Facilitating Learning through Web 2.0 Collaboration - Cases Across the Culture

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Abstract: While majority of college students are familiar to various Web 2.0 tools and are actively using the tools in their personal life, educators have been considering ways to use these tools to enhance teaching and learning. Facilitating active collaboration among learners on a familiar platform and its impact is one of the key factors that educators closely investigate. In this presentation, cases from two very distinctive geographic and social environments, the U.S. and Malaysian students with different learning culture are presented. The Malaysian students, as a case point, grow up in more collectivist learning approach, while the American students are exposed to individualistic learning. Both cases report positive student responses on improving their learning through the online tools such as class wiki, blog, user-created video clips, and online discussions. The authors found that students at both institutions find the online tools useful regardless of their location or the subject matter. As delivery of education is transforming from a traditional teacher-centered approach towards student-centered individualistic learning, further exploration of cultural differences in attitudes towards technology in education is crucial. This study seeks to investigate individual differences in approaches towards usage of Web 2.0 tools between nationality and cultural differences.