

## **Integrated Approach to Building Intercultural Competence**

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### **Abstract**

With the increase of globalization, it is now imperative that universities begin to internationalize academic courses and programs (Reimers, 2009). It is important to assess how intercultural issues are taught and embed the practical skills needed to build global competencies (Willard, 2010). The primary contribution of this article is to define intercultural competence and provide the foundation for measuring and assessing this construct. It aims at offering substantial basis for pedagogical techniques need to be considered when developing domestic and international/study abroad courses. This paper overviews the foundational components that should be considered to build a holistic framework on intercultural competence and provides suggestions for future research.

*Keywords:* intercultural competence, cross-cultural course development, internationalization

## **Integrated Approach to Building Intercultural Competence**

### **Introduction**

In today's ever changing global environment, individuals are being challenged to work in complex multicultural arenas. They are thrown into new business opportunities and expected to be able to communicate, manage and negotiate effectively in global settings. Studies show that there will be a surge in the international assignments over the next five years with more expatriates being exposed to cross-cultural situations (Brookfield, 2013). It is essential for individuals to possess intercultural competence to better meet future global business demands. The need for individuals to possess intercultural competence is becoming essential to meet the demands of the business world (Yu, 2012). Students first need to develop skills to identify their own culture prior to being acceptable of other international cultures. Thus intercultural competence development will continue to play an important role in student learning. One the primary goals of internationalization is to have institutions of higher education working to train students to function in our integrated world, becoming better global citizens (Deardoff, 2011). To better understand how universities are addressing these intercultural global challenges this review looks at how universities are preparing students, how faculty members are evaluating students, and how academic programs are designing courses to include intercultural competence.

This article examines intercultural competence by presenting pertinent definitions and models that are available to educators, administrators and professionals. In addition this review presents various instruments that can be used to measure the construct of intercultural competence along with a look at prioritizing learning outcomes to better increase student learning. Lastly, recommendations for faculty members, universities, and organizations, as well as future implications and research are discussed.

### **Defining Intercultural Competence**

Intercultural competence is a multifaceted construct that reaches across different disciplines (anthropology, education, management, psychology, and sociology). Even with its frequent use in the literature, there remains much debate on what makes up the construct, intercultural competence. Fantini (2005) stated that intercultural competence incorporated a variety of traits, domains, dimensions, and levels of attainment. Intercultural competence has also been identified in the literature to include the knowledge, motivation, and skills that lead to appropriate interactions among individuals of differing cultures (Wiseman, 2003). To further the confusion in identifying intercultural competence, researchers have used various terms such as: intercultural readiness (Dodd, 2007), cultural intelligence (Early & Mosakowski, 2004), global competencies (Willard, 2009), cross-cultural adaptability (Kelley and Meyers, 1998), intercultural sensitivity (Byram, 2003), and intercultural communication (Yu, 2010). Deardoff (2009) defined intercultural competence as "a cultural learning process in which one builds authentic relationships by observing, listening, and asking those who are from different backgrounds to teach, to share, to enter into dialogue together about relevant needs and issues" (p.xiii). Alternatively Fantini (2005) defined intercultural competence as "the complex set of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (p. 1).

Chen and Starosta (1996) presented three perspectives in which individuals' embody when developing intercultural competence: affective (intercultural sensitivity), cognitive (intercultural awareness), and behavioral (intercultural adroitness). One thing

that remains clear between the differing interpretations of intercultural competence is that developing knowledge, skills, and abilities from individuals with differing cultures requires the complex nature of interacting, engaging, and learning processes.

### Intercultural Competence Models

Several researchers have developed models for intercultural competence over the last 25 years. These include compositional models (Howard, Hamilton, Richardson, & Shuford, 1998; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Deardoff, 2006; Hunter, White & Godbey, 2006); co-relational models (Fantini, 1995; Kupka, 2008); developmental models (Bennett, 1993; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Byram, 1997; Schaetti, Ramsey & Watanabe, 2009); adaptational models (Kim, 1988; Gallois, Franklyn-Stokes, Giles and Coupland, 1988; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989) and causal path models (Arasaratnam, 2008; Griffith & Harvey, 2000; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Hammer, Wiseman, Rasmussen, & Brusckhe, 1998; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989). This review will focus on the developmental model for intercultural competence because it is the primary objective of human resource (HR) professionals and the most direct way of increasing learning and performance. Information pertaining to the other models can be found in Spitzberg and Changnon (2009).

Bennett developed a framework entitled Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) which suggests that “individuals and groups confront cultural differences in predictable ways as they develop or learn to become more competent intercultural communicators” as cited by Bibby (2008, p. 6). Bennett believes that as an individual’s experience of cultural differences becomes more diverse and complex that their competence increases. The DMIS points out seven developmental orientations including three *ethnocentric dimensions* (ethnocentrism/denial, defensiveness, and minimization of perceived differences) and three *ethnorelative dimensions* (acceptance, adaptation and adoption/integration). According to Bennett (1993), the ethnocentric stages and ethnorelative stages characterize the learner’s growing recognition of and adjustment to intercultural differences. The core of ethnocentrism is “the assumption that one’s own world view is central to all reality” whereas with ethnorelativism “cultures can only be understood relative to one another and that a particular behavior can only be understood within a cultural context”(Bennett, 1993, p. 35). Bennett (1986) believed that the individual will develop on a continuum and that cultural intelligence and competency develops dynamically as seen in Figure 1.

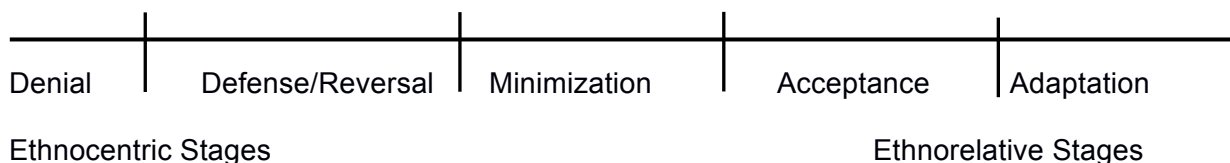


Figure 1. Developmental Intercultural Competence Model (Bennett, 1986).

One additional developmental model, provided by King and Baxter Magolda (2005), is the intercultural maturity model. This model identifies different levels of awareness and sensitivity providing the ability to adapt to distinctions in cultures. The individual begins at the initial stage, which designates limited knowledge of culture and naïve cultural practices. This developmental level identifies the individual as lacking awareness of oneself and others. The intermediate level sees the individual evolving in awareness and acceptance of varying perspectives. The individual begins to interact

with others of divergent points of view and recognizes the value of other cultures. The final development to be reached is the mature stage. The individual is able to consciously shift perspectives and uses multiple lenses to understand various points of view. She/he has developed a new identity and is willing and able to work with others from diverse perspectives. King and Baxter Magolda (2005) believe that the low levels of awareness and sensitivity represent less competent modes of intercultural interaction while higher levels of awareness and sensitivity represent more competent modes of intercultural interaction (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). As individuals progress through the maturity model they tend to interact more with people from other cultures. Figure 2 provides King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) model identifying the three levels of maturity for intercultural competence.



Figure 2. Intercultural Maturity Model (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p.22).

Bryam (1997) presented a multidimensional model of intercultural competence composed of five factors: attitude, knowledge, skills of interpreting/relating, skills of discovery/interaction, and critical cultural awareness. Byram, Kuhlmann, Muller-Jacquier,

and Budin (2004) developed the Intercultural Competence Assessment (INCA) tool for measuring differing levels of intercultural competence. This assessment tool examines two sets of dimensions (assessor and examiner's point of view). The assessor looks at tolerance for ambiguity, behavioral flexibility, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for otherness, and empathy; where as the examiner's point of view studies openness, knowledge and adaptability. The combination of both the assessor and examiner's analysis enables individuals to see both their strengths and weaknesses when working with those of other cultures. It allows the individual then to develop a plan for continuous improvement and development.

Schaetti, Ramsey, and Watanabe (2009) described developing intercultural competence in terms of three spheres nested within one another: culture specific, culture general, and intercultural practice. The first sphere focuses on culture-specific competence, which provides generalizable information about particular cultural groups. This method of developing competence "emphasizes learning about specific cultural patterns exemplified by a chosen group and analyzing the impact of those cultural patterns when members of that group are involved in intergroup relations" (p. 128). This approach alone cannot build intercultural competence it must be built over time and experience. The second sphere entitled culture-general examines general cultural contrasts. It allows individuals to assess the extent of difference amongst those they are working with. The final sphere is the sphere of practice in which it recognizes that to be fully competent we must take the theories and knowledge and transform it into practice. Schaetti et al. (2009) described it as "a whole-person approach to building intercultural competence, for culture is as much emotional and physical as it is an intellectual one" (p. 128). Schaetti et al.'s (2009) model addresses intercultural competence as being developed from the inside out compared to Byram, which is equally influenced by both internal and external factors.

Each of the aforementioned development models identifies different stages in which the individual obtains intercultural competence. However, these models differ on how the individual progresses and learns through this transition. These models identify this transition as being a continual process, building upon one's experience and the awareness of oneself and others. These models help to explain the types of skills and abilities in which individuals could benefit from when functioning in culturally diverse settings. Identifying these skills and abilities lead to the next phase in which intercultural competence is measured.

### **Measuring Intercultural Competence**

Intercultural competence models/frameworks have assisted in illustrating different phases in which cultural adaptation occurs from the interactions between ones' declarative and procedural knowledge (Bibby, 2008). Table 1 describes the models utilized by researchers to study cultural adaptation and intercultural competence development at various stages in the process.

One individual evaluation includes Fantini's (2005) *Assessment of Intercultural Competence (AIC)*. Fantini's AIC instrument was composed of four separate dimensions: knowledge, skills, attitude and awareness. One benefit is that it is quite thorough in its examination of intercultural competence however the drawback of this instrument is that it tends to be long and tedious to administer. The AIC instrument was primarily used in a government-funded project and could benefit from further analysis in differing environments. Another instrument similar in nature is Kelley and Meyers (1987) *Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI)* that measures one's ability to adapt to different cultures using four dimensions: emotional resilience, flexibility/openness,

perceptual acuity and personal autonomy. Research studies have identified misleading results using factor analysis in which Davis and Finney (2006) recommended further research to be conducted to further clarify the scales. This instrument is beneficial due to the cost and the ease of administering. Kelley and Meyers' instrument provides a brief summary in which individuals are able to gauge where they are in terms of intercultural competence. Finally, there is Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven's (2000) *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)*. The MPQ was developed as a multidimensional instrument aimed at measuring the multicultural effectiveness of executives. The self-reported Multicultural Personality Questionnaire is composed of five scales (cultural empathy, open-mindedness, emotional stability, social initiative, flexibility). Recently Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponteretto and Fietzer (2013) tested a shorter version of the MPQ reporting good fit indexes across the five condensed scales. The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire has been used as an instrument for the selection of expatriates and as a diagnostic tool for assessing further training needs. One disadvantage to this instrument is the transferability in multiple contexts.

Table 1. *Intercultural Competence Assessments*

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Assessment of Intercultural Competence (AIC)  | Fantini (2000, 2005)  | Knowledge, Attitude, Skills and Awareness  |
| Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI)  | Kelley & Meyers (1995)  | Emotional resistance, flexibility/openness, perceptual acuity, personal autonomy   |
| Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI)           | Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill (2007)  | Cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal   |
| Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)     | Hammer & Bennett (1998)   | Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, Integration   |
| Intercultural Sensitivity Index (ISI)         | Olson & Kroeger (2001)  | denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation integration, substantive knowledge, perceptual understanding and intercultural communication |
| Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI)    | Bhawuk & Brislin (1992)   | Expatriate Living, Flexibility, open-mindedness  |
| Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) | Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000)<br>Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponteretto & Fietzer (2013) | Cultural empathy, open-mindedness, emotional stability, social initiative, and flexibility   |

Two instruments that examined growth and development include Braskamp, Braskamp, and Merrill's (2007) *Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI)* and Hammer and Bennett's (1998) *Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)*. The GPI measures student growth in global learning and development settings. Influenced from King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) intercultural maturity model and from Kegan's (1994) lifespan developmental model, Braskamp et al.'s (2007) inventory views the college student as being on a journey, acquiring experiences, new knowledge, and a better understanding of themselves. Braskamp et al.'s (2007) inventory is composed of three distinct learning dimensions: cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal. One advantage of this instrument is that its frequency of use has been increasing due to its reasonable price point for universities. In addition to price, this instrument provides easy interpretation. One drawback is that it is not easily transferrable to a global workforce setting. The *Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)* was influenced from Bennett's (1986) DMIS framework. Many studies have utilized this instrument to measure intercultural competence (Altshuler, Sussman, & Kachur, 2003; Engle & Engle, 2004; Straffon, 2003). Hammer's (2003) intercultural development inventory (IDI) has proven to be valid and has been the instrument used most frequently in the literature. The reputation of the IDI in the field is well respected therefore many intercultural trainers and professionals utilize it for practice. One disadvantages of this instrument is that it requires a trained facilitator, making the overall cost of the tool higher compared to other instruments.

There are two instruments that focus on intercultural sensitivity, a primary component of intercultural competence. These include Olson and Kroeger's (2001) *Intercultural Sensitivity Index (ISI)* and Bhawuk and Brislin's (1992) *Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICIS)*. The ISI measures global intercultural competency, influenced from Bennett's (1986) DMIS framework. Olson and Kroeger (2001) intercultural sensitivity index measures six (denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, integration) of the stages from Bennett's DMIS instrument. In addition to these six stages the intercultural sensitivity index adds three dimensions of global competency (substantive knowledge, perceptual understanding, intercultural communication). Although potential benefits could be gained from this extension to the DMIS framework, this instrument needs further development to provide validity for the scales. Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) developed the *Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICIS)* to measure an individual's ability to modify behavior in culturally appropriate ways while moving between cultures. As a self-report instrument, Bhawuk and Brislin's instrument was composed of two parts. The first section asks participants to imagine living in the US and Japan and respond to 16 questions while the second section has participants respond to 14 questions based on flexibility and open-mindedness. This assessment has been shown to be beneficial for business and academic programs, assisting students to gauge their baseline for intercultural sensitivity but it lacks the research to validate the findings.

Each of the aforementioned instruments provides effective measures to gauge an individual's intercultural competence. Table 2 provides the psychometric properties for each of these assessments along with the recommended audience for each. One of the major challenges with measuring intercultural competence is that it is multidimensional, involving assessing one's knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness of intercultural competence making it difficult to capture (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012). It is important to assess the program objectives and intent for research before selecting which instrument would be of most value.

Table 2. *Instrument's Psychometric Properties and Intended Audience*

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Assessment of Intercultural Competence (AIC)  | 211 items—7 dimensions<br>Reliability: 0.70<br>Factor analysis: 0.60 or higher                 | Short term Study Abroad (Education)<br>Short-term Assignments (Business)                   |
| Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI)  | 50 items—4 dimensions<br>Reliability: range .54 to .84<br>Factor Analysis: 0.06 to 0.78        | Pre-Post Assignments/Study Abroad<br>(Education, Business, Humanitarian)                   |
| Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI)           | 72 items—3 dimensions<br>Reliability: range .63 to .75   | Pre-Post Study Abroad (Education)  |
| Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)     | 60 items—6 dimensions<br>Reliability: range 0.80 to 0.91<br>Factor Analysis:<br>0.69 or higher | Pre-Post Assignments/Study Abroad<br>(Education, Business)                                 |
| Intercultural Sensitivity Index               | 48 items—9 dimensions<br>Reliability: not reported   | Short-term Study Abroad (Education)  |
| Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI)    | 46 items—4 variables<br>Reliability:<br>range 0.63-0.88  | Pre-Assignment/Study Abroad<br>(Education, Business)<br>Primarily been used with MBA Grads |
| Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) | 91 items and 40 items—5 scales<br>Reliability: range 0.7 to 0.89                               | Pre-Assignment/Study Abroad<br>(Education, Business)                                       |

### **Designing Academic Courses to Increase Intercultural Competence**

Organizations are now expecting academic programs to expose students to the complex global arena (Archer & Davison, 2008). In response to this it is important for faculty and administrators to be thoughtful as to how they design and deliver programs



to reach both maximum learning as well as intercultural competence. By utilizing the students' diverse backgrounds within a course and allowing those students to have cultural immersion experiences, institutions can change the students' entire outlook on the world. It is important for academic programs to be intentional about the content of the courses and the assessment of the learning outcomes in both domestic and international courses. Deardoff (2011) discussed the need for institutions to infuse intercultural competence and global learning into their curriculum. It is important to set measurable learning outcomes and to find multiple ways throughout a course to bring about a diverse perspective on issues providing various cultural viewpoints (Deardoff, 2011). With this in mind some important concepts are presented below that can be used when designing for intercultural opportunities in courses, providing students with opportunities to increase their personal intercultural competence.

### **Self-Awareness**

One key factor outlined by many researchers looking at intercultural competency is the need to know oneself before you can truly know others. Bennett (2009) described this as cultural self-awareness, a precursor of intercultural learning. Bennett (1993) stated: "if students do not have a mental baseline for their own culture(s), they will find it difficult to recognize and manage cultural differences" (p. S5). Bennett recommended that students were to acquire 'etic', or culture-general categories, prior to recognizing and dealing with a wide range of cultural differences. Many programs present an etic prior to students departing to study abroad or at the beginning of a semester. Utilizing class time so that students can take various inventories, similar to the ones previously described, could benefit students allowing them the opportunity to gauge their level of intercultural competency. In addition, results from these inventories provide awareness of skills and behaviors that students need in order to function in multicultural situations domestically as well as in cross-cultural circumstances abroad. This self-awareness allows students the tools to identify any assumptions, prejudices, or stereotypes that they hold toward others. Students are also afforded the benefit of new methods in which they are able to communicate their thoughts and feelings from working in diverse teams or from engaging in cultural immersive environments.

### **Reflection**

One area that is often overlooked or we do not take the time for is reflection. Research has shown that reflection can refine and deepen the aspects of learning (Liuolienė & Metiūnienė, 2009). Deardoff (2006) states that reflection is essential in developing learners' intercultural competence. The major theoretical roots of reflection can be found in John Dewey, David Kolb, and Donald Schön. Dewey (1944) stated, "We do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience" (p. 118). Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle, built upon Dewey, Piaget, and Lewin, bases the belief that deep learning (learning for real comprehension) comes from a sequence of experience, reflection, abstraction, and active testing. Reflection should be thought of as a critical process of promoting and assessing learning (Deardoff, 2011). One of the best ways to encourage students to reflect is through personal reflective journals. Journals can be used for a number of reasons including:

- To enhance professional practice or the professional self in practice;
- To explore the self, personal constructs of meaning and one's view of the world.
- To enhance the personal valuing of the self towards self-empowerment as a means of slowing down learning, taking more thorough account of a situation(s);
- To enhance creativity by making better use of intuitive understanding;

- To provide an alternative 'voice' for those not good at expressing themselves;
- To foster reflective and creative interaction in a group (Liuolienė & Metiūnienė, 2009, p.34).

Personal reflective journals allow free expression through the art of writing. It can be both therapeutic and transformative. It revolutionizes student's thinking from concrete thoughts to comprehension of emotions and feelings based upon cultural experiences. Moon (1999) pointed out that a journal can encourage independent learning by allowing students to monitor the learning process at their own pace, providing a focus point in which the students can gather thoughts in order to see the whole system. Journaling provides an invaluable tool for both intercultural learning and personal awareness. It can be done in a number of ways including personal diaries, blogging and reflection papers. Research has identified various benefits from the reflection process, to include long-term memory attainment through story telling (Rice and Pollack, 2000). By encouraging students to convert their personal reflection journals into reflective papers students are better able to solidify concepts in addition to describe their cross-cultural experiences. Significant events through critical incidents could be utilized to immerse both faculty and student in role-playing, group exercises and challenging approaches to the complex global arena. "Critical incidents are used as triggers of reflection and learning, they are considered as salient events able to arise emotions that leave an impression on the individual and his/her history because of the unique meaning they hold" (Onorati & Bednarz, 2010, p. 60). Critical incidents are best employed once a student has immersed himself or herself within a culture to have previous experiences to work from. Freedman, Adam and Smart (1994) argued that critical incidents and case studies do not reflect the complexity of real-world contexts and must be used with caution.

### **Assessment**

Due to the complexity of intercultural competence, a multi-method assessment plan is preferred. Deardoff (2011) pointed out that how you define intercultural competence determines the choice of measurement used. Deardoff recommended utilizing a combination of both direct (learning contracts, portfolios, interviews) and indirect (surveys, instruments) methods to assess intercultural competence. Pruegger and Rogers (1994) compared direct and indirect assessments and found that the indirect tools did not reveal a change in intercultural competence but the direct approach showed significant difference. They stated that "sensitive and complicated issues that may contain inconsistencies, contradictions or ambiguities are not amenable to paper-and-pencil analysis" (p.382). Researchers also believe in the developmental perspective when assessing intercultural competence favoring assessing the students' growth over a period of time rather than using a single measure (Lei and Schnell, 2012). This allows for a better understanding of the students' evolution of learning as well as the students' overall capabilities. Yu (2012) covered a wide variety of methods used to assess intercultural competency. Yu described various course deliverables in depth (paper and presentation assessment, critical incident/case study assessment, portfolio assessment, personality tests, sensitivity instruments, awareness tests, cultural profilers, interviews, and observations) determining the validity/reliability for each measure. Yu concluded that portfolios and reflection papers provided the most value for the student and the best reliability of learning captured for faculty. Barrett (2007) stated that "portfolios provide a

powerful environment in which students can collect and organize the artifacts that result from engaging in these challenging, real-life tasks, and write the reflections through which students draw meaning” (p.4). The literature supports that using a blended approach to assessing intercultural competence works best.

### **Application**

One of the most important questions that comes to mind for every student is “how will I use this knowledge?” It is vital as educators to bring the theory to life so it can be easily placed into practice. Irving (2010) points out that “educating for intercultural competence must take a holistic and multi-dimensional approach that focuses both on the intrapersonal cognitive and affective levels as well as the relational and behavioral levels of interpersonal experience” (p. 7). He further explains that the line between the intra- and inter-personal perspectives is often not as clear in practice; ultimately, a holistic approach encourages students to gain both personal reflection and relational engagement. This allows students to fully embed the lessons learned from the intercultural experience into their everyday lives. Deardoff (2011) pointed out the importance of giving students adequate preparation before studying abroad, providing better identification of their intercultural experiences, allowing students to articulate what they have learned. Many students declare that the experience has “changed my life” but failure to give them the tools to comprehend what they went through and how to use it can be a detriment to the learning process. Deardoff (2011) said that it is important to provide the intercultural competence frameworks, vocabulary and concepts so they can apply them to their lives. Educators must provide pre-departure, on-site and re-engagement activities for students to fully comprehend the learning that has occurred and the application of that knowledge. There are several ways in which to assist the students in comprehending the application before, during and after the learning has occurred through critical incidents, case studies and role-plays.

### **Discussion and Future Research**

Given the complexity of intercultural competence, there is much to discover about the development and the techniques/tools needed to foster the intercultural learning. The primary contribution of this article was to define intercultural competence and provide the foundation for measuring and assessing this construct. It was also aimed at providing substantial basis for pedagogical techniques needed to be considered when developing both domestic and international/study abroad courses. By designing and developing curriculum and programs with a holistic framework including intercultural competence, we are preparing students to take on the new challenges of tomorrow.

Society as a whole is coming to value the capacity of individuals to think and act beyond their own cultural borders. As educators it is vital that we begin to develop courses that enrich student understanding of their own culture while building a strong cultural awareness for others. Through integration of activities, exercises and study abroad programs we can begin to tap into a new dynamic of knowledge and understanding for students. Developing intercultural competence is extremely complicated. First a foundational definition must be developed that everyone can work from. Deardoff (2011) began this step with her Delphi study to further clarify the definition and assessment of the construct. It is important to understand that there are multiple layers (Schaetti et al., 2009) to the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully manage and work in an intercultural environment. Barrett (2011) said that many models of intercultural competence only look at the attitudes, skills and

knowledge separately failing to examine the interconnectedness and developmental interdependencies that make up the entire construct. Much more research needs to be conducted on the causal relationships and developmental processes amongst these various components of intercultural competence. There is a need to look at the holistic process utilized to foster intercultural learning. Trimble, Pedersen and Rodela (2009) stated that becoming interculturally competent could occur in a variety of ways (readings, conferences, workshops and courses) but in order for the full acquisition of competency and knowledge one must immerse them in the culture. Trimble et al. (2009) continued to state that intercultural competence is a “lifelong endeavor” (p. 501). Therefore more longitudinal research needs to be done once students have left academic institutions and take on various careers. Are the students gaining the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to operate in the global arena? Are they being able to translate the international multicultural experience into the workforce?

Assessment should play a role in helping us understand and improve our students’ intercultural competence. We should be diligent in selection of the proper instrument and measures. There is great variability in the tools available and the breadth and depth of research conducted with each assessment. Consideration of the overall objectives should be at the forefront of selection. We should also be aware of what is to be learned by the utilization of such instruments. It is important to consider how you will assess learning that has occurred, whether in the classroom or in the field. Yu (2012) provided an invaluable table outlining the strengths and weaknesses of student deliverables. More research needs to be conducted on the learning outcomes of these different deliverables to find out what they are truly measuring. Future research should study the blended approach to assessment to understand what components need to be a part of evaluating intercultural competence. More research needs to be conducted on the role of instructor and administrators influence on the intercultural competence process. How do the instructor’s worldview impact the development of intercultural competence?

Reflective practice should be at the vanguard for learning intercultural competence. “Reflection works as an ideal ring joining theory to practice, enhancing the relevance of interlaces between biographies, workplace settings and training opportunities in building up competences” (Onorati & Bednarz, 2010, p. 60). Faculty and administrators should encourage reflection to not only enhance the knowledge and practice but also to overcome biases and prejudices that could exist. Guilherme (2007) stated that critical cultural awareness emerges from self-reflection during the time of interaction. He believes that this allows the individual to transcend cultural biases and ethnocentrism. As many institutions are encouraging the development of global citizens the use of reflective practice should be at the forefront, to not only connect theory to practice, but to develop well-rounded intercultural competent people.

With the increase of globalization, it is now imperative that we begin to internationalize our courses. We must assess how we teach intercultural issues and provide our students with the practical skills to incorporate their global leadership competencies. By providing cultural opportunities and educational courses enriching intercultural competency, we begin to spark a new vantage point for our students to be the global leaders of tomorrow.

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