

Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad

© Andrea Rizzotti, Hector Cruz Feliciano

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Volume 38, Issue 2, pp. I.1-I.20

DOI: [10.36366/frontiers.v38i2.1333](https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v38i2.1333)

www.frontiersjournal.org



Latin American contributions towards a more inclusive and diverse international education: Challenges, transformations, and innovation

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Abstract

This introduction to the special plurilingual issue *Voices from Latin America* advances a more inclusive and epistemically just vision of international education by centering perspectives, practices, and knowledge produced in and with Latin America. Although international education is often associated with intercultural learning, global engagement, and personal transformation, it continues to operate within structures that shape mobility, access, linguistic hierarchies, and the legitimacy accorded to different forms of knowledge. This special issue challenges these dynamics by positioning Latin America not as a peripheral destination or a provider of cultural experiences, but as a heterogeneous site of intellectual production, pedagogical innovation, and critical reflection capable of contributing to the transformation of the field. Drawing on decolonial thought, the epistemologies of the South, critical interculturality, and theories of epistemic justice, the introduction examines how colonial and geopolitical asymmetries continue to influence international education. It critically addresses practices that privilege Northern institutions and knowledge systems while assigning host communities and local actors secondary roles in defining educational experiences. Particular attention is devoted to cultural extractivism: processes through which the knowledge, histories, practices, and experiences of host societies are incorporated into student learning without reciprocal recognition of local actors and communities as producers of knowledge and educational partners. More equitable forms of international education therefore require challenging these asymmetries and expanding the conditions under which diverse forms of knowledge are

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recognized, valued, and brought into dialogue. A defining feature of the special issue is its commitment to plurilingualism. By publishing contributions in Spanish, Portuguese, and English, *Voices from Latin America* promotes dialogue across linguistic and academic communities while questioning the assumption that English should function as the sole or privileged language of international academic exchange. Plurilingualism is understood not simply as linguistic diversity, but as part of a broader commitment to epistemic plurality and more equitable knowledge production. The introduction also presents the 4P Model, a theoretical, pedagogical, and evaluative framework for analyzing, designing, and strengthening international education programs through four interconnected dimensions: Pedagogically Meaningful, Politically Conscious, Contextually Relevant, and Participatory in Experience. Together, the contributions demonstrate how Latin American scholarship and practice can contribute to a more democratic, reflexive, and socially and epistemically just international education grounded in reciprocity, dialogue, participation, and the recognition of multiple ways of knowing.

Abstract in Spanish

Esta introducción al número especial plurilingüe Voces desde América Latina propone una visión más inclusiva y epistemológicamente justa de la educación internacional al situar en el centro las perspectivas, prácticas y conocimientos producidos en y con América Latina. Aunque la educación internacional suele asociarse con el aprendizaje intercultural, el compromiso global y la transformación personal, continúa operando dentro de estructuras que condicionan la movilidad, el acceso, las jerarquías lingüísticas y la legitimidad otorgada a diferentes formas de conocimiento. Este número especial cuestiona estas dinámicas al posicionar a América Latina no como un destino periférico ni como una proveedora de experiencias culturales, sino como un espacio heterogéneo de producción intelectual, innovación pedagógica y reflexión crítica capaz de contribuir a la transformación del campo. A partir del pensamiento decolonial, las epistemologías del Sur, la interculturalidad crítica y las teorías de la justicia epistémica, la introducción examina cómo las asimetrías coloniales y geopolíticas continúan influyendo en la educación internacional. Analiza críticamente las prácticas que privilegian a las instituciones y los sistemas de conocimiento del Norte Global, mientras asignan a las comunidades anfitrionas y a los actores locales papeles secundarios en la definición de las experiencias educativas. Se presta especial atención al extractivismo cultural: procesos mediante los cuales los conocimientos, historias, prácticas y experiencias de las sociedades anfitrionas son incorporados al aprendizaje estudiantil sin un reconocimiento recíproco de los actores y comunidades locales como productores de conocimiento y socios educativos. Formas más equitativas de educación internacional requieren, por lo tanto, cuestionar estas asimetrías y ampliar las condiciones bajo las cuales diversas formas de conocimiento son reconocidas, valoradas y puestas en diálogo. Una característica definitoria de este número especial es su compromiso con el plurilingüismo. Al publicar contribuciones en español, portugués e inglés, Voces

desde América Latina promueve el diálogo entre distintas comunidades lingüísticas y académicas, al tiempo que cuestiona la idea de que el inglés deba funcionar como lengua única o privilegiada del intercambio académico internacional. El plurilingüismo se entiende no simplemente como diversidad lingüística, sino como parte de un compromiso más amplio con la pluralidad epistémica y con formas más equitativas de producción de conocimiento. La introducción también presenta el Modelo de las 4P, un marco teórico, pedagógico y evaluativo para analizar, diseñar y fortalecer programas de educación internacional a partir de cuatro dimensiones interrelacionadas: Pedagógicamente Significativo, Políticamente Consciente, Pertinente al Contexto y Participativo en la Experiencia. En conjunto, las contribuciones muestran cómo la producción académica y las prácticas desarrolladas en América Latina pueden contribuir a una educación internacional más democrática, reflexiva, social y epistemológicamente justa, fundamentada en la reciprocidad, el diálogo, la participación y el reconocimiento de múltiples formas de conocer.

Keywords

Critical interculturality; decoloniality; epistemic justice; epistemologies of the South; international education; Latin America; Latin American thought; plurilingualism

Editorial note

The Spanish version of this introduction of the Plurilingual Special Issue of *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* on Voices from Latin America be accessed [here](#).

1. Introduction

International education is often presented as a privileged approach for broadening horizons, promoting intercultural understanding and dialogue, and preparing people to participate in interdependent and interconnected societies. Yet these promises coexist with historical power relations that unevenly structure mobility, resources, decision-making capacity, and access to and use of technologies, among other issues. In the same way, these powers structure the differential circulation of knowledge and the validation of different ways of being in the world (Antenucci, 2024; Rizzotti & Cruz-Feliciano, 2023).

Those of us who work in this professional field know that international experience alone does not guarantee intercultural learning or more equitable relationships (Fischman, 2018). Although it can open spaces for encounter and transformation, it can also reproduce hierarchies among countries, institutions, languages, forms of knowledge, and subjects.

“Study abroad” experiences require not only opportunities for reflection that facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the experience, but also planning and organization grounded in intercultural tools and pedagogical and epistemic models that engage all participants in these educational and cultural processes.

We also know that these experiences generate tension between a set of prior expectations and biases, both institutional and personal, and the cultural, educational, and social realities of the cultures encountered, which almost never fully correspond to the ideas previously held about them.

Examining these tensions is one of the starting points for this plurilingual special issue of *Frontiers*. Its purpose is to bring together voices, research, experiences, and proposals produced from and with Latin America in order to challenge and enrich the field of international education.

The region is presented here neither as an unconventional destination offering an exotic setting for international education programs nor as a collection of peripheral cases enriching the experiences of students seeking alternatives. It is understood as a heterogeneous space of intellectual and academic production, pedagogical innovation, and institutional action.

In this special issue, we propose approaching Latin America through its diversity in order to engage more deeply with the complexity of its social, cultural, and linguistic realities. Rather than asking what Latin America can learn from purportedly dominant models, this issue highlights a sample of what Latin America can contribute to global understanding and transformation through distinctive educational practices.

In recognition of this diversity, the articles have been written in the authors' own languages. Languages are not neutral vehicles: they shape the possibilities for producing, publishing, translating, citing, and legitimizing knowledge.¹

¹ In this article, we distinguish between authors' languages of origin and Indigenous languages. By the former, we mean the set of languages and linguistic practices associated with the linguistic contexts from which the authors participating in this issue come (Buyse et al., 2021). This notion should not be confused with Indigenous languages, understood here as the languages of the Indigenous peoples and nations of Latin America, whose existence predates conquest and colonization and which form part of the region's linguistic, cultural, and epistemic diversity. This distinction is essential for understanding the Latin American context, because Indigenous languages are systems of communication as well as vehicles of knowledge, memory, and identity that shape worldviews and ways of inhabiting the world (Mato, 2015, 2026). Full recognition of these languages and their place in the production and circulation of academic knowledge lies beyond the scope of this issue; nevertheless, we consider it necessary to address this question in future work.

The decision to publish the contributions in Spanish, Portuguese, and English goes beyond an accessibility issue. It is simultaneously an academic, political, and linguistic gesture. By describing this issue as plurilingual rather than multilingual, we underscore the distinction between multilingualism, which refers to the coexistence of different languages within a given social or communicative space, and plurilingualism, which emphasizes the dynamic, relational, and interconnected nature of linguistic and cultural repertoires (Coste, Moore, & Zarate, 2009; Piccardo, 2013, 2019). From this perspective, the presence of Spanish, Portuguese, and English in this issue highlights the coexistence of three distinct languages as part of an editorial decision intended to foster circulation and dialogue among academic works situated in different contexts.

This constitutes an intervention in academic circuits that frequently equate internationalization with the circulation of English as the hegemonic language of communication and reduce linguistic diversity (Li Wei & García, 2022) to a difficulty to be overcome or a limitation belonging to 'others,' who are constructed as different by structures that rank languages, forms of knowledge, and subjects (Walsh, 2009). Difference is thereby transformed into a deficit measured against a linguistic norm whose dominant position renders it invisible as such. By contrast, the plurilingual character of this issue seeks to uphold the epistemic value of the languages in which experiences unfold, and knowledge is produced.

It is therefore an action aimed at advancing a measure of epistemic justice (Fricker, 2007) and at challenging colonial models that persist today—models that organized not only territories and forms of labor, but also identities, subjectivities, and legitimate modes of knowledge production.

With this *Frontiers* special issue, we hope to move a little further along the path we traced with *Voices from the South: Decolonial Perspectives in International Education* (Rizzotti & Cruz-Feliciano, 2023), in which we invited authors from the Global South to share their voices and experiences. Here, we focus on Latin America in order to continue bringing together diverse voices and experiences that reaffirm the positive value of the region's academic and scientific production, while recognizing that diversity and difference are not grounds for the exoticization of a region, but rather sources of enunciation for a multiplicity of realities that enrich international education experiences.

2. Latin America as a site of enunciation and practice

To understand contemporary international education, we must situate it within the scope of geopolitics. The internationalization of education, particularly higher education, is shaped by academic, sociocultural, economic, and political motivations whose effects vary across institutional and national contexts. As Antenucci (2024) notes, these dynamics are embedded in historical trajectories of colonialism, competition, cooperation, knowledge transfer, and elite formation.

Asymmetries between the Global North and Global South are expressed in the meanings assigned to destinations, the differential valuation of educational systems, the direction of mobility flows, access to resources, and the authority granted to particular theoretical frameworks and conceptual paradigms.

Marketing strategies also draw on imaginaries and stereotypes that reinforce disparities in the perceived potential of experiences, as well as in the capacity and academic quality attributed to educational systems across regions.

Latin America is constructed through nature, experience, community, and personal challenge; Europe, through institutions and institutional life, knowledge, excellence, and academic legitimacy. We use the Latin America–Europe contrast as an illustration, while recognizing that this opposition extends beyond these two regions, as we argued in *Voices from the South* (Rizzotti & Cruz-Feliciano, 2023).

It is important to note that, in these interpretations, the Global North is presented as a homogeneous territory, rendering its linguistic, cultural, and social diversity invisible. Its own internal colonial logics are disavowed, and this homogenizing mechanism underpins the idea of predictability and safety in contrast to the unexpected and unpredictable character attributed to other regions.

These forms of marketing and the discourses surrounding them are not neutral; they reproduce a geopolitics of knowledge in which the North appears as the producer of theory and deep knowledge, while the South is cast as a provider of exotic experiences and encounters.

As Aníbal Quijano (2020, p. 203) observes, 'the conquered and dominated peoples were placed in a natural position of inferiority and, consequently, so too were their phenotypic traits, as well as their mental and cultural discoveries.' This operation transformed historical, cultural, and

epistemic differences into allegedly natural differences, legitimizing the opposition between civilization and barbarism, modernity and tradition, and homogenizing the diversity of the regions encompassed by the Global South.

At the same time, this does not mean drawing a rigid geographical boundary or assuming that Latin America speaks with a single voice (Rizzotti & Cruz-Feliciano, 2023). Inequalities and positions of privilege cut across both North and South; within the region, diverse histories, languages, social groups, institutions, and political projects coexist. Thus, 'from Latin America' designates a plural and situated site of enunciation, not a singular cultural essence. It signals a commitment to recognizing how location, history, and power relations shape knowledge production, the formation of our societies, and the complexity of those societies.

This is precisely where Latin America's richness lies. We therefore believe that focusing on the knowledge, experiences, and educational practices of professionals and scholars situated in the region enables the incorporation of dimensions arising from everyday experience, relationships with local communities, and specific institutional conditions. These dimensions foster new forms of knowledge and lend legitimacy to other ways of knowing and doing.

The aim is not to replace one center with another, but to change the rules that determine who may speak, what is recognized as knowledge, and under what conditions dialogue is constructed.

3. Moving from segregation to holistic integration

The epistemologies of the South offer a key to understanding this challenge. De Sousa Santos and Meneses (2014) argue that colonialism was also a form of epistemological domination: an unequal knowledge–power relationship that suppressed, disqualified, or rendered invisible multiple ways of knowing.

Abyssal thinking segregates experiences and forms of knowledge into those deemed visible, intelligible, and valid and those relegated to the other side of the line. Thus, even if formal political colonialism appears to have been eradicated, the abyssal lines that structured colonial relations persist in contemporary modes of producing, validating, and circulating knowledge, cutting across science, universities, and academic publishing circuits (De Sousa Santos, 2007, 2024).

In international education, such lines become visible when local institutions are regarded primarily as providers of access, logistics, or 'culture,' while academic authority and the definition of objectives are located elsewhere. This is especially clear when host communities are presented as objects of observation or as beneficiaries rather than as producers of knowledge; when the number of visiting students becomes the nearly exclusive measure of success, and the content and objectives of mobility lack pedagogically meaningful development; or when approaches developed in Latin America acquire legitimacy only after being translated—not merely linguistically, but also culturally reformulated—so that central institutions can deem them intelligible and valid. In this way, such institutions materialize practices that we describe as *cultural extractivism*.

In this sense, the definition of “cultural extractivism” can be understood as a dynamic through which the knowledge, practices, relationships, and experiences of host societies are incorporated as resources for the learning and transformation of international students, without those who produce them necessarily being recognized as subjects of knowledge and transformation or participating reciprocally in defining the educational experience. Our analysis dialogues with scholars such as Neriko Musha Doerr (2013) and Lauren Collins (2022). Doerr problematizes the position of local people as *involuntary teachers* of internationally mobile students, while Collins shifts attention toward host communities in the Global South and their role as providers of intercultural experiences and local knowledge for those participating in mobility programs.

This is how the coloniality of knowledge, as theorized by Aníbal Quijano (2000), becomes material. To assume that educational systems and pedagogical formats are less valuable or transformative because they have fewer resources or pedagogical, organizational and evaluative models that differ from those considered universal and hegemonic is an act of coloniality and epistemic injustice.

We therefore understand that (re) thinking and (re) organizing international education requires revisiting the field through the ecology of knowledges (De Sousa Santos, 2007), which recognizes the plurality and interconnection of knowledge without reducing it to a single mode of validation. This does not imply relativism or the idealization of local knowledge at the expense of other forms of knowledge. Rather, it renders processes of listening and intercultural dialogue, as well as the evaluation of knowledge and its effects, more complex. Ultimately, the principal aim of the ecology of knowledges is to recognize as valid epistemic interlocutors those whom dominant narratives place in different historical periods or stages of development, or outside standardized systems of validation.

From this perspective, and in pursuit of epistemic justice, it is important to revisit certain practices in international education. A process of decolonizing international education should not be limited to adding authors to syllabi or including 'Latin American cases' for analysis. Although we consider these issues important, we wish to highlight at least two others that this introduction must address: What do Latin American experiences contribute to the formation of a situated global citizenship oriented toward social justice? And how can these principles be translated into pedagogically meaningful, politically conscious, contextually pertinent, and participatory practices?

We believe that responding to these questions will help chart a path toward recognizing 'other forms of knowledge' and integrating diversity into both the formulation and implementation of international education programs.

3.1. Decolonization, decoloniality, and critical interculturality: Dialogues with global citizenship

Throughout this introduction, we position ourselves conceptually at the intersection of decolonial perspectives, the epistemologies of the South, and critical interculturality.

The latter is understood not only as a set of concepts for analyzing unequal power relations, but also as a political, epistemological, and ethical project (Walsh, 2010) that deepens recognition of racialized colonial structures.

From this perspective, inclusive international education requires more than the coexistence of different people or a collection of diverse cultural celebrations in the same place and time. It requires the affirmative recognition of epistemic peers and the validation of diverse forms of knowledge that enable us not only to understand the 'other,' but also to reconsider our own position and act upon the structures that generate discrimination through universalist models and colonial imaginaries.

From a historical perspective, well into the twentieth century, colonial relations were understood primarily in terms of how one culture and its political system dominated another, imposing a formal power structure that institutionalized domination and produced relations of exploitation and privilege benefiting colonizing societies.

In line with the foregoing, Peruvian scholar Aníbal Quijano observed that colonial oppression persisted in many societies even in the absence of a power structure imposed by foreign powers. To explain these dynamics, he introduced the concept of coloniality, which he defined as a system of exploitation and privilege grounded in socioeconomic factors, through which

one group capitalizes on and reproduces inequalities to its own benefit at the expense of those placed at a disadvantage (Quijano, 2000).

He thus argues that coloniality exceeds colonialism as a historical form of domination and that its consequences extend beyond whether colonial administrations formally continue. They permeate both the material and subjective dimensions of social relations and therefore become perpetuated and naturalized, taking on normative force.

In response to the model of coloniality, various scholars have advanced the concept of decoloniality. This entails not only identifying the persistence of colonial structures, but also questioning the forms of knowledge, classification, and authority they have produced and opening spaces for other ways of knowing, interpreting, and building relationships (Mignolo, 2010; Walsh, 2009; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). These historical processes have moved forward and backward and have adopted other, apparently subtler and less institutionalized forms of hegemony and domination.

When we speak of decoloniality in international education, we introduce a specific idea intended to support practices aimed at establishing more just and equitable relationships, regardless of the formal structures of the institutional order within which each person develops a professional career (Rizzotti & Cruz-Feliciano, 2023).

We understand that international education as we know it operates within the bounds of a market economy. Consequently, a process capable of decolonizing study abroad would require dismantling the market structures that incentivize the rules and behaviors imposed by Northern institutions and providers on their Southern partners. At present, these include matters related to liability, accommodations, and safety, among others.

For most Northern institutions, their particular understandings of these matters are presented as non-negotiable. This entails imposing these structures on staff and partners in the South, often in ways that conflict with local practices and preferences. Within the market economy in which we operate, decolonizing study abroad is currently an unattainable goal. We are therefore unable to remove the formal structures created by the commercial relationship between the parties, but we can alter the rules so that they reflect a more horizontal, equitable, and just order.

Adopting a decolonial approach is a feasible step toward making inequalities and imbalanced relationships in the field visible, allowing us to begin reassessing our positions and possible paths forward. We distinguish between decolonizing study abroad and applying a decolonial approach in order to be honest about the institutional context in which we work and the

changes we can make from within. As Tuck and Yang (2012) aptly state, 'decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools' (p. 1).

The construction of otherness that has historically shaped relations between Europe and Latin America—from O'Gorman's (1958) 'invention' of America to Dussel's (1994) constitution of the Other as exterior to European modernity—shows that encounters between cultures are never neutral: differences are also interpreted, represented, and ranked from positions of power. In international education, this perspective enables us to problematize practices that turn receiving societies and their communities into objects of observation, sources of cultural authenticity, or settings for visitors' learning, thereby reproducing forms of othering even when the stated purpose is intercultural exchange (Doerr, 2019).

This reflection leads us to the current debate on global citizenship, a concept that can reproduce universalist imaginaries and the hierarchies of colonial modernity or, if resignified from a critical and situated perspective, offer a pedagogical horizon for understanding interdependence, assuming responsibility, and acting upon global inequalities.

This is what a decolonial perspective entails: we may share the goal of educating people with global citizenship capacities. The difference, however, lies in how each perspective understands that citizenship and which tools it considers valid—from a functional perspective oriented toward the individual subject, or from a critical decolonial perspective oriented toward the collective and relational subject. The outcomes will certainly not be the same.

Global citizenship can contribute to these aims when understood as awareness and commitment rather than as a depoliticized cosmopolitan identity. Global citizenship education integrates cognitive, socioemotional, and behavioral dimensions in order to understand interdependence, develop empathy and respect, and act for social and environmental justice. From the South, these capacities should be directed not only toward successfully adapting to a globalized world, but also toward critically interpreting inequalities and taking part in transforming them. To be a global citizen is to think globally while recognizing one's own location within global systems of power and responsibility (Rizzotti, 2025).

This perspective allows us to connect the social and cognitive justice proposed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014), using them as lenses through which to look into inequalities and show that they are not natural but have histories, institutions, and mechanisms of reproduction. Examining local,

global, and intercultural issues, understanding diverse perspectives, and acting for the common good require recognizing the authority of experiences and forms of knowledge that have been systematically devalued. In this sense, internationalizing means weaving more just relationships of knowledge.

3.2. From theory to implementation: Standards of practice and the 4P model.

When we critically examine education or any other social phenomenon, we risk remaining at the level of merely stating and rhetorically describing problems. We believe that these conceptual constructions must have practical counterparts if they are to retain their transformative capacity.

In this Frontiers special issue on Latin America, we invite work along both dimensions: the presentation of theoretical models and, at the same time, concrete educational experiences that consolidate the relationship between critical theory and action in practice.

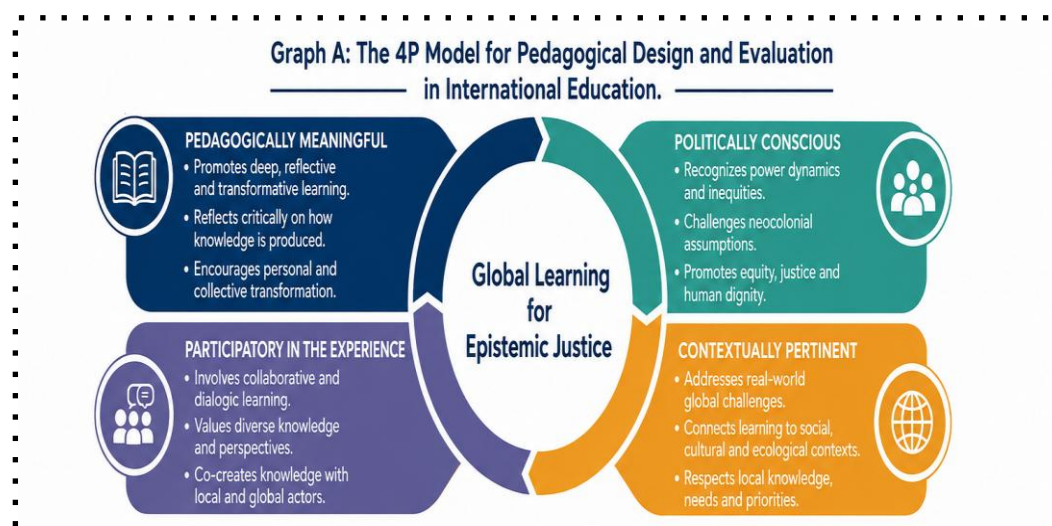
In this respect, we engage in a dialogue with the Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2020), which provide a reference for action by proposing criteria for quality and continuous improvement and by linking educational mission and meaningful learning to institutional responsibility, collaboration, ethics, and assessment. This is especially relevant when international education involves communities, organizations, and local actors, as several articles in this issue demonstrate.

As part of the movement from critical reflection to practice, we also present the 4P Pedagogical and Evaluation Model for International Education (Rizzotti, 2026)², a situated tool designed to engage with professional standards developed in the Global North (Figure A). The model incorporates questions arising from Latin American experience and articulates four interrelated dimensions: Pedagogically Meaningful, Politically Conscious, Contextually Pertinent, and Participatory in the Experience.

FIGURE (A)

THE 4P MODEL FOR PEDAGOGICAL DESIGN AND EVALUATION IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

² The 4P Model was developed by one of the guest editors of this special issue. Its copyright and intellectual property registration is currently being processed by the competent national intellectual property authority of the Argentine Republic. Its dissemination and reproduction are subject to the author's authorization.



Pedagogically Meaningful: as a first dimension, asks how international education experiences become meaningful learning and, at the same time, transformative experiences through reflection and pedagogical mediation.

The second, **Politically Conscious**, recognizes that every educational experience, including an international one, is a political act insofar as it is a pedagogical act. Paulo Freire (2003) argues that 'there is no educational practice that is not political' (pp. 42–43). This means recognizing that every educational proposal is built upon particular values, perspectives, and ways of interpreting the world; it is therefore not neutral, but unfolds in contexts shaped by histories, power relations, inequalities, memories, and forms of agency. It must consequently become politically conscious of both its foundations and its consequences.

Contextually Pertinent, as the third dimension, examines the proposal's coherence with the territory, the people involved, and its educational purposes.

Finally, the **Participatory dimension in the Experience**, considers possibilities for diverse voices, agency, reciprocity, and co-construction among the actors involved in the experience.

Taken together, these dimensions make it possible to analyze not only the intentionality and coherence of a program's design, but also the experiences it generates, the relationships it builds, and the outcomes it produces. The Model is also translated into a matrix that defines its dimensions within both the theoretical framework and the pedagogical development model, and serves as an instrument for analysis and evaluation.

MATRIX(1)

ABRIDGED EXAMPLE OF THE EVALUATIVE APPLICATION OF THE 4P MODEL³

Dimension	Guiding Question	Illustrative Indicator	Possible Evidence
Pedagogically Meaningful	Does the experience transform participation into meaningful and reflective learning?	Connection among experience, reflection, and learning objectives.	Reflective work, projects, and learning assessments.
Politically Conscious	Does the proposal enable critical recognition of power relations, inequalities, and forms of knowledge production?	Inclusion of critical and diverse perspectives on context and knowledge.	Content, critical reflection activities, and the voices and sources included.
Contextually Pertinent	Does the proposal respond in a situated way to the social, cultural, and institutional context in which it takes place?	Coherence among objectives, activities, and the context's characteristics and needs.	Program design, activity selection, and feedback from local actors.
Participatory in the Experience	Do the different actors have genuine opportunities to participate, contribute knowledge, and co-construct the experience?	Spaces for participation, dialogue, and joint construction.	Co-design processes, community participation, and evaluations by students and local actors.

Dialogue between the two frameworks does not imply equating them or setting a perspective produced in the North against one developed in the South. Rather, it seeks to demonstrate the possibility of constructing professional knowledge relationally. The Standards of Good Practice provide a consensual framework, developed from the perspective of the Global North, for identifying conditions of quality, responsibility, and continuous improvement in international education. The 4P Model, meanwhile, introduces a perspective that asks how these principles materialize in contexts shaped by historical, cultural, economic, and epistemic inequalities. We thus propose understanding the South–North relationship not exclusively as the circulation or transfer of models, but as epistemological dialogue and the shared construction of practices.

These orientations enable a particularly productive dialogue with critical perspectives from Latin America. If coloniality is not merely a historical

³The matrix presents, for illustrative purposes, one possible operationalization of the four dimensions. The 4P Model encompasses a broader system of criteria, indicators, and evidence for the design, monitoring, and evaluation of international education programs. At the time of publication, the 4P Model is undergoing copyright and intellectual-property registration in Argentina.

legacy but a logic that continues to organize relations of power, knowledge, and authority (Quijano, 2000), international education practices must ask not only what participants learn, but also who is recognized as a producer of knowledge, who sets the priorities of the experience, and from which positions relationships between visitors and local communities are constructed. In this sense, reciprocity cannot be reduced to an exchange among actors; it must also take into account the conditions under which that exchange occurs.

This articulation also allows us to recover Fricker's (2007) concept of epistemic justice. An international experience may formally meet academic and organizational objectives while still reproducing inequalities regarding who holds the authority to interpret a reality, which forms of knowledge are considered legitimate, and which voices remain subordinated. Incorporating this dimension requires moving beyond an evaluation focused exclusively on the student's experience toward a broader understanding of the effects programs generate for the different actors involved.

From this perspective, the quality of international education cannot be measured solely by participant satisfaction, achievement of academic objectives, or managerial efficiency. It must also consider contextual pertinence, reciprocal relationships, the participation of local actors, the recognition of different forms of knowledge, and the capacity to generate intercultural learning that does not turn difference into exoticization or cultural consumption.

The 4P Model is presented here neither as a closed framework nor as an alternative intended to replace existing standards, but as a situated proposal designed to expand the questions through which international education programs are designed and evaluated. Its inclusion illustrates how knowledge produced in Latin America can enter into conversation with international professional frameworks from other regions, contribute specific categories arising from historical contexts and experiences, and thereby support a more democratic construction of the field.

4. A plural issue to broaden the field of international education

This special issue was organized around five closely connected themes: diversity and inclusion; social justice and equity; virtual mobility; the geopolitics of international education; and intercultural dialogues with and from Latin America. The plurality sought in the call is expressed in the ten articles that comprise the issue. Together, they bring together research and experiences developed across Latin American territories—including

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, and Mexico—and, in several cases, in partnership with institutions in the United States. Territorial diversity is complemented by varied methodological approaches, ranging from case studies, qualitative and interpretive research, and mixed methods to quantitative analysis, analysis of student work, and critical systematizations of educational experiences.

A first group of articles focuses on inequalities, inclusion, and the conditions of access to international education. The experiences analyzed show that broadening participation depends not only on increasing mobility opportunities but also on revisiting who can access them, under what conditions, and what learning occurs during these encounters. They include short-term regional mobility between Chile and Argentina, hybrid initiatives developed in Ecuador, and virtual experiences between Mexico and the United States. Taken together, they invite us to reconsider inclusion not only as access to an international experience, but also as a genuine opportunity to participate, learn, and build more reciprocal educational relationships.

A second group addresses the geopolitics of international education and inequalities in the production, circulation, and legitimation of knowledge. These articles challenge the apparent neutrality of international flows of students, knowledge, and educational models. A regional analysis demonstrates the persistence of structural asymmetries in academic mobility and the concentration of international students in Global North countries; another examines how geopolitical and colonial representations of Latin America may shape U.S. students' motivations and choice of educational destination. A short-term international education experience in Mexico, in turn, shifts authority over curricular design and the interpretation of the experience toward the host institution and local actors.

Territoriality, community, and intercultural dialogue constitute another important cluster. The articles in this group approach interculturality not as simple contact among people from different cultures, but as an experience requiring pedagogical mediation, reflexivity, and recognition of different modes of knowledge production. Research conducted in Brazil explores affective, cultural, and identity shifts in exchange students' writing and invites us to think about language learning beyond the mere acquisition of linguistic competence. In Ecuador, the body–territory becomes a pedagogical practice and a way of producing situated, collective knowledge together with Andean and Amazonian communities. In Mexico, encounters with migrants, Indigenous educators, and community actors reveal, from another perspective, the possibilities and tensions that arise when an international experience seeks

to shift interpretive authority and recognize local actors as producers of knowledge.

Virtual mobility and hybrid forms of internationalization also cut across several articles, revealing both their democratizing possibilities and their limitations. Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) experiences between Mexico and the United States show that digital environments can foster interdisciplinary, bilingual, and intercultural exchange and open opportunities for students who would otherwise be unlikely to access physical mobility. At the same time, the studies show that virtuality does not automatically eliminate inequality: disparities in technological access, linguistic hierarchies, and power relations can also be reproduced online. A regional perspective on Latin American universities shifts the analysis to a different scale and demonstrates the importance of management capacity, infrastructure, and institutional frameworks for sustaining virtual mobility beyond isolated experiences. These articles encourage us to consider technological innovation not as an end in itself, but in relation to the pedagogical, institutional, and political conditions that give it meaning.

Across the articles, recurring concerns include inequalities in access and mobility flows; persistent epistemic and linguistic hierarchies; the need to recognize host communities and institutions as actors and producers of knowledge; the role of pedagogical mediation in transforming experience into learning; and the search for more reciprocal, contextualized, and sustainable forms of internationalization. They also propose responses that move away from standardized models.

Our purpose extends beyond offering uniform and closed answers: we seek to show that Latin America's heterogeneity is one of its strengths. The issue, therefore, does not attempt to establish a single regional model or to turn particular experiences into universal prescriptions.

Instead, we seek to make situated knowledge visible, encourage careful comparison, and build a dialogue in which the region's contributions participate on equal terms in shaping global agendas. The issue's plurilingual commitment is part of this objective: to broaden possibilities for circulation without erasing the languages of production or the texts' contextual marks.

We believe that building a broader and more diverse agenda requires strengthening South–South dialogue and reconstructing less-asymmetric South–North relationships. It also demands a critical examination of inequalities within the region and vigilance so that appeals to 'the Latin American' do not silence differences of nation, race, ethnicity, language, gender, class, disability, citizenship, or institutional position.

Fundamental questions remain open: How can we evaluate, in contextually situated ways, the effects of international education on all the people and communities involved? How can the local labor that sustains programs be recognized and redistributed? Which pedagogical devices foster critical reflection that translates into action? How can publication and translation policies be developed without making English a condition of academic existence? Which forms of cooperation can be sustained without reproducing dependency?

In this sense, professional standards and critical perspectives can operate in complementary ways: the former help establish institutional conditions for responsible practice, while the latter enable continuous interrogation of the power relations that permeate that practice.

A more inclusive and diverse international education will be possible to the extent that it combines pedagogical rigor, political awareness, contextual pertinence, and substantive participation. From Latin America, the experiences gathered here show that internationalizing can mean more than crossing borders: it can become a practice of dialogue among forms of knowledge, collective responsibility, and transformation oriented toward social and epistemic justice.

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Guest Editor biography

Andrea Rizzotti: My career in this field began in 1994, when I joined a study abroad program as a Student Life Assistant. I am a sociologist, internationalist, and interculturalist with over 30 years of experience in international education. I coordinate the International Education Program at FLACSO Argentina and work as an educator, researcher, consultant, and designer of innovative programs. An active member of The Forum on Education Abroad, I also serve on the Editorial Board of *Frontiers*. I developed the 4P Model, integrating pedagogical significance, political awareness, contextual relevance, and participatory experience in international education.

Hector Cruz Feliciano: My first encounter with international education came as a Peace Corps volunteer in Guatemala, where I discovered the transformative power of cross-cultural learning. For more than two decades, I have worked in community development, higher education, and international academic programs. As Director of Latin America Programs at CET Academic Programs and professor at the University of Puerto Rico, I design transformative learning experiences that foster critical reflection, intercultural understanding, social justice, and deeper engagement with Latin America and its diverse societies.