



A Web 2.0-based collaborative model for multicultural education

Md. Mokter Hossain and Hasan Aydin

*Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning, University of Nevada,
Reno, Nevada, USA*

Abstract

Purpose – Web 2.0 is a collaborative web development platform that has had tremendous usage in building effective, interactive, and collaborative virtual societies at home and abroad. Multicultural study is another trend that has tremendous possibilities to help people in the fight against racism and enables them to become active members of a democratic society. Based on the advanced and interactive features, Web 2.0 technologies could be appropriate media to build many virtual collaborative societies among students in local and global classrooms. Students and teachers from any corner of the world would be able to participate in such virtual communities to practice effective multicultural skills with no or minimum cost. The purpose of this paper is to address these issues.

Design/methodology/approach – This is a conceptual framework of a Web 2.0 model. This paper focuses the background of Web 2.0 technologies and multiculturalism and a feasibility study of using Web 2.0 technologies in the teaching and learning of multiculturalism, and depicts a conceptual framework involving use of a Web 2.0-based collaborative model for a multicultural classroom using one of the simple but powerful Web 2.0 tools, blogging technology.

Findings – Web 2.0 technologies could be crucial tools for students, teachers, educators and social workers to build and participate in many virtual collaborative societies to practice effective skills of multiculturalism.

Social implications – Participants from different corners of the world are able to participate in virtual communities simultaneously to practice effective multiculturalism.

Originality/value – This is a newly developed model.

Keywords Cross cultural studies, Web 2.0, Education, Social networks, Web 2.0 pedagogy

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Owing to the extensive research in computer networking and internet use, more and more advancements are being developed in the communication technologies that enable people to become closer and participate in many local and global communities interactively. Fast and easier access to the internet through computers and the handheld mobile devices, and the interactive characteristics of recently developed Web 2.0 technologies have enabled people to collaborate in virtual societies more easily than ever. Web 2.0 is a collaborative web development platform that refers to the cumulative changes in the ways software developers and end-users achieve benefits from the web (O'Reilly, 2005). In the recent years, Web 2.0 technologies have become popular among the younger generation to make communication and effective and interactive.

Social networking applications such as blogs, forums, podcasts, and wikis are the successful implementations of the new generation Web 2.0 technologies. These provide web 2.0-based applications, programs, and services including web hosting, text-audio-video sharing, communication, social interaction, and many more.



Web 2.0-based applications such as Facebook, Hi5, LinkedIn, MySpace, Nexopia, Twitter, and YouTube enable users to share ideas, opinions, interests within their individual networks over the internet in convenient ways. The free, open, collaborative, and interoperable features of Web 2.0 technologies allow users to create many virtual communities at home and abroad free of charge.

Multicultural education is a trend that is being incorporated into many school curricula (Ocak, 2006). It is:

[...] a progressive approach for transforming education which holistically critiques and addresses current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in schools and in doing so, works toward change in the larger society” (Gorski, 2001, p. 9).

According to Banks (1994), multicultural education is an essential component of quality education. However, it is not just a new concept and already an important curriculum for most teachers to incorporate into their daily classroom instruction. Nowhere is the need for the inclusion of a culturally diverse education more evident than in our global world. Several researchers, including Banks and McGee (2001), as cited in Meyer and Rhoades (2006, p. 83) argue that multicultural education is a transformative movement in education which produces critical thinking and socially active members of society. It is not simply a change of curriculum or the addition of an activity; it is, etc.

Furthermore, effective of multicultural education leads to changes in participants’ worldviews and dispositions (Ndura and Lafer, 2004). It helps students gain knowledge, and attain attitudes and skills needed to take part in cross-cultural interaction. Teachers use diversity as a resource to bring more meaning, tolerance, and opportunity to a multicultural classroom (Ocak, 2006). Multicultural education prepares students to function in today’s diverse society and has a role in creating a more democratic society (Campbell, 1996). It requires all students to be exposed to education that actively works to fight against racism and prepares them to be active members of a multicultural society (Nieto, 2004). Thus, for teachers and students, teaching and learning in the area of multiculturalism is important within and among societies with various social, ethnic, and linguistic groupings.

One of the best ways to learn multiculturalism is by sharing one’s own personal experiences with others. However, as Cruz (2010) has argued, the issue of multiculturalism is one of the greatest challenges in our society and, therefore, schools, communities, and public offices have the responsibility of managing cultural diversity and its associated conflicts. There is a need of addressing these differences by introducing school students to the cultural heterogeneity which should be encouraged and respected. By doing so, people can become aware of their own culture, compare and contrast themselves to others and be prepared to live in a multicultural society. Furthermore, many researchers, including Cruz (2010), explain by virtue of its existence, cultural diversity necessitates the transformation of children into open-minded people who are able to change and explore the knowledge of culture. Children participate more in class when they can show their abilities and interests, so then teachers will find out each student’s limits and individualize the way of teaching. On the other hand, Cruz (2010) contends that if multiculturalism is well explained and incorporated into our society so that we better understood one another, there would be less prejudice against those who hold different beliefs. Social networking sites can be a

new media to share experience with others either explicitly or anonymously. Based on Web 2.0 technology, Habacon (2008) defines a new model of multiculturalism, a schema model that includes all forms of culture: work cultures, music sub-cultures, academic cultures, virtual online cultures, media consumption cultures, and sports culture. However, teaching multicultural education with technology also can be essential in engaging students around cultural artifacts (music, ethnic portals) to help facilitate and bridge not only access to language, but also, literacy, math, science, and the arts. Also, Habacon (2008) argues that Web 2.0 technologies can perform modification, recognition, interaction, and communication in the same ways that individuals in a multicultural society do.

The interactive and read-write natures of Web 2.0 technologies could facilitate users' participation in and build many rich and user-centered virtual communities that could attract more people to participate and interact in building many collaborative societies simultaneously (Alexander, 2006). By participating in such a virtual community users can learn about each other's culture, religion, beliefs, traditions, and views on contemporary issues which could help them in building a global democratic society. Thus, Web 2.0 could be an appropriate technology to build many local and global virtual communities among people in different cultures to help them practice effective multicultural skills. Students, teachers, educators, and social workers from every corner of the world, who love and respect multiculturalism, can participate in these virtual communities and share their views and experience to make the world a better place to live in and respect each other.

The rest of the paper presents a brief introduction of the Web 2.0 technology, a discussion of its importance and effective ways of teaching-learning multiculturalism through a Web 2.0 pedagogy. The paper closes with an example of a Web 2.0-based collaborative model for a multicultural classroom and conclusions regarding the feasibility of using Web 2.0 technology in teaching-learning multiculturalism.

2. Understanding Web 2.0 technologies

2.1 Web 2.0 technologies

Web 2.0 is a new trend in communication technology that has become a basis of the new generation internet to make it a more mature and distinctive medium of communication by facilitating user to develop web applications interactively and interoperably. According to O'Reilly (2009).

Web 2.0 is a set of social, economic, and technology trends that collectively form the basis for the next generation of the internet – a more mature, distinct medium characterized by user participation, openness, and network effect.

This means that Web 2.0 technology refers to the new generation of web development and design concepts that are more organized than its predecessor, Web 1.0 technology. It allows internet users to transition from the static to the dynamic to the dynamic web technologies both in using and developing web applications. Based on the easier access to the internet through computers, cellular, and handheld devices, Web 2.0 tools enable users to develop a collaborative virtual society to share information interactively and interoperably.

Web 2.0 technologies allow users to develop user-centered web applications to participate, add, control, and share information interactively and interoperably (O'Reilly, 2005). In addition to traditional Web 1.0 development tools, Web 2.0

technologies include some additional features that are accessible to users, entirely through a browser located anywhere – connected to the internet via personal computer or handheld mobile devices (O'Reilly, 2005). Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of the Web 2.0 platform. Building Web 2.0 applications is easier and faster. More people can tie together to use and build the applications interactively and interoperably (O'Reilly, 2009). Blogs, wikis and podcasts are the most popular Web 2.0-based tools that provide web-based communities and programs, web applications and services, web hosting, audio-video sharing, social-networking, and many more services.

Social networking sites. Social networking sites are the Web 2.0-based applications that allow users to share personal information with each other in convenient ways. Social networking sites focus on building and reflecting upon social relations and interactions among people who possess the same interests. Social network sites essentially represent individuals' profiles, social links, and a variety of additional services. They enable users to share ideas, opinions, activities events, and interests within their individual networks over the internet through e-mailing and instant messaging. Facebook, Hi5, LinkedIn, MySpace, Nexopia, Twitter, and YouTube are popular applications of social networking services. They emphasize online collaboration, social collaboration, and resource sharing among users free of charge.

Blogs. A blog, an acronym for web log, is an easier web publishing tool that allows users to create and publish web pages with personal or anecdotal information to share with others. A blog takes in a user-friendly commentary format with separate postings rather than a threaded discussion board (Richardson, 2006). Users' ability to leave comments is the distinct feature of a blog. A typical blog combines text, images and links to other web pages, blogs, and contents related to the topic. A blog usually provides news or comments on a particular subject or a person's opinion in text, picture, audio, and video formats. Creating or editing a blog requires only basic computing knowledge. Blogs can be visited by local and global communities.

Wikis. A wiki is a collaborative web page that allows users to create and easily edit any number of interlinked web pages using a traditional web browser (Achterman, 2006). A wiki can be developed through the WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) format that allows users to view its contents very similar to the end result while it is created. Wikis allow users to have different levels of access to edit or delete content. Creating or editing a wiki requires only basic computing knowledge – no programming knowledge at all. Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, is a great example of a wiki that is created and constantly developed by its users.

Podcast. A podcast is a series of digital media files in audio or video format. It allows users to publish their audio and video recordings on the web episodically and to download them through multiple devices including cell phones, iPods, net books, laptops, desktops, and similar handheld devices (Richardson, 2006). Publishing audio and video recordings of lecture materials and class discussion on a podcast is a popular way of information sharing among the new generation of students, teachers and social workers.

2.2 Advanced features of Web 2.0 technologies

Web 2.0 not only has more features than its predecessor Web 1.0, traditionally known as web technology. It is qualitatively different from Web 1.0 in many ways. Web 2.0

enables its users to interact with other users actively (such as in chatrooms) and view information passively that is provided to them by its developer. The dynamic features of Web 2.0 allow its users to interact with other users actively or to change web site content interactively, interoperably, and simultaneously. If Netscape is the standard bearer for Web 1.0, Google is the standard bearer for Web 2.0.

In Web 2.0 platform everyone is a both consumer and seller of information who defines and designs the contents of the web. The interactive features of the Web 2.0 technology enable its users to actively participate and contribute to develop and enrich the web page contents. Web 2.0 users also become able to create, share and enhance their knowledge, and thinking with other users in the network. They share knowledge and information wherever it is located and whenever it is needed through the web.

Improved functionality of Web 2.0 tools such as openness, remixing, and freedom of control over data have made it exceptional when compared to the traditional Web development approach. This means that Web 2.0 tools allow users to add their own content with few or no restriction at all. Web 2.0 allows its users not only to retrieve information but also encourages them to input additional resources to the application as they prefer.

On a Web 2.0 site, users can own data and can have control over that data (O'Reilly, 2005). A Web 2.0 site allows its users to interact with other users or to simultaneously change web site content from any location, any time. In order to do this, Web 2.0 technology uses open source coding, which means that the Web design codes are available for others to use and customize freely. It has caused the Web to shift from being a medium in which information is transmitted and consumed into being a platform where content is created, shared, remixed, repurposed, and passed along (Downes, 2005).

3. Multiculturalism

Different researchers from various fields of learning attribute different meanings to multiculturalism. The growing cultural integration in various societies across the USA, the UK, and in countries with fairly stable economies has led to the need to redefine treatment and perspectives on multiculturalism. Education practitioners define multiculturalism as an idea where educational reform is promoted, promulgated, and processed (Gorski, 2001; Banks, 2001). Multiculturalism continuously seeks the equal distribution of educational opportunities for highly diverse students in the educational institution; and because of the significant increase of cultural integration in various societies in recent years, multicultural approaches in education becomes an important contemporary issue (Stewart, 1993).

Moodod's (2007) definition of multiculturalism is a fairly recent coinage of a concept that has existed for quite a long time (Higbee *et al.*, 2003). As was mentioned previously, advances in technology, economics, transportation, and telecommunication allowed people from various cultures to come together, usually in big and progressive cities for job and business opportunities, along with their families or relatives (Stewart, 1993). The growing numbers of people from different racial and cultural backgrounds has altered the normative processes in many societies as the needs of a heterogeneous society are somewhat different from the needs of homogenous communities (Ryan, 1998). This often translates to the need for people from various cultures to have the same quality of education which then translates to the need of a multicultural approach

of instruction in educational institutions. As Higbee *et al.* (2003), there is a growing need for multicultural awareness in educational institutions in order to effectively handle the demand for high-quality multicultural education.

3.1 Importance of teaching and learning of multiculturalism

Multicultural communities have grown significantly in the last few decades. The typical issues experienced by societies have increased significantly as well with the growing cultural diversity. With the growing presence and influence of cultural diversity in today's modern societies, more and more culturally-related issues and problems have become apparent. The most common of these issues are racial discrimination and prejudice which destroys the basic tenets of the society (Rorty, 1995). Teaching multicultural topics in education could be one of the efficient ways to combat these issues.

The demand for educational institutions to provide quality education amidst a heavy multicultural setting is elevated (O'Reilly, 2009). With the failure of the existing modes of instruction, approved teaching strategies, textbooks, and the like to address the demands of a culturally diverse student populace, the need to come up with better, more efficient and effective educational systems has become a necessity. This demand forces educational institutions to seek reform under the new social structures in communities as the list of complaints on the existing curricula and approaches in education grows. In schools, in order to address the needs of cultural diversity in schools, new methodologies, curricula, and models of instructions must be implemented. Nonetheless, any reform or changes in the existing educational system is not easy to implement due to the fact that the system has already existed for many decades (Ryan, 1998). Against this backdrop, nothing can be done in education to make multiculturalism successful.

According to Powell (2000), success in the integration of multicultural curricula in education can only be achieved when thorough and deep understanding of the nature, requirements, and demands of a multicultural educational institution are achieved. When educational institutions open their perspectives towards cultural differences within their confines, particularly highlighting the needs to take a holistic approach to instruction and methodologies, cultural-related conflicts and issues can be avoided. Moreover, the institution would be able to effectively define and identify culture-related issues in education and strategize and implement methodologies and instruction that would fit with these new demands for high-quality education.

Learning and understanding the nature and associated issues of multicultural education are also important for three major reasons. First, classrooms that are free from racial discrimination or prejudices facilitate successful and healthy learning experience for both students and teachers alike (Ryan, 1998). Racial discrimination deters progress as it causes stress at various levels. In terms of education, racial discrimination and prejudices not only cause stress but also eliminate the possibility of a successful learning process (Sleeter and Grant, 2003). Students from different cultures often experience discrimination because they are not understood both by their teachers and their classmates. More often than not, the social pressures they experience in the school make it hard for them to focus on their lessons, and increase their risk of failure in school. By learning multiculturalism, educational institutions can eliminate the negative effects of racial discrimination and prejudice within their confines.

The second most compelling reason why learning multiculturalism is important in educational institutions is that this understanding improves social interaction and mutual understanding between cultures. The prevalence of racial discrimination and prejudices in society is partially brought about by the lack of understanding of the cultures of people from other races (Moodod, 2007). Not all social situations present opportunities for learning about other cultures but the social settings in educational institutions allows learning about other cultures to occur. Because educational institutions are seats for open mindedness and integration of knowledge through theories and experience, they present a good opportunity to learn about culture and cultural perspectives. If schools around the world can develop teaching methodologies they can successfully teach students about other people's cultures. This would hopefully breakdown all social barriers towards the understanding of various cultures, and makes the world a better place. This is because the understanding which starts at school can be brought home and to communities and people might see each other in a different light. When young people see each other in a more positive way, racial barriers can be broken down and positive social integration can actually occur.

The third reason and probably the most important reason why multiculturalism should be taught is that it can help students develop democratic values and fair attitudes (Ocak, 2006). Individuals that fail to understand or fail to attempt to understand the beauty of individuality fail miserably to see the uniqueness in every person. By learning multiculturalism in schools, perspectives will be challenged, perceptions will be tested, and virtues will be honed to accept the importance of liberty and freedom in the society for all (Downes, 2005; Nieto, 2004). People should understand each other or allot a space for understanding other people's differences, whether racial or cultural, in order for the society to actually achieve freedom and liberty (Sleeter and Grant, 2003). Once individuals are liberated from their prejudices and biases, successful societies might become a direct consequence. Because educational institutions provide avenues for successful instruction and critical learning, the needs for educational institutions to facilitate cultural understanding are enormous.

3.2 Effective ways of teaching and learning of multiculturalism

There are many ways of effectively teaching multiculturalism to students. Some of the most common strategies include:

- cultural exposure;
- cultural integration; and
- historical development of a particular culture.

The relation of cultural identities either formally or informally to individual attitudes and behaviors. Also, broaching racial issues by adopting a color-blind perspective and the use of technology and modern communication devices (Ndura and Lafer, 2004). Cultural exposure is where individuals are taught about the uniqueness of the practices of certain cultures by being exposed to the culture and its practices. Firsthand experience of the culture allows deeper understanding of the culture as individuals become able to perceive and explain what and why such differences occur. Moreover, direct exposure to the culture allows differences in practices and perspectives to be explained, even if not really understood.

Ocak (2006) argues that cultural integration is similar to cultural exposure. Kluckholm (1963) argues that culture can be seen as a “way of life” which is passed down through generations. Cultural integration is the increasing integration of the different cultures found throughout the world and the diffusion of a dominant “global cultural” (SlideShare Networks, 2010). It could be argued that this leads to a reduction of the cultural differences and a dilution of local cultures. The only difference between the two is the length and depth of exposure to the culture of choice. Moreover, Aydin (2009) argued that while cultural exposure barely scratches the surface of another’s culture, cultural integration allows a deeper understanding of the uniqueness of a given culture by a deeper level of exposure towards that culture.

Historical development of a particular culture is one of the effective, and probably the most common methods of teaching multicultural differences to students (Ndura and Lafer, 2004). This can be done in formal and informal settings where students learn more about a particular culture by evaluating the historical development of the culture, leading to the explanation of the uniqueness of behaviors and characteristics of people from other cultures. By understanding the past associated with a certain culture, understanding of the present perspectives of individuals from various cultures becomes easier. Once people begin to understand the underlying reasons for cultural practices and perspectives, they become able to relate these historical accounts to the individual attitudes and behaviors which they find baffling or bizarre at first.

Teachers can play important roles in teaching cultural diversity and respect in the classroom. This can be done by simple actions that reflect equality and color blindness and by showing empathy for everyone regardless of ethnicity or religious inclinations. Teachers teach their students how cultural differences should be addressed. By adopting a color-blind perspective and setting an example, students develop the ability to emulate this perspective and practice which when taken into the long run, will help reducing or eliminating racial prejudices and discrimination in the classroom.

Finally, educational institutions should be able to make good use of technology in teaching cultural diversity, particularly since cultural integration occurs frequently in cyber space. By educating students on the ethical and proper ways to handle cultural diversity online and offline, teachers become able to take full advantage of modern internet and communication technology. Web 2.0 is such a new innovation of technology that has tremendous potential in teaching-learning multiculturalism.

4. Feasibilities of Web 2.0 in teaching and learning of multiculturalism

The possibilities of using Web 2.0 tools in teaching and learning of multiculturalism could be unlimited. The openness, collaborative, and interoperability features of Web 2.0 technology can enable teachers to engage students in working together in different content areas of multicultural aspects to create many virtual communities at home and abroad. Web 2.0 tools can provide excellent ways to help students understand various cultural aspects of the world, particularly to find out something about the social attribute of their own and other cultures (Solomon and Schrum, 2007). To initiate a new blog on a multicultural issue, teachers first need to form some small groups with interested students to work together in that specific area. For instance, a social science teacher can form several groups for doing a comparative study on various religions or cultures that are common in the class. By doing so, the groups might find some common or equivalent faith or beliefs among different religions including Islam,

Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism or Hinduism; or they may find some common customs among the different cultures and religions.

The New York Law School calls these groups iSections (Broussard, 2008). However, iGroup seems to be better suited term for such an interactive group as members will be working together using Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, social networking and interactive learning tools that allow them to practice and share their differentiated beliefs with their fellow classmates. Once a group member discovers something different or interesting in he or she can post and share that with others. That might encourage other students to join their groups or form new groups and share their findings to others as well. Teachers and students in an iGroup will always be kept in touch with technology and work collaboratively inside and outside the classroom, learning, publishing, and respecting their thoughts in their blogs. Students in the iGroups will discuss, create and upload their own contents under the guidance of their class teachers. If somebody outside the class, local or abroad requests to be a member of a group, teachers can add or reject the request based on the nature of the activity. Students will more likely be motivated to join and write in such a group if they are using a blog or other new technology instead of simply writing on paper (Solomon and Schrum, 2007).

Multicultural teachers can develop various resource sites in their content areas by engaging such iGroup members. Web 2.0 tools, for instance a blog, can be used to make this process more effective and interesting for the iGroup members to work interactively. For example, while teaching the topic “women’s rights in different cultures”, on Monday, a social science teacher can post this topic on the blog, and ask every individual student to write a short essay on women’s right in his/her own culture. Students are given the week to study and collect information about it. Then, on the weekend students start posting their opinions on the blog. Students’ search and response could include various related inquiries to the topic: how women should be considered? What rights should they have? How does my culture consider them? What advantages do they enjoy? What barriers do they face? Then over the next week, students could have the opportunity to read their classmates’ postings and compare women’s right among their own and others’ cultures. This time students would have the chance to learn about multiple cultures and differentiated beliefs about women’s right. On the following week, teacher could share all the accepted findings, and discuss in the class how different cultures have similar or dissimilar practices and viewpoints on women’s right. Finally, the teacher can post a request on the blog asking what topic the participating students would like to study next time. This way, the teacher can have an information bank of multicultural topics that s/he can post in the next time or can use in another class or next year. By doing these assignments, we hope students will begin to respect other’s cultures and beliefs which will help them to build an equitable democratic and multicultural society.

5. A Web 2.0-based collaborative model for a multicultural classroom

Let us consider a hypothetical model in which teachers and students in a multicultural classroom can work collaboratively. In this model, the training will be based on computing and Web 2.0 technologies, mainly blog. In this project students will focus on the various geographies, languages, cultures, religions, and ethnicities in different groups. Participants will do a comparative study on their different beliefs, faiths, and

customs, in these five different aspects. The project might be initiated locally, for instance in a single class with approximately 20 students under the supervision of a teacher. The teacher will divide the class into five heterogeneous groups with four students in each group. Each group will have a leader, responsible for initiating the process and maintaining communication with the teacher and other members in the group. The group leaders will also be authorized to maintain interrelation among the groups. To accomplish the project successfully, groups might be named and assigned with specific tasks as follows:

- *Group-A.* Geography group – will research, explore, and publish geographical information about their own group members' states/countries, by rotation.
- *Group-B.* Language group – will research, explore, and publish information about their own group members' first languages, by rotation.
- *Group-C.* Religion group – will research, explore, and publish information about their own group members' religions, by rotation.
- *Group-D.* Culture group – will research, explore, and publish information about their own group members' own cultures, by rotation.
- *Group-E.* Ethnicity group – will research, explore, and publish information about own group members' ethnic identities, by rotation.

To successfully complete the project each group will specifically perform the following activities:

- Each group will do an intensive search on its designated area in all possible sources from texts, journals, newspapers, and most preferably from the web.
- Each group will enrich its findings by using text, pictures, audio, video, and related resources as much as they need or can.
- Each group will prepare a report on its assigned task and prepare a multimedia presentation of their reports to show all other students in the class.
- Each group may also create a comparison report highlighting the similarities and dissimilarities of its internal findings.
- Each group will write personal journals about other groups' findings. Participating students can write their personal experience and opinions while working on the project.

A well-planned project will require a number of phases equal to the maximum number of heterogeneous members in the groups. For instance, in this case, a maximum of four phases might be needed as there might be maximum of four heterogeneous members in a group. Each phase might take several weeks to months, based on the nature and or activity of the project. In every phase, each group will select a different person as a host member in his/her own group, by rotation, and the whole group will work on that host-member's own state/country or language or religion, or culture or ethnic background. For the first two weeks the groups will individually do research and collect information about the host member's own state/country or language or religion, or culture or ethnic background. The next week, they will explore and publish the information on the blog. Finally, in the following weeks, they will read and share all other groups' results/findings on the blog.

In the next phases, the groups will select another person as a host member in their groups, and the whole group will work on that host member's own state/country or language or religion, or culture or ethnic background. In these phases, the groups will explore, publish, read, and share all other groups information in the same fashion as stated earlier. The phases will continue until everybody in all groups is selected as a host member in his/her own group. When all four phases are completed successfully, all five groups will share and explain their findings to the other groups in five separate sessions. Finally, the groups will publish their summarized outcomes on the blog. Thus, by the end of the project, the participants will learn geographical information of several different states/countries, as well as information about several different languages, religions, cultures, and ethnic groups.

6. Nature and benefits of the proposed model

This model is based on a project-based cooperative learning. It is also interdisciplinary in nature. It can be considered as a conceptual curriculum approach. At first, it may seem to be complicated; however, once it begins, it becomes easier to understand and use. Since this project focuses on different/diversified factors of geography, language, culture, religion, and ethnicity – it is multidisciplinary in nature. For easy and quick communication between the participants it requires computer and internet use through e-mailing and instant messaging.

This model requires five phases of technology integration. In the first or planning integration phase, the teacher needs to plan the basic structures of the model and choose a content area. In the second or assessing phase, the teacher needs an assessment survey to find the needs and possibilities of the project. In the third or designing phase, a project-based assignment that includes tasks and blogs as an effective technology tool to design the project is required. In the fourth or implementing phase, participants need to implement the model through the interdisciplinary process. To do that the participants need to be divided into five groups to work on individual aspects. Finally, in the fifth phase, students update, correct, replan/recollect, and upload their findings on the blog.

There are some benefits of this model. First, since the students have the opportunity to work in a heterogeneous group they might ultimately learn to become familiar with and respectful of other cultures, religions and traditions. Second, because students have the opportunity to learn and share differentiated beliefs, cultures, and faiths of their classmates' who study in the same environment, they might ultimately become more respectful to other cultures. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, students are engaged in an ongoing meta-cognitive process in which they can reflect and compare their own beliefs with others, and thus may have an opportunity to accept best practices. This could help them to become confident in conducting more or larger projects in the future.

The proposed Web 2.0-based technology integrated model could have tremendous positive effects on students' learning achievement. The cooperative-instructional approach motivates young students both working in groups and individually. Prior decisions about what technology can be used can increase their enjoyment and reduce anxiety thus, enhancing learning achievement. Implementing and updating the content and working in groups may also affect student attitudes. Students' effort and interest in using Web 2.0 tools in investigating new topics can motivate them to be more

confident and respectful of their own findings. This model is open and general. Thus, anyone who loves multiculturalism can use it as is or customize it according to his/her teaching or instructional approach as well as contents' and learners' requirements.

7. Conclusions

Advancements in web development and an increasingly diverse society are two notable hallmarks of the twenty-first century. Such a diverse society requires an increasing need for multicultural studies. Technology-based multicultural study can help students gain the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to take part in cross-cultural societies. This may provide unique opportunities for every participant with web access to disseminate his or her own idea, experience, research, comment and suggestion to the global audience. Young students may become more inspired and respectful regarding foreign cultures and customs while working in groups or individually. This could be encouraging for first time participants as well as classroom teachers whose voices and perspectives are not available in news media or refereed journals. As more people participate in online discussion with the contemporary social and cultural issues, and take the opportunity to publish voice on the blogs, the depth and breadth of multicultural studies will increase among the mass of people. Thus, the Web 2.0-based multicultural movement has the prospective of keeping multicultural education in-step with the exponentially increasing diversified population of the world. To conclude, teaching multicultural education with Web 2.0 technology that students becoming familiar with different cultures worldwide promotes students' deeper understating of all people. As final point of positive and effective multicultural interaction students become more successful in their lives.

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About the authors

Md. Mokter Hossain is a Doctoral Student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning in the University of Nevada, Reno, USA. His research interest is Web 2.0 technologies and their applications in teaching-learning process. Md. Mokter Hossain is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: mokter@unr.edu

Hasan Aydin is a Doctoral Student at the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning emphasized in multicultural education at the University of Nevada, Reno, USA.