

Chapter XIX

Conclusion

Culture works as a design construct. It is apparent that there are many factors operating to make this happen. First, the nature of culture in design is dynamic and maintains an interactive relation with its parts. Second, the inclusion of culture must be a design decision from the onset. Third, producing culture-based ICTs means that the needs of the many and the few are considered throughout the design process. Finally, designing with culture in mind is a creative process.

The exploration of culture as a design construct is truly an interdisciplinary pursuit. This text situates culture in the field of instructional design; however the roots of culture can be found sprouting across disciplines. That said, the field of instructional design provided an ideal foundation for this work because of its focus on how humans learn and designing products for these learners. The research in learning theory and child development offered the foundations to mental development, understanding how children think, methods of teaching and learning, and the social impact of learning (Dewey, 1897; Lay, 1903; Thorndike, 1903). Behaviorists broadly examined how behavior influenced learning; this scholarship later transformed into cognitive approaches to learning (Aebli, 1951; Piaget, 1954; Skinner, 1954). Learning theories gave way to theories pertinent to the design of instruction such as Bruner's (1966) theory of instruction, Ausubel's (1960) theory of cognitive structures, and Gagné's (1962b) theory of knowledge acquisition. The systematic

design procedures aided in the management of military projects (Johnson, 1989; Richey, 1986; Seels, 1989) and later in solidifying the discipline of instructional systems design. Early instructional design models supported task analysis, systems development and instructional systems (Gagné, 1962a; Silvern, 1967); most in an effort to improve or understand human learning in parallel to ICTs. Constructivists continued in the search to improve teaching and learning by connecting the learner to their environment by authentic or real world situations (Bednar, Cunningham, Duffy & Perry, 1992; Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). Culture, it was discovered, influenced learning and how learners acquire new knowledge (Bruner, 1996; DuBois, 1903; Vygotsky, 1978). Theories, methodologies and practices relevant to learning and culture became defined as multiculturalism, culturally responsive, culturally relevant, culturally mediated, cultural accommodation, cultural compatibility, and cultural congruence among others (Au & Kawakami, 1994; Banks & Banks, 2003; Gay, 2000; Hollins 1996; Jordan, 1984; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Overall, this history provided a foundation in terms of approaches to understanding how humans learn, systems and processes of design, the role of assessment in teaching and learning and the influence of culture on learning.

Theory and methodologies of teaching and learning provide a basis but where does the designer begin. What should be added or deleted? How does the designer make a product culturally relevant, culturally sensitive, or culturally compatible? If a product is multicultural, it is by its nature generic because it is meeting the needs of multiple cultures or many cultures not one isolated culture. These theories and methodologies are implicit when it comes to design. The design process is explicit when there are specific design specifications such as those in CBM. Viewing culture as a design construct gets at the creativity needed to transform theory and methods into its practical applications.

Designers & Learners of the Future

The designer of the future should be able to embrace multiple ethnic and racial groups and truly become a culture-based designer. This designer might be versed in creative and research skills in order to provide multiple talents to clients. He or she might be proficient in technological skills.

To prepare for this role, designers might ask themselves: How can I better serve the client and my target audience?, What about myself do I need to change to grow as a designer? and What can I learn from others?

The learner of the future should be multilingual and multi-talented. They are proficient in speaking, reading, and writing two or more languages. Socially savvy in meeting and working with people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds and operating in both national and international circles. They exhibit a comfortable

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