**Educational Technology: Mapping the Uncharted**

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IDE 772: Instructional Technologies for International Settings

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June 18, 2021

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## Introduction

The world of educational technology development and implementation expands and progresses at a rapid pace as the global educational environment seeks to enhance the levels of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of human beings.  While the perspectives of nations may differ, regarding the emphasis placed on educational technologies, progress of people remains to be a universally accepted commonality amongst all.  Aspects, such as educational focus, subject importance, and differentiations regarding the prioritization of specific learning groups must be considered as they greatly influence national educational technology initiatives.  Social, cultural, religious, and individual considerations also present unique and diverse challenges, which must be explored to ensure the success of any educational technology campaign.  Through this essay, this writer will seek to explore educational technologies within the North American nation of Canada.

## Context

The nation of Canada is comprised of ten provinces and three territories spanning nearly ten million square kilometers making Canada the world's second largest country behind only Russia.  In contrast, Canada is sparsely populated, ranking 40th in total population amongst the recognized countries of our world.  Canada's closest ally, the United States of America, is also the only nation of which it shares an international border (Custred, 2008).  This relationship has fostered many similarities between the two nations with the emphasis placed on educational technology being but one.

Canada does not possess a national education program and instead relies upon provincial and territorial statutes and legislation to govern separate and distinct educational programs.  However, Canadian territories and provinces maintain a distinct level of uniformity amongst educational systems, resulting in equitable educational goals, practices, and results amongst all Canadian people (Scholey, 2015).  Lastly, the Canadian educational technology environment is robust and progressive, seeking to expand the use of educational technologies not only across Canada, but also throughout the global educational environment.  Canada's educational technology industry maintains an annual value in excess of one billion dollars, rivals that of nearly all other developed countries, and is on the leading edge regarding global educational technology development (Hache, 2021).

## Key Factors

Many factors must be considered when planning and implementing educational technology initiatives in new and unfamiliar settings.  The diversity of the nations that span our planet regarding society, culture, religion, and economy is extensive, broad, and ranging.  This diversity becomes of critical consideration when one begins to design, develop, and implement any program in a specified area of human population, especially educational programs.  The following factors have been identified by this writer through focused research pertaining to the nation of Canada.  Further, this writer has divided the identified factors into national and cultural categories to differentiate these factors and the environments that influence them.

### National

National, or federal government, factors pertain directly to the policies, legislature, and governing documents of the identified nation.  Canada is a democratic nation that prides itself upon its liberal focus and emphasis on equality, social justice, and a humanistic approach to government.  Moreover, Canadian policies directed at maintaining a just and fair society are protected by the Canadian constitution (Dyck, 2011).

One key national factor, identified by this writer, is linguistic consideration as Canada recognizes both the English and French languages as national languages.  This factor must be carefully considered due to the criticality of translation of educational technology products (Chen, 2017).  Due to the bilingual nature of Canada, it is imperative that educational technologies are designed to reach and influence the majority of the nation's population not only in word, but in meaning as well.  Meaningful instruction should always be designed from a learner-centric perspective and the incorporation of both Canadian national languages is imperative to the success of any project focused on Canada.

**Societal**

From a societal perspective, Canadian citizens foster and encourage an environment focused on multiculturalism (Sikka, 2014).  With the historical influences of British, French, and indigenous peoples, Canada has grown into a society that embraces acceptance, tolerance, and inclusion (Sikka, 2014).  Due to the collective acceptance of the majority of Canadian citizens, educational technologies designed and implemented within Canada must be done so with modification and flexibility as a primary consideration.

To achieve success, educational technologies must be able to be rapidly adapted to account for previously unrecognized societal factors.  Ultimately, educational technologies in Canada, and across the world, must be reflective of the society they intend to serve.  Through purposeful design and development, instructional designers can identify societal differences and changes, and adjust technologies to best serve the target audiences.

**Cultural**

Culturally, Canadian selective immigration policies have given way to a true melting pot of cultural influence.  As previously mentioned, the historic roots of Canadian culture reach to British and French influence and run parallel to a deeply respected native culture regarding Canada's indigenous populations (Gibson & Oberg, 2008).  The nation of Canada recognizes approximately 600 indigenous, or First Nation, populations composed of over 1.5 million people (StatCan, 2006).

Gaining a true and clear understanding of the cultural differences within the country of concern must remain a top priority of an instructional designer.  The countless cultures that compose Canada, coupled with the Canadian value of broad inclusion, present a true challenge regarding the successful implementation of educational technology within Canada.  One must work diligently to account for the varying, and often distinct, differences of target population cultural aspects such as ethics, values, morals, priorities, and principles to design effective instructional technologies.

**Summary**

In summary, this writer's exploration of the Canadian educational technology industry has revealed several key factors to consider regarding educational technology implementation within Canada, but also throughout the world.  The previously identified factors are applicable within any national context and provide a solid foundation from which impactful education can be grow.  Ultimately, education is a human-centric process and must be designed with not only the individual, but the individual's nation, society, and culture, in mind.

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