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Cultural Differences of Lifelong Learners in Using Emerging Technologies

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Abstract: To examine emerging technologies and discuss their potential to improve teaching and learning with respect to cultural factors. Understanding the cultural differences and how they affect teaching and learning will inform higher education to offer a friendly environment that benefit adult learners.

Keywords: emerging technologies, cultural difference, lifelong learners

Cultures differ with respect to how people approach different things. The way of how people process learning may be different culture by culture. For example, a learning style may be more valued in one culture and less in another. Therefore, cultural variables may impact learning in different contexts. However, assumptions to cultural differences may demonstrate biases in assuming one group is better than another. Understanding the cultural assumptions in differences and how they affect teaching and learning will inform us how learning occurs by means of a variety of technological tools.

With the introduction of emerging technologies, the way of how people communicate, interact and construct knowledge is different than what people process before. Social media as Web-based applications provide online spaces for users to generate, create, and share not just the information but the content. As a result, participants can interact with not only professionals but also like-minded individuals to engage in learning activities or knowledge construction (Sigala, 2007; Diaz, 2010). The features of Web 2.0 in terms of knowledge transfer (Rollett, 2007), collaborative learning (Alexander, 2006), and active participation (Berger, 2010) have influenced the landscape of teaching and learning environments.

Even though educational institutions around the world seize the opportunity to engage their learners and better their services. Yet, knowledge about best strategies for technology integration to encourage interaction and collaboration among different cultures and use is limited. While emerging technologies present new possibilities for higher education to deliver content, it is uncertain ways in which universities use emerging technologies to interact with different types of learners and engage their participants. In order to understand which technologies can be used, what interactions exist between instructors and learners, and how learning occurs within the community of interests, will be the focus of this presentation. The discussion will explore the potential of emerging technologies with respect to learning especially in the aspect of cultural differences. This discussion activity will allow participants to investigate a variety of emerging technologies and identify their potentials to improve teaching and learning based on learning theories, technology features and diverse learners.

In Tarhini et al. (2015) study, the authors explore the social, organizational and individual factors that may affect students' acceptance of e-learning systems. Arpaci (2015) conducted a comparative study to investigate the impact of cultural difference on adoption of mobile learning. The results of these studies lead to the conclusion that social and cultural factors are critical elements that need to be considered when using technology in different context. If culture makes

a significant difference regarding technology use, the probing question is what differences appear in using emerging technologies in different cultural contexts. The purpose of this discussion is to examine the potential of these technologies based on how adults learn, what institutions can offer, and social cultural influences.

A final product will be developed to analyze a list of factors that will influence the adaptation of emerging technologies in a given culture. By listing factors that are different from culture to culture will inform the integration of emerging technologies to enhance teaching and learning. The findings will provide suggestions for educators to realize the emerging needs to conduct research toward cultural differences in the adoption of technologies to facilitate learning especially for adult and lifelong learners.

Questions for discussion:

Q1: What emerging technologies can be used to serve adult learners?

Q2: What factors influence the adoption of emerging technologies in a given culture?

Q3: How the adoption of a specific technology might be different in different countries?

Q4: Give an example to explain factors that are most important to influence the adaptation?

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