

Distance Education in India and the USA — the Cultural Dimensions

VIJAY KAPUR

Seattle Central Community College, Broadway, Seattle, USA

Abstract: *Often makers and practitioners of distance education tend to forget or undermine the importance of the contexts, including the cultural context of countries in which education philosophies and strategies are used to achieve specific goals. As a result, they meet with situations where the perceived solutions to socio-academic problems become themselves problematic. Vijay Kapur's comparative and historical perspective of the Western and the Indian contexts provides some significant insights that add to the value of the on-going debate.*

History and Background

The credit for pioneering an expansion in education opportunities through enhanced correspondence course offerings distributed by mail should go to Sir Isaac Pitman, the British inventor of shorthand. Pitman conceptualized that this framework of delivering educational offerings would increase access to a large multitude of would be learners who might not otherwise be able to take advantage of the traditional avenues available for obtaining a college and university level education. This experiment — first introduced in 1840 — proved remarkably successful and led to the establishment of departments specializing in promoting distance education through correspondence courses at the University level starting with the University of Chicago in 1900 and the University of Queensland in 1911. The period up to 1969 saw an incremental expansion in distance education course offerings driven largely by the correspondence course model.

The year 1969 marks a significant watershed in the history of distance education. Then British Prime Minister Harold Wilson had seen distance learning programs being implemented in the then Soviet Union which reinforced his conviction that the advantages of an educated population which would accrue to a modern nation state in the twentieth century required the provision of facilities and program offerings which were comprehensive, contextually relevant and cost effective. The socio economic imperative was recognized as the main component of this process of disseminating knowledge instead of a pure reliance on economic and cost benefit derivatives. It would be valid to point out here that the achievement of this goal within the British political system was not a post World War II phenomena. Interestingly Benjamin Disraeli when serving as the British Prime Minister in the second part of the nineteenth century had stated the same goals in a statement, which reads as follows, 'Upon the education of the people of this country the fate of this country depends' (June 15, 1874). However it fell to

Harold Wilson to move the dialogue over the 'felt need' into the realm of reality by focusing on the creation of facilities for delivery of quality cost efficient course offerings. The establishment of the Open University (OU) in the United Kingdom in 1969 marked the next step in this process. Its innovative approach to learning — through the incorporation of a mixed media framework encapsulating textual, audio and video materials — revolutionized the learning process and helped move distance education into the mainstream of global educational initiatives. The Open University concept acquired wide institutional legitimacy and led to the establishment of four (4) such entities in Europe as well as twenty (20) more in different parts of the world within the next two decades - including Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) established in New Delhi in 1985. My view is that these efforts — within Britain, Europe and parts of the British Commonwealth — were driven by a desire to correct imbalances in conventional higher education by accomplishing the following societal and institutional goals:

- Jettisoning oft-repeated concerns of scarcity and exclusivity in access by expanding the academic activities of the traditional university apparatus into hitherto uncovered geographical areas and demographic/income groupings;
- Underlined the creativity of existing political institutions in utilizing existing university administrative structures to devise solutions thereby enabling individual national economies to derive the social and economic benefits of an educated workforce;
- Alleviating concerns about additional cost outlays by offering prospective students the opportunity to learn without investing additional funds on creation of capital assets.

Distance learning within this modular framework was perceived as a creative response to the need for improving access to learning without either challenging or creating the existing structure of traditional higher education. The operational paradigm however evolved differently within the United States where the twin goals of time specific quality learning and an adequate economic return on investment — to an absence of emphasis on socially relevant objectives — took precedence. An enrolment of over 300,000 students in US based distance learning institutions in the mid 1980s was projected to grow into a market of \$21 billion by 2003. The institutional responses devised within the United States hence focused on strategies to dominate the largest proportion of this rapidly growing market to the exclusion of the societal and political variables, which had guided the process within the United Kingdom, Europe, India and other parts of the world.

The Philosophical Framework – Emergence of Contradictions

The end of the Cold War in 1989 and the subsequent disappearance of the Soviet Union as a consolidated nation state in 1991 enabled the United States to solidify its position as the world's only superpower. This unipolar emphasis was also evident in the incremental moves towards globalization pursuant to the Marrakesh Accords (1995). The first institution to emerge was the World Trade Organization (WTO), which soon

became the enforcer of the philosophy of globalization — a policy whose principles promoted uniform market access by nation states to each other's domestic markets. Interestingly education also became a 'saleable commodity', which could be promoted across national borders under the WTO framework. Naturally the desire to dominate the growing market of global learners drove the developed nations to devise revenue intensive and technologically comprehensive strategies to accomplish this goal. The lead in this endeavor was taken by the United States whose emphasis on technology enabled online distance education to grow but also marginalized the importance of cultural differences as influences on individual learner behavior. The need for cost effective uniformity drove this process and economic imperatives of adequate returns on investment received more attention than the need to recognize and protect cultural attitudes which influenced both learner and teacher behavior in non American environments.

Aristotle once wrote "The educated differ from the uneducated as much as the living from the dead". It is my contention that the term 'educated' – as defined — should not be perceived in purely linear terms as is the usual practice in Western individualist societies where the needs of the individual take precedence over that of the group. The locus of control is also driven by internal stimuli and the operative concept of self, places the individual over the collective group. Such a scenario would promote the logic of 'cost benefit' as an appropriate objective leading an individual/s to acquire the benefit of an education so that their status in society could be bettered. The achievement of status or material gain becomes a goal in itself usually to the exclusion of other variables, which would impact on this process. However 'education' in a non-Western collectivist society would be perceived in-group terms where the influence of subjective non-linear variables would be more pervasive. The locus of control would recognize the relevance of external stimuli over which both the individual learner or the teacher usually have little or no control. An example would be cultural norms and beliefs concerning the symbolic role demarcation of responsibility between males and females in such societies or the importance of the in-group versus the out-group in interpersonal relations. In both cases the desire for conforming to these behavior attributes would come from outside stimuli dictated by long standing cultural beliefs and the fact that a person/s is sensitive to these values is indicative of a degree of cultural competence. This paradigm challenges the thesis that 'education' is synonymous with cultural competence — a view that resonates within sections of the online education movement who believe that universality is the same as outreach and maximum coverage to the exclusion of course content.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) endeavored to provide a semblance of focus and coherence to this debate when it released the 'World Document in Higher Education for the Twenty First Century: Vision and Action' (1999). It recognized the influence of culture in higher education offerings – whether of the domestic or borderless variety — and sections of the 'Agenda for Higher Education' (Pages 6-7) articulated the following aspirations:

"One of the most important missions of higher education in society is its cultural and ethical mission. Higher education is required to preserve and accept cultural identity, promote the propagations and creation of cultural values, protect and encourage cultural

diversity and participate actively in the development of intercultural understanding and harmony and the mutual enrichment of cultures. The transmission of cultural values which is bound up with ethical considerations should permeate all courses in higher education”.

The relevance of this goal finds further amplification in the recognition within this document that quality cannot supersede social relevance and both have to function in a holistic atmosphere of systemic comprehensive coherence rather than competition. The parameters of this philosophy are also evident in the following principles listed as a part of the 1999 UNESCO Declaration:

- Universality would imply that the goal of higher education is not only to train, but to educate
- Universality of higher education also indicates that the course offerings should increase the level of individual consciousness
- The achievement of true universality in higher education demands that it should acquit an ethical stabilizing role when there is a crisis of values.
- Higher education offerings should encourage improvement in academic quality, a desire to promote the removal of inequities based on gender or access as well as Provision of incentives to encourage evolution of multidisciplinary academic solutions on thematic issues.

The laudatory goal of ‘universality’ set out within the UNESCO Working Document was interpreted differently by national service providers based on their perceptions and cultural value systems. The Western individualist cultural framework conceived of it in terms of enhancing outreach and coverage leaving the benefits of such an approach to be driven by individual motivations. On the contrary the non Western collectivist group framework perceived ‘universality’ in terms of access without developing safeguards to ensure quality in such educational offerings. The Western approach - epitomized by the distance learning models promoted by American institutions — accepted the need for ‘adaptability’ without recognizing the pervasive influence of the cultural imperative while the non Western approach — utilized by nations like India – accepted the need for ‘adopting’ Western modes of technology in educational offerings without recognizing that the operative framework should enable a balancing in economic investment and returns in the shape of revenue. The die was thus cast for the contradictory methods utilized by the Western and non Western nations in promoting higher educational offerings both domestically and across geographical borders.

Craig Storti contended in his workbook ‘Figuring Foreigners Out’ (1999) that cultural beliefs and attitudes impact directly on personal behavior and usually individual responses when confronted with complex and difficult interpersonal situations fall within the following four broad areas of cultural competence or incompetence:

- Unconscious Incompetence (epitomizes complete ignorance)
- Conscious Incompetence (beginning of awareness but devoid of adroitness derived from cultural competence)

- Conscious Competence (progression of awareness of differences but responses are not natural)
- Unconscious Competence (awareness and understanding is natural and adaptive and demonstrates knowledge based on heightened cultural competence)

It will be useful to examine the utility of this paradigm to the cultural dimensions of higher education offerings promoted by American and Indian entities to ascertain whether the quest for 'universality' has enabled a growth in 'adaptive' or 'adoptive' cultural competence or the inherent philosophical contradictions within the different societal settings makes such a goal worthless. A famous Chinese proverb states that, 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.' The effectiveness of strategies to enable the accomplishment of the goal of universal learning will now be examined within the contextual cultural framework of contemporary American and Indian approaches utilized for this purpose.

The American Approach – Altruism and Financial Rewards are Compatible not Competing Goals

The existence of a correlation between the organizing and processing of information between Asians and North Americans — based on cultural stimuli — has been contended by Nisbett et al (2001). The interface between instruction strategies generated within one cultural setting and learners coming from another is not devoid of confusion and misunderstanding. Differences in time and location were already accepted as defining components within 'borderless distance education'. The view that "cultural distance" poses its own set of challenges is gaining recognition within American academia but the interventions and responses devised are consistent with prevalent individualist cultural mores wherein individual motivations superimpose the validity of internal stimuli over non quantifiable and subjective external influences as determinants of cross cultural interaction and resultant miscommunication.

Allen and Boykin (1992) defined these obstacles in terms of 'an absence of contextual match between the conditions of learning and a learner's socio cultural experiences'. They term these contextual mismatches as 'cultural discontinuities', which impact upon the learning process in negative terms. Vygotsky and Luria (1994) proposed a culturally sensitive system wherein psychological structures operated as mediating mechanisms between a person's inner self and the surroundings that he or she encounters on a regular and/or irregular basis. This elaborate framework — akin to a reliance on beliefs and values as determinants of cultural identity — is utilized by individuals in the Western individualist environment and the non Western collectivist setting in culturally neutral terms with a desire to engender stability in interpersonal behavior and resultant social interaction. The malfunctioning or break down of this framework can prove prejudicial to transmission of the correct contextual meaning thereby disrupting both the instructional and the learning process. These 'discontinuities' will now be discussed in the subsequent sections.

Altruism – Concept and Meaning

Altruism within the conventional American linguistic mode remains synonymous with ideas of charity and prevalent attitudes reflect this perception. Dissemination of

knowledge cannot be considered to be a charitable endeavor since costs associated with creation of educational facilities/delivery of materials will need to be recovered through the generation of adequate revenue. Moreover the perception remains that individuals receiving education will use it to better their standing in society – of which income remains a yardstick of comparison. This perception leaves no room for adjustment in the cost of delivering education through the distance-learning mode to cover differential income levels since higher education continues to be perceived as a privilege with a recognizable cost to the user. This philosophy is carried into the field of ‘borderless education’ wherein the principle of adequate return on investment instead of any altruistic motive associated with universality of coverage holds sway.

Differences in Motivation – Financial Accountability is Indicative of Success

Distance learning establishments within the USA typically function at two different levels — one for the domestic user and the other for the foreign user. The cost of education for the domestic user is typically very reasonable and the ‘virtual classroom’ functions on the same criteria as a typical ‘chalk and lecture’ classroom with student input being sought and encouraged. On the contrary ‘borderless education’ offerings are typically more expensive to deliver – especially in the online mode – and the desire to establish any kind of interaction with non-USA based students enrolled in distance education courses remains stillborn. The main motivation remains financial — to provide a service and receive payment for it. This framework implicitly serves to devalue the educational component that now becomes subject to financial exigencies. The ‘customer provider’ relationship that has become an integral part of American academic practice in the sphere of higher education does not exist to ‘borderless education’ offerings. On the contrary financial reward drives this process thereby making financial returns indicative of a successful distance learning endeavour rather than non-quantifiable variables associated with the promotion of critical thinking skills or measures that help create a globally conscious workforce. Distance learning establishments are usually self support endeavors and this is reflected in the strategies employed by their functionaries to ensure that their financial goals retain precedence.

Time – Patience is Not -- a Virtue

Individualist and Collectivist cultures have different perceptions about the relevance of time. The American system is oriented to the linear monochronic mode where time is conceived as a quantifiable asset. In real terms this implies that the time frame between the development of an idea and its actual implementation is not infinite. If it is perceived as infinite it runs the risk of being identified as economically unworkable. Unfortunately the decision making process in collectivist cultures is not usually characterized by any recognition of expediency based on time. The influence of time is perceived in cyclical polychronic terms — a framework that contends that time is immutable and limitless. This philosophy does not find reflection in the American setting where patience is not a virtue but works as a disincentive to extra effort associated with outreach.

Curriculum Content and Context: *Transmission of Acceptable and Validated Techniques Matters More than Concerns about Cultural Adaptation and Actual Course Context*

Efforts to develop a globally neutral curriculum in different areas of study remain mired in ambiguity and confusion. The post WTO scenario is certainly leading to the incremental evolution of a global economic structure. But this is not reflected in the establishment of a 'global work culture' or 'globally acceptable norms of individual behavior'. The influences that operate on individuals are derived from their values and beliefs — which in turn are influenced by operative societal norms and behavioral patterns. This anomaly extends even to the content and context of course offerings — American courses of study are usually driven by individual instructor perceptions and also are reflective of their values and belief systems. Principles of academic freedom are enshrined in American intellectual thought and changes in content usually are difficult to implement because the outcomes associated with 'borderless course offerings' are situational rather than holistic in nature. This framework provides a higher priority to transmitting the nuts and bolts of validated theories/findings as the focus of individual course offerings instead of recognizing that local imperatives accord a higher priority to actual meaning based upon ideas of cultural context and perceptions. The adherence to a predetermined knowledge construct encompassing achievement of tangible outcomes may be considered an important attribute of success within the American setting. However this yardstick cannot be transposed onto an Indian or a non-Western environmental setting leading to the conflicts that usually emerge thereafter.

Language, Informational Materials and Technology: *The World View Changes Based on Situational Realities*

The American view of distance learning implicitly relies on the online mode for information dissemination though correspondence course offerings continue to be provided for interested students. The culture of language is a key variable, which comes into play whenever educational materials and ideas are disseminated between cultures. Knowledge of the English language is taken for granted. However this does not mean that cultural context and meaning disappear as influences on transmission of ideas and knowledge. The provision of distance education courses does not remain a purely technical issue — instead such courses take on cultural and social contexts especially when examples are not culturally unidimensional and idioms do not transfer easily between cultures. In addition the style of writing within non-Western cultures — as in India — is essentially academic while the American setting promotes a writing framework that retains a personal style thereby endowing it with a less impersonal air than visible in the system of writing seen in India.

Access to the Internet also is not uniform in nature. Available data suggests that there were a total of 230 m. active Internet users at the global level in 2000. The highest number — 98m. were in North America — followed by Europe with 70 m. active users. India accounted for only 270,000 active users in quantitative terms and China had 2.47 million active users. The cultural climate however dictates that Internet sites are not individualized — as in North America — but are shared within multiple groups of people. In quantitative terms this enhances access to the Internet but also reduces the privacy that is an integral feature of Internet access in both North America and Europe. The incorporation of this reality is imperative when planning for 'borderless' course delivery within the American planning scenario and lack of emphasis on this component can make such initiatives unworkable right from the inception stage. The implementation

of this approach involves an adjustment in worldview, which is both normative and conceptual.

The American approach thus is replete with 'cultural discontinuities' whose resolution is imperative if 'borderless' distance learning initiatives have to be realistic and effective. The desire to obtain financial rewards through active promotion of 'borderless' education offerings is legitimate. But this has to be balanced against the need for 'universality' in outreach and coverage – goals which have to be accomplished in the backdrop of the need for a globally competent work force enabling the fruits of productivity to be distributed more equitably than at present.

The Indian Approach: *Social Goal of Accelerated Individual Improvement Through Education Irrespective of Cost Remains a Pivotal Institutional Priority*

The Indian strategy towards distance education can be summarized as follows – multiple goals, lack of linkage between technological process and outcome, reliance on external course materials and non specialist faculty, imploding and reactive academic values and a bureaucratized decision making process. All these are indicative of the cultural patterns, which remain unique to the Indian administrative and academic culture and have been barely influenced by the ideas associated with globalization.. These components will be discussed in the sections, which follow.

Multiple Pedagogical and Institutional Goals

Ramanujam (2001) has discussed a wide range of issues in the context of distance education practices in the developing Asian countries. Goal setting by institutions of distance education is one such issue that needs particular attention.

The goals of distance education within the Indian context are subject to political exigencies — not economic realities. The establishment of IGNOU in 1985 — which had 750,000 enrolled students in 2001 — met a uniformly felt political and social need. A burgeoning population as well as the needs of the globally interconnected knowledge economy required access to higher education. Unfortunately existing facilities available in university and college settings was insufficient for this purpose. The Open University model — with its regional, programme and study centers — was perceived as the appropriate answer.

Lack of Linkage Between Instructional Medium and Outcome

The desire to achieve a multiplicity of competing goals is visible in the mediums utilized for dissemination of course offerings. These include the following:

- Correspondence course materials distributed through mail.
- Online offerings through terminals usually available for student usage — on a shared basis — in the institutional university or college setting. The cost of facility creation and maintenance is borne by the course-offering agency.
- A multitude of offerings follow a variation of the 'chalk and talk' lecture technique

utilizing the television medium for instructional purposes. A television channel is specially earmarked for educational purposes and instructional offerings are beamed through it at predetermined times. Once again the cost of installation and dissemination is borne by the apex agency — which in the Indian scenario would be the University Grants Commission or a wing of the Government responsible for education. Usually no quantitative information about the extent of coverage is available thereby making a linkage between investment and actual return ephemeral and difficult to pinpoint.

- Audio and video tape offerings disseminated for instructional purposes through a plethora of regional, study and programme centers — which in the case of IGNOU numbered 1253 in the year 2001.

This approach is not emblematic of the operative Indian social culture where thrift and cost consciousness, not extravagance, are crucial influences on individual behavior. Astonishingly this value does not find favor in the functional educational culture — where a policy of vertical and horizontal expansion of permanent assets without an accompanying validation of utility, thrift and achievable outcomes is the norm rather than the exception to the rule. This philosophy ultimately spawns a multitude of non-utilitarian assets and adoption of instructional mediums which are devoid of linkage and do not reflect any clarity in either outcomes or goal accomplishment.

Dominance of Outside Course Materials and Non-Specialist Faculty as Instructional Assets and Facilitators

The Indian academic culture within the sphere of distance education is a curious combination of the conventional 'chalk and talk' lecture mode and the dominant 'generalist' oriented administrative work culture. The reliance on outside course materials is in consonance with prevalent academic value systems, which place a premium on the spirit and perception of impartiality by denying supervising instructors the right to prepare relevant course materials. Hence course writing is usually done by outside agents who may possess the academic skill and knowledge but lack the situational specific cultural understanding essential to the effective transmission of knowledge. This is contrary to the American system where course changes are usually done by the concerned supervising instructor who also operates as the core faculty member in the instructional setting.

Imploding and Reactive Academic Culture

The Indian academic culture promotes security without encouraging a commensurate level of originality and creative scholarship. The emphasis on instruction is promoted but the idea of user evaluation by the attending students does not merit favour. The academic culture remains unionized and group oriented with individualized excellence being the exception rather than the norm. This relationship is indicative of the 'high power distance' collectivist culture where the gap between the student and the teacher is large. In turn this motivates the evolution of an academic culture based on reactivism where foresight is equated with reacting to problems rather than creating a framework,

which can either eliminate or alleviate the problem. This academic culture — integrating security, procedural routinization and a non proactive work setting — inspires responses which instead of stability promote ‘implosion’ thereby leaving the academic fraternity grappling with a state of continuous chaos owing to lack of direction and focus in goals.

Bureaucratized Decision Making Apparatus

Indian higher education – whether in the conventional university/college or the Open University setting – remains rule bound and procedurally overloaded like any governmental entity. The flow of funds remains controlled and the inculcation of a semblance of accountability into financial expenditures usually invites stiff resistance since it is considered an unwarranted intrusion. The operative administrative ethos remains bureaucratized — a philosophy symbolizing the dictums of Max Weber in his landmark study of bureaucratic procedures and operative styles. Higher education in today’s global economic climate requires a response mechanism, which is not bureaucratized but instead proceeds on the assumption that proactivism and creativity are essential and compatible with the needs of society in a rapidly changing global environment.

Conclusion

Does A Bridge to Effective Communication and Understanding Exist?

According to UNESCO the quality of higher education is dependent on the achievement of the following goals:

- Staff quality which encapsulates the presence of acceptable social and financial status
- A desire to reduce inequalities relating to gender and income, among others
- Promotion of merit as the guiding principle in effective staff management
- Provision of in-service training opportunities to staff enabling them to fulfill their work goals in a proactive manner
- Availability of incentives and work structures to researchers enabling multi-disciplinary teams to be the norm rather than the exception.

The achievement of these goals requires a clearly defined understanding of cultures across geographical boundaries. In the case of India and the USA such an understanding can evolve if it is accepted in advance that ‘cultural discontinuities’ are symptomatic of situation specific communication styles and are not insurmountable. Patti McGill Peterson — the Vice President of the Institute for International Education — stated in a speech to the United Negro College Fund’s Global Partnership Conference in Washington DC that the ‘Information Age should teach us that knowledge is very fluid and can grow and develop with the input of many people in many different parts of the world’ (April 9, 2001). She went on to contend that the ‘key phrases for the information Age need to be cooperation, collaboration and respectful partnerships. In so doing you seek

the best of one another and in that process create a basis for globalization where the flow of knowledge and information moves from a one way street to a dynamic superhighway where the traffic moves in all directions.’ Thus changes are required and workable but need mutual cultural empathy and understanding to make the end product useful for all the users and participating entities.

Swami Vivekananda once commented on the attitudinal differences between Indians and Americans when he visited the United States to attend the World Conference of Religions in 1893. He said progress would be nurtured if ‘the Americans thought more and acted less while the Indians acted more and thought less’. Thus a bridge enabling better communication and understanding — irrespective of cultural differences — can be built between the American and Indian methods of distance learning if a genuine desire to do so exists and attitudes remain flexible. Such a tie-up will be beneficial for implementing agencies in either setting if a coordinated joint offering mode is adopted. This will enable asset supplementing and resource creation for both agencies to be the norm instead of the resource fragmentation and conflict, which would occur in case a partnership approach is not utilized and implemented. After all Immanuel Kant’s statement that ‘Give me matter and I will construct a world out of it’ can be adapted to the distance education setting by emphasizing its evolutionary qualities of change without sacrificing the creativity and ingenuity needed for joint course development and delivery.

Thomas Paine, while underscoring the importance of individual effort as an attribute of progress, once commented ‘We have it in our power to begin the world over again’. Distance learning has revolutionized the practice of education delivery on a global basis and it is time that American and Indian educators recognized that the cultural dimensions of open learning are not unbridgeable enabling the benefits to be available in an equitable manner to users and providers in both geographic settings. It is only then that the Storti model of cross-cultural communication will become empirically valid. This will enable the progressive incremental movement beyond the level of ‘conscious incompetence’ — to that of ‘conscious competence’ and — ‘unconscious competence’ — to become a reality for educators and users in both Indian and American cultural settings.

References

- Allen, B. and B. Boykin, (1992) African American Children and the Educational Process: Alleviating Cultural Discontinuity through Prescriptive Pedagogy ‘*School Psychology Review*’ Volume 21–24.
- Anderson, Terry, (2001) The Hidden Curriculum in Distance Education ‘*Change*’ New Rochelle Canada November/December.
- Bates, Tony (2001) International Distance Education: Cultural and Ethical Issues ‘*Distance Education*’ Melbourne.
- Bodycott, Peter and Allan Walker (2000) Teaching Abroad: Lessons Learned about Intercultural Understanding for Teachers in Higher Education ‘*Teaching in Higher Education*’ Abingdon January.
- Carnevale, Dan (2001) As Distance Education Evolves Choices Reflect Institutional Cultures ‘*The Chronicle of Higher Education*’ Washington DC 04 May.

- Erickson, F. and G. Machatt, (1977) 'The Social Organization of Participation Structures in two Classrooms of Indian Students' Canadian Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa, Canada .
- Feyten, Carine M. and Joyce W. Nutta, (1999) *Virtual Instruction: Issues and Insights from an International Perspective* Libraries Unlimited New York.
- Grant, Nigel (2000) *Tasks for Comparative Education in the New Millenium Comparative Education* Oxford August.
- Hoggart, Richard (1999) Culture and the State 'Society' New Brunswick, Canada November/December.
- Imber, Jonathan B. (2001) *Doubting Culture Wars* 'Society' New Brunswick Canada September - October.
- Martin, Randy (2000) *Universities and Globalization: Critical Perspectives Contemporary Sociology* Washington DC March.
- Matthews, Diane (1999) The Origins of Distance Education and Its Use in the United States 'T.H.E. Journal' September 1999
- Nisbett, R.E., K. Peng I. Choi A. (2001) Norenzayan Culture and Systems of Thought: Holistic vs. analytic cognition 'Psychological Review' Volume 108-21.
- Ramanujam, P.R. (2001) *Distance Open Learning in the Developing Asian Countries* Fernuniverstat Germany /IGNOU , New Delhi, India.
- Rieff, Philip (1990) *The Feeling Intellect: Selected Writings of Philip Rieff* University of Chicago Press Chicago IL.
- Storti, Craig (1999) *Figuring Foreigners Out: A Practical Guide* Intercultural Press Yarmouth, ME.
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Document (1999) 'World Declaration in Higher Education for the Twenty First Century – Vision and Action'.
- Van der Veer, R. and J. Valsiner (1994) (eds) *The Vygotsky Reader* Blackwell Publishers, Cambridge, MA.
- Wimsatt, Leslie Adams (2001) *University Teaching: International Perspectives* 'The Journal of Higher Education' Columbus OH July/August.

[**Vijay Kapur** is a Professor of Political and Intercultural Communication, *Correspondence:* Division of Humanities and Social Science, 2BE4128, Seattle Centre Community College, 1701, Broadway, Seattle WA98122, USA. Phone (206) 587-5431. Email: vkkapur@sccdite.edu]