Global training, multicultural course design, and delivery: The impact on cultural style adjustments of faculty and global training instructors

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Abstract  
Globalization is a reality for businesses and institutions of higher education. Furthermore, many U.S. based firms are expanding their businesses beyond domestic markets. These trends indicate that U.S. born individuals are likely to study or work in multicultural environments domestically and abroad. Research suggests that faculty and trainers adapt their teaching style and classroom policies to accommodate multicultural learners. Disconnections may arise, however, regarding the willingness to include these accommodations. The present exploratory study investigates the inclination and extent to which faculty and trainers adjust their teaching style, content, and policies to adapt to multicultural learners, namely, graduate and undergraduate business students and business professionals enrolled in training.

Introduction  
Globalization is a reality for businesses and institutions of higher education. In fact, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) reported that 5.1% of the 855,675 business schools undergraduates in the U.S. in 2009-2010 were international students; this represents an increase of approximately 2% from 2005 (AACSB, 2011). Additionally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics research showed that foreign born workers comprised 15.3% of the U.S. labor force in 2006, up from 14.8% in 2005 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). Furthermore, many U.S. based firms are expanding their businesses beyond domestic markets. As a result of these trends, U.S. business schools and organizations overall are becoming
increasingly multicultural. These statistics suggest that U.S. born individuals are very likely to study or work in multicultural environments domestically and abroad as expatriates. Additionally, business savvy people are cognizant that employees can have multicultural experiences that are global in scope while remaining in their home country.

Are there disconnections between the suggestion that teaching style and classroom policies should be adapted to the multicultural learner and the willingness of faculty and trainers to do so? Given that competencies in global interactions are requisite for business students and expatriates, the question that arises is: how does the reality of interacting in multicultural environments match with the inclination of business school faculty and global training instructors (hereafter referred to as faculty and trainers) to adapt their own behaviors when teaching courses with a high population (25% or more) of multicultural students? We decided to investigate this issue.

Effectively teaching an increasingly multicultural population of learners requires faculty and trainers to adapt their pedagogy to advance the learning of multicultural students (Clark & Stewart, 2009). In the present study, the term multicultural refers to non-U.S. born learners, students, and training participants, who are matriculating in U.S. business schools or working for organizations that engage in international business. Faculty and trainers may be inclined to make curricula and pedagogical changes used to teach multicultural learners. In this research, we chose to adopt the perspective of Pankaj Ghemawat (2003; 2008) who suggested that the world is semi-globalized. He contended that semi-globalization acknowledges differences that exist between different countries. According to Ghemawat (2003; 2008), the cultural differences are distinctive rather than standardized for all countries; thus business education should emphasize the significant differences that exist from one country to another. In fact, Ghemewat (2008) suggested that business schools examine their curriculum and systematically make changes to develop courses that integrate the notion of semi-globalization and thereby encourage learners to take into account cultural differences specific to each country and ultimately to think globally. From an application perspective, Thatcher (2010) suggested that

Many current globalization theories would have us believe that globalization means a significant amount of cultural blending, hybrization, glocalization, and cross-border flow of rhetorical and cultural patterns with geopolitical borders relatively meaningless, and, as such, an out-dated mode of inquiry. After ten years of systematically working on both sides of the [U.S.-Mexico] border, that’s not my picture. (p. 14)

Multicultural learning is challenging. Researchers in this area remind us that cultural fluency is not simply produced by language fluency (Beamer, 1992; St. Amant, 2002; Thrush, 1993). The flow of the learning, both from and to the instructor and student, also creates a complex dynamic. Ghemewat (2008) emphasized that business school faculty and trainers who teach populations of multicultural learners are in a unique position to enrich the educational experience of all by gaining invaluable information and knowledge about the home country and culture of those learners.
Equally challenging is the integration of globalization into course content. Beamer and Varner (2008) pointed out that “in the past, many business majors and practitioners immersed in questions of financial forecasting, market studies, and management models did not examine culture and the way it affects business” (p. ix). In an insightful essay, Ghemawat (2008) shared the findings of a quantitative and qualitative study he conducted that examined the extent to which business schools have integrated globalization into the content of courses in the graduate curriculum of 77 highly rated colleges and universities; only business schools rated in the top 30 or the top 50 global business schools in Business Week and the Financial Times, respectively, were included in the study. The focus of the study was on business strategy courses that used the case study methodology to teach MBA course content. He found that 33% of the business strategy courses taught in these prestigious institutions of higher learning did not utilize cases set outside of the U.S. Approximately 21% of the cases used in business strategy courses featured businesses in Europe or Israel; and Asia and Australia were the setting in 7% of the case studies. Very few of the cases were set in Latin America or Africa (Ghemawat, 2008). According to Ghemawat (2008), the lack of focus on cross-cultural differences in business courses is due, in part, to a lack of motivation by (some) faculty to change course content and that faculty are not convinced that significant differences exists across different countries. This suggests that the inclination of business faculty to teach or integrate cross-cultural content into courses merits empirical investigation.

Faculty may be receptive to adapting their courses or teaching style to include a multicultural component and appropriate theoretical framework if they are provided training in doing so. Clarke and Stewart (2009) described a training program designed and implemented at Xavier University for business instructors to enhance their understanding of the best practices for multicultural learning and how to incorporate them into their pedagogy. Trainees from various departments attended a workshop comprised of two 75 minute sessions focused on acknowledging and minimizing stereotypes and unintentional prejudices inherently reflected in words and phrases regularly used by business school faculty and trainers that impede the learning of multicultural learners (Clark & Stewart, 2009). The response of faculty who attended the training sessions was positive. The authors noted:

In short, hearing perspectives and noting the pedagogical resources of faculty in other departments encouraged me to examine the unspoken assumptions that underpin many of my communication behaviors in and out of the classroom and also to look at myself through the eyes of students and reconsider pedagogies that I use in my classes….I am committed to keeping up to date on trends in multiculturalism, so that my classes are responsive to the increasing diversity of our students in the increasingly global business environment. (Clark & Stewart, 2009, p. 121)

Following the trend of instruction for faculty and trainers, Woods, Jordan, Loudon, Troth and Kerr (2006) discussed a program developed to enhance the effectiveness of teaching a university-level business course in a multicultural classroom. The researchers collected data from focus groups of international students and business faculty. Data collected from the focus groups were analyzed and used to develop a training program to improve the teaching skills of faculty who taught in multicultural classrooms (Woods et al., 2006).
Specifically, “global scholars must avoid using approaches that implicitly espouse U.S. or western cultural values, most notably individualism” (Thatcher, 2010, p. 6). Understanding this concept and its link to the creation of training programs for faculty and corporate trainers is consistent with researchers (Northedge, 2003; Witte, Sequeira, & Fonteyne, 2003) who encourage faculty members to be cognizant of the way they teach in multicultural classrooms. Improving the teaching competencies of faculty served as the basis for an intensive training workshop for faculty and trainers (Woods et al., 2006). A by-product of the training was to improve teacher-student interactions, in general, for international and domestic students.

Faculty and trainers “inevitably face the challenge of providing cross-cultural experiences in the classroom, and students are eager to have real exposure to other cultures” (Cardon, 2010, p. 150). (Note: Cardon and others have suggested the benefits of utilizing film). Citing an example of teaching exercises about ethnocentrism, Scott (2010) reminded us that “despite many claims that such activities are valuable, there are relatively few sources that mention specific exercises that might be incorporated into classrooms” (p. 82).

In the context of the need for training and supporting resources aimed at addressing specific challenges faced by instructors in multicultural classrooms, Woods et al. (2006) identified multiple limitations. Specifically, training was developed focus on the following challenges:

1. Students from non-English speaking countries tend to avoid participating in classroom discussions.
2. Faculty face challenges in grading written assignments submitted by students whose first language is not English.
3. Faculty find it challenging to apply concepts and examples that are framed within the cultural and business context of countries other than the U.S.
4. Faculty encounter difficulty trying to engage students whose early education followed a paradigm that did not encourage critical thinking to adopt an analytical approach to learning. (Woods et al., 2006)

The dynamics of the global mindset emphasize a “predisposition to see the world in a particular way that sets boundaries and provides explanations for why things are the way they are, while at the same times establishing guidance for ways in which we should behave” (Rhinesmith, 1993, p. 24). Furthermore, Rhinesmith (1993) suggested that “a mindset is a filter through which we look at the world” and he advocated that people with global mindsets:

- drive for the bigger, broader picture;
- accept life as a balance of contradictory forces that are to be appreciated, pondered, and managed;
- trust process rather than structure to deal with the unexpected;
- value diversity and multicultural teamwork and play as the basic forum within which they accomplish their personal, professional, and organizational objectives;
- flow with change as opportunity and are comfortable with surprises and ambiguity;
- and continuously seek to be open to themselves and others by rethinking boundaries, finding new meanings, and changing their direction and behavior. (pp. 25-26)
Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) also described the importance of the global mindset as “one that combines an openness to and awareness of diversity across cultures and markets with propensity and ability to synthesis across this diversity” (p. 117). Hitt, Javidan, and Steers (2007) emphasize a global mindset and an understanding of “a complex web of global interdependencies” (p. 2). Ghemawat (2011) advocates that “global success requires that companies appreciate diversity and distance rather than seek to eliminate them” (p. 92). Dyer and Tarimcilar (2011) suggest that business educators are exploring “ways to increase the global IQ of their MBA students” (p. 47).

Research conducted to date, as noted by Woods et al. (2006), on teaching multicultural learners has focused primarily on business faculty. The present study extends previous research by collecting data from two different samples of instructors who teach multicultural learners: business school faculty and training professionals. By focusing on the question of how the reality of teaching in multicultural environments match with the inclination of faculty and trainers to adapt their own behaviors, this study examined the extent to which business school faculty and global training instructors adapt their style of teaching, subject matter content, and classroom policies to adapt to multicultural learners. Further investigation of the specific challenges confronted by individuals who teach multicultural learners identified by Woods and his colleagues (2006) as well as the dynamics of the global mindset (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002; Hitt, Javidan, & Steers, 2007; Rhinesmith, 1993) were explored in the present study.

**Study Methods**

This study was designed as an exploratory examination to identify the inclination of business school faculty and trainers to adapt various aspects of the course content, pedagogical methods, and their own behaviors when teaching courses with a high population (25% or more) of multicultural students. The midwestern university where this study was conducted is classified as a predominately white institution with a highly diverse (24%) student enrollment. We chose to use 25% as the benchmark for defining a high population of multicultural learners since this number closely represents the demographic make-up of the university. A percentage was selected instead of a fixed number to allow flexibility as an appropriate benchmark that could be applied to small or large classes. We focused on the inclination of faculty and trainers as well as the adaptations utilized to adjust to multicultural learners.

We conducted structured one-on-one interviews with full-time, tenured faculty, a business school department head, and trainers who have international teaching experience, all of whom currently teach a course with a constituency of international students. We also interviewed members of the global training company’s corporate leadership team. Details elicited from these interviews, coupled with information from the literature, such as the global mindset (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002; Hitt, Javidan, & Steers, 2007; Rhinesmith, 1993), were used to design survey items to assess the extent to which behaviors and practices of multicultural adjustments were made by faculty and trainers when a course was populated with a high population of multicultural students. The six major categories of adjustments examined were: course content, teaching process, course design model, use of technology, communication behaviors, and instructional multicultural skills. Demographic and open-ended questions were also developed. Prior to distribution, the survey was pilot-tested by a sample of faculty and trainers. Based on feedback, adjustments were made to the survey.
The survey was administered online. Prospective study participants were contacted via e-mail and provided access to the online survey through a link. Subjects were given three weeks to respond electronically. They were provided with one reminder two weeks after the initial e-mail was sent.

Survey participants were asked to rate the extent to which they incorporated adjustments or behaviors and their inclination to do so in multicultural classrooms. The online survey was comprised of 38 questions. Twenty-six questions provided answer options that were a statistical percentage with a calibrating verbal descriptor: 0% (never); 1-24% (seldom); 25-49% (occasionally); 50-74% (frequently); and 75-100% (almost always). The faculty member or trainer determined whether they used word descriptors or a statistical percentage to help guide their response with consistent parameters. One question requested a rating of satisfaction, eight items asked demographic questions, and three open-ended items provided an opportunity for subjects to note comments.

**Participants**
The sample size included all full-time and tenured/tenure track business school faculty at a midwestern university (n=90), and all North American trainers employed by an international expatriate training organization (n=30). Forty-two participants responded, providing a 36% response rate. All responses are reported in aggregated percentages.

Faculty respondents were closely divided by gender, 45.5% male and 54.4% female. The trainers were exactly divided by gender, half male and half female. The age of the faculty was distributed as 4% in the 20-29 years old age range, and 96% in the 50+ years. The trainers’ age was distributed as 7% in the 20-29 years, 50% in the 30-49 years, and 43% in the 50+ years.

Courses taught by faculty respondents included accounting, computer information systems, culture, finance, general business, management, marketing, and others. The years taught by the respondents showed that 4% of the faculty and 14% of the trainers had one to five years of experience; zero faculty and 21% of the trainers had six to ten years; 19% of the faculty and 36% of the trainers had 11-16 years; 18% of the faculty (and zero percent of the trainers) had 17-20 years; and, 59% of the faculty and 29% of the trainers had 21+ years of experience. Data showed that 77% of the faculty respondents had 17+ years of teaching experience.

Respondents have taught on six different continents, in a total of 33 different countries. Study participants also reported that they have traveled extensively. More than half of the faculty and trainers had travelled in six to 16 countries, and about one-third of both had travelled in more than 17 countries.

Another distinctive factor regarding this study is that data were collected from two different samples. One sample population was from academia and the other sample population included practitioners who taught global business professionals to perform effectively in global settings. It should be noted that the global training company model is 1 x 1 training, with the trainer always being a native speaker of the language or culture being taught. Additionally, the trainer also knows the student’s language, creating a strong communication and cultural understanding.
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This is substantially different than a typical university business school classroom model with 20-30 students from multiple cultures.

Regarding continuous education and professional development, about three-quarters of the respondents indicated that they participated in development or teaching method seminars at least once every one to three years. Additionally, an equivalent number of both samples noted that they participate in regional, national, or international conferences at least once every one to three years.

Results

Course content
Survey findings showed a strong variance in a willingness to adjust course content. As shown below in Figure 1, of the faculty, 33% never did, 46% seldom or occasionally did, and 21% frequently or almost always did. Of the trainers, 13% never did, 6% indicated that they seldom or occasionally did, and 81% frequently or almost always adjusted course content.

Question: To what extent do you adjust course content when you have a multicultural student population?

Figure 1. Adjusting course content to multicultural population.

Over half of both faculty and trainers indicated that they frequently or almost always adapt verbal and written explanations. About half of the respondents from each group indicated that they deliberately avoided the use of country-specific colloquialisms and idioms. However, a portion of the faculty (13%) and the trainers (12%) indicated that they did not.

As for using international examples, over half of the faculty and three-quarters of the trainers included these types of examples whether or not the class included multicultural students. Given the pressures of today’s global business environment, it seemed unusual that some (more than 10% of both types of samples of respondents) indicated that they never did, regardless of whether multicultural students were present.
Teaching process
Time allocated to an assignment did not seem to require adaptation, as shown below in Figure 2; 46% of the faculty and 13% of the trainers indicated that they never did. Twenty-one percent of the faculty and 50% of the trainers frequently or almost always did.

In regard to adjusting in-class activities in a multicultural classroom, 29% of the faculty and 13% of the trainers never did. In contrast, 29% of the faculty and 56% of trainers frequently or almost always did adjust.

Did participants change the length of examinations when the class is multicultural? Forty-six percent of the faculty indicated that they never did, and 34% indicated that they seldom or occasionally did. In contrast, 19% of the trainers never adjusted the length of examinations, while 69% seldom or occasionally did.

When asked about adapting team assignments if the class had a multicultural population, 25% of the faculty indicated that they never did, 21% seldom or occasionally did, and 54% frequently or almost always did. Trainers reported essentially the same adjustment levels.

The inclination toward preparing differently was evaluated. About 37% of the faculty indicated that they never did, and about 42% responded that they seldom or occasionally did, and 21% frequently or almost always did. Conversely, 12% of the trainers indicated that they never did, 25% seldom or occasionally did, and 63% frequently or almost always did.

Question: To what extent do you prepare differently for teaching in the multicultural classroom?

Figure 2. Teaching time devoted to adapting course materials.

Through an open-ended question, respondents were asked to describe how they prepared differently when teaching in the multicultural classroom. As shown below in Table 1, the comments included the use of visual material in different languages, images, famous international quotations, idioms, contrasting examples, vocabulary, allusions, historical references, descriptions of special items, comments about international sports teams, and cultural items from cultures present in the classroom. Other techniques included respondents being alert to special problems, as well as taking specific actions, such as arranging seating to avoid
homogeneous groups and asking the students to volunteer to provide examples from their experience related to the topic being taught.

Table 1.

Selected Comments Regarding Options Utilized in the Multicultural Classroom

- Provide visual material in different languages
- Include famous international quotations
- Use comparison and contrast of examples from multiple cultures
- Show famous global images
- Utilize international historical references
- Describe special cultural artifacts
- Comment on international sports teams
- Display cultural items in the classroom
- Remain alert to potential issues
- Arrange seating
- Asking for volunteers to provide examples from their experiences

Course design model

Did participants use a compare and contrast teaching model, for example comparing one country’s practices to another country’s practices? As shown below in Figure 3, about half of the faculty and over two-thirds of the trainers indicated that they did use this model. However, a percentage of the faculty and instructors indicated that they never used this model, 17% and 12% respectively.

Some respondents indicated flexibility with classroom management rules to meet the needs of multicultural students. A high percentage of faculty and trainers, 54% and 69% respectively, frequently or almost always were. About 8% faculty and 19% of the trainers never were willing to be flexible.

Regarding instructional adjustments, 45% of the faculty and 79% of the trainers indicated that this should occur frequently or almost always. Nine percent of the faculty and 14% of trainers indicated never.
Question: To what extent do you support that instructional adjustments should be made when teaching a multicultural student population?

*Figure 3.* Instructional adjustments for student populations.

Receiving negative feedback regarding course adaptations for multicultural students did not seem to be an issue. Three-quarters of both groups of respondents reported a strong “never” response.

**Use of technology**

A significant inclination was reported about the extent teachers used technology in the classroom. A strong 91% of the faculty and 50% of the trainers indicated that they frequently or almost always did.

Considering students’ use of technology, the survey created a distinction contrasting the utilization during class as opposed to during examinations. When asked about English as a second language (ESL) students using technology during class, it was allowed by 92% of the faculty and 50% of the trainers. Using technology during examinations was never allowed by 29% of faculty, but 67% frequently or almost always allowed it. During examinations, 44% of trainers never allowed technology, and 31% frequently or almost always did.

**Communication behavior**

As shown below in Figure 4, when asked about adjusting the process of establishing rapport, 16% of the faculty indicated that they never did, 47% indicated seldom or occasionally did, and 37% frequently or almost always did. Trainers in similar numbers never adjusted, but half occasionally did, and one third frequently or almost always did.
Question: To what extent do you find that you have to adjust how you establish rapport with students?

Figure 4. Adjustments to establish rapport with students.

Considering the adjustment of feedback to students due to multicultural implications, of the faculty, 16% never did, 37% seldom or occasionally did, and 47% frequently or almost always did. The responses of trainers were consistent with those of faculty; that is, 16% of the trainers indicated they never adjusted feedback to students, but fewer (25%) occasionally did, and 58% frequently or almost always did.

Reporting on the faculty members or trainers being more aware of their non-verbal communication and whether they modified their non-verbal communication when teaching outside of the USA, some indicated (11% of faculty and 17% of trainers) they never made modifications, while a significant number (67% of faculty and 73% of trainers) indicated they frequently or almost always were more aware of their non-verbal communication.

As for participants modifying their behavior around cultural norms, which may exist in the students’ culture so as to not be perceived as behaving in an inappropriate manner, 16% of the faculty and 17% of the trainers indicated they never did; but more than half of the faculty and two-thirds of the trainers indicated that they frequently or almost always modified their behavior.

Instructor multicultural skills

As shown below in Figure 5, regarding identifying the extent to which the respondent was open to ambiguity (example: situations that are mystifying or puzzling or that have various interpretations) in a multi-cultural classroom, 13% of faculty and 12% of trainers reported never. Slightly over half of the faculty and three-quarters of the trainers reported that they frequently or almost always were open to ambiguity.

Findings as to the extent participants adjusted their expectations to a global context (example: use a global context rather than a specific country paradigm) show that 26% of the faculty indicated that they never did, 27% seldom or occasionally did, and 47% frequently or almost always were open to ambiguity.
always did. For the trainers, 17% never did, 8% indicated seldom or occasionally did, and 75% frequently or almost always did.

- **Never**: 17% trainers, 26% faculty
- **Seldom/Occasionally**: 8% trainers, 27% faculty
- **Frequently/Aliost Always**: 75% trainers, 47% faculty

**Question**: To what extent do you adjust your expectations to a global context (vs. a specific country paradigm)?

**Figure 5. Adjusting expectations to global contexts.**

Were respondents satisfied with their abilities to adapt to a multicultural student population? Five percent of faculty and 14% of trainers indicated they were not satisfied, 27% of faculty indicated somewhat satisfied (no trainers indicated somewhat satisfied), and 68% of faculty and 86% of trainers indicated satisfied.

Participants’ satisfaction regarding the training they had received to prepare them for teaching in a multicultural student population was low. Twenty-three percent of the faculty indicated never satisfied, 41% indicated seldom or occasionally satisfied, and 36% indicated frequently or almost always satisfied. Trainers indicated that 14% were never satisfied, 36% seldom or occasionally satisfied, and 50% were frequently or almost always satisfied. The salient point of this particular data is a noticeable level of dissatisfaction with their training. Although many were satisfied, a significant number were not. Faculty remarks during interviews indicated that much of the multicultural training and teaching abilities were self-taught. In contrast, the trainers are hired as native speakers, so their need for cultural training would be significantly less than others.

Faculty and trainers applied a variety of methods to prepare students to perform in a diverse and global work environment. As shown in Table 2, respondents described using multicultural case studies, developing models for student-focused self-awareness, specifically including multicultural training in the subject content, introducing different cultures and customs, practicing during class for a variety of possible situations that could arise, and providing multimedia examples.
Table 2.

Methods Used to Prepare Students for Global Work

- Use multicultural case studies
- Develop models for self-awareness
- Include specific multicultural training in subject content
- Introduce different cultures and customs
- Practice during class for possible scenarios
- Provide multi-media examples

Lessons respondents learned about themselves when teaching a multicultural classroom or when teaching outside of their home country were varied. Respondents indicated such ideas as: applying fairness and treating every student the same—otherwise teachers open themselves up to complaints; increasing teacher self-awareness; learning from the students; expanding the ability to tolerate ambiguity and being very open-minded; having patience; enjoying the deeper rapport developed with international students; enjoying the diversity; remembering the importance of studying the history and culture of the students’ countries; being reminded that students are the same everywhere; being aware that multi-cultural students tend not to like to work individually; and remembering that even teachers can make a cultural faux pas. Other respondents indicated a completely different response: that it is incumbent upon the multicultural student, not the teacher, to understand and adapt.

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to provide an exploratory collection of data to identify the inclination and extent to which faculty and trainers adapt various aspects of the course content, pedagogical methods, and their own behaviors when teaching courses with a high population (25% or more) of multicultural students. This study shows a variance in the application of adjustments and the inclination toward such adjustments by faculty and trainers.

Respondents had a strong inclination to adjust semantics regarding verbal and written explanation, avoiding the use of country-specific colloquialisms and idioms, and using international examples. There was a strong contrast in course content adjustments, which most faculty members not inclined to do so, but trainers were. A caution here is that some learners in the global training setting actually request that trainers use U.S. idioms, such as the whole nine yards. This sports reference does not have world application, so it is likely that learners would want to be aware of it, since this and other idioms, particularly those related to sports, are frequently used in U.S. business contexts (S. Smulsky, personal communication, January 19, 2011).

Teaching process flexibility among faculty and trainers revealed a complex dynamic. Although some faculty and trainers were willing to be flexible, most respondents indicated that they were not inclined to adjust assignments, in-class activities, or team assignments. Over 80% indicated that they would not adjust the length of examinations. This limited flexibility links to a disinclination for content adjustment, too. These processes are in contrast to preparation, with
one-quarter of the faculty, and two-thirds of the trainers indicating that they do prepare differently for a multi-cultural classroom. Comments included strategies for adjusting when possible, including references to historical events, culture, and sports teams.

Three topics emphasized an inclination to adjust course design by approximately half of the faculty and three-fourths of the trainers: use of comparison and contrast model, flexibility with classroom rules, and the extent to which instructional adjustments should be made. Negative student feedback regarding course content adaptation was not a strong factor for either group.

Respondents exhibited a high inclination to use technology themselves, many allowed its use during instruction, and some even permitted its use during examinations.

Communication behaviors were an area that faculty and trainers showed a strong inclination to adjust. Respondents indicated that rapport, feedback, and non-verbal communication were frequently modified. A significant number of both faculty and trainers adapted their actions so as to not be perceived as behaving inappropriately.

For global instructional issues, such as being open to ambiguity and modifying expectations, both faculty and trainers, shows a significant inclination to adjust. One strong discussion point is the satisfaction level with training received to prepare teachers for multicultural student populations. About two-thirds of the faculty and one-half of the trainers indicated some level of dissatisfaction. Additional research may clarify the thrust of this need, including the challenges involved. Clarification might also identify the type of training support that faculty and trainers desire.

The variance in adaptation and the inclination to do so may highlight unevenness in the pedagogical application of a multicultural perspective, specifically dependent on the individual faculty member or trainer. David Victor, Director of International Business Programs, Eastern Michigan University, has suggested several possible interpretations: some faculty adapt because they wish to reach their audiences effectively; others may have personal experience with traveling abroad where they experienced first-hand the need for cultural adaption; conversely, some may be threatened by what they do not understand; faculty may erroneously believe that the U.S. way is the only successful method; or faculty mistakenly expect that their students will work only in a domestic environment (D. Victor, email communication, May 26, 2011).

Inclination could be impacted by the instructional model itself. As described above, the global training company model is 1x1 training, with the trainer always being a native speaker of the language or culture being taught. Additionally, the trainer also knows the student’s language, creating a strong communication and cultural understanding. This is substantially different than a typical university business school classroom model with 20-30 students from multiple cultures. The business school at the surveyed Midwestern university, for instance, has students attending from 44 different countries. It is likely that a classroom session may be populated by learners from multiple cultures.

We recognize that our exploratory study has specific limitations related to our research in that we can report on the inclination and variance in adaptation of our respondents only. We recommend
that the research be extended to include faculty at different universities and organizations that provide training in multicultural settings. We further recommend that additional research be conducted regarding the current application of global mindset competencies and how these competencies can be transported into teaching in multicultural classrooms. We also recommend that multicultural training be included in the faculty development process and in instructor development seminars, with particular focus on the complexity surrounding norms, values, and beliefs that students bring with them to the classroom. The preparation could include expectations regarding communication patterns, behaviors, relationships, and other dynamics, with the intent to prepare teachers for the dynamics of diverse class sessions, especially when there is a high population of multicultural students. Concurrent to the preparation, further research should be conducted regarding the willingness of faculty to adopt the expectations.

As an exploratory examination, the importance of this study is that it begins to identify disconnections between the inclination and extent to which faculty and trainers adapt various aspects of the course content, pedagogical methods, and their own behaviors when teaching courses with a high population (25% or more) of multicultural students. This study was not intended to debate the importance of making adjustments when teaching multicultural populations. Instead, the study will hopefully advance an extensive examination regarding teaching style and classroom policies as well as other specific types of adaptations faculty and trainers could make to enhance the experiences of learners in multicultural classrooms.
References


