Chapter 3
Technodiversity: Lessons Learned From Diversity Exchanges
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ABSTRACT
What happens when technology, culture, and education intersect? How does culture of place impact technology communication? How does this affect baccalaureate education? While examining cultural awareness and diversity in three separate projects, the researchers discovered key elements to understanding technodiversity and its impact on the exchange of ideas. Morehead State University in eastern Kentucky, Western New Mexico University, and University of Guangxi in China participated in joint projects about privilege and digital communication. Issues impacting technodiversity were discovered. Understanding and harnessing the principles of technodiversity will impact distance education, online communities, and the use of technology as a conduit for communication. The diversity exchanges formed future ideas about curriculum providing baccalaureate candidates not only with a remarkable background in developing goals and assessments of achievement but also with technology and diversity tools to enable teaching in diverse circumstances.

INTRODUCTION
Teachers have been adapting and choosing tools to fit their instructional needs since education began. The way tools are used determines how learning is mediated and understood (Vygotsky, 1978). Tools can be anything from a block to a video camera. Until a teacher uses a tool in a particular manner, the tool is inert, instructionally (Negroponte, 1995). It is only through interaction that an object becomes an instructional tool. A blackboard can reflect any lesson based on what the teacher decides to write across it.

Although technology or a tool may appear to be neutral until used, Cuban (2001) claims that computers are not neutral because of the expectations people have attached to them. One reason technology has not transformed education in the ways reformers hoped may be due to what Rogers (1983) and later Cuban (2001) refer to as

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... the classic S curve in adopting new technologies: The enthusiasm of a few innovators is followed by early adopters, leading to a gradual acceptance among mainstream professionals, and then a slow embrace by the last holdouts (p.146).

This chapter will investigate the use of instructional technology as a bridge between three different cultures by examining culture of place and identity, cultural receptivity, and cultural programming, as well as make recommendations for implementing an improved instructional technology integration curriculum.

**TECHNODIVERSITY**

A new culture is emerging from the easy connection of the internet, texting, blogging, and chat rooms. The potential of this new culture is untapped and what is emerging is often incomprehensible to outsiders. A new language for communication is developing through iPod applications (apps) and texting (Crystal, 2008). Technology is the new means for connecting with people. Instead of paying social calls and leaving a card, introductions are made through “friend” connections. This new frontier is much like the wild west before the church ladies moved in; an untamed wilderness that has yet to fall under the spell of civilization. In this new environment, there are few laws. Although some regulations are beginning to be instituted, it is difficult to police this global territory. Currently, advertising and merchandizing appear to be the civilizing influences. Every time a new, free application appears on the technological horizon, advertisers are quick to move in and take over.

Technology has rapidly changed the way people communicate. Before the advent of the technological age, a musician sang or played on a stage before a live audience. Traveling musicians went from town to town, singing and carrying news. Later, singers could hit the vaudeville circuit and move up to concert halls to perform. Individuals could move up the ladder of success by showcasing their talent. In nightclubs and restaurants, bands and singers made names for themselves and performed for the public. When radio first emerged, live shows were a broadcast staple; bands and singers had a new medium to explore. The recording industry changed radio and later, the advent brought in a new technological medium to navigate. As the industry became more and more packaged, creative outlets dried up.

When the Internet exploded on the scene as a new medium for communication, suddenly a new stage emerged for creativity. Unable to be published through traditional means, writers blogged online. Posting short films, songs, stories, and original music online is now an alternative to traditional methods of publication. This type of exposure is very different than the traditional route, however, because the musician, writer, or singer has no way of knowing if their work will be viewed. The audience is obscure. Once a creative endeavor is sent into cyberspace, there is no limit to its dissemination.

Further, the culture that is emerging is also permanent. The International Society for Technology Education (ISTE) clearly states in its National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers (Standards*T) that teachers will:

1. **Inspire and Facilitate Creativity:** Teachers use their knowledge of subject matter, teaching and learning, and technology to facilitate experiences that advance student learning, creativity, and innovation in both face-to-face and virtual environments.