

# Four Practical Techniques to Increase Cultural Awareness in Online Higher Education Programs

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## Abstract

In the increasingly diverse landscape of online higher education, the need for cultural awareness among educators is more crucial than ever. This study explores four practical techniques to enhance cultural awareness in online higher education programs, emphasizing the importance of teacher development, cultural experiences, foreign language learning, and cultural arts programs. Teachers often judge their students from their own cultural perspectives, creating barriers to learning. By developing cultural awareness, educators can tailor their teaching to meet the specific needs of their students. Despite recognizing the importance of cultural understanding, many teachers struggle to implement it effectively due to limited knowledge. This research highlights the transformative power of the arts in promoting cultural understanding. Visual and performing arts programs can influence social action, change perspectives on culture, and foster enjoyment of learning about diverse viewpoints. The arts, embedded in all cultures, often shape human experiences and raise questions about power and justice, contributing to a global impact on justice and peace. Furthermore, teacher development programs focusing on cultural sensitivity and competency are essential. These programs immerse educators in diverse cultural contexts, fostering a deeper understanding of differences and vulnerabilities. Foreign language learning also plays a crucial role, opening new communication channels and enhancing tolerance for ambiguity. It serves as a gateway to profound cultural understanding. Lastly, immersive cultural experiences, such as study abroad programs, extended travel, and work opportunities in different cultural settings, significantly contribute to cultural awareness. These experiences provide educators with firsthand exposure to diverse cultures, enriching their teaching practices and promoting equitable learning environments. This presentation aims to demonstrate the necessity of cultural awareness for educators in online learning platforms and provide actionable strategies to cultivate it, ultimately fostering more inclusive and effective educational environments.

**Keywords:** Cultural Awareness, Online Higher Education, Teacher Development, Cultural Experiences, Foreign Language Learning, Cultural Arts Programs