Chapter 34
Technology Tools for Building Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

Educators everywhere recognize that today's classrooms are more culturally diverse than ever. These classrooms can enhance learning by giving all students equal opportunity to share their experiences, knowledge, perspectives and insights. However, this enhanced learning is possible only through a process that is supported by appropriate tools especially technology tools. This chapter explores the issue of learning in multicultural classrooms and various tools educators can use to open up their students' minds, understand each other privileges, and gain better understanding of other people, perspectives, and cultures. Specific recommendations to meet the challenges of multicultural learning using the technology tools are also provided.

INTRODUCTION

According to Nahal (2005), a classroom where both faculty and students could benefit from each other's cultural experiences is the best classroom. Globalization is a reality for businesses and institutions of higher education. During 19090s, it was established that team compositions within organizations become more diverse and team diversity was expected to increase further in years to come (Triandis, Kurowski, & Gelfand, 1994). A concurrent trend of classrooms becoming more culturally diverse or multicultural is evident within universities in many developed western countries (such as Australia, the UK, Canada and the USA). The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) stated that 5.1% (around 43,700) business schools undergraduates in the U.S. in 2009-2010 were international students. This number represented an increase of approximately 2% from 2005 (AACSB, 2011). The U.S. enrolled a record-breaking number of international students during the 2013-2014 school year, welcoming 886,052 undergraduates and graduate students at colleges and universities throughout the country. International

students from China, India and South Korea now represent roughly 50% of all international students in the U.S. (Haynie, 2014). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics research showed that foreign-born workers increased from 14.8% in 2005 to 15.3% in 2006 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). In 2014, there were 25.7 million foreign-born persons in the U.S. labor force, comprising 16.5% of the total (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). In 2007, international students represented approximately 17.3% (around 36,500 students) of the total population of Australian university students (IDP Education, 2010). In May of 2015, the total number of international students in Australian universities increased to approximately 63,000 (Department of Education and Training, 2015). In UK universities, in 2007-8, 15% of the total population of UK university students (around 341,795 students) were international students (UK Council for International Student Affairs, 2010). Around 18% of all students, in UK higher education came from other countries in 2012-13 (Gil, 2014). In 2008-9, 7% of total national undergraduate population in Canada comprised of international students (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 2010). The number of international students in Canada has increased by 84% over the last decade, growing 22.8% from 2011 to 2013 and 11% from 2012 to 2013 (ICEF Monitor, 2014). In 2010, business faculties in these four countries had the highest percentage of international students (IDP Education, 2010; UK Council for International Student Affairs, 2010). In various business classes, students from diverse cultural backgrounds are required to participate in group projects and group-based assessment.

Many firms around the globe are expanding their businesses beyond domestic markets. Consequently, business schools and organizations overall are becoming increasingly multicultural. More and more individuals are expected to study or work in multicultural environments domestically and abroad as expatriates. Business savvy people are cognizant that employees can have multicultural experiences that are global in scope while remaining in their home country. Around the globe, we see an increasing number of international students on business programs in universities. These students belong to a diverse range of countries and for many of them English is not the first language. For these students, the experience of tertiary education at a foreign university is very different. This situation brings many challenges for the faculty teaching large classroom with a student body that comprises of both local and foreign students. It is anticipated that the existing cohort of domestic and international students will continue to grow in both size and diversity.

Countries around the world (such as UK, USA, Germany, and France) are internationalizing the tertiary education bringing more and more international students to the classrooms. This increasing mix of domestic and foreign students in the classrooms is beneficial for the host countries because foreign education is a big business. In USA, foreign education is the fifth largest services export (Marginson 2002). The communities in many of these preferred countries for foreign education are culturally diverse but the Anglo-American content of their tertiary education doesn't take into account this cultural diversity. Most institutions continue to provide mono-cultural higher education. Such system of higher education is not in a position to address the unique challenges of teaching and learning of large and culturally diverse classrooms.

Many international students are willing to adapt to the new learning styles of the host foreign countries. However, unfamiliarity with the process used to facilitate their learning is one big obstacle in their learning (Pincas, 2001). The classrooms of tertiary educational institutions in these host countries use a wide array of western teaching and learning strategies. These strategies (such as case analysis, group-based learning, critical analysis, etc.) are based on the concept of active participation of students. Many international students are unfamiliar with this concept. Their expectations are largely founded on

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