**International Students’ Figured Worlds of Doctoral Classroom**

Corina Todoran, M.S. and Nathan Wood, Ph.D.
Education Doctoral Programs, Occupational and Adult Education

**Introduction**

- **Globalization** makes the world seem a smaller place and determines campuses to have a more international composition, thus it is important for educators and students to understand and care for each other in order to embark together in the learning journey supported by higher education.

- **International students** tend to experience a variety of difficulties once they arrive in the host country, and these experiences are being amplified by the figured worlds they are developing.

- The concept of **figured worlds**, amply explored by Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998), is the nucleus of this paper, and is strongly connected to the lived experiences of international students.

**Objectives**

- This paper attempts to provide background information, ideas, and insights related to the different figured worlds that international doctoral students might experience in the American education system.

- The goal is the development of a theoretical framework that would inform future research in the field. Issues such as cultural expectations, faculty-student relationship, microaggressions, caring relationships, and banking education are explored and combined into a model created to understand possible figured worlds experienced by international doctoral students.

**Framing Questions**

- What is a figured world? Why is it important?
- What are the different figured worlds that an international doctoral student might experience?
- What influences the way those figured worlds develop?

**Developing a Conceptual Framework**

**International Students’ Figured Worlds of Doctoral Classroom Model**

The model attempts to outline the variety of figured worlds experienced by international doctoral students, and the possible connections existing between them.

**Discussion**

In general, the concept of figured worlds describes how:

- a social and cultural context becomes a figured world;
- students’ identities are shaped in these figured worlds;
- they are formed and reformed in relation to students’ everyday activities.

While exploring these trajectories and aiming to analyze in-depth the new worlds in which international students pursue their doctoral journeys, two kinds of figured worlds emerged:

1. **figured worlds of mentoring relationships**, stressing the idea that the role of relationships is essential, especially faculty-student relationship.
2. **collective figured worlds of peers** that explain two approaches: community figured worlds and individualist figured worlds.

These figured worlds are created in relation to past experiences and cultural software that international students possess, and cultural expectations are the nucleus of their development.

**Methods**

An analysis of various qualitative and quantitative studies focused on international student experience was conducted.

**References**


**Contact Information**

Corina Todoran, M.S. Corina.Todoran@ndsu.edu
Nathan Wood, Ph.D. Nathan.Wood@ndsu.edu
North Dakota State University
1400 Centennial Boulevard
Fargo, ND 58102
Office: Family Life Center #210G