

Creating “Deep Partnerships” with Institutions Abroad. Bard College as Global Citizen

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Introduction

The notion of global citizenship is not simple or uncontroversial. Where is such citizenship rooted? What criteria do we apply to judge the quality of its realization? How do we know whether it is effective? Who decides? Without international norms or established forums for discussion and debate, the notion of global citizenship can be manipulated by powerful interests, or remain diffuse and fail to make a lasting contribution. In this respect, global citizenship and the institutions that support it may come to resemble foreign aid. Many people would agree that foreign aid is a necessary and a good thing in general, and yet its results are sometimes doubtful and can even be harmful—for example, by creating dependencies that discourage local populations from mastering their own development, by distorting economies, by introducing technologies that are unsustainable, encouraging corruption, or allocating too many resources to interests tied to donors or aid agencies.

In the field of education, global citizenship seems more anodyne. What can be wrong with teaching young people to know the world better, and to develop loyalties that go beyond their “national interest”? Nothing, in principle. But we should be careful how we structure and manage the programs we offer, and whom they serve. By and large, American study abroad programs are conceived for the benefit of “our” students. We may create and offer the programs ourselves, as college administrators who are in day-to-day contact with partners abroad; or we may rely on independent providers, whose goals range from the idealistic to the frankly commercial, and whose actual engagement with institutions and faculty abroad may be largely invisible to us. Either way, international exchange and study abroad involve collaboration with people and institutions in foreign countries.

It is the contention of this chapter that if we aspire to act as global citizens, we and our institutions must take conscious responsibility for the nature of these interactions—explicit or implicit. A corollary of this contention is that we need to take seriously the project of creating international partnerships, and to apply our very best thinking to the partnerships we create. In seeking to realize new forms of international education, institutions are themselves acting as global citizens—good ones or bad ones. If we wish to make the world a better place, we should strive to model the ethical standards that we

seek to impart to our students, and that must ultimately characterize meaningful global citizenship.

I maintain that the ethical standards that should inform global citizenship are to be sharply distinguished from the project of “cultural competence”ⁱ that is now popularly accepted as a goal of international education. In its exclusive emphasis on mastery and effectiveness, “cultural competence” can be detrimental to the openness and self-questioning that are essential to effective partnerships. In other words, “cultural competence” is not a sufficient basis for global citizenship. It lacks the crucial ethical and philosophical elements of mutuality and equality.

The Institute for International Liberal Education (IILE) runs Bard’s major international partnerships, or joint ventures. We are most active in Russia and South Africa, where we have extensive partnerships with St. Petersburg State University and the University of the Witwatersrand.ⁱⁱ IILE’s mission statement commits us explicitly to entering into partnerships based on the principles of mutuality and equality. These are, notably, principles that attempt to structure the dynamics of the relationship, not just its legal or administrative form. Partnerships can take many shapes; they may differ according to the needs of the partners, their size and status, the specific goals of the collaboration, etc. Whatever the details, committing ourselves to a relationship based on mutuality and equality helps assure (1) that we all make a conscious attempt to listen, to be aware of the needs, goals, feelings, and ideas of our overseas colleagues; and (2) that we consciously seek to work in ways that serve not only our own personal or institutional or national ends (though these are all important), but those of our partners as well. There is also a more pragmatic angle to our idealism—we believe these principles to be the only foundation on which we can build relationships that will be sound and long-lasting.

IILE’s collaborative projects are buttressed by the fact that Bard and its partner institutions agree to provide a dual degree or shared (dual) credit to students who complete our joint academic programs. After four years of study, Smolny graduates, 90% of whom are Russian, earn a dual B.A. degree in Arts and Humanities (from Smolny College of St. Petersburg State University) and Liberal Arts and Sciences (from Bard College). IHRE students, approximately half of whom come from North American colleges and universities, and approximately half from the University of the Witwatersrand or other African universities, earn regular credit from Bard and Wits for completion of IHRE’s semester-long, intensive, humanities-based human rights program. The commitment to the dual degree or dual credit is the central, most far-reaching and important foundational feature of these academic partnerships. Institutions are jealous of the capacity to award their degrees; they cherish and protect this right. Thus, by its very nature, dual accreditation assures a high level of academic co-ownership and administrative involvement. It requires the participating institutions to realize a common set of educational goals and to apply formal assessment and evaluation criteria. Thus, it gives both partners the leverage to insist on academic quality.

Recently, we have come to think of Bard’s most developed links with our university partners abroad as “deep partnerships.”ⁱⁱⁱ This seems like an excellent term for describing

relationships that go beyond the achievement of short-term goals for our institutions or our “own” students. Partnerships are “deep” to the extent that they engage our ethical, intellectual, and philosophical capacities, as well as our well-honed professional skills. In Bard’s case, the “deep partnerships” we maintain can be defined as long-term shared endeavors that include the exchange of students, faculty, and curricular elements.

Creating deep partnerships, in which we attempt to live up to the principles of mutuality and equality, also suggests an interest in the reform of educational practices and institutions both abroad and at home. We openly acknowledge this interest, which we share with our university partners abroad, and which means applying progressive political, namely democratic principles, to an area of activity—education—that is too often viewed as largely exempt from such concerns. At Bard, the reform aspect of our partnership activities has mainly to do with changes in the way we approach and integrate international or global issues on our campus. Deep partnerships challenge and enable us to be more effective in learning with and from, not just about people in other countries. In practice, this is not easy. It requires an ongoing effort of imagination, dialogue, and administrative finesse, not to mention stubborn persistence.

We have found that we need to be continually alert to assumptions that “our way is the right way” (or indeed the only way). It has been instructive to observe that this attitude is by no means unique to the U.S. liberal arts college. African and Russian universities can be just as convinced as we are that their way is the only good way. This frequently forces us to re-examine our assumptions—something that in some ways is more difficult for us at Bard, since the partnership programs, for financial and other reasons, take place primarily on our partners’ campuses. On the other hand, our major partners are very large institutions, and they can find it hard to change even when the will is there. Our presence then helps them implement the changes to which they aspire.

At Bard, we have found that universities in “countries in transition”^{iv} can be especially open to change. Our partner institutions in Russia and South Africa have taken advantage of just such a period of “transition” to introduce elements of liberal education into their curricula. The appeal of liberal education is based in the greater liberty that it affords teachers as well as students. Thus, the introduction of liberal arts curricula and pedagogy, in partnership with Bard, has been a tool that opens up new spaces for multidisciplinary study, critical thinking, and a more student-centered pedagogy.

In concluding this introduction, I would like to pose a number of questions whose answers may serve to determine whether our international programs live up to the promise of global citizenship:

- Do the international programs in which we are engaged also benefit students and other citizens of the countries where the programs take place?
- Do institutions and colleagues abroad have a significant voice in the initiation, design, and administration of these programs?
- Are our institutions acting as global citizens by treating our partners abroad as rights-bearing entities that are philosophically our equals?

- Do the partner institutions and our colleagues abroad also benefit, and are we conscious of the impact, both objective and subjective, that our involvement has on them?
- Do we acknowledge and welcome the fact that this partnership has the capacity to change us, and our institutions?

The answers to these questions can only be found in practice. We can answer them in the affirmative only if we are willing to enter into genuine partnerships. On this basis, we can engage our colleagues abroad in an ongoing conversation that involves assessment and analysis as well as program development and delivery.

Initiating a Global Conversation

To give a sense of the nature of such a conversation, to model it, as it were, I asked a number of individuals involved in Bard's international partnerships, as well as several of my Bard colleagues, to respond to a series of questions. Each of the ten contributors was asked to comment on one or all of the following questions:

- What is the principal value to your institution, and to you personally, of the partnership with Bard (Smolny, Wits)?
- What have been the most important benefits?
- What is the biggest challenge?

In addition, the contributors were invited to name their favorite metaphor for the partnership in which they are involved.

The following comments are intended to give a flavor of the conclusions and reflections that accompany these joint ventures. I will follow them with some very brief reflections on the nature of the dialogue, drawing especially on my colleagues' choice of metaphors, as expressive of a domain of feeling and imagination that sheds a prospective and more personal light on our experiences and hopes.

For Smolny College of St. Petersburg State University

Sergey Bogdanov is Dean of the Philology Faculty of St. Petersburg State University.^v

The Smolny project is the most serious and important experiment in the system of Russian higher education of the last years. It has not only helped the university to bring in new educational technologies, but has also brought us new content. Essentially, Smolny is a point of growth for St. Petersburg State University—in fact, not only for this university, but for the system of higher education in Russia. What is most important is that the Smolny project, from its inception, has been multidisciplinary in its essence. As a result, the program has given birth to a new curriculum, new pedagogical technologies, and a new type of students. Obviously, we are now also seeing new types of faculty. All these changes are built not so much on bringing in new resources or people who can provide the content of education—we had those here already. Rather, the joint venture allows us to develop those resources in a new form.

To enumerate the concrete benefits, it is enough to look at photographs of our graduates. There are already more than 300 young people who have successfully graduated from Smolny, and each year we see more and more students who find something useful in this program. It helps them to find their way in life.

In addition, there are quite a few officials in the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Finance, and elsewhere who recognize the benefits of Smolny's educational program. The support of these officials has helped us do very important things. For example, we are in the midst of renovating the Bobrinskiy Palace, which already serves as Smolny's main campus.

Smolny has also brought other important things to the university. This is what I meant when I spoke of Smolny as a point of growth and innovation. Many individuals who made contributions at Smolny are now serving the whole university. An example is Philip Fedchin, who is the chief technology expert at Smolny and who is simultaneously heading up the university's distance education program and the large project "Innovative Technology in a Traditional University." People like this are obviously very beneficial to the university, so we don't lack specific benefits.

Like any large enterprise, Smolny also involves some risk. The fact that this new program is occurring within the framework of the university makes it easier from one point of view. We have the university structure to support it, and powerful intellectual resources. On the other hand, the fact that Smolny is a multidisciplinary program means that it touches on the sphere of interest of other departments, faculty members, etc. For this reason it has required a lot of communicative work and human work. That's the first challenge.

The second challenge is not so much that we had to apply new standards to the Russian type of education, but is rather related to the saying that "big trees take the light from others." This caused quite a lot of problems within the Philology Department and other parts of the university—difficulties that sometimes prevented us from doing other things and led to conflicts. I remember very well the explanation I had to provide to the public prosecutor's office in 1999. There was a crisis within the university. While we were admitting students to Smolny, people came from the public prosecutor's office to check the procedure for accepting students, and there was quite a row. That was ten years ago. But I suppose the difficulties that we encountered existed for many other new programs that got started at the same time in Russia.

For me personally, there are many positive memories of a personal nature. The most difficult thing, personally, has been having to serve as a medium joining two very different spaces—the problem of realizing the idea of liberal education in the concrete conditions of the university, without losing it.

My favorite metaphor is the tower. A tower connects heaven with earth and the subterranean world. It is a "stairway to heaven." In my dream, the city of St Petersburg is

surrounded by seven towers. One of them is the Tower of Babel, which I see as something positive. It represents Smolny, too, in a way, and the seven towers are meant to protect our city, including Smolny, which is part of it.

Valery Monakhov is Professor of American Studies and Director of Smolny College.^{vi}

It is not easy to say in a few words what the most important value in our partnership is. One of the main values for me is the chance to be free and creative. For me personally, it is very important to have a chance to make something new and unusual. In addition, the partnership allows me to gain a broader view of the world—not just of the educational space, but a broader awareness of human life in general. This broader scope is extremely important when it comes to creating a new educational program, for to do this we need to understand not just the role of education, but the cultural and educational traditions in each particular country. The partnership with Bard embodies the possibility to enrich our educational practice, and the possibility to become more professional in our field.

It also creates a space for creativity for our teachers. Professor Yuri Kuperin, who is a distinguished physicist and the head of Smolny's new natural sciences program, and who visited Bard recently, came to my office yesterday. As we talked, I understood that he is, well, perhaps not exactly reborn, but certainly inspired by his visit to Bard and by the possibility of discussing new programs with his American colleagues. The chance to create something new is important for him in his own life. It is good to see our teachers feeling like this and it is a result of our partnership.

This is just one example of how important it has been for our teachers to be able to have a direct experience of liberal education as it is practiced in the U.S. A critical quantity of people needed to know what liberal education really looks like and how it works, what its means and methods are. Over time, we were able to organize visits where they could see American universities close up. It would have been absolutely impossible to do this without support from the American side. We have also had very many visits from faculty and administrators from Bard—probably more than twenty visits a year, back and forth.

When we were young, as students, our own experience of education gave us some impressions, and we developed some different ideas and dreams about possible ways of changing the educational system. When we began to collaborate with our colleagues from Bard, we had in our hands, from this moment on, a real instrument to achieve our dreams, to modernize the system of education in Russia in the way in which it was necessary to bring about this modernization, as we understand it.

Fundamentally, I would say that we wanted to be more free. One way in which the partnership helped us achieve this goal is that we were no longer dependent on only one source of power and financing. We had a chance to choose not only among ideas but also among the sources of support for our activity.

The biggest challenge, first of all, was misunderstanding. At the very beginning, not many people really understood what liberal education means. We even had to invent a

word for it. Thus, it was quite difficult to find people who were able to feel what it could be and to join us in trying to understand and implement it. We were fortunate to find some excellent faculty members at the very beginning of the process.

We also encountered hostility. This came not only from people who didn't know anything about education or about the real goals of our partnership, but also from people who were suspicious of us and our partners. Very often I had to answer questions such as: Why do your American colleagues want to participate in these programs? What are their real goals? A lot of people tried to find some hidden ambition, some devious purpose of our partners, because we had had a long tradition of hostile relations between our two countries. This was a difficult heritage of the past. It was necessary to explain what the real goals are—mine, those of my partners—and to explain this again and again to very many people. This was one of the real challenges and it was very important to create a space of understanding, over a long period.

After we had come some distance, and Smolny was beginning to be successful, we began to feel increasing interest in our program from people not only at our university, but at other educational institutions in Russia. We started to find friends and supporters not only at the university, but also in the Ministry of Education and Science. We were open to other people; we invited them to our retreats, our seminars and conferences, and we had a real dialogue with other people. And dialogue, as we very soon discovered, was a very effective instrument for building bridges of understanding.

Another challenge was competition. Sometimes our competitors were not honest in their arguments and they tried to use misunderstanding of our real goals to achieve their own ends. They tried to say that we were going to destroy the national system of education, that we are some kind of traitors. But these attempts ended, for the most part, because it became evident that these were not our real goals. Our practical achievements convinced people over time.

In the context of our partnership, what is very important is that I know my partners are very cautious, very tolerant. Each time they are trying to understand the other side, the other people. I am not sure I can express it very well in English, but whenever you do something you are careful not to do something wrong because you are not sure you understand the other person. This helps create a huge space for real understanding. Each time we try to understand whatever it is, although it might seem strange, or not right, or not customary at first view. The key thing is to have tolerance, and understanding, and real good will to make something new and important and useful for our students and for the future.

Another aspect that is absolutely important for me—through the partnership I find not only colleagues, but friends, too. I have a real human experience of another country, another university. Today our partnership is a part of my life and of my own personality. In my feelings now, Bard College is the same as my own college, my own university; it is just as close to me. The space in which I live and work—my friends—this is my space too. From this point of view, our partnership is a very effective instrument for increasing

understanding of other cultures, other peoples. I am sure that very many people from the Russian side who participate in this project, and who have participated during these ten years of collaboration, share this feeling with me.

When I am trying to explain to other people what the difference is between the traditional system of Russian higher education and liberal education, I frequently compare it with the difference between Rubik's Cube and the usual wooden cube with pictures. The system of liberal education, our curriculum, makes it possible for students to construct very different courses of study in different combinations. The usual wooden cube does not create so many possibilities.

Another metaphor that I like to use is to tell people that we are not buying a suit from a factory for our students, but instead we are at the tailor's and are trying to make something specially for each person. Each person is different from others, so we are a personal tailor, not a factory that tries to fit everyone to the same standard.

Nikolay Koposov is Professor of History and Dean of Smolny College.^{vii}

In describing the value of the collaboration with Bard, I would distinguish two things: first, the advantages of collaboration itself, and second the substantive advantages of this particular collaboration.

First of all, this type of partnership, which is very extensive and broad, allows you not only to know more about a tradition that is different, and somewhat new, but also to better articulate the tradition that stands behind you yourself—whether you identify with it or not. In our case, there was a certain degree of dissatisfaction with the system that we inherited from the Soviet times, but this was precisely the context in which we came of age. The encounter with a different tradition enabled us to understand what the tradition we had inherited was about—its limitations and even some advantages. From this point of view, I would say there is a great value in being able to gain a better understanding of what you are looking for, and what the available resources abroad, in other traditions, are. This can't be done without collaboration.

The kind of collaboration in which we are engaged at Smolny—what our colleagues there are calling “deep partnership”—has a rather different logic than the logic of exchange programs in the usual sense. Many of us, including myself, have passed through such exchange programs. Having spent several years at university in Paris, during the 1990s, I know quite a bit about the French system of higher education, but I know a great deal more about the American system. In the American case, I know many more details, including minor technical problems that would otherwise escape attention.

It might seem strange that I mention minor technical details, but there is a reason for this. Solving small problems often raises big issues. Now that St. Petersburg State University and Bard have combined to form Smolny College, and we are more or less one institution, I have come to understand that in fact minor issues can conceal very considerable cultural meaning. This kind of understanding is not always something one

arrives at spontaneously—it can only happen through close collaboration that lasts for a very long time.

The major challenges I see are two. First, there was the challenge of creating the College as a social subsystem. This meant acculturating the model in Russia. We all expected that something would change when liberal education was transplanted to Russia, but that the core would survive—a recognizable version of liberal education. However, liberal education is only a subsystem of the larger system of social relations in general. The most difficult case and ongoing challenge is how to make sure that a subsystem can be adapted into a society whose overall system is very different from the American one. Building a system of relationships within Smolny is one thing. We can do this, but the environment is different and this environment is not absolutely separable from Smolny itself.

There is a joke from the Soviet times that illustrates this problem. It so happened that Gorbachev visited London once and had a look around. He came back to Moscow and reported to the Central Committee, “I have seen England and now I know why their economy is so much more flourishing than ours—it is because they drive on the left side of the road!” The Central Committee discussed this report and decided that they would implement the measure too. But since there were some reservations, they decided to introduce left-hand driving on only some of the roads.

There is also a kind of institutional challenge, meaning that the very sense of what an institution is differs in the US and in Russia. The distinction between public and private, function and person, and so on, is somehow different in the American case. Even now, it is not so easy for me to function according to the strict sense of what an institution is, as understood in the United States. In Russia, many things are done in a more informal way. In the U.S., democratization is much more linked to the idea of formalization. Democracy there seems, to a very considerable extent, to be a matter of very complex formal institutional relationships. Without these formalities, along with a very highly developed legal system and mentality to back it up, democracy, as it stands now in the U.S., the U.K., and Europe generally, would have been very different. Russia does not have this longstanding legal situation. Hence many things are being done in a very different way. The American system of separation of powers is paradigmatic for the whole system. In Russia, things tend to merge and be perceived in a less formal, more private way, which allows for violations of the rules by everyone.

This extends into every part of life. Students need to learn to use institutional means when they want to ask for new courses, etc.; to go to the student government instead of just coming to me and asking for something to be done. We are trying to institutionalize processes at all levels, but it takes time and the environment is not always conducive to this.

For the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)

Tawana Kupe is the dean of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of the Witwatersrand.^{viii}

I think the first value of our joint program, the International Human Rights Exchange (IHRE), is the cross-fertilization of ideas that occurs between the faculty, as well as the students, because the two systems are fairly different in certain ways. The system in place in South Africa is derived from the British system, whereas the American system—although it also has some elements of the British system—is not exactly the same. The result is a conversation between the two, which I would call cross-fertilization.

One aspect of this cross-fertilization has to do with how classes and interactions are conducted. I understand that when the IHRE program started here at Wits last year there was some kind of clash of cultures. Our faculty members found the American students a bit more disruptive. The South African students are more used to a lecture mode. Normally they listen to the lecture, which is delivered by the professor, and then the lecture is discussed in the tutorial, which is a smaller group that meets separately. The IHRE program seems to be a mixture—a small group discussion that is also a lecture. I think both have their particular strengths, and if they are mixed together in the same class you derive maximum value from paying attention and listening, but also not just listening; and from students listening to each other and not just to the professor. The whole exchange is more dialogic and participative.

The IHRE program also has a particular value in terms of its knowledge area. IHRE revolves around human rights, and human rights are not necessarily always contextually the same. So there is also an exchange of knowledge. Here the details are important—what is actually contained in the course outlines. I hope that the model that is being followed in the individual courses is not one where American professors and students come to learn about South Africa, meaning that the content is about South Africa and not about South Africa and the United States. For me that is problematic, in that one group becomes the object of study while the other group is both the object and subject of study. That to me is not a genuine exchange. There are challenges to this approach—if you approach a subject comparatively it could mean that you might lose depth. But if it is a comparative situation, then that is wonderful. It means that for both groups there is an exchange of roles—both groups become the object and subject of consideration. The result is that there is an ethical and moral balance, where both groups are studying each other, and themselves. This is one of the things that can genuinely improve understanding for people coming from different contexts. They will gain understanding both of other people's context, and of themselves and the context they come from. You understand yourself better if you take yourself out of your normal context and try to look at the same issue in a different context. It challenges your assumptions, your blind spots, your prejudices, the things you didn't problematize.

What these particular challenges do, among other things, is that they force you to begin to question your own system. This can be a good thing. One of the benefits of exchanges like this can be forcing curriculum review. It makes you rethink what you are offering and you might think—ah, I can include that too.

Some other positive benefits that can result from such collaborations come about when they actually develop into lifelong exchanges and relationships. An American professor and a professor from the partner university, having taught together in the same class, might create joint research projects, or write papers together. This is very beneficial. Of course the students also develop personal relationships, and they form academic relationships, too. Their experience may lead them to change their ideas about their future career, or about graduate education. For a university like Wits this can mean that we gain students who come back long-term to earn their Master's, or that one of our students may go to the U.S. for postgraduate studies.

Then there is the very practical and direct benefit in the fact that the visiting students are charged fees to participate. In this way, they contribute to the general income of the institution that is hosting. There can be a downside to this as well; if the program is not properly costed, it can divert resources to one program at the expense of others.

One of the challenges of the IHRE program is that it raises issues about the value of small-group teaching, and who benefits. Some people would look at this and complain that the benefit goes only to those students who are part of the exchange, but not to the institution as a whole. The other side of this is that in our other programs, where we have lecture courses that may have hundreds of students, our students complain that the courses are too large and they don't get individual attention. A special program like IHRE it introduces imbalances, and this is something we need to deal with very carefully.

In general I like the exchange programs. It is going beyond the generalizations that is interesting. That exchange is good is a slogan. We have to go beyond the slogan to see what is actually happening in the concrete realization of the program. Then we understand what it represents as a value system and as a practice.

Fazela Haniff is the head of the Wits International Office.^{ix}

What is special about the kind of long-term, extensive partnership we have in IHRE is that our engagement allows new ideas to seep through slowly, in a positive way. It allows the system to be pliable and create space to found a more formal structure that accepts the richness of what an interdisciplinary program like IHRE can offer, as a complement to the existing menu of programs at the University. IHRE gives academics inside and outside of Wits a kind of approved tool, or vehicle, for introducing, challenging, and experimenting with possibilities to change and enhance the curriculum in ways that showcase the value of international education. There is an agreement that has been signed and sanctioned, so those faculty members who want to go in this direction but don't want to break the rules on their own have the freedom to explore these possibilities.

As for benefits, one of the most important is the dynamic of faculty from different cultures and traditions learning from each other—although we have our own international faculty too. In IHRE, the faculty dynamic happens primarily through team teaching. There are different teaching methodologies, different disciplines, and junior or senior people who can co-learn from each other. This enriches both participants' experience. In

the Wits case, it certainly also enhances the experience of our students, who normally would not have the opportunity to experience different ways of teaching the same subject matter, and don't have access to small seminars of this type. Engaging with the other students in a dialogue in the classroom brings a diversity of interpretation, ideas, responsibility, and attitudes that the students would otherwise not have experienced.

To cite one small example, IHRE offers an internship of ten to fifteen hours per week. The internship is not mandatory, and in the first year of the program a number of Wits students elected not to take it; perhaps they hadn't established the value of such a thing. Recently, though, some of these same students came to us and asked to take the internship this year, which we are allowing them to do. After seeing what their counterparts got out of it, they are developing a sense for the value of civic engagement that they didn't have before.

Administratively, we had to do a lot of work behind the scenes to manage the awarding of credits for students who belong to different Wits departments. This has led to heightened sensitivity and a greater understanding of the culture of exchange within the administration. Solutions are being sought that were previously outside the norm, and systems are being put in place that allow people to understand how different things can be done without compromising the system. Since IHRE is an integrated program, with more than one department involved, people don't see this as just an isolated problem, as they might if we were dealing with a few individual students coming or going. The fact that the Deputy Vice Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor, and the deans are all supporting the project lends seriousness and academic weight to the importance of finding solutions. This is a very big asset for my department, because one of our goals is to promote more exchanges in which Wits students can actively participate in the Semester Abroad program with our partner institutions and receive transfer credits. This actually fits very well within the institution's ambitions.

If I look at the academic richness that our Wits students—indeed all the IHRE students—experience; the exposure of Wits faculty and administration to new people and ideas, etc.; what I see is that collaboration, in itself, can really act as a stimulus, or a spark. It's like opening a tap. The entire process has set things in motion. Collaboration, when it is in line with our ambitions, multiplies the impact, because it is happening at different levels of the supply chain and everyone sees how their link is important to the end result. Students, academics, and administrative systems are being fine-tuned because the achievement of the pilot year illustrated the value of this kind of change.

For Wits, I also see another future benefit. The success that IHRE achieved in the first year now allows us to further strengthen our engagement in Africa, for example with universities in East Africa and Southern African with which Wits maintains established relationships. We are now looking to engage them and get their students to participate. For this, we need to be able to exchange credits. The same is true domestically, where we are talking to other universities in South Africa about sending their students to Wits to do the IHRE semester. So the individual partnership can grow into a matrix of partnerships,

which will result in a much richer experience not only for us, but for our other African partners who may not have some of what Wits has—or have opportunities like this one.

The last thing I would like to share is that the kind of engagement we have had with Bard's staff members has been extremely important to the success of my office and of IHRE. They were equally willing to shift gears, and when we visited Bard we became convinced that there is really a whole team of people there who are committed to making the program happen. This gave us a lot of needed confidence. If I had to isolate one key element in the whole collaboration, it would be trust. The personal things, learning to know each other personally, establishing trust—this is absolutely decisive in the end.

Ayesha Kajee directs the International Human Rights Exchange (IHRE) and co-teaches the course “Civil Society. Engagement with Human Rights.”

The creation of IHRE as a joint partnership between Wits University in South Africa and Bard College in the U.S. has many unique characteristics in the field of study abroad. IHRE aims to be a true exchange—it involves students, faculty, pedagogic methods, and curricular elements from both the North and South, with academic credit and institutional commitment on both sides. It is the only semester-long multi-disciplinary undergraduate program with a human rights focus anywhere in the world. It incorporates a substantial internship component that infuses a real-world work experience component into the classroom.

Since human rights is a relatively young field of academic study, it also puts practitioners and students from various backgrounds on a more equivalent footing. This helps to avoid elitist bias and mitigates presumptions of intellectual superiority that may have tended to derail past partnerships in more traditional disciplines. IHRE's academic base in the South also reverses traditional notions of “benefit” and “beneficiaries.” Significantly, IHRE has chosen to steer clear of study abroad models where students from the North live in specially designed accommodation and duplicate northern-style classrooms in a South African setting. IHRE students are Wits students in every sense—they live, eat and study together with their South African counterparts, with no artificial concessions to separate them.

A thorough orientation is crucial. Even better is an orientation program that places local and international participants alike in an unfamiliar setting (as IHRE does during participants' first week in South Africa). This fast-tracks the establishment of a communal identity and breaks down artificial barriers of nationality, class, race, and gender. Providing opportunities to remain part of the IHRE community, even after the semester ends, and facilitating ongoing contact for both staff and students, where feasible, further strengthens the deep partnership aspect and the aim of building a trans-national human rights community through IHRE.

The value to Wits of this partnership is manifold. IHRE makes a unique contribution to Wits' range of international offerings, since it is the only integrated undergraduate program offered by the institution. It also showcases Wits as a site for future postgraduate

study. The opportunity to experience different teaching styles, and to interact with peers and professors from a wide range of cultures, experiences, and backgrounds injects an unprecedented richness and depth to the Wits curriculum. In 2007, IHRE faculty came from several esteemed institutions, including Vassar College, University of California-Irvine, University of Connecticut, and New York University. Several IHRE faculty members from the inaugural (2007) program have been accorded honorary research status at Wits, and their published work enhances Wits' reputation as well as that of their home institution. As Wits is a public institution, the full body of published work associated with the university is an important consideration for the South African government.

The greatest challenges faced by the inaugural IHRE program have been those associated with integrating different academic and pedagogic styles, particularly as this relates to team-teaching. Where teams interpreted co-teaching as sequential teaching, or where more than two lecturers co-taught a course, student feedback highlighted a degree of fragmentation and loss of coherence, prompting IHRE to move toward smaller teaching teams (two teachers per course) for the future. Feedback also indicated that students derived the greatest academic benefit in instances where co-teaching was interpreted as team-teaching (i.e. with both teachers present simultaneously); thus this model has been mandated for the future. While most faculty expressed genuine appreciation for the pooling of perspectives and experience with a peer from a different pedagogic culture, there was an instance in which the team of teachers did not communicate well, both prior to and during the semester. To pre-empt such situations, IHRE requires teams to work together on syllabi and readings well in advance of the actual IHRE semester.

For Bard College

Jonathan Becker is assistant professor of history at Bard, where he serves as Dean of International Studies, Bard Dean for Smolny College, and the academic director of the Institute for International Liberal Education.

For Bard College, Smolny College primarily represents a willingness to discard norms of institutional conservatism, common in American colleges and universities, in order to pursue the better good. There is really little logical reason why Bard should be undertaking Smolny. It is located several thousand miles away from Bard's main campus, the vast majority of students at Smolny are Russian or from the former Soviet Union, and Bard expends significant energy on the project and does not generate revenue from it (although most of Bard's direct costs for the project are covered, partly through grants from individuals and foundations^x). However, we pursued and continue to promote Smolny for the same reasons we have other innovative ventures—because it is consistent with our principles and represents an attempt to promote educational excellence, because it is fundamentally cooperative, and because we continue to believe that our efforts can make a substantial difference in a part of the world that is undergoing tremendous change.

The benefits that Smolny has provided to Bard have come in many forms. Working with

our Russian colleagues to adapt the liberal arts model to a different environment has allowed us to reflect upon what we do at Bard. Why do we require students to take certain subjects as a part of our distribution requirements? Why do we place so much emphasis on written submissions instead of oral argumentation? What are accepted norms for providing feedback on papers? Being compelled to explain that which we normally do from habit or instinct has given us the opportunity to reflect and reconsider. For example, as a result of our discussions with our colleagues, and having observed Russian students' verbal abilities, I have substantially increased the number of oral assignments in my classes and have had discussions with Bard's dean about means of addressing students' verbal skills.

The greatest benefit to Bard from the Smolny project has been to inspire and reinvigorate faculty and administrators who see in Smolny the opportunities for engagement that led them to teaching in the first place, and who are motivated to work with colleagues who are genuinely interested in exchanging ideas and learning. Smolny represents the wonderment that one felt on first entering the university, and the limitless hope associated with the possible. The Bard faculty who have engaged in the project have made colleagues and friends, and gotten a dose of inspiration that they carry within them in Annandale and in St. Petersburg.

The biggest challenges for the Smolny project are in the classroom. It is no doubt a huge bureaucratic and legal challenge to change a curriculum, but the outlines of what we aspire to are fairly straightforward. However, suggesting that faculty alter their long-honored methods of teaching, and encouraging them to become more student-centric and not only to accept, but to encourage student challenges to their authority is something difficult to explain, and very challenging, especially for the older generation of teachers.

The biggest lesson that I have learned is that the project has paradoxically advanced much further and more quickly on the legal/bureaucratic front than I ever thought possible, but the challenges in the classroom, which I believed would be easy to address, are much more acute than I would have imagined more than a decade ago.

Tom Keenan is Professor of Comparative Literature and the Academic director of IHRE at Bard, where he also heads the College's Human Rights Project.

One of the positive values I see is the fact that we have a program that in some sense belongs to us, that we are co-authors of, that our students can take, that we feel confident about, but that is not actually fully ours, and that is somewhere else and is about somewhere else. This has two upsides: it doesn't repeat what we already do, and it takes the students somewhere else that's interesting, while doing both these things in a mode that seems responsible.

For students in IHRE, the value of having the South African experience to draw on is obviously important. This involves both the South African experience itself and the experience of the South African students and faculty. In other words, there is both immersion in a place that seems to be oozing human rights experience, and also the fact

that the faculty are more likely to know more about that experience. The students inevitably come back smarter and more committed. It's interesting how many of them want to go back there. This is probably about being abroad in a way that is more participatory. Whether because they are being integrated into other people's classrooms, or because the internships allow them to dig into particular local issues, or because of the friendships they have made—they come back feeling that they can't quite get South Africa out of them, that they haven't been able to stay the same person they were when they arrived. When they want to go back they are honoring that change that's happened within them.

The curriculum is unusual too. It is a kind of learning experience for the students that would be very hard for them to get at their own school—even setting aside the virtue of being in South Africa. IHRE is a very targeted, focused, and specialized curriculum over the course of an entire semester, in which all the courses are integrated with each other and hopefully make sense together. There are not many programs like this around—in fact one of the few other examples I am aware of is the Bard Globalization and International Affairs program in New York. You have a thoughtful package of classes that all go together, and then on top of that the benefits of internships, plus, in the case of IHRE, the proximity to that history and that present.

The benefits for faculty have to do mainly with the chance to work with other faculty there. The team-teaching requirement has proven to be unexpectedly popular. It may involve a bit more work and planning, but it seems to be a plus, an incentive even, for faculty who are drawn to teaching in the program because of the chance it gives them to exchange knowledge and perspectives with their peers from another place.

A less obvious, longer-term benefit for me comes about through the process of recruiting North American faculty to teach in the program. This is one of my responsibilities as Bard academic director of the IHRE program, and it is a good opportunity to find out about interesting people teaching at other schools, for the sake of recruiting them. If we had only our own school and its limited resources to work with we wouldn't have the same chance to make cross-connections with universities across North America. Although human rights is a limited field, it's not that limited, so it has meant having discovered all kinds of people I wouldn't otherwise have discovered, in fields like Islamic law, for example, or literature and human rights. This was an unexpected benefit.

Since I have family ties in South Africa, just being there is not so new for me. However, for me, as for everyone, there is a difference between being somewhere as a visitor and being somewhere as a participant in a shared enterprise. You approach a place differently if you have a personal or institutional stake in the success of the enterprise in South Africa—or at Smolny for that matter. You are a member of the project, and it *is* a South African project, even if it's a partnership. I would like to emphasize this—for better or worse, it primarily belongs to them. This makes visiting a different experience, even if you're visiting in a professional way.

Clearly, there are some challenges. Again, because IHRE is located at Wits, because it turns out that it is primarily a South African institution, we are in the position of having to accommodate ourselves. Coming from Bard, which is very informal, we have to adjust to a much larger and more formalized bureaucratic and administrative regime. This is the biggest challenge. Then there is the challenge of filling the need for short-term faculty recruitment. Finding people who are good enough to have good jobs and yet are able to leave them for seven or fifteen weeks is complicated. Once we have found them, we have to address the other dimensions of recruiting them and trying to keep them happy. It is one thing to choose competent people with interest in the subject, who can teach in ways that are interesting. After that, we need to make arrangements for keeping them happy or at least minimally content in a foreign country that can sometimes be forbidding. Keeping them happy means remembering that they are not just working, but living in Joburg, with their families, perhaps living farther from campus than is convenient, etc. This is important for the future—we want them to be interested in coming back and teaching in IHRE again.

Another challenge is more structural and concerns the program itself. We are trying, somewhat artificially, to create the effect of a relatively intimate, small campus in the middle of a big urban university. We have an intimate program, but not an intimate space—in a way we are airlifting in all these features of a small town and dropping it into the dispersal of a big place and a big city. Even if we are maximally efficient, it is hard to recreate the other things that go without saying on a liberal arts campus—people running into each other at dining hall, scheduling a talk on short notice, things like that. We can reproduce our liberal arts college atmosphere in the classroom, but not outside. From this point of view, the teaching in IHRE is probably more of a discovery for the South African students, because they get to experience a kind of intimacy in the classroom that is unusual for them. So the benefits for our students and the South African students are different.

I would say that the Rubik's cube actually rings true as a description of the administrative work. It seems like we have a large but finite set of pieces that we are moving around trying to find a satisfying configuration.

Bryan Billings is Bard Program Manager at Smolny.^{xi}

The key benefits for Smolny result directly from the combination of Russian academic life with the American idea of the liberal arts. This has brought in important new ideas in methodology and pedagogy—ideas like the interactive classroom and multidisciplinary curriculum. The College aspires to be a place of open dialogue both in- and outside the classroom, and students are expected to participate actively in the learning process. It's hard to overstress the importance of this attitude, or how different it is from the old Russian system, which is very hierarchical. This system, which relies overwhelmingly on large lectures and oral exams, in other words on rote learning, is still the norm in Russia.

I don't think the emphasis on liberal arts ideas means that we are exporting American values. There is a methodology and a pedagogy, but no ideology at all. In the classroom,

at conferences or lectures, people put forth very many varying viewpoints. There is no American idea or Bard idea that is being pushed on students, except for the idea that students should be involved in the learning process and that everyone should be allowed to think freely. Maybe that's an Americanism. But we are not pushing any ideals other than democratic education itself. Our politics are limited to the politics of education. We want students to have the freedom to choose courses, to have their own opinions, to argue those opinions. Only a very few visiting professors come from the States, and a minority of Smolny faculty have trained in the U.S. So to the extent that the faculty might have American ideas, they are in the minority.

I have been at Smolny four years, and in that time I would say that there has been a shift away from reliance on Bard and on the U.S. Russians are more confident now, more sure of their country and themselves. When I came here four years ago there was more of a general feeling of subservience to Bard, or at least a feeling that you had to listen. Now our Smolny colleagues feel more strongly that Smolny as an institution can stand on its own feet and they may disagree with administrative decisions made by Bard. And Bard has generally been okay with this, as long as it doesn't affect the educational structure or the nature of the partnership itself. Bard remains very involved in issues of academic quality because of the Bard degree that students are getting.^{xiii} But Smolny decides what majors it offers, what directions it is expanding in, and so forth.

At this point, about 7% of Smolny students are visiting American students. The rest are mainly Russian, with a majority coming from the Russian regions and some from the former Soviet Union. Because of the nature of the learning process, many of the Russian students seem very impassioned about the learning process and about Smolny itself. This does not apply to everyone, of course.

One of the obstacles Smolny faces is that some student expectations still relate to the old system, in which students—especially if they pay—can be pushed through their degree programs without preparing for class, without critical thinking, etc. Even at Smolny, tuition-paying students may think that they can pass through whether they do the work or not. Smolny is working on this, focusing on first-year students. But students who don't commit to the new type of learning are still a problem; their old-fashioned ideas often hinder the learning process for others.

This is where U.S. students have a particular contribution to make. One of the greatest gains over the past five years is the increase in the number of U.S. students who are coming to study at Smolny, and the rise in the level of their Russian fluency. This has allowed more U.S. students to take general academic courses taught in Russian. They play a key role there; in fact, I often hear that the Americans are the best students in the class. They come to class, they do readings, they are willing to participate in topical discussions. They are not afraid to discuss something with each other or with other students. This opens up dialogue; once the Russians hear Americans speaking they realize they too have something to say. If they haven't done the reading, their comments are not so much to the point. But it represents a big change in the understanding of academics in Russia—students are becoming more interested in participating.

The personal benefits for me come primarily from working with students. American students who may have been coddled at home become very independent and learn to deal with many situations. Because at Smolny they are totally immersed in Russian society, they have to do a lot of problem solving on their own in a different culture. Meanwhile, their worldview and ideas are changing, thanks to their interaction with Russian students from completely different backgrounds. Their assumptions are challenged and they have to learn to think for themselves. An example would be gender identifications, etc., which are new to Russian students. There are also all kinds of different ideas that pop up in discussions of subjects like the Cold War or World War II (the Great Patriotic War in Russia), or the Holocaust.

It's amazing how many of the visiting North American students come back to spend more time studying or working in Russia. Last fall there we had eight alumni of our program in St. Petersburg and another five in the former Soviet Union. Four more are returning this fall that I know of.

Personally, my time here has not been easy, but it has certainly given me a much greater understanding of Russia. Even though I had worked in Russian offices before, working with young people and professors at Smolny has given me a much greater understanding of Russian culture, of how things work here. I think being in this position has made me as close to being from two cultures as it is possible to be. I am ingrained in Russian culture, in a non-sentimental sense. The American pragmatist in me may once have had the attitude that says: "I see it. This is what we want to do, this is how we are going to get there." Now I say: "Let's wait, let's see what happens." It is not about memos. You have to go and speak to people personally, get a commitment, and follow through to make sure whatever it is actually happens. This also makes things more personal. When a new colleague comes from the U.S., I see their American habits—this was me a few years ago.

Christina Davis is International Program Manager at Bard College.^{xiii}

Having studied in South Africa, served in the Peace Corps, and worked in rural development, I took the job at Bard precisely because the partnership programs of the Institute for International Liberal Education were aligned with the political and ethical values I hold. These are not island programs. They are real partnerships, and they engage students and faculty and even administrators on an intellectual and personal level. The more collaboration you have in the world, the more peaceful it will be. Fundamentally, this is about respect—it's the only way to encourage and foster peace. So you could say what I value most in this work comes from a human rights commitment. There is a broad human rights aspect to the educational programs we offer.

Of course the most important benefit of these programs is for the students. Collaborative programs of this type offer things that are just not available elsewhere. At Smolny, for example, the American students are directly involved in classes with their Russian peers. This is a very big asset and gives them insights into Russian life that they simply could

not get in an island program. At the same time, it's not a program where we throw you in and don't give you any support whatsoever. So you have total immersion, but with personal support and the kind of interaction you would get at a small liberal arts college in the States.

In South Africa, in the International Human Rights Exchange (IHRE), there is something else as well, since all the courses except for one lecture course (the core course) are co-taught by pairs of faculty. The idea is to have one faculty member from the U.S. and one from Africa, although this year, for example, there are also faculty members from Israel, Egypt, Jamaica, and Zimbabwe. This means the IHRE students are going to find two very different people, sometimes from different disciplines and certainly from different countries and cultures, standing in the front of the classroom. As a result, there are opportunities to view first-hand different perspectives that the professors might have. As an example, the Islamic Law class this semester is being co-taught by a female professor from South Africa and a male J.S.D. student from a U.S. college. Her perspective on Islamic law is very different from his. This already embodies an important lesson for the students, but when it gets really interesting is when they disagree in front of the class.

People with different cultural backgrounds are like people wearing different colored glasses. They see different things and they can say different things. The African literature class is taught by an American woman and a man from Zimbabwe. They were discussing the question of the responsibility of the writer. Is the text of a Zimbabwean writer meant for people in the West or for Zimbabweans? The Zimbabwean pointed out that during colonialism, being a writer often meant writing for the West, because at that time a lot of people in Zimbabwe were illiterate. Yet others would certainly see an obligation to write for the people of the country. These different perspectives can be surprising and make you think about things in ways you did not think about them before.

For me there is a lot of pleasure in seeing the students experiencing things like this and coming back changed. I am amazed at how open they are about this, and how much some of them have changed their perspectives. They say, "Wow, really. I never thought of it that way."

I myself experienced this kind of faculty dynamic and the incredible insights it can produce when I was a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. There was a course on Apartheid taught by an Afrikaner and a Zulu professor. The depth of their disagreement, and the extent to which their factual knowledge of what went on was really different, was extreme. This had a profound impact on me and encouraged me to study about this part of the world. I saw that you have to probe deeper to find answers. Truth emerges from different perspectives. Only when you are challenged and put in an uncomfortable situation, where your views are being directly challenged, do you grow. This is true for our students, as well—actually for everyone.

This kind of co-teaching, the attempt to blend different educational principles and goals, also causes some difficulties. Faculty coming from small North American institutions tend to have the idea that teachers should encourage a lot of student engagement in the

classroom, whereas a big university like Wits, in the South African tradition, is much larger, and faculty as well as students are used to a more formal, lecture-based style. This spills over onto the students, who come with their own expectations. U.S. students may be disappointed that there is not more discussion in some classes, and African students may feel that there is not enough raw information conveyed by the more dialogical style.

The language barrier is an issue in some countries, too, and cultural differences. It can be a challenge to overcome miscommunication. If you are not familiar with the culture, this can be frustrating. In the U.S. we tend to have a philosophy of “time is money.” In other cultures, thank goodness, it’s not that way. They might rather think that “what doesn’t get done today will get done tomorrow.” Bureaucracy can be frustrating, especially coming from Bard where there is not as much of it. At Smolny College, you have to go through many people to get something done. I think it’s important to remember that they experience similar challenges when they are dealing with us—they don’t understand why we need stuff *now*. Every time I get frustrated with another aspect of another culture, I realize that they are frustrated with me for the same reason, in reverse. Frustration is always two-way.

I have two metaphors that I think might apply to our “deep partnerships.” The first is an orchestra. When you start out, people play in the wrong key, they may not be in tune. At the end, after practicing, you get a beautiful piece of music and a fantastic symphony. The second is an ocean. You are sitting on rocks and you see the waves crashing, but when you get out to sea the waves disappear; although there are still storms, you are stronger, and you can brave the storms.

Conclusion

The voices of colleagues cited above arise out of a multi-point dialogue that goes on monthly, weekly, daily, among different stakeholders^{xiv} in Bard’s “deep partnerships.” The concepts and concerns emerging from this exchange have broadened and enriched all of our worldviews, and it is certainly safe to say that, for us at Bard, our knowledge of what it is like to work and live, teach and learn in Russia or South Africa is immeasurably enhanced. We believe the same holds true for “our” students, and that the Russian and South African faculty and staff have experienced similar benefits, although in different ways or with a different valence. My colleagues and I also have the satisfaction of knowing that the students, faculty, and staff members who have participated in our joint ventures now form part of an unusual global network that we have helped to create. We hope and expect that they will continue to make significant contributions to our common future.

It can be tempting to read our colleagues’ comments as expressions of national or cultural character: Russian soul, South African sensitivity to rights issues, American pragmatism and focus on “results.” Stereotypes almost always have something true about them. In fact, one of the principle benefits of deep partnerships, as reported by our colleagues, is the chance for all of us who are involved in them to confront not only our stereotypical

views of others, but our incomplete and necessarily biased ideas about ourselves and our own societies.

To my mind, this change in the thinking of everyone involved in our “deep partnerships” is their most significant aspect. Education, after all, is about changing minds for the better. But how does the change occur? We can shed some indirect light on the question by taking a closer look at the metaphors our colleagues used in their interviews. Note that in the following I refer to metaphors introduced casually into the body of the interviews, as well as those specifically named in response to my question.

The dean in St. Petersburg sees our joint venture as a “tower of Babel,” a structure that connects heaven and earth. This reflects an idealistic view of the structure and its “towering” ambition, although in this case, rather than calling down the wrath of an angry deity, the tower actually helps to protect the peaceful citizens of the city.

Smolny’s director also chooses an architectural metaphor when he speaks of building “bridges of understanding.” A bridge is the conceptual opposite of the so-called “island programs” that limit students’ exposure to the surrounding society. Several times, Smolny’s director praises the partnership as opening up “a space for creativity,” a “space of understanding,” and, again, “a huge space for real understanding.” All these characterizations suggest that there are important structural aspects of the way the partnership is institutionalized, that the structures we build should be open-ended and connective, should permit movement in more than one direction, and should emphasize opportunities for movement, rather than constraint.

In a more sociological vein, Smolny’s dean emphasizes that the partnership creates a “social subsystem” with a “separate system of relationships.” These interlocking systems cause complex interactions that require careful management and may have unexpected effects—like a medical “transplant.” The subsystem within which Smolny College exists is forced to interact with the larger university, a circumstance that further increases the need for communication and dialogue. It is another expression of the important ways in which our deep partnerships differ from “island programs.”

The dean at Wits chooses the metaphor of cross-fertilization, which he describes (with a mixed metaphor) as a “conversation” between two different educational systems. Both of these terms suggest equality and two-way movement—movement that, in his view, is particularly valuable because it not only encourages, but actually enforces self-critique. He is leery of programs in which one partner is engaged in observing the other, who then becomes the object of a reflection that is not reciprocated. The IHRE academic director at Bard speaks of “airlifting” features of small town into a big city, and of the consequent difficulty of maintaining an intimate atmosphere that is conducive to informal conversations and exchange.

The head of Wits’ International Office also speaks of “creating space to found a more formal structure,” one that gives faculty members and staff “permission to introduce changes.” Note that the changes she describes are not introduced from without, but are

voluntarily adopted by individual faculty members who enter the new space and take advantage of the permission offered by the new structure. She also mentions that the long-term nature of the partnership allows changes to “seep” through, a process in that the collaboration is like “opening a tap,” or striking a “spark.” The fluidity of the process, the way a single action jumps across and sets ever more things in motion, multiplying its impact, suggests that a whole cascade of changes could follow.

Other metaphors refer less to the structure or quality of the exchange as a whole; and more on its impact on individuals. The dean at St. Petersburg State University feels himself to be a “medium joining two very different spaces,” as he works to merge new practices with existing ways of doing things at his institution. Bard’s academic director for IHRE speaks of “membership” in the project, a quality that makes him approach the place differently, as a participant in a shared enterprise—someone who belongs. Our program manager at Smolny speaks of being “ingrained in Russian culture”—a word that suggests a true growing together, in which the experiences of the foreign have become integral to the very stuff of his identity—while also noting that the same experiences have caused him and the students he looks after to become more aware of their own cultural traits and biases. Another Bard colleague mentions “colored glasses,” referring to emotional, cultural, or other variables that influence the ways we see that world. Like our Russian colleague, in his reference to the Tower of Babel, she turns this metaphor on its head, making a positive, productive benefit out of something that is conventionally seen as a deficit and a problem. The different colored glasses of our interlocutors are refracted in their dialogue with us, in a discourse that values contrasting perspectives and the emerging, confusing and provocative blend of impressions. At the same time, the metaphor suggests that through these various glasses, we see more clearly.

Smolny’s director’s mention of Rubik’s Cube, while related to the complex of structural metaphors—Rubik’s Cube is a three-dimensional puzzle with many moving parts—also introduces an element of play, of the freedom and creativity that he values. His metaphor of the tailored suit, while it applies more to students than to the other participants in our joint venture, emphasizes Smolny’s personal qualities, its attention to individuals and its capacity to fit different body types or personalities.

Two final metaphors, from Bard’s international program manager, express the pleasures of collaboration, as reflected both in our joint performance and in the greater ease that comes with practice and experience. The members of the orchestra learn to play in key, in ways that harmonize and produce a beautiful concert.^{xv} Finally, there is the lovely metaphor of setting out to sea from the shore, with uncertain prospects and waves crashing all around, passing through the surf, and finding clear sailing ahead.

My own preferred metaphor for successful international collaboration, and for the deep partnerships in which we are engaged, is translation—if indeed it is a metaphor in this context, since the word metaphor also embodies the notion of carrying across. The ongoing international dialogue in which my colleagues and I are privileged to participate bespeaks a growing capacity of all the partners to translate experiences and ideas across cultures, disciplines, and histories. To my mind, this capacity, the mutual pleasure we

take in it, and its reflection in our common practice are the real measure of whether our international education programs are actually creating “global citizens.” If the concept is to be more than a catchword, it must involve the establishment of practical, human-scale frameworks within which we, as individuals, can listen attentively to each other and begin to see ourselves with those others’ eyes, to hear ourselves in their voices. This is both an essential precondition for resolving the global problems we all face, and an end in itself.

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ⁱ Here is a typical definition of cultural competence: “Cultural and linguistic competence is a set of congruent behaviors, knowledge, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, organization or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations. ‘Culture’ refers to integrated patterns of human behavior that include the language, thoughts, actions, customs, beliefs and institutions of racial, ethnic, social or religious groups. ‘Competence’ implies having the capacity to function effectively as an individual or an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, practices and needs presented by patients and their communities.” From: *A Manager’s Guide to Cultural Competence Education for Health Care Professionals*. From the ‘website of the California Endowment: [http://www.calendow.org/uploadedFiles/managers_guide_cultural_competence\(1\).pdf](http://www.calendow.org/uploadedFiles/managers_guide_cultural_competence(1).pdf), downloaded 8/30/08.

ⁱⁱ The program in Russia is Smolny College, which is Russia’s first liberal arts college (www.smolny.org). the program in South Africa is the International Human Rights Exchange (IHRE. www.ihre.org).

ⁱⁱⁱ The term first emerged in conversation with Ross Lewin, the editor of this volume.

^{iv} The term is problematic, although we have not found a better one. It seems to imply that there is a natural progression from authoritarian to democratic societies; this can be a dangerous or misleading assumption.

^v Interview conducted on March 21,2008.

^{vi} Interview, March 19, 2008.

^{vii} Interview, March 25, 2008.

^{viii} Interview, March 16, 2008.

^{ix} Interview, April 19, 2008.

^x Smolny is supported by a combination of tuition revenue (from both Russian and North American students), Russian state support, and philanthropic contributions; it is creating an endowment. Bard’s role in Smolny College is supported by a combination of tuition revenue (from North American students), endowment, and philanthropic contributions. SPbU receives a percentage of Smolny’s tuition and grants and participates in the large federal grants that Smolny has helped to obtain.

^{xi} Interview, July 16, 2008.

^{xii} Graduates of Smolny’s four-year B.A. program receive a dual degree: a B.A. degree in Arts and Humanities from Smolny College of St. Petersburg State University, and a B.A. degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences from Bard College.

^{xiii} Interview, July 30, 2008.

^{xiv} At Bard, the word “stakeholder” first entered our vocabulary through our collaboration in South Africa.

^{xv} The word concert also means “mutual agreement; concord; harmony of action.” *Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language, College Edition*)