

Chapter VIII

Theorizing a Multiple Cultures Instructional Design Model for E-Learning and E-Teaching

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Abstract

This chapter demonstrates the inadequacy of multicultural and internationalization instructional design models as the solution for equitable outcomes in the learning, credentialing, and employment stakes in the 21st century. Internationalizing learning and teaching eclipsed multiculturalism as the acclaimed strategy when Western universities entice international non-English-speaking-background students to their campuses or offer degrees to such e-learning students who reside in their own countries. Global and Western businesses establishing niches in overseas countries also use the concept of internationalizing their e-learning materials for the cultural training of staff. In their place, a theoretical model of multiple cultures provides the rationale and strategies for creating and adapting e-learning resources for local, national, and international e-learning contexts.

Introduction

The multiple cultures model (Henderson, 1996) accommodates a variety of combinations of cultures and pedagogies, and academic, industry, and government contexts. Broadly interpreted, culture is the way of life of a people. It is the manifestation of the patterns of thinking and behavior that results through a group's continuing adaptation to its changing social, historical, geographic, political, economic, technological, and ideological environment. Culture incorporates race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, values, traditions, language, lifestyles, and nationality as well as workplace and academic cultures (Hofstede, 1996; Terpstra & Sarathy, 2000). E-learners¹ and e-teachers² belong and participate in more than one culture but demonstrate subsets of these in specific cultural contexts.

For better or worse, the Western model of academic research, writing protocols, and publication standards has become global academic currency. Thus the term, "global academic culture," will be used to reflect these and other common practices, such as credentialing degree programs. Likewise, regardless of the differences in managing businesses in various countries, our globalized economy with its multinational industries has been significantly boosted by international free trade rationales and practices and, in consequence, values global cultural practices. Within this economic culture resides a global culture of training and professional development of staff to work more effectively within specific national and international business cultures. The same situation applies in government so that there is, in effect, a global bureaucratic culture that offers e-training and e-professional development within each bureaucracy's own cultural context. Instructional design of e-learning and e-teaching materials based on the multiple cultures model enables instructors to empower, extend, and enrich the learner's culturally-specific knowledge and ways of thinking and doing by achieving a praxis between these and the demands of particular academic, industry, and government global cultures.

Three major issues are explored to substantiate the benefits of the multiple cultures model of instructional design, which has been utilized, especially in Australia, the United States, Canada, and Singapore. They include the limitations of multicultural or internationalization models; the parameters of the various benefits of a multiple cultures model that accounts for various ethnic, class, gender, academic, and workplace sub-cultures in the design of e-learning materials; and designing and adapting e-courses to incorporate behaviorist, constructivist, and social constructivist e-learning and e-teaching.

Limitations of Multicultural and Internationalization Models

As argued previously (Henderson, 1996), how instructional design of e-learning and e-teaching takes cognizance of multiculturalism and internationalization is exemplified by focusing on the ways it includes and excludes issues of culture. What continues to be

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