking all or part of their education in another country.

Mode 3- Commercial Presence involves a service provider establishing a commercial facility in another country to provide a service. Examples in higher education include branch campuses or franchising arrangements.

Mode 4- Presence of Natural Persons means persons travelling to another country on a temporary basis to provide service. In the education sector, this would include professors or researchers.

It is clear that cross-border supply is one of the four modes of trade. Cross-border education in the GATS context is focused primarily on distance education and therefore has a much narrower interpretation than transnational or cross-border education as used by the education sector. However, there is one similarity in interpretation that bears mentioning and that is the element of commercial practice and the for-profit motive. There is a perception in the education community that cross-border education has a close link to commercial and for profit education, which of
A course is the focus of the GATS 4 modes of trade. The same can be said about transnational education, especially in the Australian context. Yet, from a European perspective, there is less emphasis on the commercial business of transnational education although it certainly is increasing in many Eastern and Western European countries.

This discussion has served to illustrate how various countries, governments and associations attach different meaning to similar terms and often, similar meanings to different terms. Table 2 provides a summary of the approaches used to define the phenomenon of delivering education between countries and identifies key elements.

Table 2: Summary of Definitions and Key Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder and source</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Key Elements</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GATE- Global Alliance for Transnational Education</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Location of learner and providing institution</td>
<td>Transnational education denotes any teaching or learning activity in which the students are in a different country (the host country) to that in which the institution providing the education is based (the home country).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report on the “Business of Borderless Education” CVCP</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Blurring of borders</td>
<td>Borderless education refers to the blurring of conceptual, disciplinary and geographic borders traditionally inherent to higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO and Council of Europe Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications: ‘Code of Practice for Transnational Education’</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Location of learner and awarding institution</td>
<td>All types and modes of delivery of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO/OECD “Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education”</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Crossing of national jurisdictional border</td>
<td>Higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, programme, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBHE Report on Transnational Education and Regulations</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Between countries</td>
<td>Transnational education is used to designate higher education provision offered by one country in another and to exclude provision where solely the student travels abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAU, CHEA, ACE, AUCC Statement</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Role of borders</td>
<td>‘Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GATS Agreement</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Service moves across border not the consumer</td>
<td>Cross-border supply focuses on the service crossing the border, which does not require the consumer to physically move</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two common themes characterise the definitions in Table 2. The first is the concept of crossing borders and the second is that the learner is in a different country than the awarding institution. Is this a case of two different approaches meaning the same thing? On the surface, this may be true. But closer inspection raises the question whether the notion of crossing (jurisdictional) borders will have more sustainability and perhaps greater significance during this period of...
reviewing and revising regulations and policy that deal with licensing, quality assurance, intellectual property, foreign ownership, profit and GATS rules. The notion that learners are located in a different country than the awarding institution is attractive because it is student/education oriented rather than regulation oriented. However, it is more applicable to programme mobility than provider mobility and may be eclipsed by the fact that ‘stateless’ providers (meaning no affiliation with a national education system in a ‘home or sending’ country) establish a physical presence in a ‘host’ country and provide education courses and services to resident students and clients. This may negate the basic tenet of transnational education - student and awarding institutions in different countries. Therefore, the term cross-border education may be more relevant to the present challenges facing the delivery of international education to students through programme and provider mobility. Cross-border education is used henceforth in this paper. Borders refer to jurisdictional borders at either the national, sub-regional or regional levels.

3 A Conceptual Map: Towards Typologies for Providers and Modes of Mobility

3.1 Traditional and new providers

One of the challenges in discussing the issues and policy implications of cross-border education relates to the diversity of providers. As already indicated, there are the ‘traditional’ public and private higher education institutions and, there are ‘new or alternate’ providers which include media companies such as Pearson (UK), Thomson (Canada), multinational companies such as Apollo (USA), Informatics (Singapore) and Aptech (India), corporate universities such as those run by Motorola and Toyota, and networks of universities, professional associations and organisations. Together they make for a fascinating array of entities involved in the new arena of cross-border education.

Generally, the ‘new or alternate’ providers are mainly occupied with teaching/training or providing services and do not include a strong focus on research per se. They can complement, co-operate, compete or simply coexist with the ‘traditional’ public and private higher education institutions whose mandate is traditionally the trinity of teaching, research and service. The relationship between the ‘traditional universities’ and ‘new providers’, which are publicly owned companies and traded on the stock exchange, are analysed in an annual report on the Global Education Index. Special attention is given to ‘new’ providers that are in a direct competitive position with ‘traditional’ institutions. However, it is not just the ‘new’ providers that are becoming increasingly interested in commercial cross-border initiatives. Conventional higher education institutions, both private and public, are also seeking opportunities for commercial delivery of education programmes in other countries and to date it is estimated that they are delivering the majority of cross-border education programmes. The majority of these ‘traditional’ providers are bona fide institutions that comply with domestic and foreign regulations (where they exist), but there is also an increase in rogue or low quality providers who are not

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recognised by bona fide accreditation/licensing bodies. In addition, there is a worrisome increase in the number of ‘degree mills’ operating around the world. These are often no more than web based companies that sell certificates based on ‘life experiences’ and do not deliver education programmes at all.

The expansion in numbers and types of entities that are providing education programmes and services across borders is contributing to the definition dilemmas that are the focus of this paper. This also applies to the modes of cross-border programme delivery and provider mobility. This general state of flux may well indicate progress and innovation but it also begs for some kind of classification system or typology in order to make sense of the new ‘playing field’ of cross-border education.

The proposed typology of cross-border providers in Table 3 is purposely rather generic. The typology is oriented to international academic provision but may have some relevance for domestic delivery as well. There seems to be a continual flow of announcements about new providers and new forms of partnerships making this typology a work in progress. It is an evolving field that needs to be closely monitored.

Table 3: Typology of Traditional and New or Alternate Providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Provider</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Profit or Non/Profit</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Higher Education Institutions:</strong> Oriented to Teaching, Research, Service to Society</td>
<td>Includes public non-profit, private non-profit and private for-profit institutions. Usually part of home national education system and recognised by national bona fide licensing/accrediting body.</td>
<td>Can be non-profit or for-profit oriented as an institution.</td>
<td>Many countries have a mixed system of publicly and privately funded higher education institutions but there is a definite blurring of the boundary separating or distinguishing one type from another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognised Higher Education Institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-recognised Higher Education Institutions</td>
<td>Usually private and not formally part of a national education system. Includes higher education institutions that are not recognised by national bona fide licensing/accrediting body. If the non-recognised higher education institutions are of low quality, they are often referred to as ‘rogue’ providers.</td>
<td>Usually profit oriented domestically and internationally.</td>
<td>‘Diploma mills’ sell degrees but do not provide programmes of study and are related to cross-border education but are not true providers. ‘Rogue providers’ are often accredited by self-accrediting groups or companies or by agencies that sell accreditation (accreditation mills).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New or Alternate Providers:</strong> Oriented to Teaching and/ or Commercial Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Company Higher</td>
<td>Can be publicly traded or privately owned and include: 1. Companies that establish</td>
<td>Profit oriented.</td>
<td>Can include a variety of companies (i.e. media, IT, publishing) who provide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Institutions</strong></td>
<td>higher education institutions that may or may not be ‘recognised’ by bona fide licensing/ accrediting bodies and 2. Companies that focus more on the provision of services. Usually not part of ‘home’ national education system.</td>
<td>education programmes and support services. Can complement, cooperate, compete or co-exist with more traditional higher education institutions. Companies that provide academic programmes and are publicly traded on a stock exchange are part of the Global Education Index developed by the Observatory on Borderless Education.(^{17})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate Higher Education Institutions</strong></td>
<td>Usually part of major international corporation and outside of national education system. Not usually recognised by national bona fide licensing/ accreditation body. Not part of home national education system.</td>
<td>Not relevant. The corporations that run their own education/training institutes provide programmes for their employees only and are cross-border providers by virtue of being large multinational companies. They often collaborate with traditional higher education institutions especially for degree-awarding power.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional, Governmental and Non-Govt. organisations and networks</strong></td>
<td>Can be combination of public/public or public/private or private/private organisations and higher education institutions.</td>
<td>Usually profit oriented in purpose. The organisations/networks may or may not be part of home national education system; and they may or may not be recognised by national bona fide licensing/ accreditation body. However, some of the individual partners may be.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Virtual Higher Education Institutions</strong></td>
<td>Includes higher education institutions that are 100% virtual. May or may not be part of home national education system and may or may not be recognised by national bona fide licensing/accrediting body.</td>
<td>Usually profit oriented if delivering cross-border Difficult for receiving national education system to monitor or regulate international virtual higher education institutions due to distance delivery methods.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Footnote**  
Home country denotes sending or source country and host country means receiving country

It is important to highlight the fact that whether a higher education institution (HEI) is public or private is no longer the key factor differentiating the two types of traditional higher education institutions. The element of official ‘recognition’ by the home or sending country is proposed as the key element of differentiation. This shift illustrates the importance of a HEI being in good standing and recognised by a bona fide agency that registers or quality assures or accredits HEIs. This is a result of two developments. The first is the increasing emphasis on quality in all countries of the world for both domestic and international provision and the necessity of differentiating bona fide HEIs from low quality and rogue providers. The second relates to the blurring of boundaries between publicly and privately funded institutions, and between the non-profit and for-profit status of the HEI. This is because many public non-profit HEIs receive funding from private sources and engage in for-profit activities in order to diversify the source of funding and increase income. This is especially evident in countries where government funding is status quo and not able to increase to meet growing demand and costs. At the same time, privately funded institutions are receiving public funds or subsidies and may be engaged in social non-profit activities. Therefore, not only is there a mixed private/public higher education system; there are also many institutions that engage in both for-profit and non-profit activities especially in relation to cross-border activities. This is one reason why the public/private label is no longer an effective differentiating factor for cross-border education.

The category of ‘new and alternate providers’ includes a diversity of private and public companies, organisations, networks and institutions delivering education programmes and courses in foreign countries. These new types of cross-border providers can build brick and mortar institutions, enter collaborative agreements or establish virtual universities. They are usually commercial in nature and for-profit in purpose. The description and classification of ‘new’ cross-border providers is rather challenging. The tendency is to use the factors inherent to traditional HEIs and apply them to new providers. This is not entirely fair or useful. This orientation will probably change over time, especially if the ‘new or alternate providers’ begin to receive subsidies from government or undergo the same accreditation processes that traditional universities undergo. The differences between the two categories of providers are already becoming blurred and similarities are becoming more common.

One of the central issues is who recognises and gives any type of provider the power to award the qualifications in the ‘home or sending country’ and/or in the ‘host or receiving country’. As previously pointed out some of the ‘new providers’ as well as some traditional universities that are not part of, or are not recognised by, a ‘home’ national education system. They are in effect stateless and this presents challenges to the receiving country as to the determination of the providers’ quality and legitimacy. This may lead to more responsibility being placed on receiving countries to develop its own regulations to register and accredit foreign providers. This is in fact, what is happening in many countries as reported in the OBHF briefing note on Regulations and Transnational Education.\footnote{Verbik, L. and L. Jokivirta. (2005). \textit{National Regulatory Frameworks for Transnational Higher Education: Models and Trends. Part 1 and Part 2. Briefing Notes}. London: Observatory on Borderless Higher Education. URL: \url{http://www.obhe.ac.uk/products/briefings/pdfs/regulations_part1.pdf} and \url{http://www.obhe.ac.uk/products/briefings/ftpdfs/regulations_part2.pdf}. Last accessed: 25 October 2005.}

The next two sections present typologies for the different modes of programme delivery and for the various ways that providers are moving across borders. A key factor underlying these typologies is that the type of provider is purposely separated from the mode of mobility. To date, much of the discussion about programme and provider mobility has consciously or
unconsciously linked the type of provider with a certain mode of delivery and this is causing much confusion.

### 3.2 Typology of Programme Mobility

Cross-border mobility of programmes can be described as the movement of individual education/training courses and programmes across national/regional jurisdictional borders through face to face, distance or a combination of these modes. Credits towards a qualification can be awarded by the sending foreign country provider, by an affiliated domestic partner or jointly. Franchising, twinning, double/joint degrees and other articulation models are the more popular methods of cross-border programme mobility and are described in Table 4.

**Table 4: Typology for Cross-border Programme Mobility**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description of Form/Types of Mobility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Franchise</td>
<td>An arrangement whereby an institution/provider in the source country A authorises a provider in another country B to deliver their course/programme/service in country B or other countries. The qualification is awarded by the institution/provider in Country A. This is usually a for profit commercial arrangement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twinning</td>
<td>A situation whereby an institution/provider in source country A collaborates with an institution/provider located in country B to develop an articulation system allowing students to take course credits in country B and/or source country A. Only one qualification is awarded by the institution/provider in source country A. This may or may not be on a commercial basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double/Joint Degree</td>
<td>An arrangement whereby institutions/providers in different countries collaborate to offer a programme for which a student receives a qualification from each institution/provider or a joint award from the collaborating providers. Normally this is based on an academic exchange model, not a commercial model but this is changing especially for MBA programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation</td>
<td>Various types of articulation arrangements between institutions/providers in different countries permit students to gain credit for courses/programmes offered/delivered by collaborating institutions/providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validation</td>
<td>Validation arrangements between institutions/providers in different countries which allow Provider B in receiving country to award the qualification of Provider A in source country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual/ Distance</td>
<td>Arrangements whereby institutions/providers deliver courses/programmes to students in different countries through distance and online modes. May include some face to face support for students through domestic study or support centers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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A key factor in programme mobility is ‘who’ awards the course credits or ultimate credential for the programme. As the movement of programmes proliferates, there will undoubtedly be further changes to national, regional and even international regulatory frameworks. The question of ‘who grants the credits/awards’ will be augmented by ‘who recognises the provider’ and whether or not the programme has been ‘accredited or quality assured’ by a bona fide body. Of critical importance is whether the qualification is recognised for employment or further study in the receiving country and in other countries as well. The perceived legitimacy, recognition and ultimate mobility of the qualification are fundamental issues yet to be resolved in many, if not most countries of the world.

Given that several modes for programme mobility involve partnerships, there are questions about who owns the intellectual property rights to course design and materials. What are the legal and moral roles and responsibilities of the participating partners in terms of academic, staffing, recruitment, evaluation, financial, and administrative matters? How is the profit or loss shared? While the movement of programmes across borders has been taking place for many years, it is clear that the new types of providers, partnerships, awards and delivery modes are challenging national and international policies and regulatory frameworks and that there are more questions than answers at the present time. The current focus of regulatory reform is focused on registration and quality assurance issues, but other issues as listed above demand attention, some of which have been addressed in a recent OBHE report on ‘Good Practices for Contract Negotiation of Transnational Education.’

3.3 Typology for Provider Mobility

This section presents a typology for the ways in which the actual institution/provider moves. It involves a physical or virtual presence either as a separate entity or in collaboration with other foreign or even domestic providers. The mobility of institutions/providers involves different issues and challenges. Table 5 describes different types of provider mobility.

Table 5: Typology of Cross-border Provider Mobility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description of Form/Type of Mobility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch Campus</td>
<td>Provider in country A establishes a satellite campus in Country B to deliver courses and programmes to students in Country B (may also include Country A students taking a semester/courses abroad). The qualification awarded is from provider in Country A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Institution</td>
<td>Foreign Provider A (a traditional university, a commercial company or alliance/network) establishes in Country B a stand-alone higher education institution to offer courses/programmes and awards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition/Merger</td>
<td>Foreign Provider A purchases a part of or 100% of local higher education institution in Country B.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Study Center/Teaching Site
Foreign Provider A establishes study centers in Country B to support students taking their courses/programmes. Study centers can be independent or in collaboration with local providers in Country B.

### Affiliation/Networks
Different types of ‘public and private’, ‘traditional and new’ providers from various countries collaborate through innovative types of partnerships to establish networks/institutions to deliver courses and programmes in local and foreign countries through distance or face-to-face modes.

### Virtual University
Provider that delivers credit courses and degree programmes to students in different countries through distance education modes and that generally does not have face-to-face support services for students.

The virtual and physical movement of providers to other countries raises many of the same registration, quality assurance and recognition issues that apply to programme mobility, but there are additional important factors to consider especially if a network or local/foreign partnerships are involved. Setting up a physical presence requires attention being paid to national regulations regarding status of the entity, total or joint ownership with local bodies, tax laws, for profit or non-profit status, repatriation of earned income, boards of directors, staffing, granting of qualifications, selection of academic programmes and courses etc. Provider mobility relates to Mode 3 of the GATS and thus trade rules are at play here as well. For some countries, it means that strict regulations are being developed to closely monitor, and in some case restrict, new providers coming into the country. In other instances, incentives are being offered to attract high quality institutions/providers to set up a teaching site or full campus. This is especially true where ‘knowledge parks’ or ‘technology zones’ or ‘education cities’ are being developed to attract foreign companies and education/training providers. It is interesting to watch the activities of new providers such as Laureate Education whose approach is to buy a percentage or all of local private colleges so as to avoid some of the regulatory demands on foreign providers setting up in a foreign host country.

The proposed typologies are still a work in progress, as they do not yet capture in detail the innovations that are occurring in relation to networks, partnerships and other forms of collaborative provision. However, they do serve the purpose of distinguishing between programme and provider mobility and the respective regulatory issues connected to them.

### 4 Data Collection

As already pointed out, but worth repeating, one of the glaring challenges in trying to analyse cross-border education is the lack of data. While there is more information and analysis on the movement of students across borders, the paucity of information on programme and mobility creates an undesirable environment of speculation, confusion and often misinformation. This can have negative consequences in terms of confidence in the quality and dependability of cross-border education provision and impedes the analysis needed to underpin solid policy and regulatory frameworks.

Australia is the leader in terms of having up to date and fairly comprehensive data from universities on the volume, types, award level, and discipline of cross-border programme delivery. The Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (AVCC), as well as Department of Education, Science and Technology (DEST) collect, analyse and publish this data on an annual basis. In New Zealand, the International Policy and Development Unit of the Ministry of Education undertook a major survey of cross-border delivery in all tertiary institutions in 2001,
but this is not an annual data gathering exercise yet. The UK Higher Education Statistics Agency has collected information for the 2002/03 and 2003-04 academic years on UK education programmes offered abroad. This is the first time it has gathered this data and so there are still many wrinkles to iron out. Countries that have well developed licensing and quality assurance procedures, such as Hong Kong, Singapore and South Africa, have data on programmes and providers coming into the country but again, they are exceptions not the rule.

The question at hand is whether or not the data that is being collected can be compared across countries or regions. In other words, are similar definitions of terms and indicators being used? The answer is probably no. As has already been discussed, there is variation in how key terms are defined and what variables are priority areas for collecting data. The following list provides some examples of questions that need to be thought through as institutions or countries move forward in their efforts to determine what and how to measure cross-border education initiatives. These questions focus on programme and provider mobility - not on student mobility.

- What aspects of cross-border education are included?
  - domestic programmes that are being sent/exported to other countries
  - foreign programmes that are being received/imported
- What kind of providers/institutions are included?
  - 'recognised' and/or 'non-recognised' providers
  - universities and colleges (public and private)
  - specialised, technical, vocational institutes (public and private)
  - commercial companies (national and international)
  - corporate universities
  - other types of providers such as professional associations or NGOs
  - networks and partnerships
  - others
- What is/are the unit/s of measurement?
  - number of enrolled students/graduates
  - number of programmes
  - number of different providers
- What types of arrangements are included?
  - commercial or fee based programmes (usually for-profit oriented)
  - academic exchanges or linkages (usually non-profit oriented)
  - development cooperation (usually externally funded and non-profit oriented)
- What level of qualifications/awards are included?
  - foundation or pre-degree studies
  - specialised certificate or diploma
  - undergraduate/ bachelors degree
  - graduate level/masters and/or Ph.D.
  - other
- What mode of delivery is included?
  - virtual, distance, electronic
  - face to face, classroom based
  - combination
- What forms of programme delivery are included?
  - twinning
  - franchising
  - articulation
  - validation
  - double/joint degree
  - other
What kinds of provider mobility/presence are included?
-branch or satellite campus
-stand alone institution
-virtual university
-study or testing centre
-local/foreign mergers/acquisitions
-other

What length of programmes are included?
-short term (less than one semester)
-semester
-year
-multiple year

What type of study arrangements are included?
-full-time
-part-time
-self-study

What countries are involved
-as destination countries for exported education
-as sending countries for received/imported education

Who recognises, quality assures, accredits the programme and/or qualification
-sending institution/provider
-receiving institution/provider
-sending country quality assurance agency
-receiving country quality assurance agency
-third country or international quality assurance agency
-other

Who actually awards the degree
-institution/provider delivering the education
-collaborating partner/provider in receiving country
-third party
-members of network delivering the education
-other

What disciplines and/or subjects are taught

These are only some of the questions that could be asked in trying to collect data on programmes and providers crossing borders. The list is illustrative only, certainly not exhaustive. It demonstrates the number of different variables to be taken into consideration. More importantly, it identifies the need for some common understanding of what specific terms or variables mean. For instance, what is meant by ‘recognised/non-recognised’, or level of qualification, or type of programme arrangements - twinning, articulation, double degree, validation, branch campus/stand alone institution or public/private etc. While it may be possible to have a common interpretation of these terms within one national higher education system, it is certainly a steep challenge to have common interpretations among different countries. This is not a problem unique to cross-border education. A similar situation existed (and is still ongoing) with the collection of statistics on the movement of students across borders. There are still enormous challenges comparing the numbers and types of international students. Due to the relatively recent emergence of programmes and providers moving between countries, perhaps there is the opportunity to develop common interpretations of terms so as to facilitate the collection and comparison of data. This is an important international project waiting to happen.
5 Challenges and Questions

5.1 Definitions

In a field that is changing as much as international education, the challenge of finding common meanings for the same and similar terms will continue. Each country, association, government agency will use terms that make sense from their perspective. What is needed is an attempt to concentrate on the key and common reference points so that when policy and regulations are being established at national, regional or international levels, there is clarity on the meaning of the terms and most importantly the implications.

The concept of ‘border’ can be used as the key and consistent element in borderless, offshore, transnational, and cross-border education, in fact for most terms describing international academic mobility. Yet, border is not the key concept for internationalisation as this term is much broader in scope and refers to an international, intercultural, or global dimension to teaching, research, service and of course now delivery of higher education. Mobility is only one aspect of this generic term.

Given the current importance attached to jurisdictional borders in the mobility of students, professors, education programmes, providers, and knowledge, the term cross-border education has been the preferred term in this paper. The irony related to the importance of jurisdictional borders in a more globalised and borderless world is acknowledged. It may well be that with time, and perhaps this is wishful thinking, borders will not be the defining concept for education mobility. But at the present time, this is the case and we must live with and be proactive about the consequences.

What is included or excluded in the notion of cross-border education? Again, there is no universal right or wrong answer to this question. Table 6 attempts to present a comprehensive interpretation of cross-border education and to illustrate the principle elements. The first column includes the four major components of cross-border education: People, Programmes, Providers and Projects. The mobility of students, professors, scholars, experts has been a part of higher education for centuries and is therefore a pillar of academic mobility. Nevertheless, the developments in programme and provider mobility are more recent and today are garnering much attention. This is why when one refers to cross-border education, the mobility of students is definitely included, but the current emphasis seems to be on programme and provider mobility. In the second column, the different types of arrangements for mobility are included. They differ, of course, for each component - people, programme, provider and project - and several examples are given to show the diversity of arrangements. The third column focuses on the approach being used to fund or support the mobility schemes. 3 different approaches are included and they reflect a shift from development cooperation to mutual partnerships to commercial trade. There is no doubt that the current movement from aid to trade is real, but the current emphasis on GATS trade rules and the for-profit motive should not overshadow the significant growth in academic exchanges and joint activities that are non-commercial in nature and are happening in every region of the world. The fourth column relates to the mobility of programme, providers and projects and illustrates the reality of two major modes of mobility ‘virtual and physical - and the various combinations of both modes.
### Table 6: Analysis of the term Cross-border Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Types of Arrangements</th>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Modes of Mobility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- People</td>
<td>Exchanges, semester or year abroad, full programme, internships, field research, sabbaticals</td>
<td>Applicable to all components and types of arrangements</td>
<td>Applicable to programmes, providers and projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Programmes</td>
<td>Twinning, Franchise, Joint/Double Degree, Articulation Models</td>
<td>- Development Cooperation -externally funded, non-profit</td>
<td>- Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Providers</td>
<td>Branch campus, mergers, Independent institutions, teaching/testing centres</td>
<td>- Academic Exchange -self-funded, non-profit</td>
<td>- Virtual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Projects</td>
<td>Research, curriculum, IT, capacity building, reference materials</td>
<td>- Commercial Trade -fee based, for-profit</td>
<td>- Combination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2 Typologies

The recent developments in cross-border education challenge us to think in new ways and to develop classification systems for the different types of providers and modes of mobility. The blurring of boundaries between private or public institutions, plus the growth in commercial companies selling education programmes and services, add new elements of complexity.

Should we stress the differences or similarities between ‘traditional’ institutions and ‘new’ providers? Perhaps, traditional institutions are not so traditional any more as they are undergoing major changes of mandate, funding, management and governance. Cross-border education is arguably a prime catalyst for innovation in traditional higher education institutions and has an unrealised potential for capacity building in both the sending and receiving institutions.

The question about convergence or divergence between ‘new and traditional’ providers may well focus on the relationship of new providers with the professional organisations and agencies that undertake qualify assurance, research, policy analysis, etc. In some countries, new providers are already accredited and part of higher education bodies and are becoming accepted members of the domestic higher education community. But, this is not the case in other countries where a firm ‘club-like’ position is held by traditional public and private institutions deliberately excluding new provider types. The relationship between ‘traditional’ and ‘new or alternate’ providers is a fascinating area of development and cross-border education is playing an important role in breaking new ground. Thus a typology, such as the one proposed in this paper, which uses differences instead of similarities as a way to better understand and classify cross-border entities, is clearly evolutionary and probably only temporary. It is a tool to help explore and clarify the respective role, relationships and contribution of different types of

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22 Adapted Knight (2003)
providers who are delivering education to other countries and by doing so are facilitating increased access to higher education.

5.3 Data Collection

This paper is meant to deliver a strong message about the need to take the collection of data about cross-border education more seriously. It bears repeating that without some reliable and valid information on the volume, type and scope of cross-border education it is a challenge to develop sound policy and regulations to guide this growing sub-sector of higher education and to monitor new opportunities, risks and benefits. The collection of data by an institution, association, or government needs to be guided by the intended purpose, use and benefits of cross-border education, which are many and diverse.

Perhaps there are some lessons to be learned from the long experience of collecting statistics on students who study in foreign/other countries. The lack of common terms and definitions on the immigration status of students, lengths of stay, level of studies, type of qualification etc all contribute to the inability to compare data among countries with any level of confidence. The discrepancies between national level data on international student numbers and flows, and the data collected by OECD or UNESCO, are well known but not always well understood. This problem is exacerbated when comparisons are being made between countries, which is in fact one of the major uses of the data. The gathering of data on cross-border mobility of programmes and providers is still in the nascent stage. It is therefore an opportune time to bring together an international team to study the issues, identify key variables and develop definitions so that there can be some common reference points among countries in the way data is collected and analysed. This would be a definite and welcomed contribution to the field of international education and the time to start such an initiative is now.

6 Conclusion

Even though, the mobility of students, professors, knowledge, and values has been part of higher education for centuries, it has only been in the last two decades that there has been a significant growth in the mobility of programmes and providers through physical and virtual modes of delivery. This presents many new opportunities for increased access to higher education; for strategic alliances between countries and regions; for the production and exchange of new knowledge; for the movement of graduates and professionals; for human resource and institutional capacity building; for income generation; for the improvement of academic quality; and for increased mutual understanding. The list of potential benefits is long and varied, but so is the list of potential risks. Risks and benefits vary between sending and receiving countries, between developed and developing countries, and for students, institutions, companies and employers. In light of the fast pace of cross-border growth and innovation, it is important that the higher education sector be informed and vigilant about the risks and benefits and more importantly, the need for appropriate policies and regulations to guide and monitor current and future developments.

The higher education sector is a much stronger actor in the knowledge society and has more room for influence. However, it also has greater chances of being affected by other sectors such as trade, science, technology, immigration, culture and industry. Cross-border education is an increasingly important aspect of higher education and the time is nigh for the clarification of key terms, the development of new policy frameworks/regulations to facilitate and monitor the increased growth, and the strategic collection and analysis of data at institutional, national and international levels.
References


