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Reflection on Independent Study

There is much to reflect on for the independent study. I do believe that my research into human capital and human resource development has provided valuable insights into the economics of education, particularly where postsecondary education faces the dual challenge of internationalization and neoliberal economic trends. The work provides solid foundations for further research in the area, which should focus specifically on interdisciplinary and organizational approaches to questions in the economics of education. The human capital paper alone offers valuable qualitative and theoretical analytical tools for human capital and human resource development; perfect for case studies in international education. The philosophy paper for ATEM was to contribute a framework for my analysis of human capital theory until the complexities of the theory revealed itself; accordingly, the papers remain separate for additional theory building for the organization, management and governance of higher education. Overall, important research and ideas resulted from the internship, but many of the pieces are yet to be put together for pragmatic solutions to questions. Really, the subject of governance at all levels of education proves to be a debated issue that need be problem-solved.

My brief exploration of educational organizations is purposeful in addressing such issues both at home and abroad with international trends, which, in the same way, provide directions on questions over the economics of education with recent emphasis on human capital and HRD. These topics are evidently interdependent in critical ways. The segregation of ideas is no benefit to the area; postsecondary education need build bridges to globalization studies and areas such as international organization, the political economy, etc. with a critical eye. The UNESCO initiatives that I have provided detail for

on the discussion board advance many important issues. The initiatives themselves appear to be in developmental stages; but are also bridged to longstanding initiatives through the United Nations, i.e. the NGO partnerships. Really, while there is definitely valuable information on their website, the information available is surface level. The importance of their work is recognized and supported, but I question whether there will be enough support and organizational momentum to create a significant and sustainable impact. Certainly, any organizational effort is better than no effort at all. Still, there are important areas that do seem to remain unaddressed, such as governance and organizational issues related to human capital and resource development with technical and vocational education (evidently the end to the means for many initiatives).

UNESCO simply notes concerns and emphasizes the challenges of globalization. The consensus in literatures on the subject is that global trends will have a profound effect on all levels of education. The effects upon vocational and technical training cannot be overlooked. Frameworks like VET and AQF in Australia offer quality means for human resource development. The frameworks with the emergent “human capital imperative” equally suggest real potential consequences at the intersections between politics and economics in the political economy. For this reason, the debates over governance and related issues for the organization of higher education at a time of increased technological advance and global interdependence need be addressed for sustainable economic development and learning. My confident belief is that Socratic dialogue between the Australian system and American community college is purposeful in answering questions over needed organizational answers to governance debates. The

autonomy of institutions and interdependence with institutions of higher education with issues related to transitional education proves to be tricky in terms of governance.

In studying and participating in organizational solutions for education internationally, we cannot forget home. However, neither can we let home dominate our frame of reference and motivations for interest in trends to internationalize education. What we learn from international experience and research to feedback into our own institutions and learning systems while working for international solutions. The United States equally has the organizational developments to encourage innovation within higher education and a sustainable development of ideas into practice. The organizations for policy analysis and research, advocacy organizations for democratic practice and academic freedom, the organizations to improve financial capabilities and legal practice among the score of other resources to improve postsecondary education are what the international momentum through UNESCO equally lacks. While the United States might have yet to tap into the resources, the UNESCO initiatives also have a social and economic focus that might be undermined. Personally, the “human capital imperative” in light of the international trends makes me somewhat uncomfortable, and I believe that as the higher education struggles with the governance and organization of postsecondary learning from the economic and international trends, there is something to be gained with further comparative research in light of UNESCO’s focus on higher education.

Australian organizations to facilitate vocational and technical education in order to institutionalize their new VET and AQF represent inventive approaches that the United States has also yet to realize. The governance, organizational and policy focus as well as the social and economic initiatives are necessary to promote a sustainable practice and

solutions through learning. In solving questions over organizational solutions to transitional education and governance, institutions and governing structures should tap the resources needed rather than trying to solve problems blindly. Recognition of the need for participative processes at all levels of analysis should be encouraged. Strain from local and national governments with the global pressures can be avoided.