**Global eLearning**

My teaching in the last fifteen years has had an international focus. I have actively familiarized myself with cultures and have been open to different styles of learning in the schools that I taught in the USA, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, Dubai, and New Zealand. Some of the schools that I taught in had up to thirty-five nationalities represented which was itself a global learning community. Culture is certainly a consideration in schools and learning environments as these become more multi-cultural.  Even in schools where there is predominately one culture, the practice to learn in ways other than the way one is familiar with is important. ([Taylor, 2011, June 15](#_ENREF_7))

In considering learning in an online context, Thomas ([Molloy, 2011, June 19](#_ENREF_4)) highlighted that “implementation of e-learning courses to varying groups of people and cultures demands that instructional designers be sensitive to variations in culture”. Nigel ([Crawford, 2011, June 14](#_ENREF_2)) rightfully clarified that we have to “distinguish between two important factors - the content being delivered and the delivery style.”

In regards to the content in online courses, designers naturally need to take culture into account ([Olaniran, n.d.](#_ENREF_5)) by providing subject material and case studies from a global context, as well as, encouraging students to draw from their own experiences. Some of the schools that I have taught in use the IGCSE syllabus (the international general certificate of education) as opposed to the GCSE syllabus that is based in the UK. The IGCSE syllabus incorporates case studies from a variety of countries and encourages students to link concepts to their local situations. It is a challenge and a responsibility of online instructors to draw content from a global context and encourage individual application.

**A Global Curriculum?**

Olaniran (n.d.) fears that standardized curricula will not take into account differences in culture. I wonder if this fear will be challenged by the way that online learning and culture is evolving. The one benefit of online learning is the ability to pool ideas, viewpoints and resources together so that people communicate and collaborate. This occurred in the online class forum when Bridget ([Percy, 2011, July 17](#_ENREF_6)) responded to Elizabeth by saying “ I have loads of teaching resources that I would be happy to share with you”. I recently learned that ‘Education Without Borders’ conferences have been organized in the UAE since 2001. These conferences aim to explore various aspects of the elearning revolution. They include more than 500 students from 50 different countries. Our global world will bring global connections. I wonder if standardized curricula will succeed or will a more international, global curricula evolve?

**Being Culturally Aware**

I find it significant that job descriptions, like that of Emirates Airlines, specifically state that they are looking for instructors and trainers that are culturally aware. A requirement for a recent job posted is “strong interpersonal skills and a cultural sensitivity to the local community” ([Emirates, 2011](#_ENREF_3)). This is one example that confirms that employers are not looking for ‘western’ or ‘standardized’ solutions. More importantly they are seeking solutions that fit their cultural and local situations.

I hope to teach or provide training again in an international setting. I believe that educational institutions and businesses globally will seek out instructors and trainers that can provide cultural and situational understanding to meet the needs of individual learners. As a teacher I will need to adapt content and learning styles to fit the needs of individual learners. I hope to encourage participation in a global learning community.

**Problems of Inequality**

I was most interested in the discussion regarding the growth of online learning in respect to solving problems of inequality. I believe that it is most beneficial to consider online learning as a way to enhance learning but not a requirement. It is also imperative that online learning not be seen as the solution to problems of power and inequality that exist in the world. In a recent study it was found that even though there was physical and free access to computer technology for six months the majority of residents in the apartment blocks in a lower socioeconomic area in Wellington, NZ did not use the ICT facilities ([Anderson, Brown, & Murray, 2008](#_ENREF_1)). I believe that those who are traditionally disadvantaged in the current education system will be confronted with the same disadvantage in the online world. I mistakenly thought that providing access to online learning would somehow be the magic solution to problems facing inequality in schools today.

Through discussion and readings in Module 3 I have learned that elearning might not offer magical solutions but that it can provide the tools to address and solve issues of power and inequality that face many people in the world today. A favorite quote of mine by Thomas Edison is "There's a way to do it better - find it." That is what I hope to do when I return to teaching.

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