

THE ROLE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES IN MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF INTEGRATION AND GLOBALIZATION

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TÓM TẮT:

Thời đại hội nhập và toàn cầu hóa cùng với các thành tựu của công nghệ thông tin-truyền thông đã mở ra nhiều cơ hội hợp tác, trao đổi và giao tiếp toàn cầu ngày một phong phú và hiệu quả trên sự hiểu biết lẫn nhau, tôn trọng lẫn nhau trong một thế giới phụ thuộc. Trong bối cảnh đó, trên thế giới hiện nay đang có xu hướng giáo dục đa văn hóa trong giáo dục đại học. Theo xu hướng này, năng lực văn hóa-xã hội đã trở thành năng lực chủ chốt đối với sinh viên đại học để có thể trở thành “những công dân toàn cầu” thành đạt và hạnh phúc. Họ có thể giao tiếp hiệu quả và biết tôn trọng sự đa dạng văn hóa, có khả năng đóng góp tích cực vào sự phát triển đất nước và thế giới hòa bình, ổn định và hợp tác. Trong khi đó, quá trình công nghiệp hóa, hiện đại hóa đất nước đòi hỏi Việt Nam phải có nguồn nhân lực chất lượng cao, vừa giỏi về kiến thức chuyên môn vừa có năng lực văn hóa-xã hội và có kỹ năng tư duy bậc cao rất cần thiết trong thế kỷ 21. Như vậy, giáo dục đa văn hóa ngày càng trở thành nhu cầu lớn ở các trường đại học và có nhiều cách để xây dựng và phát triển các mô hình giáo dục đa văn hóa, trong đó các công nghệ dạy và học ngày càng đóng vai trò quan trọng trong giáo dục đa văn hóa. Bài viết trình bày tầm quan trọng của giáo dục đa văn hóa ở trường đại học cũng như một số ý kiến đóng góp cho việc sử dụng hiệu quả CNTT, các công nghệ dạy và học trong giáo dục đa văn hóa ở bậc đại học.

Từ khóa: công nghệ dạy và học, CNTT; giáo dục đa văn hóa, giáo dục đại học, hội nhập, toàn cầu hóa, kỹ năng tư duy bậc cao

ABSTRACT:

The era of integration and globalization has opened lots of opportunities for global cooperation, exchange and communication with mutual understanding for an interdependent world. There is now a tendency towards multicultural education in higher education. In this tendency, the social-cultural competence has become the key competence for University students to become successful and happy “global citizens” with cultural tolerance and effective communication skills. They can make contributions to the development of the country and the peaceful, stable world. Meanwhile, in the process of industrialization and modernization, Vietnam is in need of high-quality human resource with professional knowledge, social-cultural competence and high-order thinking skills as well as other skills necessary for the 21st century. Therefore, multicultural education has become an issue of great concern in higher education. There are many measures to develop various models of multicultural education. Especially, teaching and learning technologies have been playing an increasingly crucial role in enhancing multicultural education. The paper proposes the importance of multicultural education at Universities as well as some ideas for the effective use of ICT, teaching and learning technologies in multicultural education in higher education.

Key words: teaching and learning technologies, ICT; multicultural education, higher education, integration and globalization, high-order thinking, social-cultural competence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education is an approach to the teaching and learning based on democratic values that affirm cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies in an independent world. Gloria M. Ameny-Dixon, 2004 notes that the global perspective of multi-cultural education has been considered appropriate for the rapidly increasing interconnections among all nations, as we now face global issues related to the eco-system, terrorism, human rights and scarce national resources. Institutions of higher education need to embrace global perspective of multi-cultural education to stay academically competitive.

Many researchers have presented various applications of ICTs in teaching and learning in general at all levels, especially in higher education with the forms of e-Learning, blended learning, Multimedia and Hypermedia,... (Adams & Burns 1999; Ballin & Brater 1996; Grabe 2001; Norton & Sprague 2001; Newby Timothy et al. 2000; Roblyer & Edwards 2000; Lee and Owens 2000....). However, few researchers have found out the important use of ICTs in improving high-order thinking skills and especially in promoting social-cultural competence or in multicultural education.

2. THE AIMS AND MODELS OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

One of the aims of multicultural education that Banks 1995 emphasizes is to help students acquire knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to interact effectively in a democratic society, to compromise and communicate with people from other groups to create a moral civil community, working for mutual benefits. The main aim is to create Universities that encourage the full development of all students.

Multicultural education has 3 aims or levels: knowledge, tolerance and action. With Multicultural Literacy and through comparison, students can find out,

understand and appreciate the similarities and the differences in some cultural aspects of different societies. They learn to avoid cultural stereotypes and biases as well as learn about the values shared by different cultures; as a result, they have appropriate attitudes, tolerance and action. Global Awareness is the recognition and understanding of interrelationships among international organizations, nation-states, public and private economic entities, sociocultural groups, and individuals across the globe.

Burnett 1998 has classified the typologies of multicultural education into 3 kinds: content-oriented programs, which is the most popular, aimed at mutual understanding of learners from different cultures; student-oriented programs designed with the knowledge of languages and cultures to help students of minority groups to integrate themselves into the mainstream so that they can study better (especially when students go abroad to study); and socially-oriented programs, which emphasizes the human relations in all forms, overall reforms of cultural and political contexts of higher education to enhance cultural tolerance.

ICTs with the use of Internet, satellites and mobile facilities play an important role in developing these models of multicultural education. The majority of websites which have been written in English can facilitate the communication and cooperation as well as learning about other cultures all over the world. Various viewpoints and ideas can be exchanged more easily by different individuals and organizations in all countries.

3. THE NATIONAL CONTEXT OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

In the new context of Vietnamese society since Vietnam joined ASEAN and WTO, multicultural education has

become more and more important for the regional and global integration. Not only the innovation through the acquisition of experience from other advanced countries but also the preservation of Vietnamese cultural identities are necessary for the development of the country. How to combine these effectively requires first of all the knowledge and experience about different cultures and viewpoints, and then the ability to compare and contrast different cultures as well as the critical thinking.

Many Universities in Vietnam in general and in HCMC in particular have started to place greater emphasis on Multicultural Education in recent years through curriculum reforms. For example, some subjects or courses which help students to enlarge their knowledge about Multicultural Education such as Fundamentals of Vietnamese Culture, History of oriental Civilization, History of Western Civilization, various Foreign Languages,... have been taught at many Universities in Vietnam. The subjects such as Cross-cultural Communication; British and American History/Identity & Lifestyle; US, Vietnam and Globalization; Cultural Globalization... (compulsory or optional subjects), have also been offered in some Talented Undergraduate Programs.

In addition, a lot of exchange programs for both students and lecturers have been carried out at many big Universities. Especially, more and more students have gone abroad to study or taken international/cooperative courses in Vietnam or taken some on-line courses. They have a lot of opportunities for communication with foreign students and teachers; as a result, the knowledge of foreign languages and cultures are indispensable for them. This shows some concern in this trend of multicultural education the era of globalization.

4. TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE ELECTRONIC AGE AND IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

4.1 Teaching and learning in the electronic age

There are now three important tendencies of teaching and learning in the electronic age: which is technology-based, activation and individualism with many different learning environments: teacher-guided learning, material-guided learning, group-guided learning and self-guided learning (linear and non-linear models of learning). Students become more active and flexible in their own study plans from a wide variety of choice. Pedagogical approaches should be based on these tendencies for more effective teaching and learning in the modern age of lifelong learning.

As for technology-based teaching and learning, with technology literacy, both teachers and students can benefit a lot from various teaching and learning softwares, computers with Internet, multimedia,... Teachers should be aware that they are not the only sources of knowledge and their roles have also been changed and become more diversified (a guide, a moderator, an adviser,..).

As for activation and individualism, teachers can help their students in their own interests and needs in different topics or cultures to motivate them to learn and facilitate critical thinking and problem solving. How to activate students and adapt to their individual needs and abilities (learner-centered) with the support of ICTs and how to make them integrate themselves into the region and the world as “global citizens” have become more and more important nowadays. The combination of multicultural education and the effective use of ICTs as the means of supporting learning will be the key to help students improve not only professional knowledge but also social-cultural competence and

many important skills of the 21st century (communication /interpersonal, teamwork, high-order thinking,...) and even personal qualities. As a result, they can survive and develop better in the information and globalization age.

With multicultural education and constructivism, students are encouraged to rely on their prior knowledge to evaluate data from authentic sources, actively pursuing information relevant to their own journey. They can base on their knowledge of various cultures, languages and experience to be more creative in constructing their own knowledge, promoting cooperative learning. They will be eager to learn new things, more open-minded in learning and gradually develop cultural tolerance, which are the important characteristics of a multicultural person.

4.2 Principles for teaching and learning in a multicultural society

Banks 2001 suggests the 12 principles for teaching and learning in a multicultural society, among which some important principles can be summarized as follows:

- The curriculum should help students understand that knowledge is socially constructed and reflects researchers' personal experiences as well as the social, political, and economic contexts in which they live and work
- Schools should provide all students with opportunities to participate in extra- and co-curricular activities that develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that increase academic achievement and foster positive interracial relationships
- Students should learn about stereotyping and other related biases that have negative effects on racial and ethnic relations
- Students should learn about the values shared by virtually all cultural groups

(e.g., justice, equality, freedom, peace, compassion, and charity)

- Teachers should help students acquire the social skills needed to interact effectively with students from other racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups
- Teachers should use multiple culturally sensitive techniques to assess complex cognitive and social skills.

5. INTEGRATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES IN MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

The application of ICTs in general or teaching and learning technologies in particular can be seen in the different typologies of multicultural education.

5.1 The content-oriented programs

Internet and e-coursewares can help enlarge the knowledge. The objectives of teaching nowadays have usually been stated not only to help students understand lectures but also help them analyze, interpret and compare the cultural features of different societies in some lectures. It is important to show how the knowledge is understood and applied in different cultures, through which students will be motivated and be able to make some kind of comparison. Students nowadays have more opportunities to find information from the Internet and other digital materials of multimedia for their self-study, their presentation, thesis, projects ...The various sources of information are essential for them when they study the subjects such as comparative education, comparative literature, comparative languages, economics in comparison, law in comparison, philosophies in comparison, histories in comparison, geography in comparison, ...and many other interdisciplinary subjects.

Here are some examples of the websites for comparative learning:

1. Comparative education: <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/>
2. Comparative law: <http://www.comparativelaw.org/>
3. Comparative economic studies: <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/ces/index.html>
4. Comparative cultures: <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/anth210/>

5.2 Student-oriented programs

ICTs will be a great help for students to learn foreign languages and cultures. Especially when students have opportunities to go abroad to study, they will belong to the minority groups and must integrate themselves into the mainstream so that they can study better. They can learn and use English as the international language and/or the language of the country where they are studying and living for communication. There is to need to say about the great importance of ICTs, multimedia technologies in learning foreign languages: from various learning software, computer-based, Internet-based programs, multimedia lab, e-materials, and many other learning systems for learning languages, especially with the native speakers, self-study programs, online courses....

Various websites and learning softwares for learning foreign languages can be searched easily from the google tool or other searching tools in many countries (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/>, <http://luyenthianhvan.org/>, <http://www.english-hilfen.de/en/>, <http://www.learnenglish.de/>, <http://www.learn-english-online.org>, ...)

5.3 The socially-oriented programs

The general objectives of higher education are to supply students with specialized knowledge, to train them skills and help them develop virtuous characters,

personalities. The effective use of Internet not only for information retrieval, information publishing but also for communication will help students develop searching skills, analyzing and synthesizing skills, evaluation and evaluative skills (critical thinking and high-order thinking),...and especially communication skills (through email, forum, blog, facebook, voice chat, group video calling with skype,...). Students have more chances to communicate and have contact with people from various countries and cultures, and as a result, they can learn a lot from other cultures, thinking, way of living, behaviors and social or personal organization,...which can enlarge their knowledge, skill and experience in a collaborative learning. That is also the aim of multicultural education in the era of fast development of ICT. Furthermore, comparison skill is one of the important skills which can lead to effective communication in global intergroup relations nowadays.

In addition, according to Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom 1956), there are six levels moving from the lowest to the highest: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation. Skills in the cognitive domain revolve around knowledge, comprehension, and critical thinking of a particular topic. Traditional education tends to emphasize the skills in this domain, particularly the lower-order objectives. Students of the 21st century should be trained for evaluation skill: To make judgments about the value of ideas or materials. The Key Words for Evaluation are appraises, compares, concludes, contrasts, criticizes, critiques, defends, describes, discriminates, evaluates, explains, interprets, justifies, relates, summarizes, supports.

6. CONCLUSION

Various teaching and learning technologies can be applied in multicultural education. Bottom-up and

top-down approaches are both needed, especially students' background and personal experience (through media, real life, textbooks or journals, films, music, shopping, travelling, personal opportunities for cultural communication...). They can be applied in the warm-up activities (brain-storming, mind-mapping ,...) or in the follow-up writing, discussion for consolidation, or in seminars, project works, group-work, role-play,... Teachers should be aware and capable of using different facilities and media, especially the modern and electronic resources, which can be a great advantage: Internet, video clips, film, magazines, websites with multimedia,... about different cultural aspects such as history, geography, political/legal systems, education, sports, arts and entertainment, traditions and festivals,.... Some common cultural aspects can be selected for students to compare and contrast in nearly all subjects or disciplines. Students give their personal comments on those with the materials suggested by teachers or gained by students themselves with the help of ICT.

Although the negative side of using technology for teaching and learning in multicultural education may include the lack of direct interaction, technology problems or facility constraints, especially in the poor countries, we still hope that further research can be made to solve these problems and deal with the challenges. However, in general, we can see that the advantages of using technology for teaching and learning in multicultural education still outweigh those disadvantages.

Students of the 21st century in the era of globalization in accordance with the UNESCO maxim "learn to know, learn to do, learn to live and learn to be", should have high-order thinking skills and social-cultural competence. Although it can be more time-consuming and more demanding for students, students will have more opportunities to review and widen their

knowledge in cultures, to apply it for real-life situation which will be good for their future job and research. And teaching and learning technologies will be a great help in multicultural education.

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