



Chapter XX

The Treasure Trove

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Referring back to Gert Jan Hofstede's words in the Foreword, we have a treasure-trove of ideas and concepts to sort through with respect to globalized e-learning cultural challenges. In this book, we have referenced seminal research studies on cultural influences and dimensions, speculated on their potential impact on e-learning, and reviewed examples of empirical research and observations of these cultural challenges. We have explored the potential ramifications of Western-based theories being promulgated in non-Western cultures. We have addressed fresh ideas about the interactions between culture and e-learning, such as paralanguage and cultural learning objects. In addition, we have heard from learners themselves. Lastly, authors have proposed new ways to analyze and/or adapt e-learning for other cultures, based on logical presumptions, on our current experiences, and on existing research.

Where do we stand, then, at this point in time? Imagine the treasure trove, filled with gold, jewels, gems, and other riches. In this book, we have sorted through some of the treasure, initially placing similar items into their unique stacks, gold in one, gems in another, and so on. However, in the near future, with the advent of additional knowledge and experience, we will return to inspect our growing treasure and, subsequently, realize that the initial sorting system was not quite appropriate or, perhaps, not sophisticated enough. Instead, it now makes more sense to sort precious gems by color and metals by type: gold here, silver there; jade here, diamonds there.

In this book, we have completed an initial "sorting" of treasures: We have covered some of what we think we know about globalized e-learning, and what challenges can be

anticipated as well as those that have already been recognized. We have speculated on what yet needs to be researched. Thus, what would we like to see when we reexamine our treasure trove in the future? We hope to find:

1. A deeper understanding of educational paradigms, theories, and philosophies from non-Western entities;
2. Expanded use of new tools and concepts, such as cultural learning objects (CLOs) and the use of communication technologies such as instant messaging, blogs, podcasting, and so forth;
3. Deeper exploration of online communications across cultures, such as conflict resolution online and e-teamwork;
4. Expanded information about other cultures' educational systems, cultural values, ICT usage, and learning preferences;
5. Reports on:
 - a. Empirically-tested methods of e-instructional design for different cultures, including localization and adaptation techniques, instructional strategies, instructional activities, language, and semiotics;
 - b. Changes that have occurred as a result of closer contact between cultures;
 - c. The impact of increasing exposure to other cultures, such as changes in perceptions, acceptance of different learning styles and different pedagogies, discoveries of new theories and philosophies, and/or potential alteration of learning styles or preferences;
 - d. The successes generated by the globalization of e-learning, such as improved technical literacy, improved understanding and tolerance of other cultures, and the proliferation of open source education for all areas of the world; and
6. Broadened perspectives of the challenges generated by globalized e-learning documented by other cultures—Indian, African, Asian, European, Latin American, and so forth—not just Western ones.

And the list goes on! This book provides an introduction, and new perspectives, for educators from, and of, all cultures; for producers of e-learning, such as instructional designers; for consumers of e-learning, such as multinational corporations and online universities; and, of course, the learners. The intention of this book was to raise the consciousness of these stakeholders; we hope we have succeeded. More riches await us. Happy treasure hunting!

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