

# The Importance of Teaching About Globalization in Business Education

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## Abstract

Globalization, the increasing interconnectivity of cultures and countries, impacts the careers of all business students. The current phase of globalization is a relatively new phenomenon that is not well represented in business education literature. Business educators should help their students gain a balanced perspective of globalization and an understanding of the platforms that facilitate global business. In addition, business educators should help business students gain attitudes and skills that will enhance their success in the global business environment, including flexibility and adaptability, intercultural communication and collaboration skills, and a sense of urgency.

## Introduction

All business education rests on an understanding of the business environment, and globalization increasingly defines the business environment. Furthermore, globalization increasingly defines the career options of business students. This article describes how business educators can begin conceptualizing how to incorporate globalization into their curricula. First, definitions and characteristics of globalization are discussed. Second, teaching about the global business environment is contrasted with teaching about international business. Finally, what business students need to know about globalization is described. The final section includes discussion of India and China, two of the major economies in the world that are driving the present phase of globalization.

## Definitions and Characteristics of Globalization

Globalization is a highly debated topic that develops strong feelings for and against the topic. For some, globalization is an ideal – a vision of “schooling world citizens” in a “global village” (Adams & Carfagna, 2006, p. 173). For others, globalization is a negative force that causes poverty and exploitation in developing countries, environmental degradation, mass relocation of jobs, and neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism (Bhagwati, 2004).

While attitudes differ drastically, scholars of globalization define it in quite similar fashions, emphasizing the increasing interconnectivity between people around the world. Guillén (2001) defined globalization as “a process leading to greater interdependence and mutual awareness (reflexivity) among economic, political, and social units in the world, and among actors in general” (p. 236). Drori, Meyer, and Hwang (2006) defined it as “intensification of global interdependencies and the consolidation of the global as a social horizon” (p. 1).

One of the best known measures of globalization is A. T. Kearney and *Foreign Policy's* (2005) annual index of globalization. This index of globalization includes four broad categories: economic integration, technological connectivity, personal contact, and political engagement. *Economic integration* is based on measures such as total international trade and foreign direct investment. *Technological connectivity* is based on measures such as number of Internet users, Internet hosts, and secure servers. *Personal contact* is based on measures such as international travel and tourism, international telephone traffic, and remittances and personal transfers. *Political engagement* is based on measures such as membership in international organizations, personnel and financial contributions to U.N. peacekeeping missions, international treaties ratified, and governmental transfers. This and other such indexes are useful approaches to conceptualizing globalization; however, the complexity of globalization is difficult to measure precisely. As Hackman (2005) stated, “Globalization cannot be neatly measured and described . . . because no standard measure has been found yet to make this process, this dynamic force comprised of so many different elements, visible in its entirety, and relate it to the familiar world economy” (p. 1).

### **International Business versus Global Business Environment**

Traditionally, international business has been considered a logical step once a company has established a strong domestic presence. In the contemporary global economy, this mindset is no longer possible. In fact, it is globalization which is the context for all business. To remain competitive, businesses must be willing to gain efficiencies and advantages wherever possible. They must be willing to source parts and products from the least expensive places; outsource work to access the best talent available; create round-the-clock product development cycles; localize products and services to more customer

groups around the world; and respond to competitors who are likewise spanning the globe to gain the same benefits (Friedman, 2006; Ohmae, 2005; Slywotzky, Baumgartner, Alberts, & Moukanas, 2005).

By focusing on the *global business environment or globalization*, business educators are better able to emphasize the need to understand global commerce and related business activities than they can by focusing on international trade. Learning about globalization expands the range of relevant business activities and minimizes the importance of borders, which are increasingly arbitrary in a truly global economy. In addition to what is traditionally considered international trade, focusing on globalization emphasizes the importance of contact between buyers and sellers of various nationalities, communication in virtual teams made up of various nationalities, marketing to cultural groups, and many other types of intercultural business contact that were of little or less importance 10 to 15 years ago (Cardon, 2006b; Friedman).

Clearly, there are many commonalities and overlap to the terms *international* and *global*. However, the distinction between international and global is not merely academic; it is practical as well since business executives and recruiters perceive the terms quite differently. For example, business recruiters frequently downplay the importance of international skills compared to other skills deemed important for successful managers. In a *Wall Street Journal* study, business recruiters were asked to rank the importance of 20 factors of a business school. The item regarding students' *international knowledge and experience* was ranked the least important of all 20 factors and was considered extremely important by less than 20% of recruiters (Alsop, 2004). By contrast, global leadership skills are considered of utmost importance. For example, a survey of Fortune 500 firms found that of seven leadership dimensions *having competent global leaders* was the most important factor for the success of a company (Gregersen, Morrison, & Black, 1998). In a recent *Wall Street Journal* article about the growing appeal of global leadership skills and associated career benefits, the central theme was how to develop global leadership experience without having lived internationally (Lublin, 2006).

The forces of globalization on business education reflect a subtle shift in focus from international business to the global business environment. For example, in its 2001 *National Standards for Business Education: What America's Students Should Know and Be Able to Do*

*in Business*, NBEA stated, “International business is an area of the business education curriculum that commands center stage in today’s global economy,” (National Business Education Association, 2001, p. 94). A few years later in a 2004 Policies Commission for Business and Economic Education statement, the increased emphasis on the global business environment is evident:

Success in the global business environment requires knowledge and understanding of global components: economic systems, business practices, political and legal structures, and multicultural contexts. . . A solid foundation for success in the global business world mandates a curriculum in which knowledge of the functional areas of business is integrated with knowledge and understanding of these global components (p. 16).

Unfortunately, the available scholarly literature about globalization is dominated by disciplines outside of business. Guillén (2001) collected scholarly works about globalization over a period of approximately 15 years. In 1998, the last year he collected articles, he found 2,822 scholarly articles about globalization. These were dominated by sociological (1,009; 36%) and economic (924; 33%) articles. Other disciplines that had significant numbers of articles about globalization included the political (698; 25%), historical (157; 6%), and anthropological (34; 1%) fields. Notably missing are articles from a business perspective. Although economic articles about globalization are linked in some ways to a business perspective, these articles are primarily macroeconomic and focus on nation-states. These economic articles infrequently focus on the company or individual as a unit of analysis. Future work about globalization from a business education perspective is critically needed.

### **What Business Students Should Know About Globalization**

Although international trade is by no means a new phenomenon, the forces driving globalization and their impact on business are relatively new. Prominent scholars, such as Friedman (2006), Ohmae (2005), and Slywotzky and his colleagues (Slywotzky, Baumgartner, Alberts, & Moukanas, 2005), state that globalization and related impacts on businesses are between 5 and 20 years old. Furthermore, these globalizing forces are nearly impossible to reverse. Traditional business paradigms are increasingly irrelevant. Even today’s top business

executives grapple with how to handle the increasingly complex and interrelated global systems they manage (Ohmae, 2005; Friedman, 2006; Slywotzky, Baumgartner, Alberts, & Moukanas, 2005).

This section describes several general areas in which business students should learn about globalization. The first three areas deal with an understanding of the global business environment: a balanced perspective of globalization, implications of English as a global business language, and an understanding of global platforms. The final three areas deal with characteristics and skills that business students will need to succeed: flexibility and adaptability, intercultural communication and collaboration skills, and a sense of urgency. Each of these areas is described in reference to American business students; however, they could apply equally well to other nationalities and cultures.

Throughout this section examples are provided from the Chinese and Indian business environments. Chinese examples are based on recent interview research conducted by the author (Cardon, 2005, 2006a; Harrill & Cardon, 2006), and Indian examples are based on scholarly observations and research (e.g., Cardon, 2006b; Drezner, 2004; Friedman). The cases of China and India are particularly relevant to the study of globalization because both countries have significantly reformed their economies in the past 15 to 25 years to integrate with the global economy. They are currently the fastest growing major economies in the world and form the bulk of the *BRIC* (Brazil, Russia, Indian, and China) countries, which collectively have been projected to outsize the economies of the G8 countries (United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Russia) within 40 years (Wilson & Purushothaman, 2003).

With reference to the Indian business environment, the case of outsourcing of information technology (IT) jobs to India will be referenced for several reasons. First, observers of globalization consider outsourcing of service jobs to India as a small preview of the types of changes that globalization will bring to the workplace in a global economy (Friedman; Ohmae, 2005). Second, the outsourcing of IT jobs is particularly relevant to business education since business education has increasingly focused on computer literacy and information technology. Third, outsourcing of service jobs to India is an aspect of globalization that has been highly publicized in the media and, as a result, is more familiar to business students (Cardon & Sparrow, 2004).

With reference to the Chinese business environment, quotations of Chinese and American business professionals are provided. These quotations were gathered as part of two research projects dealing with the importance of face and respect in Chinese interactions with Westerners. In 2003, 34 Chinese business executives with extensive international business experience and 8 American business executives who had been working in China for more than 2 years were interviewed. In 2006, an additional 24 Chinese business professionals in the hospitality and tourism industries who worked extensively with Westerners were interviewed. On average interviews were approximately 1 to 1-1/2 hours in length. Nearly all interviews with Chinese executives and professionals were conducted in standard Chinese (Mandarin) (Cardon, 2005, 2006a).

While each research project noted in the previous paragraph was intended to address traditional Chinese values of face and respect, study participants frequently shifted the conversation and discussion occurred about the Chinese drive to adopt global business standards and certain so-called *Western* characteristics that could drive business success. The Chinese comments noted their drive to adopt global standards in virtually all interviews. In some cases adopting elements of global business culture is contrary to the traditional Chinese values, yet in other cases it reinforces long-standing Chinese values (Cardon, 2005, 2006a; Harrill & Cardon, 2006).

### ***Balanced Perspective of Globalization***

Business educators should seek to provide students with a balanced perspective of globalization that is business-oriented and practical. Several challenges exist in providing this balanced perspective. First, Americans have strong feelings for and against globalization. Second, few scholarly works are available that provide a balanced, business-oriented perspective of globalization.

Business educators can expect that students' perspectives of globalization have been largely influenced by the media and non-business disciplines. The media, in particular, has highlighted and even exaggerated the potentially negative effects of globalization (Drezner, 2004). As a result, many Americans have strong emotional reactions to the impacts of globalization and different views of globalization. For example, in a 2005 poll when asked about their attitudes toward globalization in general, more Americans (46%) stated they had a

favorable view than those who stated they had a negative view (36%). However, the percentage of Americans who have favorable views of globalization in general has dropped over ten percentage points in the past five years. Americans are particularly troubled by globalization when asked about its effects in specific areas. For example, in a 2002 poll only 32% of respondents thought globalization was good for job security, whereas 51% considered globalization bad for job security (Program on International Policy Attitudes, 2006). For this reason Americans are decreasingly likely to view foreign trade positively. In fact, for the first time since 1992, a recent poll showed that a majority of Americans now view foreign trade as a threat, not an opportunity, to the American economy (Jacobe, 2005).

Business educators who would like to provide business-oriented and practical lessons about globalization do not have many resources available to them. Two works that do reflect this perspective are those of Friedman (2006) and Ohmae (2005). These authors have written extensively about globalization and provided practical suggestions for companies and individuals who are increasingly required to compete against and collaborate with a global workforce.

The case of outsourcing of IT jobs to India is a perfect example of how difficult it is to gain a balanced, business-oriented perspective of globalization. Many prominent economists and scholars attribute Americans' increasingly negative views towards international trade and globalization to the media's presentation of exported jobs to India (Drezner, 2004; Friedman; Ohmae). The number of jobs that will be exported has been taken grossly out of context. In fact, since around 2000 when the majority of outsourcing of IT jobs to India occurred, the number of IT-related jobs in the United States has continued to grow and is expected to grow for the foreseeable future. From 1999 to 2003, the period in which media most highlighted the export of jobs to India, computer-related positions increased by approximately 10% in the United States. With the exception of computer programmers, there was an increase in every type of computer position, including computer software engineers, network and computer systems administrators, and computer support specialists. Furthermore, according to a Bureau of Labor Statistics report, IT-related jobs are expected to increase by 43% by 2010 (Drezner; Greene, 2006). Unfortunately, widespread belief that there is no future in computer jobs has caused declines in computer programs in universities/colleges around the United States. Computer science and computer

engineering enrollment was down 23% in 2004. At MIT enrollment in computer science was down 33% in two years (Greene, 2006).

### ***Implications of English as a Global Language***

Another of the key platforms is the globalization of language. Business executives are increasingly able to communicate with one another wherever they go since English is the accepted business language around the world. Closely related, global business executives increasingly share common business terminology due to the proliferation of business schools around the world and the high number of non-Western business executives who have attended Western business schools (Ohmae, 2005).

China is an example of one country that has rapidly adopted English as a business language. When China first began reforming its economy by adopting free market initiatives and opening up to international trade nearly three decades ago, few of its citizens had any proficiency in English. At that time, for non-Chinese speaking executives and managers to conduct business in China without proficient translators was unthinkable. Currently, however, Chinese business executives and managers are increasingly proficient in English usage and many non-Chinese speaking professionals can operate efficiently in the Chinese business environment (Ohmae, 2006). In particular, gaining fluency in English is considered essential for any business executive who anticipates conducting global business. In fact, English is the first language of many Chinese business professionals for business terms. Since many Chinese executives attend Western business programs that are conducted in English, many business terms are said in English even in the middle of Chinese-language conversations between Chinese. For example, in interviews conducted by Cardon (2005, 2006a) and Harrill and Cardon (2006), Chinese executives and professionals used terms such as *marketing*, *sales*, *profit*, *investment*, *FOB*, and *ROI* in English during Chinese-language interviews.

The push for English fluency is not limited to business executives. The Chinese society currently emphasizes learning of English skills from an early age. As one Chinese hospitality professional explained:

Nowadays, many Chinese kids speak excellent English. When we visit the kindergarten, most children are speaking fluently. And I know what they can say, like “what’s your name?” and “how

many people are there in your family?" and "who are they?" (Harrill & Cardon, 2006)

Since learning of English began in elementary school for nearly all Chinese citizens in the last 10 to 15 years, most young Chinese professionals have a minimum of 12 to 16 years of English training and can speak English fairly well. As a result, the primary communication obstacles are generally cultural, not linguistic.

The Chinese have worked hard to develop their economy to global standards and consider the usage of English as a central aspect of this development. In fact, many Chinese consider the usage of English as critical to improving China's international image. For example, a Chinese hospitality professional described efforts in Shanghai to increase English usage for public transportation:

With more and more foreign tourists flooding into the city, Shanghai has become an international metropolis by setting up English newspaper booths in the subway and subtitling all the traffic signs in English. On the bus, the loudspeaker announces the names of stops in both Chinese and English. As for the hard facilities [such as hotels], they are being built toward international standards. (Harrill & Cardon)

Another hospitality professional described how foreigners should anticipate fewer and fewer language problems due to the Chinese acceptance of English as the language of international communication: "Nowadays most young people in China can speak English, so foreigners can get help on any street in China if they want to ask the way. They are now meeting less and less inconvenience in China and language will not be a problem any more."

Since English is increasingly accepted as a global business language and an increasing number of non-native English speakers around the world begin English training from the time they are children, Americans and other native English speakers should prioritize their time investments in learning to communicate effectively across cultures. Traditionally, the international business paradigm has emphasized learning other languages (Carson, Lanier, Carson, & Gale, 2005; Martin & Chaney, 1992). However, under the global business paradigm in which English is accepted as a communication platform, learning to communicate effectively in English with non-

native English speakers is a far more valuable time investment than learning a foreign language.

In many circumstances, it may be unrealistic and even wasteful for Americans and other native English speakers to assume that they can learn certain languages adequately to use in business circumstances. As a hypothetical, consider an American student who undergoes extensive Chinese language training in high school and college. Even a student who has invested this much time will spend most of his or her time meeting with Chinese professionals who have been learning English since the time they were children and who have often studied for years in universities where the language of instruction is English. It is unlikely that American students who have had training in Chinese language will be more proficient at speaking Chinese than the Chinese professionals with whom they interact are at speaking English. To complicate matters, an American who has developed this proficiency may often be in work teams that include Chinese and other individuals who have no Chinese language proficiency. The language that will be used in these work environments will necessarily be the most common denominator – English. As will be described in the *Intercultural Communication and Collaboration* section, however, the fact that English is a global language should not deter American students from learning other languages. Generally, however, business students will most often be best served by investing time in learning to communicate effectively in English with non-native English speakers rather than learning foreign languages.

### ***Understanding of Global Business Platforms***

Business students should understand the types of platforms that facilitate global interconnectivity on a scale far greater than was possible even ten years ago. The present stage of globalization is driven by and defined by technology. Developments such as the Internet, computer operating systems, and mobile phones that operate as common platforms have transformed the way people around the world can communicate and exchange information. The fact that so many types of work can be digitized and then inexpensively and nearly instantaneously transported from location to location creates myriads of opportunities and challenges for businesses. Other technological platforms, such as ATMs, credit cards, smart cards, and GPS, have transformed the efficiency of moving capital around the world and allowed for increasingly complex and global logistical systems (Friedman, 2006; Ohmae, 2005).

The global business culture has also been driven by common standards or platforms for business functions. For example, supplier-customer relationships around the world are increasingly structured by ISO 9000 quality standards (Mendel, 2006), accounting is increasingly becoming compatible around the world (Jang, 2006), and human resource development and policies are increasingly similarly structured (Luo, 2006). Furthermore, the US dollar has reached status as a global currency, which more easily facilitates flows of capital (Ohmae).

The case of outsourcing of IT-related positions to India illustrates these global platforms. Recently developed technology is what makes outsourcing this work possible in the first place since work can be digitized and inexpensively accessed around the globe. Furthermore, India has the advantage of excellent English skills and a large number of business executives who have been trained in Western business and computer science schools (Cardon & Sparrow, 2004; Ohmae, 2005).

Chinese are often anxious to conduct business based on global standards. Their successful push to become part of the World Trade Organization (WTO) was considered a source of pride to many Chinese because admission to the WTO represented compliance with global standards. Achieving compliance adds to the traditional Chinese sense of face, which illustrates that traditional cultural values do not necessarily conflict with convergence with global business standards. For example, a Chinese factory owner in Guangzhou explained how abiding by what are perceived as global business standards, such as suitable labor environments and fair trading rules, improved the standing of her company. She stated:

Because this company is an American company, we built it based on standards of American human rights. When we were opening this factory, everything had to be according to these requirements. Since there were a lot of American teams, it was according to American standards. We had to address human rights. When we first start talking with them, they were very strict. For example, American human rights standards are very good for the development of this area. But because you developed in this area and passed American human rights standards for this factory, you feel that you have a lot of face because they built it very splendidly and beautifully. By giving face to others, you give yourself face. (Cardon, 2005)

Another Chinese manager from Guangzhou, also mentioned how compliance with international standards was important to the Chinese in facilitating additional international business. She stated: "When Chinese do business with foreigners, they want to do business according to international rules" (Cardon, 2005). She explained how Chinese companies prioritize complying with WTO standards.

In some cases, however, traditional Chinese values are perceived as conflicting with applying global business standards. Under these circumstances many contemporary Chinese business executives choose the path of global business standards. A Chinese business manager in Beijing, who was attending a weekend MBA program sponsored by an American university, explained:

China is really opening up and becoming like the West. The reason we are doing MBAs is we want to know global business methods and global ideas and global ways of thinking. I think the local Chinese companies will not think about face much in the future. (Cardon, 2005)

### ***Flexibility and Adaptability***

Individuals who excel in the increasingly globalized workplace will need to be flexible and adaptable. Since many types of work can be digitized and thus outsourced around the world and new technologies will require new skills sets, individuals who are able to adapt, update, and expand their skills sets will be at a significant advantage. In the case of the IT field, many American IT professionals, particularly programmers, have lost jobs due to outsourcing to India. American IT workers who will excel in the global economy will be able to adapt quickly to new business needs. They will need to become what the Gartner Group calls *versatilists* rather than specialists. In fact, the need for specialists, who excel in single skills such as computer programming, is expected to fall by 40% by 2010. Versatilists are those who possess technology skills and can also handle many types of assignments and work with people of various disciplines. Not only will they need technological prowess, but they will need artistic and creative skills and business competence. In fact, six in ten IT workers will need to take more business-facing roles by 2010. The positions that will be in the most demand include project managers, business enterprise architects, business technologists, and systems analysts (Friedman, 2006; Plummer et al, 2005).

### ***Intercultural Communication and Collaboration Skills***

One of the platforms driving globalization is a *global business culture*, in part facilitated by the dominance of English. Although the term global business culture implies convergence of cultural values, successful global business leaders will need an even more nuanced understanding of other cultures for several reasons. Leading projects across cultures will require leading work-team members of other cultures who are not so well versed in global business culture. Also, consumers in various cultures are expected to amplify their cultural identity and related preferences (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Ohmae, 2005; Slywotzky, Baumgartner, Alberts, & Moukanas, 2005).

To lead and manage across cultures will be an increasingly desirable skill in the global economy. The need for “orchestrators and collaborators” (Friedman, p. 282) across cultures is described by Freidman:

These new middle collaboration jobs will be in sales, marketing, maintenance, and management, but what they all demand is the ability to be a good horizontal collaborator, comfortable working for a global company (one whose headquarters may be in Beijing or Bangalore, not Boston), and translating its services for the local market, wherever that may be. It is about being able to operate in, mobilize, inspire, and manage a multidimensional and multicultural workforce. (p. 283)

Americans may be particularly tempted to assume that they need little training in other cultures because of the ease with which they operate with business executives around the world who are fluent in the global business culture and the fact that English is the global business language. But, as Ohmae stated, “Ironically, the key challenge faces native English speakers. Their opportunities to broaden their global view will be less than those people who are bilingual. This might have an adverse effect on their long-term ability to compete in the global marketplace” (p. 136). Not only should Americans learn foreign languages to help expand their global views, they should anticipate that other languages will become more valuable as regional economic clusters grow in importance (Carson, Lanier, Carson, & Gale, 2005; Ohmae, 2005). In other words, the primary value for Americans learning foreign languages is that doing

so will assist in learning the cultural logic of other societies, which will help Americans understand appropriate business behavior. Also, those who have gained language proficiency will be well positioned as regional economic clusters increase the cross-cultural usage of languages other than English.

Many American companies have realized that significant cultural obstacles exist to optimize performance with India partners, colleagues, and subordinates. Even with a shared language, Americans who work with Indians on IT-related projects need training to better understand the communication and work styles of their Indian counterparts (Cardon & Sparrow, 2004; Drezner, 2004; Greene 2006).

In China cultural issues are still extremely important despite the fact that Chinese increasingly have adopted global business standards and speak in common business terms. As an American executive stationed in Beijing and Tianjin explained about joint petroleum exploration with Chinese partners:

Well, it's a little difficult because in our business success is measured directly by the amount of product you find. . . . Our company has been successful in China finding this natural resource, and because of that, our relationship with the Chinese government and their representative companies has been strained. We found it, they [the Chinese joint venture partner] didn't, and now they're coming under a lot of condemnation from the government. "These guys from the outside came and found it. Why couldn't you?" And that has hurt the relationship with our joint venture partners and every decision we make, every budget cut, everything is affected by that. In a sense, this relates to their stature, their face. (Cardon 2005)

A top-level executive from Hong Kong working in Beijing, explained that even though the Chinese economy is growing so briskly, the pace of business relationships is still based on different cultural priorities. He stated:

The thing is Chinese want to make friends. They don't want to argue, especially with strangers. If they're just getting to know each other, why should they start with getting to the point? The Americans want to do that right away. Pull out some documents

and starting talking about business. They start asking questions, one after another. What about this? What about that? They need to just relax. The pace is different in China. That's because Chinese want to make friends. Then, they can understand each other first. (Cardon 2005)

An American executive working in Guangzhou talked about the importance of social outings in China. He stated:

You simply pay attention to the situation you're in and respect that individual relative to the individuals around him and don't do something that is foolish or embarrassing to them. Some of the best ways you can do that are, you know, like letting them pay the bill if they want to or if you're on their turf, so to speak, particularly in front of their employees. . . . I think one of the things that is new for Americans when they come over here is that they place much more emphasis on the friendships and relationships here. So, we might have great negotiations all day and then they want to take us to dinner. If we say, "I'm tired, I'd rather go to bed," unless they're completely Americanized, they'll really take offense to that, and next thing you know, they're really not that interested in business. The next day or that day following that, you might find out it just doesn't work out. So, I think that's a big one. If they ask you to go to dinner, it's a major loss of face if you refuse to go to dinner. (Cardon 2005)

The Chinese emphasis on relationships is reflected in many contexts, one of which is gift-giving. Although foreigners can anticipate that most business will operate on increasingly global standards within China, the Chinese still prefer symbols of warmth and hospitality, such as gift-giving. From the Chinese perspective, it can be very disappointing when gifts go unreciprocated. Ms. She, a top-level executive from Taiwan working in Guangzhou, talked about such disappointment. She stated:

My younger brother started a very large factory that makes women's shoes in America. . . . When he [an American purchaser] came to our factory for a tour, he wanted a large pair of shoes. So, we ordered a large pair for him even though that pair of shoes was needed for the order of our next customer. He should certainly have reciprocated [this nice gesture]. But when we went for a visit to his factory where they were producing men's shoes, he didn't

give us a pair of shoes. Later, I told my younger brother that he [the American] should return face. In my heart I felt I had no face. (Cardon 2005)

Businesspeople should carefully consider how to most effectively collaborate and communicate with business partners of other cultures. This requires adopting appropriate communication styles. A Chinese businesswomen spoke about her frequent role as a go-between in Chinese-American business relationships over the years. She stated:

I run into those kinds of situations where you know they [Chinese and American business executives] simply just don't understand each other. They're talking about two different things, but they think they're talking about one thing. I try to help them talk on the same level. . . . To speak privately is seen as respect of his authority, and this may be helpful, and he may be able to better accept what you want. I have observed a few cases where there was a private conversation between the leaders away from the teams. In most of the situations, I found the Chinese side changed their attitude right after half an hour conversation and quickly became more cooperative, and it's because you respected his authority and you wanted to take time to consult him about the issue. (Cardon, 2005)

### ***Sense of Urgency***

An increasingly globalized world makes finding and keeping the best jobs more competitive than ever. The American educational system has historically been one of the top systems in the world; however, in recent decades American students have drifted further behind students in other countries. The U.S. is now 17th in science degrees awarded. Of students who graduate from college, only 31% score excellent on literary tests. While there are many reasons for reduced American competitiveness in terms of educational performance, many observers point towards the complacency and poor work ethic of American students. Friedman (2006), speaking of the urgency that Americans should feel in response to globalization, stated:

There will be plenty of good jobs out there . . . for people with the right knowledge, skills, ideas, and self-motivation to seize them. But there is no sugar-coating the new challenge: Every young American

today would be wise to think of himself or herself as competing against every young Chinese, Indian, and Brazilian. . . [In early stages of globalization,] countries had to think globally to thrive, or at least survive. . . [Later] companies had to think globally to thrive, or at least survive. . . [In the current era of globalization,] individuals have to think globally to thrive, or at least to survive. This requires not only a new level of technical skills but also a certain mental flexibility, self-motivation, and psychological mobility. (p. 276)

### **Implications for Business Education**

This manuscript describes the importance of teaching globalization in the business education curriculum. Since the global business environment will impact the careers of all business students, business educators should view globalization as an essential component of the business curriculum. Adams and Carfagna (2006) highlighted this viewpoint as follows:

*The need to understand globalization and to be able to respond and adapt is perhaps the most crucial challenge facing humanity. While its processes are inevitable, the direction and the shape of globalization remain in our control. The future depends on developing a sense of urgency, accepting responsibility to address global problems, and acting as world citizens. (p. xii)*

Business educators should help students develop a balanced understanding of globalization and the platforms that facilitate global business. In addition, business educators should help business students gain attitudes and skills that will enhance their success in the global business environment, including flexibility and adaptability, intercultural communication and collaboration skills, and a sense of urgency that will help facilitate an increasingly globalized workplace.

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