

Chapter 8

International Students and Their Technology Proficiency

Jacob Manu

University of North Dakota, USA

Emmanuel Mensah

University of North Dakota, USA

ABSTRACT

The term “Global Village” has been used by both experts and novices to explain how the world we live in has gradually become a mere neighborhood. Meanwhile, one important factor that does not come into the global village discourse is that not all places or people can be accessed based on disparities in technology infrastructure and proficiency (Internet World Stats, 2012). Most importantly, not all college students in today’s classrooms are technologically savvy (Fletcher, 2005). The purpose of this chapter is to identify the perceived relevance of computer technology among international students and their past technology experience levels in one of the Midwest universities in the United States. A sample of 90 international students reveals that they perceive technology as relevant to their learning. The study also reveals that different continents have different past technology experiences that might adversely affect international students’ academic work.

INTRODUCTION

In spite of the increased enrollment in distance education around the world through the use of online tools for effective student learning (Wang and Reeves, 2007), it is increasingly becoming commonplace for students, regardless of their nationality, to seek higher education in the United States as full time students. As the world continues to be a neighborhood, as a result of the invention of the World Wide Web (Crane, 2009),

more and more students come to the United States and other advanced countries to pursue different degrees. The idea of studying in the United States has been around since 1784, and during the middle of the twentieth century, there were about 15,000 international students in the United States (Jenkins, 1983). This number has grown over the years tremendously. According to the Institute of International Education (2011), the number of international students’ enrollment has increased from 131,946 students in 2004/05

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-6347-3.ch008

academic year to 214, 490 in 2010/11 academic year, which represents 62.6% increase in enrollment. It was on record that 723,277 international students enrolled in 2010 in United States out of the over three million students seeking education in foreign countries despite the cost of American higher education (Fry, 2012). This report added that these international students contribute around \$21 billion into the United States economy.

In the 21st century, technology pervades all aspect of human life as a result of the speed and volume of information that is managed (Prensky, 2009). Critical to the development of students in K-12 and higher education levels, there has not been any serious study on the entry technology competence or behavior of international students who come into the United States to further their education. For the sake of pedagogical purposes, such information is desperately needed in order to inform faculty members and decision makers of the needed support.

According to Internet World Stats (2012), there is a huge disparity between access and usage of internet and personal computers among the various continents of the world. Whereas the United States dominates with 78.6% of their population using technology, Europe records 63.5%, Asia 27.5%, Southern America 48.2, Caribbean 29.8%, Africa 15.6%, Middle East 40.2%, and Oceanic/Australia with 67.6 of the population using internet. Within individual continents too, there is wide disparity that exists among different countries. For example, whereas 82.7% of South Koreans are using the internet, only 0.2% of the people of Myanmar use the World Wide Web. Again, as against 51.0% of Moroccans using the internet, Niger has 1.3% of the population of sixteen million people having access to computers. This situation is puzzling since international students come to the United States from all walks of life. Every aspect of United States higher education has, at least something basic to do with the use of computers or the internet. The issue is how do international students from these deprived countries adjust to the new

environment in their early semesters? In a study to identify why sections of Americans did not use the internet, it was reported that age, income level, and education were strongest predictors of one-out of five Americans who do not go online (Zickuhr & Smith, 2012). Putting these data together, it can be inferred that international students, depending upon the country of origin, are likely to show some of these deficient characteristics and will therefore have serious technological challenges while studying in the States.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are lots of studies that seek to compare different variables to technology proficiency. McCoy (2010), in her study on college students' self-efficacy and technology proficiency did not find significant relation between the two variables. However, Hare, Howard and Pope (2002) reported that pre-service teachers' self-confidence level increased when faculty demonstrated the use of technology tools in their methodology classes. Morales, Knezek, and Christensen (2008), in a comparative study, concluded that teachers in Texas perceived themselves as having higher technology proficiency than their counterparts in Mexico.

The Place of Technology in Learning

Prensky (2009) commented that whether schools or students do not have access to technology tools, students still will need technology, and predicts that technology will pervade through all aspects of our lives. For example, the internet continues to remain one invention that is seductively affects the life of almost everybody compared to any other technology tool (Adeya and Oyeyinka, 2005). If the 21st century student is already participating in online activities, it is logical for the classroom experience to be peppered with online adventures too. But, one of the reasons is the refusal of teach-

10 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/international-students-and-their-technology-proficiency/115702

Related Content

Challenges and Perspectives of Language Education Technology in Brazil: From Confronting Native Language Loss to Implementing EFL Classes

Eliane Thaines Bodah, Josh Meuth Alldredge, Brian William Bodah, Alcindo Neckeland Emanuelle Goellner (2016). *Handbook of Research on Foreign Language Education in the Digital Age* (pp. 59-82).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/challenges-and-perspectives-of-language-education-technology-in-brazil-from-confronting-native-language-loss-to-implementing-efl-classes/159337

Book Review: Taking Literature and Language Learning Online: New Perspectives on Teaching, Research, and Technology

Chenghao Wang and Wenying Xu (2023). *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching* (pp. 1-5).

www.irma-international.org/article/book-review/324059

The Use of Videoconferencing and Unprescribed Conversation for Listening Comprehension in L2 Spanish

Laurie Massery and Claudio Fuentes (2020). *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching* (pp. 1-15).

www.irma-international.org/article/the-use-of-videoconferencing-and-unprescribed-conversation-for-listening-comprehension-in-l2-spanish/257526

Investigation of Technology-Enhanced Language Learning and Teaching E-Resources/Tools in the Online Context

Lixun Wang, Hsueh Chu Chen, John Chi-Kin Lee, Eric Kwan Wai Yu and Jing Xuan Tian (2022). *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching* (pp. 1-21).

www.irma-international.org/article/investigation-of-technology-enhanced-language-learning-and-teaching-e-resource-tools-in-the-online-context/307150

Individual Differences among Student Teachers in Taking an Online Corpus Linguistics Course: A Multiple Case Study

Alice Ebrahimi and S. Susan Marandi (2015). *Handbook of Research on Individual Differences in Computer-Assisted Language Learning* (pp. 71-93).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/individual-differences-among-student-teachers-in-taking-an-online-corpus-linguistics-course/134610