Easily Add Multi-Cultural Content and Perspectives to your Business IT Courses

Kevin J. Jetton, CDP

kj02@txstate.edu

McCoy College of Business, Computer Information Systems
Texas State University-San Marcos
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666 USA

Abstract

Core Business IT courses can easily be enhanced by adding multi-cultural components and perspectives to your course. After all, today's firms are a multi-national mix of employees, partners and above all - customers - especially in the e-Commerce space!

Keywords: Multi-Cultural, Socially Responsible Teaching, e-Commerce

TARGET AUDIENCE

Core Business curriculum IT instructors

Contributors to Business IT curriculum course content

e-Commerce course instructors

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Realization that Multi-cultural perspectives are easy to incorporate into your curriculum

Countless media examples and websites are easy to integrate into the classroom that yields a multi-cultural perspective for emphasis and discussions

Two simple individual homework assignments will be shared that can be easily incorporated into your class. Each assignment has a student reflection component and class discussion opportunities

Assignment #1: The Digital Divide

Assignment #2: Multi-Cultural Project Teams

Realization that today's modern students do not always remember or know that the world is not an "always on and available high-speed internet connection with a fast wireless notebook/netbook at their disposal 24x7"

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION AND LEARNING ABOUT CULTURALLY SENSITIVE ISSUES

Guidelines for Establishing a Safe Environment for Discussing and Learning about Culturally Sensitive Issues. The following table, developed by Nathalle A. C. Piquemat and Sandra G. Kourizin (2004), includes the guidelines for establishing a safe environment for discussing and learning about culturally sensitive issues:

1. Each person can and should contribute to developing a high level of trust.

2. We must all practice respect for ourselves and one another.

3. We must agree to participate in open and honest discussion and debate.

4. Everyone should respect the views of others even if we do not agree with them.

5. We should practice positive and productive ways in which we can convey our perspectives, feelings or disagreements.

6. Everyone should be willing to make comments or contribute to discussions that will promote cross-cultural learning.

7. We must listen to others, as well as listen to ourselves to continue to support strong and healthy communication.

8. Everyone should feel comfortable and safe about asking questions of others.

9. We all need to take time to think and question our own assumptions of others.

10. It is critical that we all practice being accepted and non-judgmental and open-minded.

11. We must remember that no one is an expert on all cultures, but we should all be consistently learning new things about others.

12. It is imperative that we understand that no one person speaks as a representative of the entire ethnic, cultural, or social groups to which they belong.

13. Together, we can help turn around misinterpretations or misunderstandings.

We recognize that we are all here to learn and one of the most valuable ways to learn is from each other.