HELPING STUDENTS DEVELOP INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE IN TERTIARY EDUCATION

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Abstract

Many students never develop good intercultural competencies during their years at college or university. These students are often unaware of how important cultural attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are in their daily and academic lives. Students are also unaware of their own cultural boundaries that may be impacting their communication and engagement with others. Assignments that teach intercultural competencies can help students in a variety of ways: to gain confidence in their own cultural identity and acquire a set of skills to communicate and lead in a global world. In this paper, the researcher discusses some effective activities that can be used to teach students intercultural competencies and increase students' intercultural intelligence. Activities are based on experiential and blended learning approaches and integrate technology tools to engage learners. These activities are based on Knowledge Workx intercultural intelligence training that introduces three key theories of culture: Hofstede's cultural dimensions, World View theory, and Knowledge Workx of 12 Dimensions. These theories follow the layers of culture found in an iceberg metaphor that includes the top of the iceberg and observable culture, next is attitudes, the third layer is norms and values, and finally the most hidden layer is one's beliefs. Based on these theories, three blended and experiential projects were developed to include cultural object presentations, a research project on current intercultural conflict, and a cross cultural communication research and application of cultural maps. Three psychometric tests were also used to increase intercultural awareness: culture learner/critic, worldview, and 12 Dimensions tests.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Experiential Learning, Intercultural communication, Intercultural intelligence, Knowledge Workx training, Tertiary Education

Introduction

The large mix of nationalities in the United Arab Emirates created both opportunities for cultural enrichment as well as challenges. The term intercultural intelligence was coined by a training company named Knowledge Workx (2009) which developed a model to train people in the UAE and abroad to become interculturally intelligent. This type of intelligence became important in leading companies with a diverse group of nationalities. The course of intercultural intelligence became an important part of the type of electives Emirati students took as part of their tertiary education. The following paper is a brief presentation of the cultural context and the type of activities developed to train the Emirati learners in intercultural education.

Context

The tertiary context for this paper is a governmental, federally-funded organization that His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan Mabarak Al Nahayan established in 1988 as a public community for vocational education (About HCT, n.d.). Sheikh Nahyan founded the Higher Colleges of Technology as a post-secondary system that catered and still is catering to United Arab Emirate nationals. Leaders divided the HCT system into two campuses in each of the United Arab Emirates: one for male students and one for female students. However, teaching faculty and staff are allowed to be from both genders. Leaders decided to base the teaching approach in an applied, hands-on experiential learning that would enable graduates to take on skilled leadership positions in the country (About HCT, n.d.). The HCT system has grown from four campuses to 17 making it the largest higher education system in the United Arab Emirates with a student body of 20,000 students (HCT Catalogue, 2018).

Emirati leaders based the HCT vision on the three guiding principles of productivity, self-determination, and excellence to prepare graduates for a knowledge-based economy (HCT Catalogue, 2018). The vision and mission of HCT are in line of the country's vision of 2021 and have been based on applied education in a technology-rich environment to support that nation's pursuit of excellence in the transformational journey of HCT 2.0 (HCT Catalogue, 2018). Hatherley-Greene (2014) explained that the HCT multi-campus federal institution has made

tremendous investments in offering a high-quality education that is free for the UAE nationals. Therefore, the HCT campuses are equipped with the latest technology and extremely well-resourced campus facilities, in addition to hiring some of the best western-educated faculty.

The educational framework for HCT is based on offering a bachelor's degree; however, the HCT system began as a vocational community college that started offering bachelor program. A. Akel is an engineering faculty at HCT who started working when Sheikh Nahayan established and led HCT in 1988. Akel explained that the HCT system began as a two- to the three-year program offering a foundations program which lasts for one year optional and diploma and higher diploma programs that continue for two years (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2015). The HCT educational offerings shifted to the bachelor program due to industry demand. However, the current shift now was back to the original mandate to offer exit degrees at diploma levels to received applied degrees if students wish to do so to meet the learning needs and provide a sustainable model that would hopefully graduate students on time (HCT Catalogue, 2018).

The learning model for HCT has been experiential learning. The focus on cutting-edge technology and educational practices have been since it was established (A. Akel, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2015). The eight graduate outcomes on which the HCT learning model was based on are (a) communication and information literacy, (b) critical and creative thinking, (c) global awareness and citizenship, (d) technological literacy, (e) self-management and independent learning, (f) teamwork and leadership, (g) vocational competencies, and (h) mathematical literacy (HCT Catalogue, 2015). HCT campuses are well equipped with offering wireless internet access, electronic library resources and databases, library study rooms, and laboratories for practical instruction. Electronic devices are part of the teaching and learning model. Laptops were offered at HCT Dubai campus in 2007 and students received the technical support and configuration for laptops from each of the HCT campus (A. Akel, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2015). The educational technology expert V. Patel explained that Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach was implemented in 2012 and led to less support required in class (personal communication, Sep. 13, 2018).

Cultural Context
Several researchers investigated the Emirati culture in relation to education. Understanding cultural complexity is critical in higher education. As an introduction for the Gulf Perspective journal, Palfreyman (2014) said that it is important to understand the individual's behaviors in the specific context to be able to comprehend the cultural complexity in higher education in United Arab Emirate. Both Hatherley-Greene (2014) and James (2014) emphasized context and building rapport with the learner as essential factors for a successful learning experience.

For example, Hatherley-Greene (2014) conducted a study pertaining the cultural transition for college male Emirati students from high school to college and listed four factors, smooth, managed, difficult, and impossible. The author developed a valuable border crossing index of four factors that the researcher pointed out to identify the close relationship of Emirati students' learning: smooth, managed, difficult, and impossible. Important questions from this study focused on investigating the reasons behind the low intrinsic motivation for male Emirati learners. The author wondered why these particular students, who come from the same cultural background and have the same educational opportunities as in this paper's context, do not make the best use of the free education their country leaders offer.

Several important discoveries were made that are worth noting. First, in his investigation, Hatherley-Greene (2014) indicated that these particular students are not motivated because of lack in involvement, engagement, and integration in the higher educational system. The second discovery is about context. It is important to point out the author's conclusion claiming that Emirati learners do not perceive education in isolation from other elements but rather a cultural event. The third important discovery in Hatherley-Greene's (2014) study was the author's claim that a learner-centered environment is not the ideal set for the Emirati learners instead teachers are advised to build rapport before asking their students for more. Hatherley-Greene (2014) made 54 suggestions and recommendations for change. Further research is required to investigate the impact of Hatherley-Greene's (2014) ideas and planned suggestions.

Furthermore, James (2014) focused on the importance of tribal bonds in the Emirati culture and the importance of building strong relationships with the Emirati learner. James (2014) pointed out the difficulties of quality research sources in the Emirati region stating that the sources for research in the author's regional area came from governmental open sources and media. The study was a small-scale qualitative investigation to check how educators

implemented a pedagogy of interruption in three different courses in higher education. The main emphasis in the study was the importance of context stating that Dubai as a city in the United Arab Emirates is multi-cultural, so the more cultures seem to appear in Dubai the more a sense of self and identity are exposed. The evaluation of the Emirati learner profile is that the Emirati learners jump to judge and have a fuzzy logic of culture and religion.

Researchers established the importance of investigating the local cultural context as it related to education for specific type of learners. In order to investigate the cultural factors researchers have applied several theoretical frameworks. Several researchers have applied Hofstede's six dimensions, in addition to models used in teaching intercultural intelligence in Emirati higher education such as Knowledge Workx 12 Dimensions framework and World View theory (for example, see Hatherley-Greene, 2014; James & Shammas, 2013). Researchers such as James and Shammas (2013) employed Knowledge Workx model of 12 Dimensions and World View theory in their investigation while Hatherley-Greene (2014) relied on Hofstede's six dimensions' model. Knowledge Workx framework consists of 12 dimensions that include growth, relationship, outlook, destiny, context, connecting, expression, decision making, planning, communication, accountability, and status (James & Shammas, 2013). World View theory consists of three perspectives of honor or shame, guilt or innocence, and power or fear (James & Shammas, 2013). Hofstede's model includes six dimensions that the investigator looks at to include power versus distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty and avoidance, long versus short term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint (Hatherley-Greene, 2014). The different models offer a focus on a variety of factors that could indicate the cultural orientation of a specific group of individuals or a personal cultural orientation. The elements in the various models could help understand the behavioral and cultural choices of the specific type of learners in this case study.

In yet another culturally relevant study, Prowse (2014) conducted a study pertaining the cross-cultural differences between Qatari and Canadian students attending the same institution in Canada. The study was a comparative investigation at a business program delivered at two different locations: one in Canada and one in Qatar within the same Canadian institution. Data collection came from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and follow-up interviews. The theoretical frameworks of Hofstede, Dimmock, and Walker informed the study. A possible cultural profile of the Qatari learner in this study is useful because they come from a similar Arab Gulf background. The claim was that Qatari students were polychromic in their perception of time and deadlines. Qatari learners had high power distance index, so they lacked independent learning skills, questioning strategies, and exploring a variety of perspectives (Prowse, 2014). As a collective society, Qatari learners value helping each other. Despite the small-scale case study, Prowse's (2014) research was of significant value to this investigation because of the close similarity of the Emirati learner and the Qatari. It could be argued that there was a limitation to Prowse's (2014) study because the institutional context was different from the homogenous population in the case study for this investigation. Therefore, Qatari learners may have developed certain cultural characteristics to survive in the learning environment based on cultural interactions with the Canadian students. Identifying cultural behaviors for Emirati learners may be similar to the Qatari students; however, this was an assumption that needed further investigation.

Other researches have indicated the importance of high context and holistic thinking such as in Rapanta (2014) investigation on studying the Emirati learners' culture. Rapanta (2014) presented a reflective paper based on classroom practices. The researcher observed the Emirati cultural characteristics and adaptation strategies for in class teaching. Rapanta (2014) explained that the Emirati culture included a similar learner profile as the previous studies and the author listed elements of spirituality, collectivism, flexibility, high context, power distance, and holistic thinking. The two essential factors in understanding the Emirati culture were high context and non-verbal communication that can be missing in online learning (Rapanta, 2014). Additionally, an important finding was the holistic thinking tendency, so the Emirati students preferred to think big and based their decisions on intuition could cause communication misunderstandings in the online environment (Rapanta, 2014). Literature was lacking in investigations that considered how jumping into conclusion, therefore, could impact online learning.

Hall and Herrington (2010) investigated the online Arabic learning communities at Sultan Qaboos University in the Sultanate of Oman. The authors indicated the importance of studying culture for the Arabic learner. It is important to note the discovery the authors made. The major finding was that social presence is essential to developing the online learning community; however, without a proper understanding of the Arabic learner's culture social presence may not be successfully built. Educators need to identify the Arabic cultural preferences when creating the online learning environment and refer to Hofstede's theory in the analysis (Hall & Herrington, 2010).

Finally, Anderson, Barham, and Northcote (2013) looked at how teachers' knowledge and views of online learning impacted teaching practices online. The focus was on teacher's competencies in designing an effective learning environment. The authors used Mishra and Koehler's TPACK framework that looks at technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge. The application of TPACK instructional model was useful in revealing how the teachers' technological knowledge impacted the online teaching practices. Anderson, Barham, and Northcote (2013) indicated that the overlap between technology, content, and pedagogy was essential for designing the online classroom environment. Furthermore, Shea and Bidjerano (2013) indicated on the importance of instructional design model in distance education Researchers stating that teachers' cultural views and beliefs can impact structuring the online learning environment.

Culture in Blended Learning

In a qualitative case study on Emirati learners, several discoveries were found on how culture can impact blended learning courses. Analysis of the data sources in the qualitative case study revealed two thematic groups and subthemes (Hiasat, 2018). The first major thematic group was the culture in the blended learning environment which included how faculty developed their courses and students' experiences with blended learning. Further subthemes found were the importance of developing autonomous learners, engaging students, and motivating them (Hiasat, 2018). Students' experiences with blended learning related to the importance of establishing personal rapport with their course faculty, having a continuous connection outside the classroom hours, and enjoyable learning.

Faculty members in the above qualitative study understood that the cultural values of students were important to consider. The values faculty paid attention to were students' beliefs of what teacher's role should be, how students viewed education, and levels of motivation students had because of the unique cultural situation they live. Students participants represented a minority in their country where most population were expatriate workforce. Such a situation placed students in a position where jobs were secure, and they were assured that their government will take care of their needs. Such reality resulted in low intrinsic motivation which faculty understood (Hiasat, 2018). The cultural value that students responded to, was the relationship they established with their faculty. Since a key cultural value for students was group cohesion and orientation, establishing personal rapport was important. Students did not view education as an isolated event from their personal lives. Students shared that a faculty's enthusiasm for the subject they teach helped students like the subject. Failing to establish the good rapport with students results in negative experiences and lack of satisfaction in the blended learning environment.

Continuous connection meant that students were not disconnected from their faculty or course materials once the official class is finished. Students did not view education in isolation from other spheres of their lives, and therefore; students expected to be able to continue their communication with the faculty beyond the official office hours. Connectivity helped both students and faculty achieve the goal of independence and accountability which faculty discussed. Students also spoke about the fun element of learning in the blended learning environment.

The importance of culture was also confirmed by another collective case study that Boda (2018) shared. The case study was of five science education graduate students who brought their conceptual understanding of urban science. What was interesting in this study's finding is the confirmation that learning experiences and interpretation of themes was different due to cultural complexity and differences. This finding was confirmed also by Battistella, Nonino, and Palombi (2017). Different cultures were found to impact the effectiveness of project management and organizational behaviors based on the analysis of managers from different cultures and their cultural profile of Geert Hofstede's dimensions (Hofstede, 2011). The researchers aimed to identify the cultural profile of a manger that would provide rigor when managing projects. Based on Hofstede's dimensions of cultural profiles (Hofstede, 2011), it was found that masculinity and individualism had positive impact on communication and risk management, and consequently on rigor in managing projects while uncertainty avoidance dimension had a negative impact.

Creating the Intercultural Intelligence Course

In order to prepare the Emirati learner for the ich intercultural workplace, an intercultural intelligence course was designed as part of the elective courses which students took in tertiary education. The intercultural intelligence course is a three-credit course from the General Studies department that is delivered in a traditional 16-week semester. All Bachelor program students from Engineering, Business, and Applied media students are required to take the course starting from year two in their program. There are five course learning outcomes (CLOs):

CLO 1- Explain and describe the key concepts and components of culture
CLO 2- Compare and contrast different frameworks used to analyze culture
CLO 3- Demonstrate understanding of issues related to cultural diversity, multiculturalism and social change
CLO 4- Demonstrate understanding of issues related to intercultural communication; recognize how culture may result in conflict and apply different strategies to resolve it
CLO 5- Critically analyze cultural case studies by applying concepts and terms learned in CLOs 1-4 through two research-based projects

The course was delivered in English to second language learners because Arabic is the native language in a blended learning approach using institutional Learning Management System (LMS) Black Board Learn. The main theories taught in this course were Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions, the World View theory, and Knowledge Workx 12 Dimensions theory. As the system course team leader, I ensured that students understood those were tools that can help them better understand cultures; however, these theories are not without fault and limitations. A brief description of those theories is in the following section.

Lesson units taught in the intercultural course are:
- Intercultural Intelligence CLO 1, CLO 5
- Theory # I: Hofstede's Theory CLO 2
- Culture Shock and change cycle CLO 3, CLO 5
- Theory # II: World View Theory CLO 2, CLO 5
- Perspective and Bias CLO 3
- Conflict Resolution CLO 4
- Ethnocentrism and Cultural Gaffes CLO 3
- Theory # III: 12 Dimensions CLO 2, CLO 4, CLO 5
- Managing Polarities CLO 4, CLO 5
- Case Studies CLO 5

The layers of culture seen below (image 1) were used to in increase student's intercultural intelligence. Based on the layers of culture, applied projects were created as the following:

1. *Observable culture*: for students to learn about observable culture, they worked on cultural object presentations.
2. *Attitude*: students worked in a collaborative team on analyzing cultural conflicts that are current in their community. Students used Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory and approaches to resolve conflict analyze intercultural and intracultural conflicts.
3. *Norms and Values*: students used the 12 dimensions in Knowledge Workx theory to create cultural maps as seen below.
4. *Beliefs*: The World View Theory was used to explore deep beliefs and values. The theory has three dimensions: Power/Fear, Honor/Shame, Guilt/Innocence. Case studies were used to make the analysis and students took the world view theory questionnaire to understand their own beliefs.

Image 1: Layers of Culture
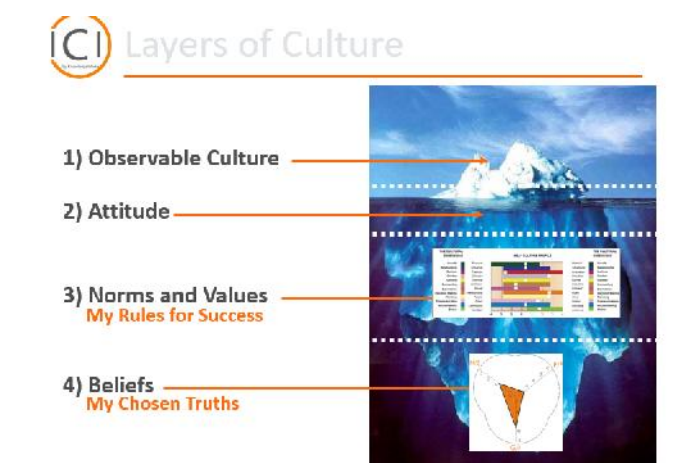

Theory 1: World View Theory
        David Naugle identified four key components which he uses to understand worldview (Springsted, 2003).

- Worldview refers to a person's *interpretation of reality,* or basic view of life.
- Worldview is *an inescapable function* of the human heart.
- There is *no impartial ground* from which to reason or interpret reality.
- Worldview is best understood as *a system of signs* (symbols), which helps us to understand the world.

There are three colors for the worldview theory and there is an assessment tool that students take to discover where their views are dominant. Even though the learners in this paper's context come from a homogenous culture, it was found that their worldview dimensions are different. Roland Muller, who did anthropological and sociological research among the Bedouin, initiated this research which was carried into the workplace by Knowledge Workx (2009). Muller suggested that all societies could be grouped into three main categories or worldviews with reference to the main motivators that drive behavior. He called these three groups (Knowledge Workx, 2009).

    Guilt versus innocence societies
    Power versus fear societies
    Shame versus honor societies

*Image 2: Example of a World View questionnaire results*
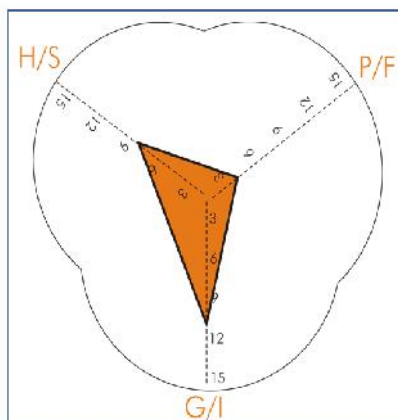
Theory 2: Geert Hofstede's Theory

Geert Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions explored how societies as a whole group rather than individuals have values that impact their values and behaviors. Hofstede's definition of culture as "collective mental programming" (Hofstede's Insights, n.d.) referred to groups of people rather than individuals. Hofstede claimed that culture does not exist. It is a rather constructivist approach to explain why certain groups of people are different from others. Hofstede's dimensions of culture (2011) is originally an examination of the results of a world-wide survey of employee values by IBM in the 1960s and 1970s. The theory was one of the first that could be quantified and could be used to explain observed differences between cultures.

This initial analysis identified systematic differences in national cultures on four primary dimensions: power distance (PDI), individualism (IDV), uncertainty avoidance (UAI) and masculinity (MAS) as Hofstede explains on his academic website (https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/). In 1980 he published Culture's Consequences, a book which combines the statistical analysis from the survey research with his personal experiences. The two additional dimensions were long term orientation and indulgence versus restraint. On Hofstede's academic website, comparing countries on the basis of the six dimensions is possible as in the below example.

Image 3: Country comparision based on Hofestede's dimensions
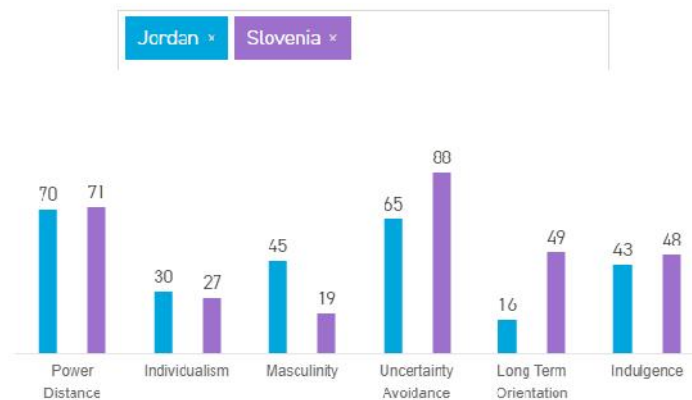
Theory 3: Knowledge Workx 12 Dimensions

Knowledge Workx is a consulting company that developed the 12 Dimensions of Culture. The Intercultural Intelligence Model is based four levels of training: awareness of intercultural learning, mapping the cultural environment, navigating the cultural differences, and finally developing and practicing strategic organizational plans (Knowledge Workx, 2009). Image 3 is a summary of Knowledge Workx model.

Image 3: Intercultural model (Knowledge Workx, 2009)
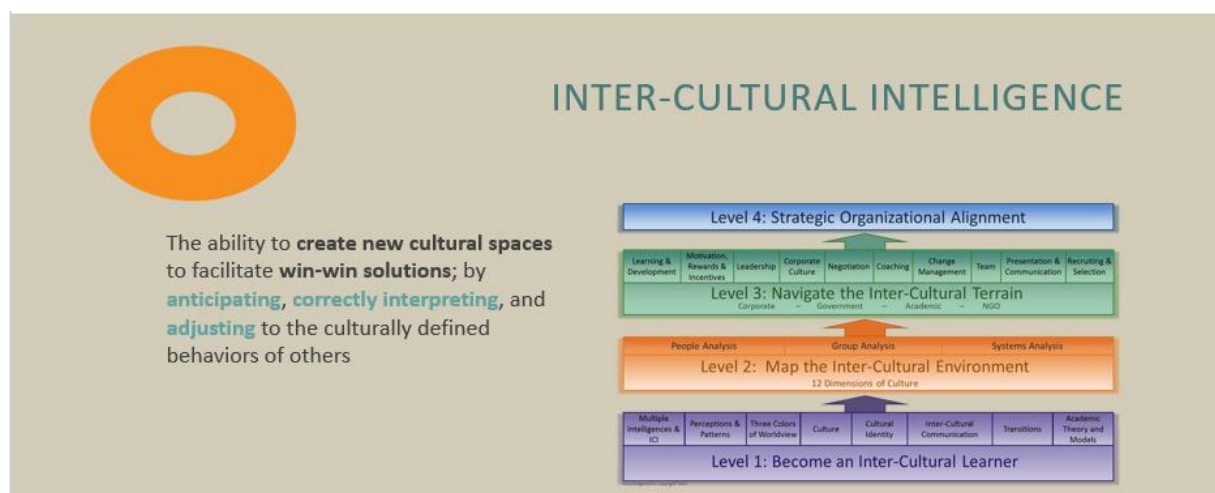
The 12 Dimensions of Cultural Mapping were shaped during 2001 & 2002. The initial starting point was the material of Hall, Hofstede and Trompenaars. The 12 dimensions used by Knowledge Workx to create a Cultural Map are:

1. **Growth** (Material or Personal)
2. **Relationship** (Situational or Universal)
3. **Outlook** (Innovation or Tradition)
4. **Destiny** (Directive or Directed)
5. **Context** (Formal or Informal)
6. **Connecting** (Inclusive or Exclusive)
7. **Expression** (Conceal or Reveal)
8. **Decision-Making** (Rules or Relationship)
9. **Planning** (Time or People)
10. **Communication** (Direct or Indirect)
11. **Accountability** (Individual or Community)
12. **Status** (Achieved or Ascribed)

Experiential Learning Projects
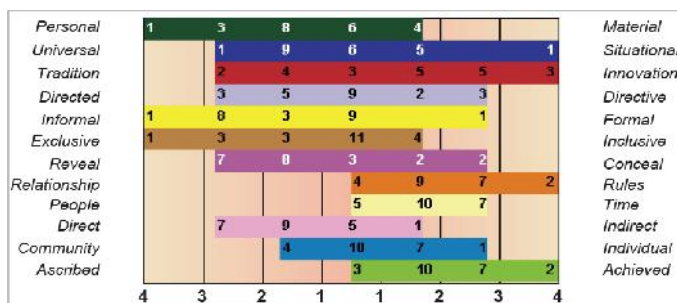
To teach students the layers of culture explained in image 1 earlier, several applied projects were created. Here is a brief summary of some of the activities that were successfully used:

Cultural Objects: Students chose cultural objects from their own culture and explained the observable elements and the hidden ones based on the ice berg metaphor. Students interviewed four people from different generations about their chosen cultural object and created a presentation of what the object meant. Students also choose cultural objects from other cultures than theirs and researched what these objects meant.

Example from a student: Culture is like a mall:

You can see if you entered to the mall you will see the security which represent the country's rule.

Restaurant 》 》 food

Library 》 》 culture

Salon 》 》 beauty

AC 》 》 weather

Mosque 》 》 religion

Sport shop 》 》 traditional sport

Clothes shop 》 》 dress

Another example is culture is like sea: "not a lot of people know what's within the sea. To most people, the sea is just a place to swim and go fishing or a place for boat and ship. It's a mysterious zone and not everything within it had been discovered yet just like culture".

Intercultural Conflict: students explore a current inter/intracultural conflict and analyze it based on their own definition of culture, World View Theory, Hofstede's dimensions, and cultural conflict approaches. Some of the topics students analyzed and chose were:

1. Dress Code
2. How Other Cultures Affected the Emirati Culture
3. The Effects of Maids on Emirati Children
4. Acceptance in UAE
5. Western Impact on UAE Culture
6. Diversity in UAE
7. Intercultural Marriages
8. Dowry in UAE and other Cultures
9. Identity Loss
10. Obesity in UAE
11. Identity Crisis
12. Emirati Males' Marriage from Foreigners
13. Housemaids in Emirati Homes
14. Emirati Females' Marriages from Foreigners

In addition to applying Hofstede's theory and worldview theories in analyzing the intercultural conflict, students explored approaches to conflict resolutions based on cultures and culture shock. Stages of culture shock are summarized in the below image 4.

Image 4: Stages of Cultural Shock (Knowledge Workx, 2009)
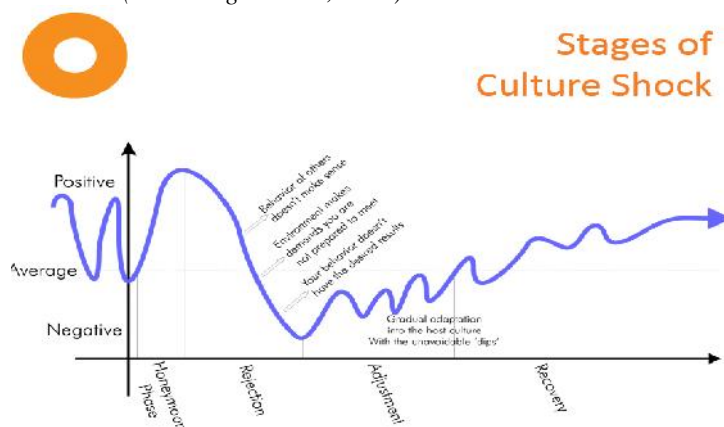
Barnga Game: this classic card simulation game on cultural clashes fully engaged students in simulating cultural differences. Students had interesting insights on winning and losing. Groups of students who lost had to remain in their tables and not change. They later on explained that they did not feel like losing because others were coming to their table. The losing team even imposed their rules on incoming winning teams. The five tricks rules can be found in this website (https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/wp-content/uploads/sites/355/2017/07/Barnga-Card-Game-Rules-1.pdf)

Media analysis and cultural maps: students explored the 12 dimensions by analyzing movies and creating cultural maps. Some of the movies that were used are: Outsourced, Ana and the King, City of Life, High Life Dubai-Episodes.
Further details on the applied activities and projects can be found in Appendix A.

Content Delivery
Content was delivered in an asynchronous online course using the Institution's Learning Management System Blackboard Learn. Weekly discussions and collaborative tasks were planned to use the Blackboard Learn engagement and collaborative features.
Factors to consider when selecting delivery method are:

1. **Institutional readiness:**(a) Technology available to teachers and students and (b) Technical support needed and availability of support
2. **Faculty readiness:** are teaching faculty ready to use the technology? Would training and support be required? How much training is required?
3. **Student readiness:** are students ready to learn online? Would students need technical support? What is students' motivation and independence levels? What learning needs and differences students have?

The Blackboard Learn LMS was used as the delivery method because it is the LMS that the institution officially uses in its blended courses. Blackboard Learn has many features and tools that are available to faculty and students. Wireless internet connection and mobile application features are as well available campus wide and on students' smart phones. Students in the institution for this online course have been using Blackboard Learn and know the main features. Students also can use their smart phones in class.

Factors to consider for planning and delivery include readiness issues at three different levels. First, institutional readiness is concerned mainly with technology available which is the LMS, Internet connectivity, and technical support. Technical support is limited and often faculty are disappointed by the late responses. Therefore, a team of technical support will be approached to offer the needed technical support.

Second, faculty will need to be trained and an assessment of training needs must be conducted before the delivery of online course. Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, and Zvacek (2012) stated that the success of distance education courses depends on faculty who are lifelong learners and skilled in facilitation strategies. Simonson et al. (2012) further reported that faculty support in terms of training and technical support in delivering the course online is required for successful online course delivery.

Third, student readiness is concerned with learner autonomy and the transactional distance learners exhibit. Learner's knowledge of learning online and learner autonomy was assessed, and an orientation workshop was provided prior to taking this blended learning course. Simonson et al. (2012) suggested that teachers assess learners at the beginning of the course to understand the learners' readiness for online learning and based on the assessment results the course could be individualized.

Facilitation

Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, and Zvacek (2012) further explained that student centered learning is based on a collaboration and is characterized by a learning by doing approach and problem based instructional strategies. Knowles's (1984) adult theory of Andragogy is applicable for this blended learning course because learners were adults and the learning environment was planned for adult active participation that was linked to real life application.

Active learning and interaction can only happen in student - centered environment otherwise learners will be passively listening to lectures or reading content. The role of the instructor was that of a facilitator of learning rather than a presenter (Simonson et al., 2012). Course design in this course was divided into two areas: content delivery resources and activities resources. Course structure was easy to follow and took into consideration learner differences and active learning engagement. Therefore, learning was facilitated and guided as Holmberg's theory of interaction suggests (Simonson et al., 2012).

The importance of student-centered learning was based on the following:
1. Adult learners constructed their knowledge socially through active engagement and interaction in the course (discussions, blogs, wikis, group projects).
2. The learning environment was focused on participatory learning where students interacted with each other, with the instructor, and content to master the materials and became active learners.
3. The instructor was a facilitator of learning rather than a presenter.
4. Course structure was guided by the learning experiences students were expected to have in the course and structured following the social constructivist beliefs.

Active Learning

Chickering and Gamson (1987) explained that active learning strategies fall into three categories: tools and resources that support learning by doing approach, time-delayed exchanges, and real-time conversation. Active learning strategies that supported learning by doing approach included real life projects and simulations. Students in this

intercultural course practiced active learning using the Blackboard Learn features of community building such as blogs, groups, wiki spaces, etc. in addition to engaging in case studies and reflective journals.

Anderson, Krathwohl, and Bloom (2001) explained that the revised Blooms taxonomy has evaluation and creation as the top two thinking skills. Therefore, learners were asked to evaluate the cultural theories and tools they were learning and created a new model for intercultural understanding. Active learning involved real world-based projects and as such the planned projects deal with real intercultural issues that were currently facing the local society. Students were able to access the online discussion and self-reports were accessed. In sum, active learning activities included:

> **Learning by doing activities:** students engaged in projects that required them to communicate, collaborate, and research a real-life issue in their community regarding intercultural conflicts.
> **Simulation:** students engaged in the analysis of real-life case studies that simulated situations that may face in the work place from a cultural perspective.
> **Reflective tasks and journals:** Students reflected on their learning through online journaling that is maintained throughout the course.
> **Asking students to provide examples** from their major of study also increased their active learning and motivation.
> **Active learning in projects:** students applied the revised Blooms Taxonomy therefore students evaluated the three theories of culture they learned in the online course and created a new inter-cultural model Students debated a current intercultural issue and took different perspectives using De Bono's hats
> **Active learning in discussions:** students were asked to justify their opinions, compare, and analyze what they have learned.
> **Self-Report:** Students took Quizlet tests (online tests that they can save on their smart phones) that they created and responded to other students' tests commenting on the accuracy of content.

Collaboration

Students engaged in a variety of collaborative learning tasks that met the diverse learning styles and were opportunities for practicing multiple intelligences. Therefore, students collaborated using discussions, blogs, and wiki pages. Furthermore, Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (2013) explained that retaining students in higher education depends on how well students are able to build a community and actively engage in learning. Establishing an interdependence through cooperative learning projects is paramount for student success. Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (2013) listed several approaches that are effective in building a community online and encourage collaboration. These activities are: Problem based learning, team-based learning, and collaborative learning which is based on dialogue and does not follow a formal structure (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2013). In sum, students collaborated in the intercultural course through actively engaging in:

- **Group projects:** based on learning teams that were either self-selected or assigned
- **Online Discussions:** students discussed weekly topics based on current news or observations of intercultural topics. Student collaborated to solve a cultural issue presented from a news article.
- **Blog entries:** students maintained a blog that they collaborated on for the cultural theories learned in class.
- **Wiki pages:** students in small groups created a wiki page for (a) virtual cultural museum and (b) an intercultural survival guide for global leaders
- Students collaborated on Google + presentations to develop exam review PowerPoints.
- Students collaborated on a Google + drawing so that they present a cultural map of a famous leader.

Student Engagement

Holmberg's theory of interaction of communication indicated that interaction is the core of distance learning because interaction is believed to correlate to student motivation and emotional involvement in the distance studies (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2012). Student engagement strategies were enhanced with the available technology tools; however, instructors should provide clear guidelines and expectations of learner interactions (Techniques for Student Engagement Online, 2014). Similarly, Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (2012) stated that instructors must clearly explain what the expectations are for engagement and the positive interdependence in the online course. Therefore, the instructor in this intercultural course emphasized the importance of team work by showing videos and follow up discussion activities. Reflective tasks focused on how well students were able to work in teams and what challenges they faced. Furthermore, Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (2012) reported that students

who do not engage in class and with the instructor tend not to engage in other activities and assigned tasks. Consequently, planning active learning activities that would engage students is important for university success. Student engaged through interactions with content, instructor, and with other learners which is explained in more details in the following section.

Interaction: Learner-Content
Gardner's multiple intelligences and learning styles guided the content presented in this intercultural course so that students had a variety of ways to interact with the course materials. The content moved from a visual content to active interaction with the material, to virtual collaboration and discussions.

Planned instructional content for this course was based on the following:
1. Video lectures
2. Interactive websites and simulations through subscribed cultural websites
3. Use of images and multi-media PowerPoints
4. Reading material
5. additional resources

Interaction: Learner-Instructor
Moore and Kearsley (2012) stated that learner-instructor interaction is concerned with how the instructor would support the learner and encourage active learning. According to the Transactional theory (Moore & Kearseley, 2012), the interaction between the learner and instructor would help in increasing the transactional distance because learners would receive support and guidance for their learning which would later in the semester decrease and as a result learner would move to a higher level of learner autonomy. Furthermore, prompt feedback is one of the seven best principles that Chickering and Gamson (1987) listed as critical for effective teaching and learning in higher education. The type of activities in this intercultural course that related to learner-instructor interaction included:

Weekly Announcement: (Ongoing course structure): Before the content is delivered, the instructor interacted with learners through using the Announcement tool in Blackboard Learn. The weekly announcement that was linked to students' email helped set the direction for the weekly plan and encouraged the learner to prepare for the week's work. Thus, help learners improve their learner autonomy.

Prompt Feedback: Instructor commented on the blog entries and online discussions thus helping move on the discussion or offer guidance.

Informal chat forum: learners and instructor were able to chat informally in a discussion forum that was dedicated for asking questions and providing support and encouragement for learning.

Interaction: Learner-Learner
Moore and Kearsley (2012) explained that learner-learner interaction is the third type of interaction and has two types; between groups based on video and teleconferencing live sessions and within groups based on asynchronous interaction. This intercultural course was based on asynchronous interaction between learners based on discussions, team work, and collaborative tasks. Students were continuously asked to produce products by interacting with each other and collaborating. The type of activities to illustrate learner-learner interaction included:

Online discussions: students interacted with each other through online discussions by responding to message prompts initiated by the instructor and later on initiated and moderated by the students

Group work: students formed learning teams and interacted with each other online using the group feature in Blackboard Learn.

Collaborative knowledge construction using the social technology features such as wiki and blog tools in Blackboard learn:
(a) Students used the blog feature to post information regarding the cultural objects and responded to other students.
(b) A wiki page was created for understanding the three theories of culture in this online course. Students also created a wiki page for their final project showcasing their research of the culture they studied.

Course Management
Course management issues related to managing class disruptions, lack of participation, student plagiarism, and student accommodations. First is the concern for lack of participation. The instructor contacted privately the student who did not participate and emailed a reminder of the participation expectations. Instructor also asked whether there were any valid reasons for the lack of participation and if so then the instructor advised the student how to proceed so that lack of participation did not impact course success. Doing this communication in private is critical because of the honor/shame cultural perspective of the local learner. It is critical that the instructor maintains student's honor by addressing any issues privately.

The second issue is student plagiarism. The instructor followed strictly the institutional policy on plagiarism which stated that the issue will be reported to the department chair and investigated through a committee. As a guilt/innocence perspective of world view theory, students understood that there were strict rules to follow.

Third concern is for student accommodations. In the beginning of the course, the instructor sent an introductory email and included a statement asking students if they had any accommodation requirement to contact the instructor through responding to the instructor's email in private or by contacting the academic services of the institution.

Institutional policies are followed in dealing with plagiarism and student accommodation. The institution has strict rules and direction of how to deal with plagiarism that are important to follow. Students were aware of the consequences of plagiarized work and were reminded at the beginning of each assessed task. Students were required to submit a signed statement for each submitted task stating that it is their original work. Participation requirements also followed institutional policies. Any students who did not meet the requirement was contacted informally through the teacher and then formally through the institution's student service officer.

Participation
What are the student participation expectations in such a course that depends highly on authentic collaboration and discussion responses? The weekly participation was based on a total of 4 postings in the discussion forum on two separate days. Students were required to post an initial response to the online discussion in the first three days then replied to three posts by the end of the teaching week. Participation had a word limit of 100 words and examples of participation messages to be shared. Participation also included other format of communication such as a visual, an image, or an audio or video responses so that second language learners do not get discouraged to participate.

Simonson et al. (2012) stated that the syllabus is the guide to ensure communication is clearly provided to the online learner. Therefore, the online course material had the syllabus posted in the course content and available for learners throughout the semester. The instructor provided guidance and clarification to the syllabus document at the beginning of the course by having a quiz on the syllabus content. Students practiced effective participation in the online discussion. Additionally, students had an exercise where they read messages and decided whether these messages were good examples or not for participation. Early postings in weekly discussions set the tone and direction of the discussion (Techniques for Student Engagement Online, 2014) which helped other students participate by agreeing or disagreeing. In addition, early posting helped provide material for discussion early on in the week.

Feedback
Chickering and Gamson (1987) emphasized the importance of prompt and effective timely feedback. Feedback was in different formats so that learners had the opportunities to practice critical thinking skills and increase their learner autonomy. Prompt feedback was planned as the following:

Instructor feedback: Different format of feedback was provided to accommodate a variety of learning styles: 1. Written feedback on completed work and weekly tasks. 2. Recorded video messages to help the second language learners who struggle with reading.

Peer feedback: students had the opportunity to provide feedback to each other through commenting on each other's work in the blogs, discussions, and group work in addition to providing feedback on submitted assignments.

Course feedback: students were asked to respond to short online surveys to provide their feedback on the weekly course content and activities. Follow up discussions were based on the feedback are planned.

Reflective journals: feedback on one's learning and learning experiences was expressed in a weekly journal entry that students engaged in a private dialogue with their instructor.

Reflective Tasks

Reflective tasks followed the structure of ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, and Descriptive reflections). ORID is an approach defined in the book "The Art of Focused Conversation", by R. Brian Stanfield. It was formulated by the Institute for Cultural Affairs in Canada as a means to better guide conversations that can lead to well-informed decisions.

- Objective Data: what did you learn?
- Reflective Data: what surprised you, discouraged you, and encouraged you?
- Interpretative Data: what insights did you have?
- Decisional Data: what can you take with you into your future?

Samples of student reflections are found in Appendix B.

For the final reflection students are tasked to think about the Intercultural Studies course and reflect on the following points applying the ORID framework found in Appendix C

Obstacles and Solutions

Both faculty and students are expected to face obstacles and barriers for successful adoption of the intercultural course. The obstacle found were:

1. Second language learners' communication skills
2. Learners' low learner autonomy
3. Teacher readiness and willingness to teach online
4. Equivalency issue to the traditional class

First students are not English language speakers and the language of instruction and delivery was English. As second language speakers, students were potentially going to face difficulties in interaction and written communication. Furthermore, students in the institution for this course may have a low learner autonomy. According to Transactional theory, transactional distance is impacted by the responsibilities learners demonstrate for learning at a distance (Moore & Kearsley, 2012).

Second, the low learner autonomy meant that students required additional help and scaffolding from the teacher to manage their learning online. Students needed help in developing their learning plan and managing their learning. Therefore, activities that would target student learner autonomy and increase their independence were planned in the course even though these activities were not directly linked to the course content. According to the Gardner's (2000) Multiple Intelligences and Learning Styles inventories, multiple options to engage in the course were offered.

Third, teacher readiness and resistance were solved through offering technical and professional training support that ensured teachers were ready to trouble shoot when technical issues happened. Resistance was solved by ensuring faculty input was considered in the planning of the course and additional incentives were provided for teaching the course such as providing certificated training.

Finally, the issue of equivalency to traditional classes was an institutional and governmental issue because there were clear policies for what blended learning courses were. Therefore, the course plan followed the institutional policies and standards set by the local government in addition to the accreditation requirements so that the academic credits could be officially awarded. According to the Equivalency theory, learning activities should not be exactly the same as in the traditional face to face class, but rather comparable (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright & Zvacek, 2012).

In summary, the planning for online Intercultural Studies course included looking at first the course delivery method and facilitation approaches. Next, learner interaction was examined in terms of examples provided for how learners would interact with each other, with the content, and with the instructor. Classroom management issues were discussed which related to lack of participation issues, disruptions, plagiarism, and cheating were issues discussed in

regard to institutional policies. The importance of instructor feedback, peer, and self-evaluation were also evaluated carefully. Finally, a list of obstacles was shared, and workable solutions were also shared.

Conclusion

In conclusion, intercultural intelligence is an essential competency for students in tertiary education. They should have opportunities to explore their own cultural identities and be able to understand the theories of culture available regardless of their major of study. There are many resources and experiential learning activities that can be help students in their intercultural intelligence. This paper was a presentation of a few activities that were successfully applied. Appendix D had further ideas and resources that are freely available. The main consideration in any new intercultural intelligence course or activity to eb planned is the contextual consideration.

Brief Biography

Dr. Lana Hiasat is a full-time faculty at the General Studies department in the Dubai Men's College, Higher Colleges of Technology in the United Arab Emirates in addition to her leadership role serving as the program coordinator. Drawing on her background of cultural diversity, trainings in emotional intelligence, creativity, and intercultural understanding, Dr. Hiasat offers unique insights into educational leadership, cultural inclusion, and integration of technology. Her first master's degree was in social science and the second was in MTESL. Her Ed Doctorate research was focused on blended learning approaches in integrating technology into higher education programs. Her passion is in creating learning environments that are student centered, flexible, and based on effective integration of technology.

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Appendix A: Applied Activities and projects

Activity 1: Definition of Culture

In the discussion forum within your online course, create a new thread and post your answer to the following two questions:

1. What is your definition of culture?

2. Share your cultural analogy by completing this sentence:

Culture is like...
You can add a picture or graphic illustration o what culture is like to you. Make sure you explain the components of culture that you think are important.

Tip: *Remember to add a subject title to your thread. The subject title could be your analogy.* When done, **comment on at least one post by clicking on the post and then click reply.**

Activity 2: Hofstede's Country Comparison

In pairs, you will get a random choice of two countries to research. Now follow these steps to respond to the discussion forum:
Step 1: Go to http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html
Step 2: In pairs, work on preparing a PowerPoint adding the following slides:

Hofstede's Model
•Slide 1 (A): Intro and summary of Hofstede's model (in your own words)
•Slide 2 (B): Comparative table
•Slide 3 (C): Similarities (in your own words)
•Slide 4 (D): differences (in your own words)
•Slide 5 (E): Suggestions for solutions

Additional Task: bring a cultural object that represents each of the country for your presentation. Be ready to explain the visible parts and the hidden parts.

Step 3: Respond to this discussion post by submitting one PowerPoint per pair.
In the title of the post, add the two countries you researched.
Add two pictures of the two cultural objects for each of the country selected.

Step 4: After presentation and class discussion, respond to at least one post.

Activity 3: Case Study for Worldview

Read the story about Nadir bin Hendi then reply to the discussion question below: Powerboater Nadir Bin Hendi (link: http://www.thenational.ae/sport/uae-sport/powerboater-nadir-bin-hendis-struggle-to-clear-a-tarnished-reputation#ixzz2LzMkBDr9)

Discussion question:100 words
After reading Nadir bin Hendi's story, identify all of the three worldview paradigms in this case. Where is Guilt/ Innocence, Honor/Shame, and Power/ Fear in this story? Explain and provide examples from the story. Word limit: 150--200 words. Then reply to one post by commenting with a minimum of 50 words.

Activity 4: Cultural Maps

Part I: Choose a famous person or leader you have studied in your Leadership class:

- List their key character traits
- Make a Cultural Map for them
- List ways to address this person

Famous Person/Leader

Part II: Group Cultural Profile

In small groups of 3- 4 study the group profile and the company's cultural issues.

1. Understand the Results: *How do you see the company dynamics in this company profile?*

2. Recognize the group's Positive Impact: *How do the group cultural preferences help the group dynamics?*

3. Recognize the group's Negative Impact: *Decide which dimension(s) are the key drives behind the issues*

4. Use the Results for Growth: *What action do you recommend to take based on this insight to deal with the group issues?*

Group Profile # 1:

This team is part of a large global NGO that specializes in Disaster relief and long-term sustainable development in over 100 countries. This team are mainly senior leaders who operate in over 17 countries. Their role is to focus on HR and people development so that their people are equipped to interface with African, Middle Eastern and Central Asian cultures.
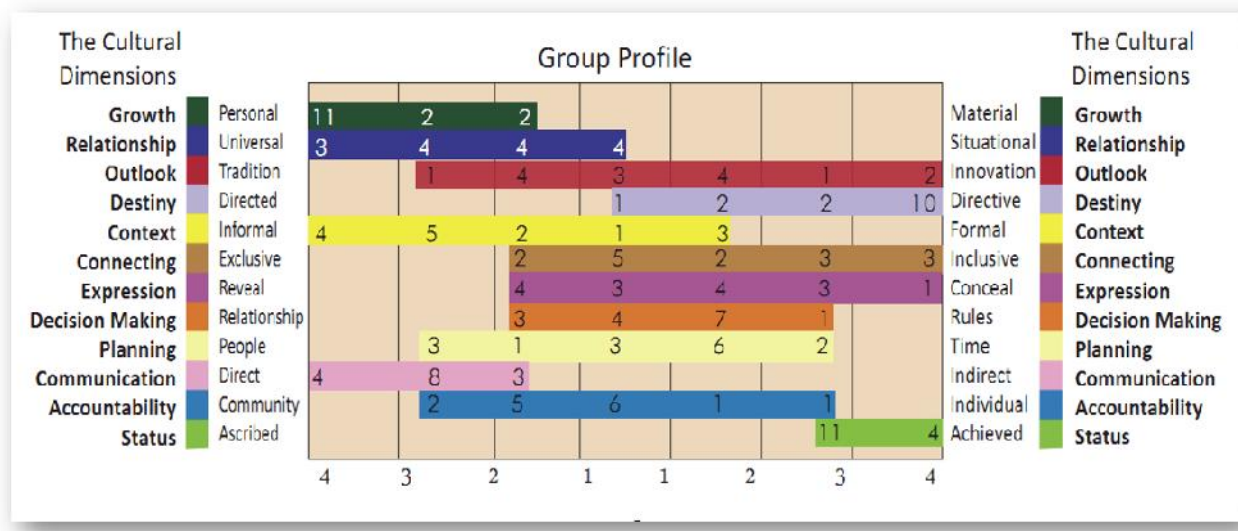
Group Profile # 2:

The Executive team of a small exclusive airline. The four executives have been head hunted from different parts of the world to set up an exclusive airline targeting the more affluent middle class traveler who wants just a bit more than economy class. They have 7 planes and a workforce of 500 from 55 nationalities. The team is trying to build up the organization and at the same time needs to keep an eye on the GCC national investors who come from traditional families.
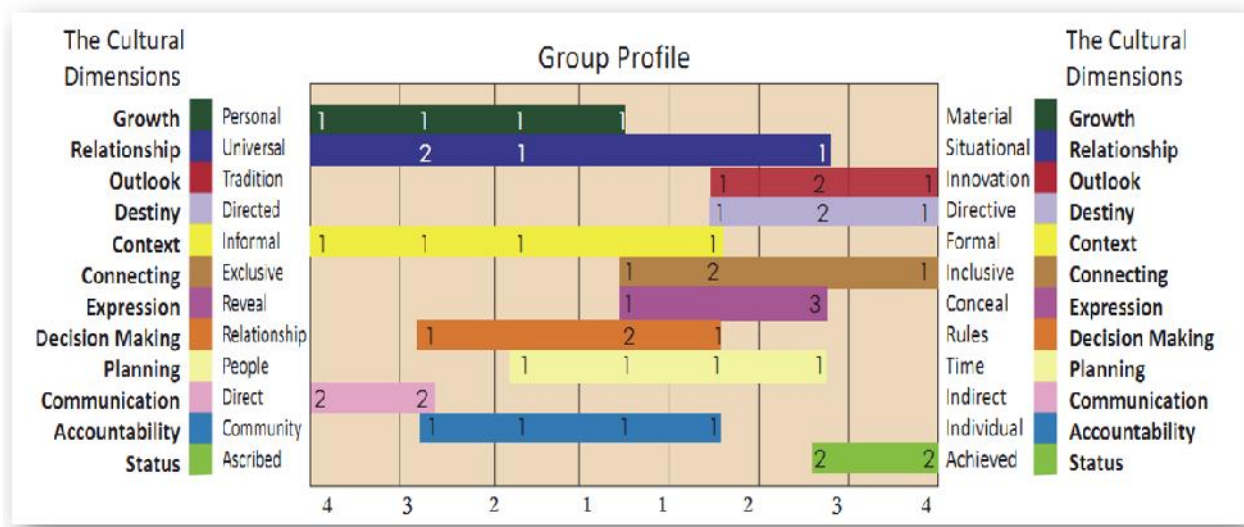
Activity 5: Intercultural Conflict

Select an example of <u>**inter-cultural (or intra-cultural) conflict**</u> which you or someone you know has experienced. If you do not know of such an example you should find one in the media. It should involve one or more people **from your own culture.** *Example topics could be intercultural marriages, maids in Emirati homes, Arabic versus English native language for locals, Western celebrations and local traditions, etc.*

If possible, interview the people involved in the conflict. Alternatively, read everything you can find about the topic.

Think about why you are choosing this conflict to focus on – **why is it important or relevant**?

In teams you will need to present your analysis to the rest of the class. Your team should give **a 20-minute presentation** of your findings.

- **Each student** should **speak for 5-7 minutes**.
- You can use PowerPoint, Prezi or Keynote or any other tool that you discuss with your teacher. However, your submitted presentation should be *an academic PowerPoint* with **speaker's notes**.
- You can use photos, images, diagrams, multimedia or simple slides to illustrate your presentation. Use your imagination and creativity.
- IELTS speaking band should be a minimum of 5. 5
- There is a group grade and an individual one as per the assessment rubric in your Bb Learn course and in this document below.
- **Discussion question types**: I may ask you any of the following questions after your presentation: https://prezi.com/7v3boyhz4vum/deep-thinking-knowledge/#share_email
- Submit the PowerPoint and Poster by the set deadline. <mark>No make-up allowed for this assessment:</mark> If you miss this assessment you cannot do a make-up for it because it is based on a group work. You will get a zero for presentation and possible points for content.

Presentation Outline

Here is a sample outline of topics to be included :(21 slides). You could have between 20 to 25 slides.

Slide 1: Names, H#s, course code, teacher's name, date of submission

Slide 2: Academic Honesty= all group members must type their names and sign

3: Topic 1: Conflict Description

Slide 3 (A): Background Details: general description of the problem

Slide 3 (B): Evidence problem exists: present at least 3 articles in the news about your topics or interview at least 3 people

4: Topic 2: Hofstede's Model

Slide 4 (A): Intro and summary of Hofstede's model

Slide 4 (B): Comparative table

Slide 4 (C): Similarities

Slide 4 (D): differences

Slide 4 (E): communication guide and recommendations for the two countries

5: Topic 3: World View Theory

Slide 5 (A): Intro and summary of World View Theory

Slide 5 (B): Country 1 World View ratio and explanation

Slide 5 (C): Country 2 World View ratio and explanation

Slide 5 (D): communication guide and recommendations

6: Topic 4: Conflict Resolution

Slide 6 (A): Intro and summary of the 5 approaches to conflict

Slide 6 (B): Which approach was used in this conflict? Was it effective? Explain

Slide 6 (C): Intro and summary to four approaches to conflict

Slide 6 (D): Which approach was used? Was it effective? Explain

Slide 6 (E): Suggestions for conflict resolution

Using your intercultural intelligence, and knowledge of **conflict resolution**, say which type of approach to conflict is being used. Recommend a better way to respond to the conflict.

- **Avoiding**
- **Accommodating**
- **Competing**
- **Compromising**
- **Collaborating**

YouTube lesson: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8CkZ2pVfDo

Tiny URL: http://tinyurl.com/conflictapproaches

 Cultural Approaches to Conflict handout: http://tinyurl.com/fourapproaches

Study pages 35- 49

7: Summary of the conflict description and Recommendations for conflict resolution

8: List of References

Activity 6: More than one story

The Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's lecture entitled "The Danger of a Single Story", talking about the danger that arises when people hear only a single story about a country, a culture, a group or an individual.

She stated how important it is for us to have more than one story about each other in order to avoid prejudice, segregation and racism.

Adichie's Ted Talk: http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html

Your Project:

1. Think of a group of people or nation and what single story you have of them. Write down that story and then record telling your story.

   As a team agree on one story about a certain group of people.

2. Go to Global Village and **collect 5 different stories** of the same group/nation that you chose. Interview and collect your stories. Us eideas from the card game you played in class; *More Than One Story* game

3. Take pictures.

4. Retell the 5 different stories as you have collected them.

5. Your goal is to provide a **balance of stories** to the same group of people.

6. In your conclusion—**reflect on how your single story was developed** (i.e. what impacted your perspective) and **what you have learned now**.

   Refer to **World View Theory** and the **12 dimensions in your conclusion**.

Video Presentation should have the following:

Prepare a Power point presentation or Prezi
Slides should include the following outline:
Cover slide with group names, ID and sections
Academic Honesty signed by all of team members.
Single Story
5 Different Stories that were collected
Conclusion including: World View Analysis and 12 Dimensions profile
List of references if used following APA format

Record your voice over each slide. As each student records his/her voice state your name and then start your explanation. Do NOT read your prepared part. Your recorded presentation should show fluency and follow a natural speech. Each student should speak for 2-3 minutes.

Appendix B: Sample Student Reflections

Students' Course Reflection
Posted by   Abdalla Majid at Monday, May 25, 2016 3:35:30 PM

The Intercultural course is a very important course. Each and every student have to take this course. Because there are many things good. Such as: Knowing some other cultures and improving some skills you have by doing some projects and improving also some research skill and writing skill also. in addition to that this course changes a lot in the student's personality and attitude with same culture people or even other culture people. There are many challenges every student face in this course, some with the pressured apply on them because of the many project and assignments and other with their language. About myself i have face only one memorable thing in this course. Which is to learn about other cultures and some vocabulary I have to learn to finish this course, some of them in 12 Dimensions and other in other theories we've learned in class. Also there are many changes i've done during this course, most of them in my attitude with other nationality people.

> After intercultural studies course everybody feels that something is changes and something improved. what's surprising me while taking this course is that there are many people making researches about cultures and how to deal with people have other cultures and attitudes. In each course there are something interesting to you and there are something frustrating to you. one of the thing frustrated me in this course is a lot of students in my class does not take this course seriously at all. In addition to that there are many people does not like to know about their cultures and other cultures.

> There are main three things I've learned in this course, and I will try put it in my mind to get use of it now a days and in future. This course took a part of protocol which what I like. Firstly, I have learned things about protocol which is how to exchange business cards, and also I have learned about something in other cultures. In addition to that I have significantly improved my skills in making movies and in writing. Because in this course every student have to do at least three projects and four writings.

> After taking intercultural studies course I cannot just know what i learned in my mind only i have to get a benefits of the information I have learned in this course. I'm planning to make a website talks about the cultures and protocols in generally and also I will try to upload my projects of this course only to share it with people, so they can know also more about cultures and about what we take in intercultural studies course.

Posted by Abdulla Masood at Sunday, May 24, 2016 10:00:08 AM

Objective Data:
Throughout this course we had many moments that influenced us. I'd say the most memorable moment for me was the constant debate, me and Miss Lana had about working in teams. I was convinced that working in teams would only delay me and would just make everything harder to do, yet she believed otherwise and kept trying to convince me and actually "forced" me to work in a group with members I wasn't comfortable with.
In addition, it also adds to the most challenging thing I faced in this course. Working with members not handpicked by me and working out of my comfort zone. Aside from that, another challenge I faced was the first reflective journal due to me travelling and not knowing how to do it or how the miss grades her papers.

Reflective data:
I would say something that was surprising during this course is how important it is to be inter culturally intelligent. I was really surprised and excited to learn more about different cultures after the first few weeks, especially after seeing a short video on how Japan has its own business culture during class. It made me realise how important it is to understand and adapt to the cultures you are in.
However, what really frustrated me were my test marks. I studied hard and I knew the information yet I continued to make the same mistake I always did, which is not reviewing the exam before submitting it. This causes me to get marks that are far lower that what I know I am capable of achieving.

Interpretive data:
I learned quite a lot of things in this course. Firstly, I learned how important it is to be educated about the culture you are in, this will help you in communicating and dealing with them, which significantly helped me improve my ability to react to various situations. Another thing I learned is how a country's culture can greatly affect their business environment, for example in Japan, the importance of their business cards is a key factor in communicating with them. I also noticed that even though cultural objects from different cultures might not be significant or important to us, they can be very important towards their own cultures.
Lastly, I'd say I have greatly improved many of my skills during this course, from time management to the ability to work in teams.

Decisional data:
I acquired a lot of information regarding cultures, which would help me make changes in the future. When I talk to other people with different cultures I would try to not judge them prematurely and instead I'd adapt to their culture to make them feel comfortable. Another major thing I'd change is that i'd at least research about the culture I will visit rather than completely going with no knowledge.
Aside from cultures, this course helped me realize what I need to change in order to be efficient. I would change my mentality regarding working in groups from now on and the way I'd delegate tasks. I would also improve my schedule when it comes to assignments. Hopefully all these changes would help me deal with other cultures and improve my skills both internally and externally.
Posted by   Amal Jassem at Monday, May 25, 2016 12:36:07 PM

Objective data:
Intercultural studies course was very interesting course I really enjoyed it, the most thing that I liked it in this course that its shows as how we can build our future without forgetting the past, so by that we can change and improve our self.
I faced a lot of challenges in this course specially when we started to study about the 12 dimensions, I knotweed my personality and in which side I belong and I can know others personality so i can understand them and that help me to change from myself and try to build a good future.

Reflective data:
The most exciting thing was working on the projects I enjoyed working on them because I get some experience and I learned how to organize my time and how to work on some application and many other things, I faced some difficulty because some times while working on the project because I thought its easy and I can finish them in one day but they are not, all of them need hard work and they toked from me a lot of time.
There are some things we frustrated me, the first project was about Hofstede and I didn't understand it very well I didn't know how to work in the project and that let me frustrated, the other thing was when had a group project we divided the work between us at the last day one of the members she tell us that she can't do some part and we were busy so she do it very quickly after submitting the project she said that she did all the work but she's not but the most thing that frustrated me when I saw the grade and when the teacher said for us that it's a children project , it really wasn't perfect and from that time I worked hard in the other projects and make sure that everything is done before one week from the submitting day.

Interpretive data:
I have significantly improved my skills in understanding other cultures and how I should manage my time and know how to work with other people.

Decisional data:
I learned many things which can help me to change my future, For example I shouldn't forget my past, I need to manage my time and find a perfect people to work in a project also I need to understand others and take their opinions and share with them my opinion.

Posted by   Latifa Ibrahim at Sunday, May 24, 2016 4:03:14 PM
    To be honest, I usually hate courses that require creativity maybe because I am not a creative person or and I don't like to be rejected even when it comes to my work. But at the same time I like challenges and I like to face my fears to prove to myself that I can get over anything, and this course was a big challenge to me specially because my

teacher is not easy, she is actually a very creative person who loves to see students doing their best and getting in to high level of everything, at first I hated the fact that even if I completed all the tasks I'm supposed to do it won't be enough and I am going to get a C, this was my biggest challenge but with days I knew that the only reason our teacher was doing this is because she believes in us, she knows somehow that we can do much better than what we've done, and this feeling made me want to do more than my best to make her satisfied. One of the most memorable project I've ever done was the niqab project, I've never been as serious as I was in that project, and I've worked so hard and tried to change myself to a better student. I've learned how to manage my time, be serious about the deadline and how to focus and get over the problem that I faced working on team not letting the stress control me and effect my work.

 Furthermore, the most exciting thing about this course was the ability to choose the topic we are going to talk about and having the completely freedom beside in this course it doesn't matter what do you think, there is no such a thing call right and wrong because the actual concept of this course is understanding that people aren't the same and each one of us have a different way of thinking and point of view but the most surprising thing was the huge amount of project and tasks we have to finish before that ghost call "deadline". There is also things that frustrated me such as working on a team supposed to make the task easier. It is based on helping each other but I realized that it is even harder especially when it comes to dealing with lazy people.

The best part of this course was that I have significantly developed my skills in managing my time I also have improved knowledge of other culture and learned new theories such as Hofstede's and the three colors theory Moreover I have developed my ability to control myself and to be able to deal with other people.
 Finally, I'm looking forward to improve my research skills and choose my future team based on their efficient not on my friendship with them and to believe in myself as my teacher does, everyone got their creative side and their inspiration I just have to find mine.

Appendix C: Questions for Evaluating and Creating new Theories for Intercultural Intelligence

Part 1: Objective data: Overall learning:

    (a) What was the most memorable part of the course?
    (b) What challenges did you face during this course? List at least 2.

Part 2: Reflective data: Evaluate a Theory

    1. What was exciting or surprising during this course?
    2. What frustrated you? Explain.
    3. Choose **<u>one of the theories</u>** you learned in this course. Then answer*:*
          What is the most important part of the theory you chose? Why?
          What changes would you make to the theory you chose? Explain.

Part 3: Interpretive data: Create your Model

Identify 3-5 main things you learned from this course about yourself and other cultures. **Explain**. *Note: this part is about evaluating theories.*

List cultural dimensions that you think are important for people living in Dubai, then design your own inter-cultural framework or model that could help people become inter-culturally successful. Present a visual model then provide a short explanation. *Note: this part is about creating a new model.*

Part 4: Decisional data: Future goals

What changes will you make in the future based on what you learned in this course? *Note: think about SMART goals for this part.*

Appendix D: Additional Resources to Teach Intercultural Intelligence

<u>**Articles from Harvard Business Review:**</u>
- Navigating the Cultural Minefield: https://hbr.org/2014/05/navigating-the-cultural-minefield
- When Culture Doesn't Translate: https://hbr.org/2015/10/when-culture-doesnt-translate#
- Cultural Differences are more Complicated than What Country You're from: https://hbr.org/2016/01/cultural-differences-are-more-complicated-than-what-country-youre-from

Quizzes:

Challenge your preconceptions: Take the 'ignorance' test: http://edition.cnn.com/2013/12/10/world/gapminder-us-ignorance-survey/

Cultural Awareness Quizzes:
 http://www.commisceo-global.com/quizzes/cultural-awareness-quizzes?view=qcategory&cat_id=39

Country Specific tests:
 http://www.commisceo-global.com/quizzes/country-specific-quizzes?view=qcategory&cat_id=41
Cultural awareness self-assessment form:
http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/dl/free/0072563974/87090/ch02.html

Assessment forms: http://www.literacynet.org/icans/chapter05/cultural1.html

Country guides and cultural profiles:

Management Guides: http://www.commisceo-global.com/management-guides
Country Guide: http://www.commisceo-global.com/country-guides
Business culture quizzes: http://www.commisceo-global.com/quizzes/business-culture-quizzes?view=qcategory&cat_id=40

useful tool to compare management styles of different countries:
Cultural Map https://hbr.org/web/infographic/2014/04/comparing-management-cultures