

Chapter 20: Culture and Community in the Global Age: 20-2f Global Science and University Education
Book Title: The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History 7th Edition Update, AP® Edition
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20-2f Global Science and University Education

AP® Exam Tip

Compare reactions to Westernization in the previous time period to reactions in this time period.

By contrast, science and technology have become standardized components of global culture. Though imperialism helped spread the Western disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics around the world, their importance expanded even further after decolonization as students from newly independent nations sought to compete at an international level. Standardization of scientific terms, weights and measures, computer codes, industrial practices, and even wordless instruction icons underlay the worldwide expansion of commerce.

The third pillar of global elite culture, along with science and globalized languages, is the university. The structure and curricula of modern universities are nearly indistinguishable around the world, making student experiences similar across national boundaries. Instruction in the pure sciences varies little from place to place. Some doctoral science programs in American universities now enroll mostly students from non-Western countries. Standardization is nearly as common in applied sciences such as engineering and medicine and only slightly less so in the social sciences. Although the humanities preserve greater diversity in subject matter and approach, professors and students around the world pay attention to the latest literary theories and topics of historical interest and look to a future of computerized analysis of massive online databases.

New universities, many of them privately funded, have mushroomed in many parts of the world as young people increasingly strive for learning that will improve their employment opportunities. Some American universities have contributed to this educational expansion by opening branches or research centers in foreign countries.

While university subjects are taught in many languages, instruction in English is spreading rapidly. Because discoveries are often first published in English, advanced students in science, business, and international relations need to know that language to keep up with the latest developments. Many courses in northern European countries have long been offered in English, and elsewhere in Europe courses taught in English have facilitated the EU's efforts to encourage students to study outside their home countries.

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