



**The emergence of intercultural sensitivity through  
experiential learning in the attitudes of Emirati women**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The expatriate population of Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates stands at close to 90% of the population. The challenges this presents the leaders of the UAE are complex and reflect the social and cultural fabric of the region. Ensuring Emiratis remain the stake-holders in their country is key and only achievable through an 'Emiratization' policy and buy-in from the tertiary sector.

This study takes place at Dubai Women's College, part of the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) which has responded to the government's 'Emiratization' initiative by mandating that all Bachelor Degree students undertake an Intercultural Studies course as part of their studies.

The research explores the role of experiential learning in fostering intercultural openness and seeks to capture students' responses both to this type of learning and to how intercultural understanding and development is perceived by this particular group.

This is a mixed methods study that includes ethnographic data collection, uncovering the complexities of a lived classroom learning experience from the perspective of the students. As an inductive exploratory study the movement is from observation to generalisation to theory.

The data collected was sourced from interviews with students, written reflections and a Likert scale survey. Themes were not pre-determined and were generated through a coding system based on frequency and constant comparison until core categories were clearly defined. Both sets of data were then compared to generate more conclusive theory. Participation was entirely voluntary and taken from the students from a current Intercultural Studies class.

This study has contributed significantly to a field that has not yet explored experiential learning as a vehicle for intercultural studies in an Emirati context. The results provided a much needed road map for the teaching and learning of intercultural studies globally. Finally, this study was unique in that it was designed to capture the students' perspectives of their learning, and of the pedagogy, rather than adopting a more traditional type of external measure.

## **CERTIFICATION OF THESIS**

This thesis is entirely the work of Nicole Shammass except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and has not previously been submitted for any other award, except where acknowledged.

Student and supervisors signatures of endorsement are held at USQ.

Principal Supervisor: A/P Shirley O'Neil

Associate Supervisor: Dr Anikó Hatoss

Student and supervisors signatures of endorsement are held at the University.

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## **Acronyms**

Higher Colleges of Technology: HCT

Intercultural Competence: IC

Dubai Women's campus (DWC)

Intercultural Communication Competence: ICC

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Opener

He drew a circle that shut me out  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle and took him in.

*From the poem "Outwitted" by Edwin Markham*

It is a fairly ordinary Friday in Dubai (the weekend). I am listening to my children playing with their friends in the garden. Aware of monitoring the tell-tale signs language reveals, a side effect of my dissertation studies, I soon realise that one girl is nameless, she is referred to by the visiting friends as 'that girl'.

'That girl' is my housemaid's granddaughter, she spends her weekends in the small house in our garden with her grandmother and a large, extended Sri Lankan family who come and go. Her name is Fatma and she is clearly 'othered' from the British-schooled children that come and go from my home. Despite the many uniting forces such as skin colour, age, language and devotion to Ipad games, somehow Fatma is not a social equal; she remains nameless and is not easily included. This namelessness is significant as children are quick to name peers they *want* to associate with.

However, there is no overt unkindness, no meanness. Nothing that requires parental intervention. But there is, nevertheless, an immutable distancing. Somehow, the mechanisms of social and cultural expectations have conspired against this little girl and everyone is in on it including her. It is the proverbial elephant in the room. With 21 nationalities at my children's school, to excuse these children for not being familiar with cultural others is not plausible.

The purpose of this dissertation is not to explore the reasons for this cultural distancing, although this will be touched upon, but rather to examine how we can become more intercultural sensitive, how we can close this psychological, social and cultural gap towards cultural others, and subsequently how we can determine the extent of this ‘closing’. The setting is an Intercultural Studies course taught at Dubai Women’s College, the participants are Emirati Business students, and the researcher is a trained Intercultural studies teacher who has completed a 5 day Intercultural Intelligence (ICI) Certification workshop through Knowledgeworkx Dubai (“Inter-Cultural Intelligence Certifications”, 2017).

## **1.1: Introduction**

This study aims to understand more fully whether the policy of introducing Intercultural Studies to the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) courses initiates the process of students becoming more globally literate. The rationale behind integrating Intercultural Studies into the HCT tertiary system is to prepare Emirate graduates to more successfully navigate the vastly multi-cultural backdrop of Dubai, and more specifically to prepare them for the challenges of working in a multi-cultural environment both locally and globally.

In addition to this, the research also asks questions about the medium used to deliver this education: experiential learning, a natural companion to the needs of intercultural sensitivity development (Jackson, 2011; Kaikkonen, 1997). This type of approach, in this particular cultural context is not commonplace, and it is important to uncover students’ attitudes towards experiential learning in order to build knowledge that will best serve this particular community of learners in the long term.

The research method adopted is a phenomenological approach. As a teacher–researcher living and working in the United Arab Emirates, issues around intercultural sensitivity are an “abiding concern which seriously interest [me]” (Creswell, 2006, p.59). Thus the *phenomena*, or lived experiences being interpreted are those of both intercultural sensitivity and experiential learning. In order to stay true to phenomenological philosophy, data collection comes through the perspective of the students experiencing it, therefore interviews and reflections will be utilised, which provide insight into the “essence of human experiences” (Creswell, 2013, p. 15).



## **1.2: Background and Context of the Research**

In this study the background and context of the research are unique in that this takes place in an extremely multi-cultural society. Yet within this, the participants are Emirati women studying at a government tertiary institution. They therefore experience Dubai as more of a conservative, gender segregated Islamic society, often living within the confines of their families or their husband's families (Bristol-Rhys, 2010). In addition they will have generally attended government schools, synonymous with a rote learning style where free and independent thought are discouraged (Raven, 2011). Furthermore, notions of culture and Emirati identity are positioned in terms of nation building, loyalty and security rather than enquiry (Partrick, 2009). Herein lies the dichotomy inherent in this research; the course at the center of this study relies on experiential learning and higher order thinking, and has the potential to unhinge longstanding views about cultural others. The challenge is to navigate the research through this landscape without compromising on the rigour of the study or impinging on the morals and norms of the Emirati women at the heart of this study.

### **1.2.1 Background: Social and Political**

In the opening section, the researcher cited the fact that there were 21 nationalities in her children's British curriculum school in Dubai, and this serves to show the extreme demographic cultural mix inherent in Dubai that will be examined, along with the implications of that, in this section.

This study is situated in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The importance of Dubai as the backdrop to this study cannot be understated. The UAE houses an increasingly multicultural work-force; within a total population of 8,264,070, almost 85% are non-nationals (U.A.E National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). The reality for many UAE nationals working in the private sector is that they will not only be the minority nationality in their own country, they will also be working in a vastly multi-cultural work environment. Rapid change and the intercultural issues that accompany that change are at the forefront of social and political rhetoric in the UAE (Kirk & Napier, 2009).

The late ruler of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, is remembered and revered as a champion of women's rights to both education and to work; strongly encouraging women to take their place in society and contribute to the development of the U.A.E (Mahani, & Molki, 2011). With this political foundation and the global trend at the time of tertiary education becoming more accessible (Kirk & Napier, 2009) the stage was set for the U.A.E to develop its tertiary education sector and begin to attend to some of the issues resulting from the country's rapid development.

The current ruler of the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa has not garnered the same, almost cult, following that His Highness Sheikh Zayed did, who was fondly known as the father of the nation. Plagued by health issues since his inauguration His Highness Sheikh Khalifa has not presented himself either publically or through policy to the same extent as Sheikh Zayed; indeed current literature only serves to minimise his role. In Suliman and Hyat's 2011 book chapter *Leadership in the UAE*, Sheikh Khalifa's role in the country's development is noticeably absent and visibly evident in their conclusion: "In summary the UAE has benefited from strong leadership positively associated with the inspirational leadership of the late Sheikh Zayed" (Suliman & Hayat, 2011, p. 111).

Significant to this discussion on women's education and gender issues is a Ministry of Education policy document entitled Vision 2021 (Vision2021.ae, 2015) bringing education to the forefront of government policy as positively impacting both Emirati men and women alike. Sheikh Khalifa, although not instrumental in the creation of the document, has clearly endorsed it. Essentially, policy regarding gender issues and education has remained on the same trajectory spearheaded by Sheikh Zayed, and unchanged under His Highness Sheikh Khalifa.

While 'Emiratization' was first introduced in the early 1990s the policy is even more relevant today and garners generous government attention and financial support as unemployment amongst Emiratis has become one of the nation's fundamental domestic challenges (Forstenlechner, & Rutledge, 2010). UAE Federal National Council member Hamad Al Rahoomi predicts that by 2020, 150,000 UAE nationals will be unemployed, urging both locals and companies to take the government's Emiratization policy seriously (Salem, 2013). It has not gone unnoticed that the problems of the Arab Spring were related to unemployment issues and the UAE

government is at great pains to avoid the same fate. Emiratization is seen as the means to addressing this challenge (Forstenlechner, Madi, Selim, & Rutledge, 2012). Government tertiary institutions in the UAE are seen as the vehicle through which policy can be realised (Godwin, 2006), therefore Emiratization is taken very seriously in the tertiary sector.

To understand the forces at work in the UAE, which transfer to the tertiary institutes, and by design then directly to this study, it is useful to look at Hofstede's (1980) seminal work on differences in national cultures. Relevant to the topic at hand is the cultural dimension of Power Distance, which describes the "extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organisations is distributed unequally" (p. 45).

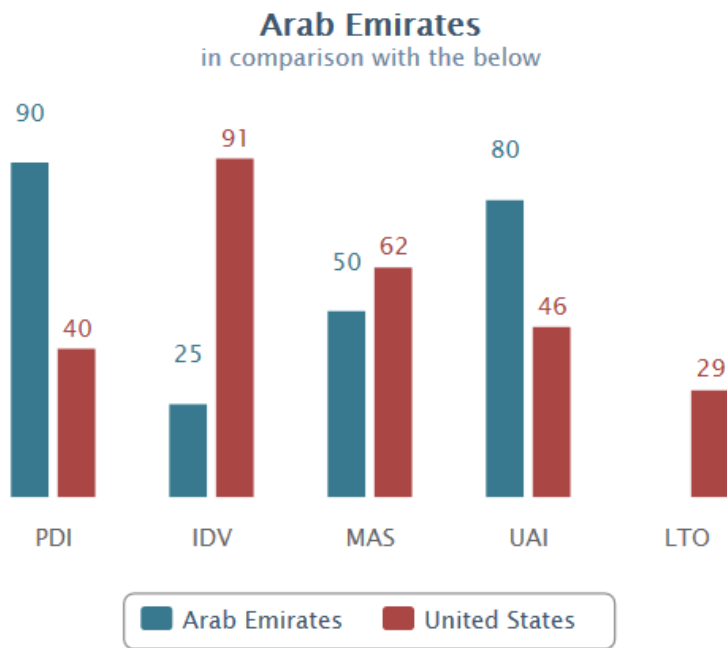


Figure 1.1: Comparison of Power Distance Inventory between the United Arab Emirates and United States. Hofstede from: <http://geert-hofstede.com/arab-emirates.html>.

This explains why people in the UAE, including myself, accept that hierarchy and power are the norm, and illustrates why the HCT is somewhat invested in delivering the Intercultural Studies program.

### 1.2.2 Background: Education and Gender

As evidence of the importance the UAE government places on educating UAE nationals the government provides free education for all nationals from primary through to tertiary. Article 23 of the UAE National Constitution states that: “Education shall be a fundamental factor for the progress of society. It shall be compulsory in its primary stage and free of charge at all stages with the Union” (Godwin, 2006, p. 3). While there are a number of private fee paying tertiary institutions in the UAE, the educational context within this study is that of the government-funded tertiary institutions of which there are three: The United Arab Emirates University, Zayed University and the Higher Colleges of Technology.

The first Higher Colleges of Technology campuses opened in Al Ain and Abu Dhabi in 1988, with Dubai Men’s and Women’s campuses opening in 1989; further growth in the 1990s soon took the number to 17 campuses, with 18,000 students enrolled throughout the country (Swan, 2011). The teaching ethos of the HCT is comparable to that of a western style institution, with concern for learning by doing, student-focused learning and fostering respect for different learning styles (“Faculty, Business - Job Posting Details”, 2017”). This study takes place at the Higher of Colleges of Technology, Dubai Women’s campus (DWC), a campus of close to 3,000 mostly female students with faculty from all over the world. Programs include both Bachelor’s degree and Diploma programs with the remit being preparation for the workplace in support of the government Emiratization (the governmental drive for Emiratis to join the workforce) policy.

The students in this program and the participants in this study are young Emirati women studying at Dubai Women’s campus. Traditionally the number of Emirati women in higher education is extremely high with 95% of high school students applying for tertiary positions (Wilkins, 2010). Madsen and Cook claim that the number of Emirati women in tertiary education is increasing at a rate “that has not been achieved in any other country in the world” (Ferghany, 2005, as cited in Madsen & Cook, 2010, p. 132). Statistics from the United Arab Emirates University corroborate this and show a jump in female enrolment from 189 students in 1977 to 12,391 in 2003 (Nelson, 2004). As these women are generally the first generation in their family

to attend college, literature into the demographics and disposition of these students is relatively scant.

In order to examine more deeply the contextual factors relevant to this research, it is important to uncover what these women bring to this work. Despite being female students from a conservative Arab Muslim country where “women typically experience a disadvantageous position in society” (Gallant, & Pounder, 2008, p. 15), on the surface they appear to live a somewhat emancipated life. They have not had to fight for the right to an education as UAE society values women’s education. Nor have they had to fight for the right to work, as society encourages them to contribute and the workplace welcomes them. However, there are still many issues that serve to subjugate Emirati women. Laws on divorce, inheritance and child custody alongside rights to nationality discriminate against women and in the minds and thoughts of both men and women alike, women still carry the legacy of a patriarchal society and are viewed as subordinate to men (Gallant & Pounder, 2008). This combination of perceived outward freedom and internal resistance is crucial as to why many Emirati women struggle with the concept of agency.

Gender is an important consideration in this study because of the huge gender divide between UAE men and women where their experiences and life expectations are vastly different. The UAE is a patriarchal society where the father, husband or son has a role of guardian over the women and where men are clearly more valued than women (Crabtree, 2007). It will be interesting, therefore, to investigate the perceptions of Emirati women as they have less opportunity to interact with foreigners as Emirati men do and are often less confident in these encounters.

Cultural considerations make one-on-one interviews and reflections ideal for this group of women as Emirati society is a small community and confidentiality is important. Revealing personal information, even related to teaching and learning, with other Emiratis present is often prohibitive as there is a fear of gossiping or of secrets being exposed (Winslow, Honein, & Elzubeir, 2002). Allowing these young women to talk openly and honestly, whilst assured of anonymity is something they respond well to, especially when the interviewer is someone whom they have rapport with and have developed trust in. Sharing openly is not something Emiratis are accustomed to or comfortable with. In Fatima Al-Darmaki’s study on Emirati college students’

attitudes towards counselling, she reports that: “they seem to have negative attitudes toward interpersonal openness” (2011, p. 48).

In short, the rapidly accelerating change in the U.A.E brought about by an influx of expatriates in the last 20 years has created a unique set of social and political problems. Through the work of the late Sheikh Zayed the country is predisposed to the value of education and acknowledges the contribution women can make to society. With the government prioritising Emiratization as a result of the Arab Spring, and an increasing call to develop strategies to successfully navigate multicultural living, it is fitting that Intercultural Studies is incorporated into the UAE tertiary curriculum.

### 1.2.3 Background: Role and Stance of the Researcher

Given the unique position this study is situated in, the role of the researcher is crucial in sensitively navigating the potential minefield an intercultural course such as this offers students in the UAE. At the forefront of this is the need for a researcher in this context to primarily respect the cultural norms and values of the UAE, which may at times be contradictory to western norms and values. The phrase ‘western’ is used as a broad term in this study to refer to countries that are historically marked by European immigration that share similar social norms, political and belief systems such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. This contradiction of values does not imply any differential in esteem or regard of either culture: Emirati or ‘western’, For the researcher it requires an acknowledgement of difference, and the ability to adjust and adapt accordingly.

Throughout this proposal I use the term teacher-researcher to define my dual role. According to Bauman and Duffy the term teacher-researcher is: “A reflective elementary, secondary, or postsecondary classroom teacher [who] identifies a persistent teaching problem or question and decides to initiate a classroom inquiry” (2001, p. 3). I am a teacher-researcher in that I have identified a number of questions related to my own teaching practice that have propelled me to instigate a systematic study that seeks to answer those questions. The ethos from which a teacher, such as myself, chooses to research their own students comes from the belief that there is all too often a research disconnect between what is *really* happening in the classroom and what is

written about what is really happening in the classroom (Cochran-Smith, & Lytle, 1990; Hammack, 1997). This idea that research needs to be directly applicable to work has gained much momentum as “teachers have begun to assume their rightful position at the head and heart of inquiry into classroom practice” (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 477, as cited in Hammack, 1997).

With any dual role however, there is potential for conflict and I am aware of the fact that my actions as a researcher should not compromise my role as a teacher; my primary responsibility. The ethics of this situation are discussed in the ethics section. It is worth noting here though that there is a clear distinction in this study between the teaching and the research; simply put, my time in class is for teaching, and time out of class has been allocated for research. There are, and will always continue to be, moments in my class teaching that will pique my research interest. What I do with that moment will be relative to the question: *Is this useful learning for my students?* It is inevitable that my perceptions of this research study will broaden while interacting with my student-participants; however, these insights will be explored within the research framework, not ad hoc in the classroom.

Alongside a need to examine my role as both teacher and researcher, I recognise that I bring my own unique beliefs and assumptions to this study; which also shapes my researcher stance. On a personal and ethical level, having taught Emirati women for close to 16 years I acknowledge I am guided strongly by “notions of ethics of care, responsibility and relationship” (Morrison, 2002, p. 183). The notion of situated ethics, carrying with it an attitude of “being with rather than looking at subjects in research” (De Laine, cited in Morrison, 2002, p. 182) and implying a desire for a deeper understanding of the participants, resonates strongly here. This attitude also sits nicely with the use of a phenomenological approach where the research aims to respectfully dig deeper to fully uncover the phenomenon.

Respect for the students comes from my personal ethos where I believe the role of the teacher is one of a nurturing mentor, enabling me to more easily develop a classroom environment where students feel safe to speak openly, which is vital in this type of course. Contributing to this is my Arab heritage which gives me an edge of trust with Emirati students; one that I deeply honor and value. My lack of a strong cultural identity enables me to view other cultures somewhat neutrally and I demonstrate this acceptance in the classroom. I am a positive role model for

students in this regard, and if I am successful in this, then surely I am well-equipped to teach these students as they struggle with the challenges of being a minority in such a multi-cultural society. Issues of potential researcher bias in the researcher's dual role capacity will be discussed in Chapter 3.

### **1.3: Focus of the Study**

This study was born out of the researcher's initial curiosity in asking herself how effective the intercultural course that she teaches on, actually is; as far as her students are concerned. Literature indicates that this is indeed a complex question with no definitive answers. Approaches to this subject are varied, reflecting the infancy of the field with definitions and concepts still being explored. However, research to date indicates that a two-pronged approach to intercultural learning is most effective, incorporating both theory and practice. The gap in the body of knowledge exists where, in contexts such as this, 'practice' is not possible. To counter this, an experiential approach with the aim of developing participants' intercultural sensitivity, has been adopted, which to some extent provides students with the experience of an intercultural encounter. This study builds knowledge in the field by testing how effective this approach is. In order to fully answer this question some sort of measure needs to be in place. The literature review highlights the limitations in many of the current assessment tools and posits a case for using a repertoire of tools to track participants' perceptions of their intercultural learning. This is a unique approach that will contribute to the body of knowledge in the field, for all practitioners, but especially for trainers and researchers working in a context such as this one. To date, most intercultural research takes place in either a Western or Asian environment and there is a gap in the field regarding training in non-Western/non-democratic contexts; "one key gap that exists is non-Western perspectives on intercultural competence" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 51). Gorski (2008) goes so far as to call for the decolonisation of intercultural education and argues for the "dismantling of dominant hegemony" (Gorski, 2008, p. 1). Like much of education, western practices are often held as the benchmark of quality and adopted in non-Western contexts without thought to their usefulness or applicability (Shah, 2004). This study also builds knowledge lacking in the field on the connection between experiential and intercultural learning; the use of trainees' perceptions for assessment and a training program that does not incorporate some sort of direct intercultural encounter. The research questions reflect these gaps.



### 1.3.1 Research Questions

The aim of this research is to uncover both the perceived effectiveness of, and attitudes towards, experiential learning in the role of teaching and learning intercultural sensitivity (a term that will be elaborated on in the literature review) with Emirati students. The notion of *perceived* effectiveness is an important distinction to make here as this study considers the viewpoints of the participants and how they are constructing knowledge. Concrete, causal links in a creative transformative learning environment are difficult to evidence (Bamber, 2013), therefore perceptions in this type of study must play a greater role in providing this evidence. Within this context the aim is also to understand how Emirati students perceive intercultural understanding and what it means to them in practical terms. Research questions are as follows:

*1: How do Emirati students perceive their intercultural learning as a result of taking the Dubai Women's College Intercultural studies course?*

*2: To what extent do Emirati students perceive experiential learning as an effective teaching and learning approach for Intercultural Studies?*

### 1.3.2 Significance of the study

The significance of this study reaches across the fields of interculturality and experiential learning, and is situated within the context of Emirati women's lives. Primarily, the connection between experiential learning as an approach to teaching intercultural understanding is explored and contributes to a limited body of theory where the focus on intercultural learning is all too often on the skills and attributes required rather than how those skills are developed (Yamazaki, & Kayes, 2004). This research adds much needed practical knowledge for the classroom teacher/trainer in this regard and clearly demonstrates the connection between intercultural and experiential learning. The results of this will positively impact the Intercultural Studies course to greater enhance the teaching and learning of this subject, benefiting both future students and the college itself as the syllabus is improved. However, the benefits are not limited to a UAE context, and all those interested in intercultural studies and/or experiential learning will be able to learn and gain from this. As a study of Emirati women, this research contributes to a fairly scant body of literature which supports further academics working in the region, especially in regard to

knowledge and theory building about how Emirati women perceive intercultural issues and respond to experiential learning. This research potentially leads Emirati women to a broader intercultural understanding, which in turn goes far in supporting the UAE government's Emirtization drive, especially in their concern with getting Emiratis to enter the private sector. This is a sector that has openly stated that Emiratis often lack the holistic necessary training and skills to succeed (Morris, 2006). This study contributes significantly to knowledge that directly fills that gap. While it may not directly reach the ears of government policy makers, the results of this study will certainly impact those who teach this course and therefore the lives of those who matter: Emirati women. This research also contributes to the body of knowledge about how Emirati women experience the shift in teaching style and pedagogy, from high school rote learning where the teacher is the authority to a more democratic autonomous classroom that fosters agency.

As an emerging field of research, the literature is still in its infancy (Ang et al., 2007). Especially lacking is expertise on how we assess and measure this development (Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003).

and this research explores this question and will therefore contribute to the wider body of knowledge in the field. Finally, this research is important because the world *is* changing, and because the new challenges we face in this increasingly global world permeate every aspect of our lives. Limited research exists on how to best incorporate intercultural studies into the curriculum of our tertiary institutions. This research explores the question of how we can successfully teach intercultural studies in a tertiary organisation where English is not the first language. Through this the researcher is contributing to the body of knowledge and providing a working model for others in this position.

#### **1.4 Outline of the chapters**

Chapter Two, the literature review examines the relevant literature across three areas relevant to this study, and these themes then underpin the conceptual framework, outlined in this chapter. First, a clear definition and conceptual understanding of interculturality is established. Second, methods and practices related to the teaching of intercultural studies are described, with a focus on experiential learning as the teaching and learning pedagogy adopted in this study. Third,

assessment practices within the intercultural education field are reviewed and how this specifically relates to experiential learning. These themes build on the research to date and contribute to both the general body of knowledge in the field and specifically to understanding interculturality within a non-western context.

Chapter Three builds on Chapter Two by examining the course at the center of this study, detailing the dual focus on both theoretical and affective knowledge and its practical application, reflecting the research in the literature. It also describes a number of salient guiding principles for teaching in the field that draw and expand on the literature to date.

Chapter Four the methodology chapter outlines the epistemological and ontological foundation and rationale for adopting a phenomenological approach. This chapter demonstrates the link between the research questions, the research gap, the theoretical foundation, the methodology and how this study contributes to the field. It presents the research framework, the participants and data collection tools and identifies the potential problems in its discussion of the validity and reliability of the research and how to address them.

Chapter Five describes the data analysis and presents the findings. Findings from the surveys and both pre- and post-course interviews are interpreted within the context of the research questions. This chapter identifies the main factors participants perceive as helping or hindering the development of their intercultural understanding and the effectiveness of experiential learning in this context.

Chapter Six draws on the data analysis and findings from chapter four to answer the research questions and clarify how participants have engaged with experiential learning and it offers an explanation regarding the intercultural development trajectory of the participants. Practical implications are discussed, the studies limitations are outlined, and recommendations for moving forward in order to contribute to the wider body of knowledge in the field are outlined.

## **1.5 Summary**

This chapter has outlined the social, cultural and political context of this study providing the rationale for intercultural education in the UAE tertiary sector. Emirati women constitute the

majority of students in this sector, and as the participants of this study, their position in UAE society and unique cultural outlook has been discussed. In addition issues around the need to navigate the dual role of both teacher and researcher to the women in this study have been raised.

Central research questions have been outlined which determine the focus of this study: Emirati female students' perceptions of their intercultural sensitivity development and responses to experiential learning. The significance of this study has been summarised, capturing both the bridge this study brings to intercultural education within an Emirati context, and providing a teaching model for intercultural practitioners globally. Finally an outline of the dissertation chapters has been presented.

The following chapter explores the literature relevant to the research questions by examining current research in the intercultural and experiential learning fields. Gaps in the body of knowledge are identified, which are addressed in this study, thereby contributing to developing knowledge in the field that will be elaborated on in Chapter 5, the discussion.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Overview

The literature review discusses the concepts and primary texts relevant to both the intercultural and experiential learning fields. It begins by defining concepts of interculturality and outlining why *intercultural sensitivity* is the preferred term for this study. Following this is an examination of intercultural training both past to present, providing reasoning that underpins the instructional pedagogy adopted in this study; that of experiential learning. Experiential learning is defined and described within the context of this study, drawing on Kolb's experiential learning theory. Justification into why there is a need for intercultural training is outlined and the Dubai Women's College Intercultural Studies Course is examined drawing on research in the field to both explain and validate the teaching and learning material tested out for this research study. This review then addresses assessment methods for intercultural training and presents a case for the use of a reflective, perceptive evaluation model. Finally, the literature examines current research methodologies and studies in the field and provides the grounds for the adoption of a phenomenological research approach.

The literature review demonstrates the need for continued research adding to body of knowledge on intercultural learning within an experiential learning framework. This study aims to address that lack and contribute to the field by examining an experiential approach in action for teaching and learning intercultural sensitivity utilizing a phenomenological research methodology. In addition this study also fills a gap in the field of knowledge on intercultural learning through its unique focus on *intercultural sensitivity*, a competency not constrained by the need to *behave* with intercultural others, a feature more commonly associated with intercultural development. Finally, the literature review exposes a wide gap in research in the field that takes place in a conservative Islamic society.

Table 2.1 below illustrates the three themes that the literature review addresses. From these foundations both the research gap and research questions are generated thus determining the

theoretical foundation and methodology, both of which will be elaborated on in this chapter and are presented in Table 2.2 as the conceptual framework.

Table 2.1: Literature Review Themes

<b>Intercultural Understanding</b>		
<u>What is intercultural understanding?</u>	<u>How can it best be taught?</u>	<u>How can intercultural learning be captured?</u>
Clarify intercultural definitions and competences	Teaching and learning: Current literature	Intercultural assessment tools
Adoption of the term intercultural sensitivity	Experiential learning as a teaching and learning approach.	Assessment in experiential learning
	Dubai Women’s College Course Overview and link to theory	The use of reflection and student perceptions of learning as a measure.

The starting point for this conceptual framework is initially driven by the researcher’s curiosity when asking herself how the students’ view and perceive the development of their intercultural maturity as a result of doing this course. As outlined in Chapter 1, the demographics of the UAE, and Dubai in particular, necessitate a need for Emirati tertiary students to enter both the workforce and their communities with the sensitivity to navigate cultural difference. Reflecting this, Intercultural Studies has become integrated into the curriculum of the UAE’s largest tertiary provider: the Higher Colleges of Technology. The literature review demonstrates the challenges there are in answering how successful these types of programs are and accordingly refines the research inquiry around the themes of both experiential learning and that of perceived intercultural development. The theoretical foundation explores both these concepts and the relationship between them within the structure of a mixed methods phenomenological study. The primary purpose of this study, and indeed of most research in the social sciences, is therefore to understand the nature of this lived phenomenon, one that is experienced but uncharted, and from the knowledge gained be able to act, and specifically in this case, educate, in more effective ways (Labaree, 2009).

Table 2.2: Conceptual Framework

<b>Research Questions</b>	
1: How do Emirati students perceive their intercultural learning?	
2: How do Emirati students perceive experiential learning?	
<b>Research Gap</b>	
Contribution of intercultural studies course on the intercultural sensitivity development of Emirati women.	Effectiveness of experiential learning for developing intercultural sensitivity in an Emirati context.
<b>Theoretical Foundation</b>	
Intercultural Development Theory	Experiential Learning Theory
<b>Methodology</b>	
Mixed Methods Approach - Ethnographic study - Phenomenology – data collection – interviews – written responses – Likert scale survey	
<b>Contribution to existing field of knowledge</b>	
In what ways does intercultural studies foster or hinder intercultural sensitivity for Emirati women?	In what ways do students perceive the use of experiential learning in developing intercultural sensitivity?

## 2.2 Introduction

Given the plethora of research on how the world is becoming more interconnected (Irving, 2010; Jackson, 2008) and the resultant pressing need for intercultural competence (Ang, Dyne & Tan, 2011), this work contributes to knowledge about how to actually do this at a tertiary level, and then on how to know we've actually *done* it (Deardroff, 2006; Stone, 2006), whether it be a more objective study of direct measurable change over time, or, as in the scope of this study, an exploration of students' perceptions.

With as many as 63% of American universities either having, or developing a diversity component into their curriculum (Klein, 2010) it is apparent the subject *is* being prioritised. In

view of the field's significance there is limited research, outside corporate training programs and missionary colleges, on classroom methods used to cultivate intercultural sensitivity. Ang et al. report that "relatively little research ... focuses on factors that could improve intercultural encounters" (2007, p. 336), Livermore comments on the haphazard implementation of cultural intelligence education in the U.S. school system (Montgomery, 2011), while Otten (2003) describes the prevailing uncertainty and vagueness around methods of how to teach this subject.

Once taught, the logical next question is: How do we assess this learning? And, more precisely, exactly what learning are we assessing? Despite prioritising it, many U.S universities cite the high number of students who travel overseas or enrol in intercultural courses as part of their studies and interpret this as successful 'internationalisation' without other measures in place (Deardorff, 2004). Evidence strongly suggests that research into methods of *measuring* the development of intercultural awareness is sorely needed in order to measure the efficacy of these programs and whether they are producing globally minded, inter-culturally competent citizens. (Klein 2010; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003).

### **2.3 What is Culture? Hofstede's Definition**

Before there can be any discussion of 'intercultural', the concept of 'culture' within intercultural studies, and what this encompasses needs to briefly be explored in order to establish a defined construct. Concepts of culture have been explored across disciplines (Fischer, 2009) for over half a century, starting with Hall (1963), continuing with Hofstede (1992), then leading to current day researchers such as Spencer-Oatey, (2000); Triandis (2000) and Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, (2011). While it is not within the remit of this study to uncover the plethora of research on culture, the importance of Hofstede's work, particularly around 'programming on the mind', provides a spring board for investigation into interculturality, the focus of this study. Hofstede's work is important as he remains the leading scholar in the field with regard to identifying and mapping national differences (Doupnik & Tsakumis, 2004). Hofstede defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (1992, p. 25). Just as a computer can be programmed, our formative years of childhood are spent learning how to think, act and feel and we become, in a sense, programmed as well. When this process is shared, it is there that culture is formed, and Hofstede



also acknowledges the ‘individual culture’, which takes into account the differences in personality and allows for diversity and divergence (Dahl, 2004). Using data from 116,000 IBM employees around the world, Hofstede has tapped into this shared programming or ‘culture’ and identified five value dimensions along which nations can be positioned. These are: Power distance, Collectivism versus Individualism, Femininity versus Masculinity, Uncertainty versus Avoidance and Long-term versus Short-term orientation (Hofstede, 1983). As someone who spends a good part of their day in the classroom, and who uses Hofstede as an introduction to Intercultural Studies, I find students relate to Hofstede’s work, especially when it comes to examining the country comparisons. When shown a chart with sharp contrasts such as Saudi Arabia and the U.S.A in terms of Collectivism versus Individualism, this work suddenly becomes alive and for many students, Hofstede gives real meaning to what is culture and cultural difference.

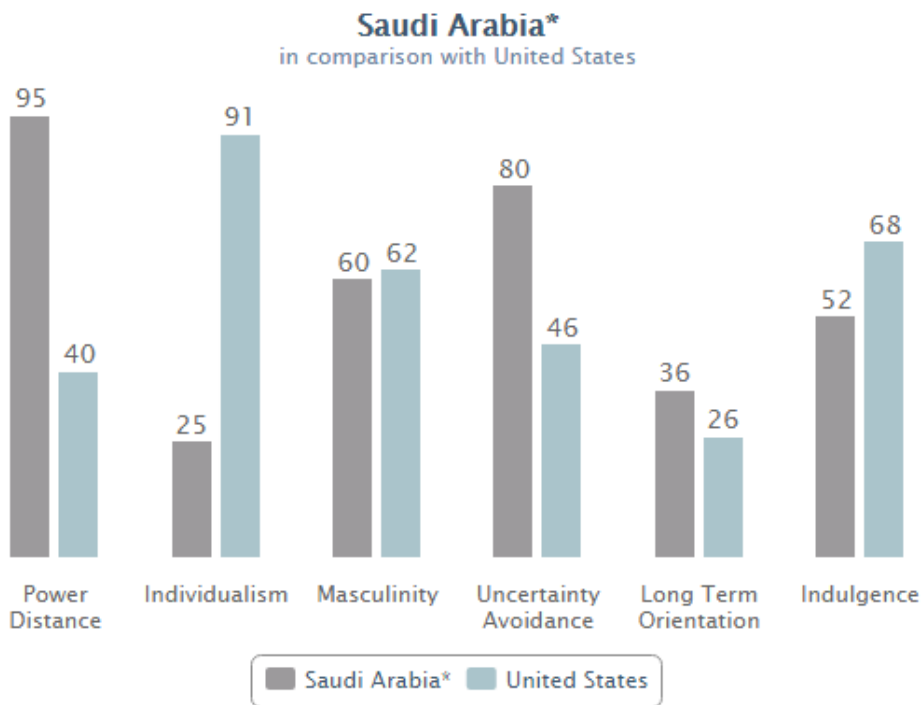


Figure 2.1: Comparison of Dimensions between Saudi Arabia and the United States. Hofstede from: <http://geert-hofstede.com/arab-emirates.html>.

It is Hofstede's programming of the mind theory that defines culture within 'intercultural', which is at the core of this study. Within this framework, culture is viewed as layered and complex with differences in behavior and ways of thinking attributed to learned collective tendencies.

While Hofstede is considered a leading figure within the field, it is important to acknowledge the limitations in his work and to draw on more current constructs. For example, Holliday (2010) describes culture as being more fluid and independent of nation and collective tendencies "social structures of nations do not necessarily define and confine cultural reality" (p. 176). Holliday argues that culture works in dialogue with religion, ideology, politics etc to shape behaviour and thought and that cultural identity may be forged individually rather than collectively. A research study by Signori, Wiesemes and Murphy (2009) concurs with Holliday and describes culture as both fuzzy and mutable and separate from concepts of nation. They also identify issues in Hofstede's classification of cultural dimensions arguing that other factors such as socio economics may have a significant impact on a cultural tendencies, meaning, for example that so called collectivist societies could also operate as more individually oriented. The study goes on to describe Hofstede's definition of gender roles as "superficial" (p. 256) and defines Hofstede's work as having a number of inconsistencies. A study by Fang (2003) finds flaws in Hofstede's fifth dimension of national culture: long term orientation, which outlines the two poles of Chinese value systems. Fang describes Hofstede's work in this regard as contradictory, unclear, not wholly relevant and "suffers from a grave philosophical flaw" (p. 355) related to Hofstede's understanding of Chinese philosophical beliefs around the dualism yin and yang. Another study by Catalin (2012) concludes not by discrediting Hofstede but by advocating the need for flexibility and saying there is an absence of convergence of the 6 models examined so when integrated there are 5 emergent themes – relationship with the environment, the social organisation, distribution of power, orientation in relation to rules, and orientation in relation to time In addition, Jones (2007), identifies a number of limitations in Hofstede's work, primarily around Hofstede's tendency of painting a broad brush stroke in defining culture, where "the domestic populations is [viewed] as a homogenous whole" (p. 5). Other criticisms include the age of the research, the appropriateness of the data instruments, too few dimensions, and the participants all being from one company (Jones, 2007). However, despite these critiques, and those above, Jones concedes that Hofstede's work "remains the most valuable piece of work on culture for both scholars and practitioners"

(p.7). In spite of the potential to oversimplify or stereotype Hofstede's work has been seminal with respect to consideration of national cultural difference and currently is still recognized as relevant, therefore it's inclusion in this current study is warranted.

Having explored notions of culture, as slippery as they are, it is necessary to also clarify the notions of both 'cultural other' and 'othering' which are referred to in this current study; terms that are somewhat intertwined in the literature but carry significant differences in meaning in this study. Both are experienced by everyone across the globe in some form or other, and reflect the way social identities are constructed, the categorization of people as 'not one of us', and an 'us and them' type of world view (Moncada Linares, 2016). This type of binary opposition can lead to 'othering' which results in an objectification of the 'other' in order to promote the self (Dervin, 2011), and "may cause alienation, and perpetuation of group stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice, and injustice" (Moncada Linares, 2016, p. 131). Othering is both pervasive and destructive, and a concept that Moncada Linares (2016) challenges us as educators to address in the classroom through critical work on cultural awareness and facilitating a learning environment where there is room given for reflection on deep held beliefs and in developing a sense of appreciation and respect for difference. It is the hope of the researcher that the Intercultural Studies course in this current study goes some way in meeting Moncada Linares' challenge. The term 'cultural other', on the other hand, is used widely in this study as a syntactical choice to convey a neutral social construct of those who are non-Emirati, the term 'foreigner' could be equally applied. While it may be argued that, particularly in this field, terms are rarely neutral and loaded with assumptions and biases, it is used in this dissertation purely for ease of communication, clarity and consistency as a descriptive term to differentiate groups and as the researcher's preference to the word 'foreigner'.

It is also important to distinguish at this point, that this study focuses on *intercultural* learning, **not** the teaching of culture. Cultural studies are often described as the delivery of information about the surface features of a culture, i.e. dress, food, geography etc, whereas intercultural studies is "not satisfied with the view from the outside" (Sercu, 2002, p. 62) but rather aims to gain an inside view, to understand more deeply the underlying mechanisms and shared values of a group of people (Byram & Nichols, 2001). This interculturality, or view from the inside, will be defined and examined in the following section.

## 2.4 Defining Understanding

### 2.4.1 Defining Understanding: Intercultural Concepts

Scholars in the field of Intercultural Studies appear to *mostly agree* on what the concepts and competencies of intercultural awareness exemplify. Jane Bennett, executive director of the Intercultural Communication Institute in Portland Oregon, attributes intercultural competence to the development of three skills: cognitive, affective, and behavioural. These three skills combined “support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts” (2011, p. 3). Bennett raises the critical issue of intercultural competence needing to be sequentially taught and facilitated, and experienced through a depth of intercultural experiences. She refutes the theory that simply having knowledge about cultures, e.g. learning a language or going abroad on holiday, equates to developing intercultural understanding (Bennett, 2011).

Similarly, Deardoff, editor of the SAGE handbook of Intercultural Competence, concurs with Bennett in acknowledging the need to provide experiential “meaningful cultural interactions” (2006b, p.232) and notes that demonstrated intercultural competency requires more than “observable performance” (2006b, p. 243). In a ground-breaking study that involved interviewing a number of scholars in the field, Deardoff arrived at the following definition of intercultural competence: “The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge skills and attitudes” (Deardoff, 2004, p. 194, cited in Deardoff, 2006b). Deardoff’s research identifies traits such as curiosity, respect for others and cognitive flexibility as characteristics of intercultural competence. Unique to Deardoff is her development of these ideas to add an awareness of the impact a person’s own culture has on developing their intercultural competence.

Earley and Ang (2003), both widely published authorities in Cultural Intelligence, have devised a four factor model of Cultural Intelligence, building on the multiple intelligence framework of Sternberg and Detterman. Earley and Ang define Cultural Intelligence as “a person’s capability to adapt to new cultural contexts” (p. 56). While sharing some ground with both Bennett and Deardoff in citing cognitive, motivational and behavioural elements as defining intercultural competence, they differ by determining that intercultural competence has both content and process

features. Their premise is that intercultural competence needs to be demonstrated in visible action – determined by the specific cultural situation and that without this process feature, intercultural intelligence is lacking (Earley & Ang, 2003).

Much research in the field is divided between the need to demonstrate behavioural attributes as a defining component of intercultural competence (Ruben, 1987; Hawes and Kealey, 1981) to those citing sensitivity or developing positive emotions as being equally important (Pusch, 2004; Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005). In a study by Hammer, Bennet and Wiseman (2003) the authors distinguish and define these two competencies by reducing them to notions of *knowing* and *doing* in an interculturally proficient manner. Proponents of the behavioural stream, pioneered by Ruben (1976), argue that while someone may have a positive outlook, good motives and a theoretical understanding of interculturality, they may, and often do, fall short in displaying appropriate behaviour. Ruben (1976) went on to add that in terms of assessing intercultural competency, it is the behavioural displays that need to be considered, calling for “measures of competency that reflect an individual’s ability to display concepts in his behaviour rather than intentions, understandings, knowledges, attitudes, or desires” (as cited in Sinicrop, Norris & Watanabe, 2007, p. 4). More recent studies also reflect this reasoning, including Fantini (2009) describing intercultural competency as “a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically or culturally different from oneself” (as cited in Jackson, 2014, p. 308). A study by the Council of Europe (Barrett & Huber, 2014) also echoes this need for intercultural competency to be defined by behavioural action. While they recognise that attitude and openness are necessary, they contend the key to constructing intercultural competency is the need to apply these traits through action. At another point in the spectrum are those researchers (Bennett, Bennett, Gaskins & Roberts, 2004; Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004) who argue that intercultural sensitivity, the ability to integrate different cultural outlooks into their worldviews, is at the essence of developing intercultural awareness: “Through increasing levels of intercultural sensitivity, increasing degrees of proficiency in intercultural competence become possible (Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004, p. 180). These researchers acknowledge that intercultural training, when focused on the development of subject knowledge or behavioural components exclusively, does not necessarily lead to a shift in attitude or perspective, a pre-requisite for increased intercultural competency (Mendenhall et al., 2004).

However, the argument is not so black and white with researchers acknowledging the necessity for both affective and behavioural aspects of intercultural competency. Penbek, Şahin and Cerit, (2012) summarise the literature regarding intercultural communicative competence in the table below, which reflects both these arguments and presents intercultural communicative competence as encompassing both.

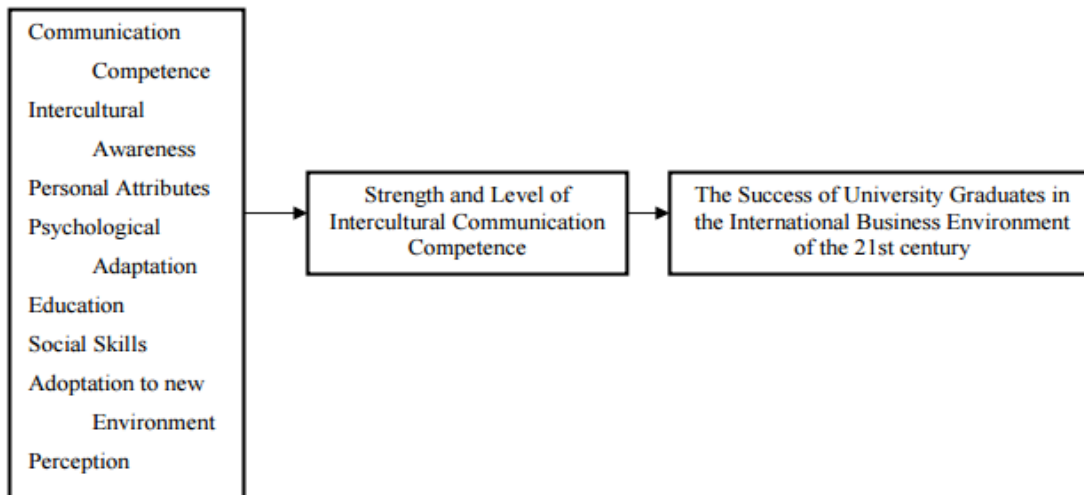


Figure 2.2: Components of Intercultural Communication Competence (Penbek, Şahin & Cerit, 2012)

The authors of this model stress that ‘communicative’ does not refer to linguistic ability, but rather to the efficacy of the intercultural exchange, more precisely, as “the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviour to elicit a desired response in a specific environment” (as cited in Chen 1990, p.2). Taylor (1994) also defines intercultural competency development as beginning with the transformative capacity to adapt “whereby the stranger develops adaptive capacity, altering his/her perspective to effectively understand and accommodate the demands of the host” (as cited in Penbek, Şahin, & Cerit, 2012, p. 2). Similarly Deardorff (2009) provides the rationale for a *process model* of intercultural competency by drawing on the work of a number of interculturalists (Deardorff, 2004). Deardorff posits that developing intercultural competency is a process, moving from developing a compatible attitude and shift of perspective to one of demonstrating appropriate intercultural behaviour. The strength in this process model lies in its understanding of intercultural competence as being complex, shifting, and requiring an element of reflection (Jackson, 2014).

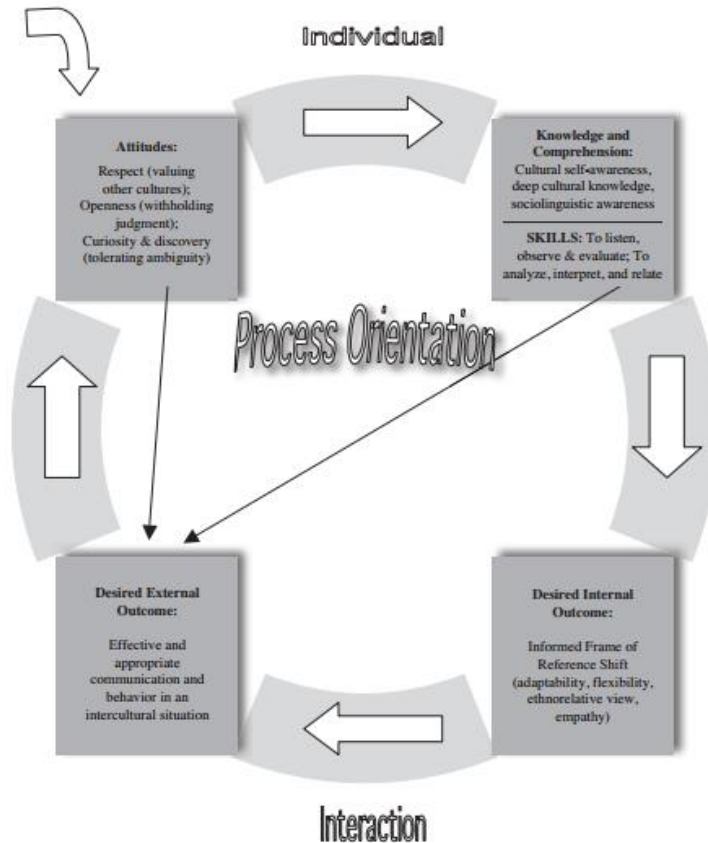


Figure 2.3: Process model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2009).

The present study aligns with these process models, and posits that a positive shift in perspective towards cultural others may initiate the beginnings of effective intercultural competence, without the immediate need for ‘visible action’. The development of intercultural sensitivity is the goal of the instructional course in this study, and the reasons for this were justified earlier, relating to the socio-political context of the participants. Research from these process models demonstrates that the development of intercultural competence relies on a supporting foundation of developing intercultural sensitivity. The research questions in this present study do not explicitly enquire about direct behavioural changes as a result of completing this intercultural studies course. However, if an intercultural maturity trajectory is to be followed, then this study aims to establish whether the seeds of intercultural sensitivity have been sown, and if so, one could hope they bear fruit in the long term and therefore reasonably expect behavioural adaptations for these participants. However, that is a different study.

What we can understand from these definitions and theoretical frameworks is that although there are varied interpretations, intercultural competencies have similarly defining concepts: they share key attributes, view learning as developmental, and value deep learning as opposed to focusing solely on behavioural differences.

#### 2.4.2 Defining Understanding: Terms

Chen Guo-Ming starts her paper on *intercultural sensitivity* with the following statement: “The development of a "global village" strongly demands the ability of *intercultural sensitivity* between people for all of us to survive in the 21st century” (1997, p. 3). Replace the words *intercultural sensitivity* with words like *competence* or *cultural intelligence* and the meaning by and large remains the same, i.e. intercultural understanding is important in an increasingly globalising world.

What this serves to illustrate is that the field of ‘intercultural studies’ encompasses a rather broad range of terms with a generally agreed upon meaning, such as intercultural sensitivity, transcultural communication, intercultural communicative competence, intercultural competence, multi-culturalism, intercultural intelligence, cross-cultural awareness and global competitive intelligence to name a few (Sinicrope, Norris & Watanabe 2007; Dervn 2010; & Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). A recent study by Ang, Leung and Tan (2013) recognizes at least 30 models that all fall under the umbrella of intercultural effectiveness. At present the field still has no cohesive definition, consistent ‘label’, or leading theory (Vijver & Leung, 2009). However, the term *intercultural competence* is increasingly being used with much overlap into other terms with similar concepts (Popa, Butnaru, Teodor & Cozma, 2008). Despite the lack of consensus about a universally accepted term, scholars do agree that the underlying goal of ‘intercultural studies’ encompasses the broad, largely positive ability of being able to transcend and step beyond one’s own culture in order to understand cultural others (Bennett, 2011; Deardorff, 2006; Earley & Ang, 2003).

The current lack of precision in distinguishing between the terms may lead to a degree of ambiguity that for the most part can go unnoticed. However, in this research study, exactness is



vital in order to reflect, in real terms, the purpose of the Intercultural Studies course at Dubai Women's College and therefore the scope of this research study.

In this research the term *intercultural sensitivity* is used to accurately reflect the focus of the teaching and learning. *Intercultural* is adopted as opposed to *cultural* because it reinforces the notion of the competency being a learned skill or acquired attitude between one's own culture and another (or more) and implies the *interaction* of cultures (Gu, 2009), which is an important distinction to make. With the focus on intercultural we are exploring the "interface between two or more individuals with differing culture maps" (Bennett, 2009, p. 126). Emphasizing *inter* over *cultural* also avoids the cultural taking over at the expense of the 'inter' (Dervin, Paatela-Nieminen, Kuoppala, & Riitaoja, 2012, p. 4). This is not a study of culture per se, or what Dervin calls the "grammars of cultures" (2010, p. 156), a sort of check list of do's and don'ts in other cultures. Indeed researchers acknowledge that studying cultural groups does little to actually foster sensitivity (Hardy & Laszloffy, 1995). The learning outcomes for the Intercultural Studies course, which this research is based on, do not require students to demonstrate knowledge of cultural norms around the globe, rather it requires an understanding of both Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede, 1983; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997), and World View theory (Muller, 2001), both concepts bound by *interculturality*.

The word *sensitivity* is used as opposed to other commonly used terms such as competence, intelligence, or communication because this is the aim of the Dubai Women's College Intercultural Studies course. Indeed this *has* to be the aim given the social and political constraints of the U.A.E. Intercultural sensitivity differs from intercultural competence in that the focus here is on the affective aspect and on developing a positive emotion towards cultural others (Chen, 1997), whereas the focus of intercultural competence is on behaviour and "the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways" (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003, p. 422). While some scholars argue that the ability to adapt one's behaviour to cultural others is key to achieving any level of intercultural understanding or competence (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006; Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Crozet, 1999, ; Crowne, 2008), the author concurs with Chen (1997) and asserts that intercultural sensitivity is in fact the precursor to intercultural competence and that without developing this sensitivity or motivation from the onset, competence cannot flourish.

According to Bennett (1993) and King and Baxter Magdola (2005), a key factor in both defining and developing intercultural sensitivity is understanding the progressive nature of its development from a narrow perspective where “my way is the best and only way” (Peterson, 2004, p. 99) towards a more global outlook where there is a willingness and openness to understand cultural others along with a concerted shift in perspective from one’s own world view to another (Hammer, 2009), a consideration that the Dubai Women’s College Intercultural Studies course takes into account.

As mentioned, the parameters of this study are very much bound by the social and political context of Dubai. The reason for this is simple; this study takes place at a women’s college in Dubai where students have little, if any opportunity to interact, beyond a surface level, with cultural others. Bringing non-Emiratis into the college is virtually impossible with tightened security measures as a result of the Arab spring. Taking students out of the college presents a whole host of challenges. These students therefore get no opportunity to demonstrate their intercultural competence (or lack of) through their behaviour - a defining characteristic of intercultural competence. This is why the ‘exactness’ of a term, as mentioned earlier, is important in this study, as the attention here has to be on developing students’ *sensitivity* not *competence*, a skill more easily developed without the need to interact with cultural others. There is an assumption in intercultural training material that contact with cultural others is not only possible but required; and a clear gap in the literature, which this study addresses, that speaks to those cultures, societies, and individuals who for various reasons, be they political, religious, social or financial cannot make that connection with cultural others.

It is also important to note that intercultural sensitivity is not a diminished form of intercultural competence and its importance should not be underestimated. It is a credible important first step to developing intercultural competence, which these students will hopefully transfer into their working lives. Bennett (2004a) echoes this concept when writing: “greater intercultural sensitivity creates the potential for increased intercultural competence” (p. 74).

## **2.5 Intercultural Training**

### **2.5.1 Intercultural Training: A Glocal Necessity and Growing Trend**

It is becoming somewhat of a cliché to find that most articles on increasing intercultural understanding start with a piece about globalisation and expand on how the world is rapidly changing. The reason for this rapid change is due to technology; the people on the street now get to see the world playing out its politics, prejudices and religious affiliations. A recent example of this is the anti-Islamic clips currently available on YouTube that many Emirati students feel negatively portray their society and religion. Through the power of technology, antagonism towards the West has increased and the political and religious divide has imperceptibly deepened. The reverse is also true with the growth of ISIS and increasing number of ‘acts of terror’, which is captured in the social media frenzy that erupted when a Muslim woman was seen ‘calmly’ walking past injured bodies during the London terror attack on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017. While this was recognised later as unjustified hate mongering, it serves to depict the mindset of many. It also cannot have gone unnoticed by many both inside and outside the Muslim community that in the heading of this piece, the word ‘Muslim’ is misspelt; what this infers is both a lack of sensitivity and of basic knowledge about Islam.

## Twitter Outrage Over Muslim Woman Walking Past Injured Person



Figure 2.4: “Leading Britain: Twitter Outrage Over Muslim Woman” (2017)

These divisions are rampant and far reaching and permeate religious, political and economic spheres. Globalisation and addressing the divisive issues in today’s world has become the current *raison d’être* for Intercultural Studies courses as through this kind of training there is the potential to develop intercultural understanding, awareness, empathy and respect. When examining the question of why research into interculturality is important, intercultural scholars

internationally agree that this is one of the single most important factors. Bryam and Nicols (2001) state: “Globalization seems to have created the conditions for taking the cultural dimension seriously again” (p. 2), and Landis and Brislin (2013), when describing an increasingly connected world, claim that “in such a world the need for cross cultural training is evident” (p. ix).

Earley and Peterson, two of the founding fathers of the concept of Cultural Intelligence, reiterate this important point: “The global economy and shifting political tides make the need for intercultural understanding and education obvious” (2004, p.100). Jan Figel, a member of the European Commission responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism spoke at the Bridge Forum in Luxemburgh in 2006 stating that: “European citizens are interacting as never before with the many different cultures, religions, linguistic and ethnic communities on our continent and elsewhere” (para 41). In November 2008 the European Commission surveyed 27,000 people across the EU about the frequency of their contact with people from different national backgrounds. Almost 70% of those surveyed said they had “recent contact with someone from a different religious, ethnic or national background” (para 7). Evidence strongly indicates, from discussions around an increasingly globalised world, that the impact of technological advances and the subsequent increased mixing of cultures are not just rhetoric but an emerging new reality for most people.

Alongside this new intercultural dynamic is the knowledge that ethnocentrism is our default position, a byproduct of our biological evolution (Shultz, Hartshorn, & Kaznatcheev, 2009). Ethnocentrism is the belief that one’s own culture is superior, and indeed the *only* culture compared to that of others, “assuming that the worldview of one’s own culture is central to all reality” (Bennett, 1993, p. 30). Therefore it is more than likely that these cultural mixes will induce misunderstanding and conflict, from minor personal annoyances to outright wars. Elie Weisel, Nobel Prize laureate cited cultural hatred as: “the major source of problems, between people across all times” (Ang, Dyne & Tan, 2011, p. 582). The Los Angeles Times also identifies “cultural hatred as a major destabilizing factor in the contemporary world” (Ang, Dyne & Tan, 2011, p. 582).

In Dubai however, it is cultural detachment as a result of the demographic imbalance and deep social stratification, rather than hatred, which is the most pressing barrier to intercultural tolerance. This cultural detachment has resulted in a number of social and political issues stemming

from a preference for Emiratis to work in the public (government) sector. In an aptly entitled article “Of Private Sector Fear and Prejudice”, Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2012) highlight a myriad of factors demonstrating the Emirati preference for public sector employment, but a principle reason given is a fear of the unknown and prejudice against the perceived low status of foreigners. The need for Emiratis to move into the private sector is pressing now as unemployment rises (Salem, 2013) but despite the government’s Emiratization program being fully enforced, prejudice and cultural detachment continue to serve as a major push factor away from the private sector. Alongside this, for those Emiratis who are employed in the private sector, cultural differences contribute to the failure of retention with estimates of up to 15% of Emiratis in the private sector leaving “because of cultural differences and discrimination” (Al Haddad, 2011, para 6). While one of many approaches, the Dubai Women’s College Intercultural Studies program is a timely and much needed initiative that aims to dispel the cultural detachment and fear some Emiratis may feel around working and interacting with cultural others.

### 2.5.2 Overview: Intercultural Training – Context and Pedagogy

Given that the world *is* changing, even more so in Dubai where this study takes place, and our interactions, be they at work or at home, are increasingly inter-cultural, our tertiary institutions provide little to prepare graduates for this new world. Templer, Tay and Chandrasekar (2007) speak strongly of the need for intercultural awareness in today’s world: “Cultural intelligence and conflict resolution ability are essential for 21st-century leaders when considering the increased interaction with individuals from different cultural backgrounds” (cited in Ramirez, 2010, p. 42). Ang et al. (2007) also acknowledge the need for intercultural training and report that until now, “relatively little research, however, focuses on factors that could improve intercultural encounters” (p. 336). It is clear from the lack of investigation done to date that there is a strong need for research into how we teach this increasingly important subject.

The body of knowledge regarding the teaching of intercultural awareness is still maturing and has been driven by the context and often changing specific arena in which it takes place. Intercultural training has for the most part taken place within five contexts: the military, the Peace Corps, missionary colleges, corporate companies with international assignments and students (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Landis & Brislin, 2013). Historically, this has largely fallen under the

domain of corporate training, helping expatriates to work overseas or as part of best practice for global businesses. Many of these companies and training websites tout statistics equating somewhat questionable increased cultural understanding with increased revenue. Livermore (2010) states: “A study showed that of 100 companies that adopted CQ [cultural intelligence] assessment and training, 92% had increased revenues within 18 months” (para. 14). What this situational need initially created was context specific curriculum, rather than general conditions and principles that could be applied across populations with “very little published material that focuses specifically on ICT [Intercultural Training] design” (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983, p. 118). For example, Grace College, a missionary college, describes its Intercultural Studies major as preparing students to “communicate in a relevant way across cultures and to penetrate the worldviews of the people in those contexts with the Gospel” (“Intercultural Studies | Grace College & Seminary”, 2017, para. 1). In addition, the military consider interculturality within what is operationally appropriate to their context with a definition of culture narrowed to that which is relevant for military missions (U.S. Marine Corps Center, 2007).

Nevertheless, the landscape is slightly different now due to the current proliferation of intercultural courses in a number of university programs (the context of this study), and a pedagogy for this type of work, within education, is beginning to materialise. As an emerging field though, there are still teething problems, and pedagogy is still developing: “Intercultural communicative practice is a messy business. It involves much trial and error....it does not fit neatly into a schema” (Byram & Nichols, 2001, p. 7). There is no one size fits training approach as they are tailored to specific contexts, which can vary immensely (Hall, Ainsworth & Teeling, 2013). In an attempt to address questions around pedagogy and provide guidance for planning purposes the Council of Europe (Barrett, & Huber, 2014) has outlined five principles which, when incorporated into an intercultural syllabus, support the development of intercultural competence in learners. These are:

- 1) Experience: learners are provided with experiences, either real or imagined (e.g. simulations) in order to acquire knowledge of other cultures, from the other culture’s perspective, which in turn initiates feelings of respect and empathy.
- 2) Comparison: learners are exposed to cultural difference in order to evaluate and compare what is familiar and unfamiliar, leading to a realization of how learners may construct cultural others.

3) Analysis. An in-depth examination of what lies beneath cultural differences and similarities in order to increase awareness of one's own and others' cultural values and beliefs.

4: Reflection: Reflection is seen as a means to cement the learning of experience, comparison, analysis and by developing understanding and critical awareness.

5) Action: Action gives learners the opportunity to put into practice what they have learnt through engagement in intercultural dialogue.

A cursory look at the various syllabi from tertiary institutions offering courses in intercultural competence would suggest that some, if not all, of these principles are being put into practice and a general, albeit loose, pedagogical framework is surfacing. For example, the Intercultural Studies course at Florida International University includes as a student outcome: "To engage in discussion and critique of cultural assumptions, stereotypes, and biases that may impact or impede intercultural learning" (Intercultural Studies: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis Course Syllabus, 2017)). The prestigious American University's School of International Service, which has a remit to prepare students for global careers, cite as a learning outcome: "Understand the dynamics of intercultural communication at the interpersonal, national and international levels" ("MAIR Academics and Curriculum", 2017). While there is much the intercultural practitioner can learn from the suggested guidelines and implementation, the course at the center of this study though varies again, due to the specific context, as well as in the adoption of an experiential approach as a means to initiating the development of intercultural sensitivity. Guiding principles and pedagogy related to this course will be discussed in a later section.

A growing trend for many institutions, especially in the USA, is the study abroad experience, with "more U.S. students studying abroad than ever before" (Marklein, 2008). However, as noted earlier, research suggests that exposure to another culture does *not* equate to developing intercultural sensitivity: "it is not self-evident that mere exposure to experience of another culture will lead to understanding" (Byram, & Nichols, 2001, p. 2). Bryam and Nichols (2001) elaborate further by postulating that experience of another culture may even be damaging if the sojourner is not well-prepared and could lead to "resistance and rejection" (p. 4) if not

handled correctly. To be effective this type of training should be combined with meaningful, developmental intercultural intelligence teaching (Bennett & Salonen, 2007).

There is some research coming out of Taiwan and China that is aimed at teaching intercultural competency to non-native speakers. Hsiao-Yin Chen's thesis on Intercultural Sensitivity Development among Taiwan Business College students (May 2008) certainly starts to fill a gap. There is however, a strong need for more research in this field, as there is clearly a lack of both teaching and research material. Given the multicultural nature of the Arabian Gulf states alone, this type of research would directly feed the educational progression this part of the world is aiming for.

#### *2.5.2.1 Critical Intercultural Awareness*

Current research in the field provides a pedagogy and argument for critical intercultural awareness, a sharp move away from essentialist thinking, often utilizing a comparison of national cultures, to a more fluid and dynamic approach where nation- language-culture are no longer viewed as directly co-related and assumptions about cultural difference are not the focus (Baker, 2012). In this approach the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for effective intercultural awareness are flexible and context specific and culture is treated critically. To achieve this in the classroom Baker (2012) proposes a number of practices, that although aligned to English language teaching, the principles are transferable to courses such as the one in this study that focus on intercultural learning, these are:

- Engaging in authentic intercultural interactions in an appropriate context specific manner
- Examining culture critically by exploring alternative representations of culture
- Developing favourable attitudes to difference
- Developing a more critical and reflexive position towards knowledge
- Examining self-beliefs and one's own cultural positioning

Gómez (2015), has also explored notions of implementing critical intercultural awareness in his study of pre-service EFL teachers in Columbia. In this study Gómez encourages his students to examine the deep more complex culture of the target culture (the U.S) “rather than the usual topics of surface culture” (Gómez, 2015, p. 43), to avoid generalizations and to facilitate a deeper



understanding of the individuals that make up a heterogeneous nation. This is achieved through critical reading of authentic literary short stories with themes around cultural identity, acculturation, social injustice and prejudice. Gómez argues that by challenging the status quo of how cultures are traditionally portrayed (particularly in the EFL classroom) and presenting diverse views of life provide a rich backdrop for critical intercultural awareness to surface: “The knowledge they acquired, the skills they developed, and the attitudes they created (openness, readiness, and curiosity) are vivid instances of learners' development of critical ICC”. (Gómez, 2015, p.57).

Further studies continue to support the need for intercultural learning to reject cultural overgeneralization and the associated, often unintended, stereotyping that comes with it. Nugent and Catalano (2015) write about the importance of developing critical cultural awareness in learners through such practices as: examining worldviews; questioning what is considered mainstream truth; developing a broader perspective, and examining how knowledge, culture and identity are constructed. The results of which will provide learners with a “greater awareness of the multifaceted nature of culture” (Nugent & Catalano, 2015, p.28) and prepare them to more sensitively navigate the global landscape. Holliday (2012) writes about how notions of culture are part of a politically charged agenda rooted in nineteenth century European nationalism that “obliterate any recognition of non-Western realities” (Holliday, 2012, p. 40). He calls for a need to unpack these hidden ideologies through critical analysis, such as the use of critical reading to explore cultural interface as a means of developing critical cultural awareness in learners. Holliday challenges us as educators to address the global inequality that has been inherent in intercultural practice and move towards a pedagogy of universal cultural processes “which provide the potential for cultural competence regardless of where people come from” (Holliday, 2012, p. 48)

When applied to the course at the center of this study critical intercultural awareness is extremely relevant, however, this is a fine balancing act as there are classroom concerns that are beyond the researcher’s control. The learning outcomes and teaching material for this course are prescribed with Hofstede’s cultural dimensions in mind and assessed in the final exam. In order to pass the course students must be familiar with this work. Thus to avoid the danger of essentialism and othering it is important to utilize Hofstede’s work as a springboard, while pointing out there are certain limitations in this type of over simplification, yet at the same time highlighting what is

relevant. Section 2.3 argues a case for including Hofstede's work in intercultural education, and it would be remiss to discard it as irrelevant. The key is in how it is used, and the goal is to balance it with the inclusion of more critical intercultural awareness in the curriculum, this in turn requires on the teacher's part an unpacking of the ideology behind how culture is presented (Holliday, 2012).

### 2.5.3 Intercultural Training: Past to Present

The first cross-cultural (a term used at the time) training programs came out of the work of anthropologists Hall and Oberg in the 1950s and 1960s (Hall & Oberg, 1958). Oberg's legacy to the world comes from popularising the term 'culture shock' (Oberg, 1960). Culture shock is picked up again in length in the 80s and 90s in the work of both Triandis (1990) and Furnham and Bochner (1986), who developed the body of work and established its constructs in the field.

The 1970s was an era where intercultural training was dominated by the Peace Corps which produced literature and training material that is still in use today. However, this material was targeted at the sojourner who would go to far flung places for a temporary period, often roughing it, and generally with the aim of contributing to the society. This is quite different from today's needs of corporate postings or academic courses.

As far as instructional pedagogy is concerned, two practices were prevalent in intercultural training material in the 1980s and 1990s: the use of the cultural assimilator and the "contrast America technique" (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000, p. 5). The cultural assimilator presents intercultural trainees with a scenario depicting a cultural misunderstanding. Trainees reflect on the misunderstanding and are given a number of alternatives to explain the cause, a process which leads them to 'discover' the most appropriate response. This is an approach that might score highly in terms of engagement but poorly in terms of efficacy in that they reduce cultures to sweeping, often misinterpreted generalizations. The 'contrast American technique', while well intentioned, seems hard to put into practice, and the idea was to use a "model to demonstrate a behavior that was completely opposed to the American way of doing something" (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000). While understanding one's own culture is the beginning of developing sensitivity, this approach appears difficult to orchestrate. In surveying the techniques currently used in the classroom for

teaching intercultural studies, two methods stand out: the use of film and the use of simulation games, and these two approaches are expanded upon below.

### *2.5.3.1 Film*

The notion of using film in education is widespread across disciplines with student feedback consistently positive (Alexander, Lenahan, & Pavlov, 2005). Jane King (2002) highlights the benefits of using film in ESL classrooms in her article *Using DVD Feature Films in the EFL Classroom*. The film *Good Will Hunting* has been successfully used in counsellor education (Koch, 2000). Film also features as an effective teaching tool in organisational behaviour and management courses (Champoux, 1999).

Specific to Intercultural Studies, Mallinger and Rossy (2003) developed the Integrated Cultural Framework (ICF) to provide a framework of concepts needed for teaching Cultural Intelligence. They go on to use the ICF to illustrate cultural concepts through the viewing of films. Tidwell (2001) outlines the many uses of film to teach key issues required for intercultural competence and is largely influenced by Hofstede as he identifies concepts such as individualism/collectivism and masculinity/femininity. Rarrick (2007) explores themes of cross cultural understanding through the use of film, referring to the theories of Carl Rogers and Kolb as underpinning his teaching philosophy. The author contends that from her experience in using film in her intercultural classroom, it is an approach that resonates well with the students and provides 'intercultural impact' through its ability to so genuinely engage students that the experience becomes deeply personal and highly meaningful, and, alongside reflection and dialogue, often transformative.

### *2.5.3.2 Simulations*

Another approach to teaching Intercultural Studies, which has gained ground in the last 20 years, is the use of simulation activities. The proponents of using simulations as a teaching tool value it as having the ability to develop deep learning. Simulations can best be described as instructional scenarios where teachers create a new 'world' in order for students to experience a desired outcome. Simulations have received a lot of praise from both teachers and students alike for their ability to 'simulate' the real life experience in a controlled way (Lewis, 2005).

Mascarenhas and Paiva (2010) describe the development and deployment of a virtual synthetic culture to help foster culture understanding in teenagers, while Sullivan and Duplaga (1997) write about the original simulation game Bafa Bafa “as being one of the most powerful teaching tools they have used” (p. 266) for developing intercultural understanding.

Although a little dated now, a model still currently used for looking at intercultural teaching and learning can be found in Milton Bennett’s (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). In this model Bennett introduces a framework to explain how people perceive cultural others and presents a developmental sequence of intercultural competence, whereby people (may) move from an ethnocentric to ethnorelative stance over time. The DMIS model has been widely exploited in developing curriculum for intercultural training programs, and one such program is discussed by Mahoney and Schamber in their 2004 study on the use of the DMIS in a tertiary general education diversity curriculum. In this study they describe an intercultural studies program and the mapping of their students’ intercultural sensitivity development (or lack thereof) corresponding to the developmental sequence in Bennett’s model. They highlight how a focus on “analysing and evaluating cultural difference” (p. 323) in the curriculum helps the shift from what Bennett calls minimisation - a state whereby a person minimises cultural difference through a belief that cultures are largely similar to their own (Bennett, 1986), to a place of acceptance. Their findings indicate the usefulness of Bennett’s model for tertiary intercultural curriculum and Bennett’s continuum is utilised in section 2.6.4 when mapping the DWC course content to intercultural maturity development.

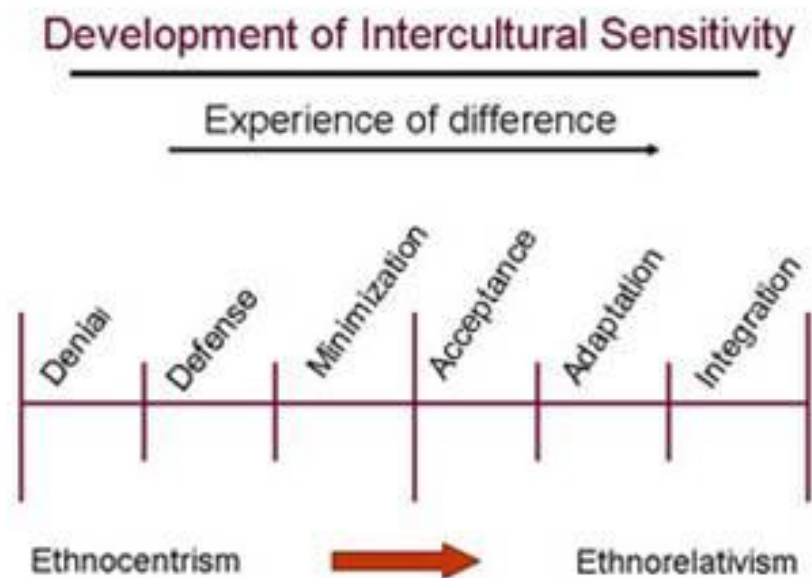


Figure 2.5 Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993)

Critics of Bennett's approach are Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Crozet (1999) who posit that language and culture need to be considered together and that they cannot be isolated: "The weakness of mono-lingual multiculturalism logistics lies in the belief that language and culture are not intimately related" (p.12). They argue that Bennett has not considered the importance of language in intercultural teaching ("the place of language and of language teaching in the model is not readily apparent" (p.19)), thereby questioning the soundness of his model. However, Lo Bianco, Crozet and Liddicoat's argument has limitations in that they view the learning of both language and culture as interconnected, in an Australian context exclusively, and additionally do not take into account Intercultural Studies programs, such as the one in this study, that are *not* culturally specific, i.e. not examining one culture and therefore not bound by one language.

Despite the limitations, Lo Bianco, Crozet and Liddicoat's (1999) work provides a useful curriculum for intercultural language learning that has much to offer both the intercultural practitioner and the intercultural curriculum through his five key principles: active construction, making connections, social interaction, reflection, and responsibility. These are briefly defined below.

Table 2.3: Lo Bianco, Crozet and Liddicoat's Principles for Intercultural Language Learning (1999)

Active construction	Active construction refers to ways of being culturally understanding through identifying cultural difference and recognising that we bring our own cultural 'baggage' to any intercultural interaction.
Making connections	This is about the need to 'connect' with cultural dissimilar ideas or associations as a means to step beyond our own cultural blinders.
Social Interaction	The premise here is that we need to interact socially in order to "work towards reciprocal relationships, directly exploring more than one culture" (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, & Kohler, 2003, p. 49).
Reflection	Deep reflection on intercultural learning, in whatever capacity it takes, is important in achieving understanding and developing a positive outlook on diversity.
Responsibility	This principle requires a certain level of maturity in the intercultural trainee as it asks them to take responsibility for their own intercultural attitudes and "show willingness to interact with people from diverse languages and cultures" (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, & Kohler, 2003, p. 51).

Liddicoat's approach to intercultural training reflects current thinking with its holistic view incorporating both a cognitive and affective element. Indeed, literature on teaching intercultural sensitivity strongly points to the need for learning to contain both subject content and be developmental and 'deep'; not simply about accumulating knowledge but rather experiencing a shift in perspective (Bennett, 2011; Mahoney & Schamber, 2004; Deardorff, 2006). This is an approach that is examined and adopted in this study. Many scholars argue, as the author concurs, that delivery of content alone yields no, or little, increased intercultural understanding: "The magic bullet idea that the presentation of content will elicit the development of multicultural sensitivity and competence is insufficient" (Mahoney & Schamber, 2004, p. 313). The importance of this affective element in intercultural learning is elaborated on in 3.2.2\_Course Content: Affective Knowledge.

In Claudia Borghetti's (2011) article *How to Teach It?*, her intention is to give guidance to those teaching in the field. She concurs with earlier scholars in two key areas of intercultural training. Firstly, like Deardorff (2006), Bennett (1993) and King and Baxter Magolda (2005),

Borghetti also argues the case for a developmental teaching approach, which she calls the Dynamic Model (see Figure 2.6), which follows the pattern or cycle that intercultural maturity naturally develops in, and a progression of classroom tasks, which mirror the stages of this development.

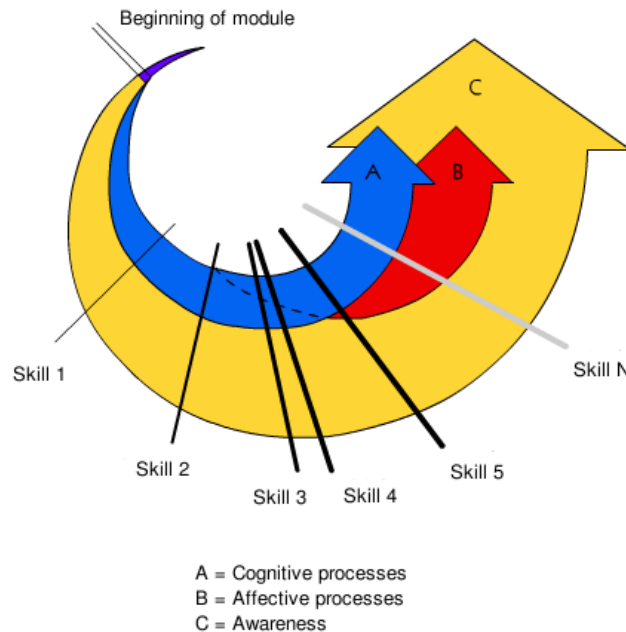


Figure 2.6 Borghetti's Dynamic Model (2011)

Secondly, as with the above scholars in the field, Borghetti also contends that there needs to be a combination of both subject content and theory alongside tasks that serve to initiate a shift in perspective:

The difference between simply knowledge building and understanding is that the latter allows, through empathy and self-awareness, to go beyond an effective, appropriate communication and reach a deeper comprehension of unfamiliar people, habits, and situations which may, in turn, have consequences for one's own identity construction processes (p. 151).

#### 2.5.4 Summary: Intercultural Training – Context and Pedagogy

To sum up this section, we have seen the need for Intercultural Competence rise in response to how the world is changing and the increased frequency of intercultural encounters. In turn, questions have surfaced about the effectiveness of education with regards to both pedagogy and

tools when applied to a general, as opposed to context specific, learning environment. Examples were given of how the aims of an Intercultural Studies course are vastly different from missionary colleges to the military to corporations. Current research has highlighted the importance of critical intercultural awareness as a pedagogy to mitigate potential stereotyping and overgeneralization. Studies from practitioners in the field such as Deardorff (2006), Chen (1997), Bennett (1993), and Lo Bianco, Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) have been discussed and a set of teaching principles proposed by the Council of Europe has been presented. A cursory look at current Intercultural Studies curricula points to an emerging, albeit still developing, pedagogy that somewhat reflects the Council of Europe's framework. On a classroom level, the use of film and simulations has been explored as valid techniques across the board to convey concepts within an Intercultural Studies curriculum. This study and the Intercultural course at the centre of this study, aligns somewhat, but not wholly, with the research to date. For example, the inclusion of an intercultural encounter, or the opportunity to put into practice what has been learnt is lacking (for social and political reasons raised earlier), and there is a separation between language and intercultural learning. If, and how, this impacts the participants' intercultural sensitivity development will be explored in the discussion. Finally, as a leading scholar in the field, Deardorff's (2006) consideration of what it means to interact successfully with cultural others and issues of pedagogy and assessment highlights the importance of linking theory and reflective practice. This is a concern at the heart of this study where the 'reflective practice' is actioned through experiential learning. Experiential learning will be examined in 2.7; however, first it is important to look at current studies in the field and what they offer this study.

## **2.6 Current Studies and their Relevance**

Dalib, Harun and Yusoff (2014) present a study relevant to the present research as they explore Malaysian students' attitudes towards intercultural competence. They raise awareness of the *cultural perspective impact* on determining and defining intercultural competence, citing "personal control" (p. 131) as being a key consideration of intercultural competence value in western cultures. Asian cultures on the other hand, they argue, dispense with control in favour of harmonising with others. However, they define intercultural competence in terms of intercultural communication competence, a rather specific skill, and one that is not necessarily the hallmark of intercultural competence. Two themes emerged from this study, which students indicated as being



reflective of intercultural competence: respecting cultural differences and developing cultural understanding. This relational perspective provides a good springboard for this study as it begs the question: *What is it that Emirati students regard as intercultural competence? What is their relationship to these two themes?* It also cannot go unnoticed that the participants in this Malaysian-based study are largely Muslim students, as are the students in this study, and it is important to consider how much religion matters in shaping student perspectives of intercultural competence. Is the desire to harmonise, rather than control, born from religious principles or cultural considerations, or both? The study by Dalib, Harun and Yusoff (2014) brings to the surface many important questions which this current study aims to both extend and explore.

Also relevant to this study is Yoko Sakurauchi's (2014) examination of the teaching and learning of intercultural sensitivity through the interactions of American and Japanese tertiary students. Sakurauchi's goal is aligned to the one in this research study in that she asks: "How are the aspects of the intentional course design more or less effective for developing students' intercultural sensitivity?" (p. 61). She also draws heavily on Kolb's experiential learning theory in the theoretical framework and implementation of her course, and therefore Sakurauchi's study presents both confirmation and a useful model for this study. Similar to the present study, her research design employs a mixed methods approach through utilising both quantitative and qualitative tools to maximise research outcomes, "by adopting two paradigms: positivism that quantitative method represents, and constructivism that qualitative method represents" (p. 62). In addition Sakurauchi also utilises pre- and post-course testing to explore the relationship between the input of intercultural teaching and students' intercultural learning. Interesting here is that a significant factor in her students' intercultural development is their prior intercultural contact. Findings indicated that those students with the least prior exposure to other cultures had the most intercultural development. However, as Sakurauchi points out, one of the limitations here is that this development may be attributed to the intercultural course, or simply as a side effect of the Japanese students living in another culture. In order to corroborate her findings Sakurauchi states that further research, such as the one is this study, is necessary "to examine a variety of intentional courses and different student populations from different cultural backgrounds" (p. 183).

Pedersen's (2010) study on the effectiveness of study abroad employs the use of the Intercultural Development Instrument (IDI) for assessment purposes. Similar to Sakurauchi's

work, Pedersen's study confirms the value of experiential classroom strategies, alongside the use of media such as movies, to help decrease the negative impact of cultural stereotyping. This is what Pedersen calls "the pedagogy of change" (p. 77). Interestingly, as in Saukrauchi's study, Pedersen's study highlights the importance of previous intercultural experience as significantly impacting students' intercultural development, citing students with no travel experience as "indicat[ing] a significant increase in IDI score pre to post [intervention]" (p. 75-76). This variable is clearly worth considering and as such is included in the first interview's biographical questions. Pedersen's findings are somewhat contrary to those of previous academics in that "students participating in the year-long study abroad program in the sample did not move along the DMIS ...by mere participation in the program" (p. 76). While the reason for this needs further exploration, Pedersen posits that the short time lag between students' re-entry to their home country and post testing may not have allowed enough time for students to integrate and process their experience. This stresses the importance of reflection in a course or program such as this in order for students to fully assimilate the process.

Both Sakuarchi's and Pedersen's studies rely on the use of the IDI: Intercultural Development Inventory (Hammer & Bennett, 2002) to map and measure intercultural sensitivity. Current research demonstrates that reliance on models such as the DMIS: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Hammer, 1999) and IDI is a growing trend (Perry & Southwell, 2011) as they have proven their reliability (Greenholtz, 2000). This is logical reasoning in a field where definitions and concepts are blurry, and the need for signposts and a clear theoretical framework are apparent. However, this present study does not rely on a measurement tool, except as a spring board for generating survey questions utilizing Chen and Starosta's (2000) model of intercultural sensitivity. The results of this present study will therefore add to the body of knowledge regarding the validity of measuring intercultural competence development independently of the 'big tools'.

Another current trend is the growing amount of research on the use of study abroad as a means for developing intercultural competence. With more than 200,000 students from the U.S traveling abroad annually as part of a new movement within Intercultural Studies (McMurray, 2007), this is a key area of research. Studies from Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004), Langley and Breese (2005), and Williams (2005) indicate the positive relationship between study abroad and developing intercultural competence: "The results showed that as predicted, the students who

studied abroad generally showed a greater increase in intercultural communication skills than the students who did not study abroad (Williams, 2005, as cited in McMurray, 2007, p. 37). A course such as the one in this present study will add to the literature by presenting findings on the impact of an intercultural experience, achieved with this need for direct ‘human’ contact.

Finally, with the exception of providing a lived experience such as study abroad, research shows that all too often intercultural training can develop knowledge but not cause a significant shift in attitude or behavior: “Studies have shown that intercultural training can enhance knowledge and satisfaction but not necessarily change behavior and attitudes” (Mendenhall et al. 2004, as cited in Perry & Southwell, 2011, p. 457). This is either the result of poor testing or lack of inclusion in the curriculum, suggesting that “either testing needs to improve so that behaviour and attitudes are also properly tested and/or that training programmes need to more effectively target these areas” (Mendenhall et al. 2004, as cited in Perry & Southwell, 2011, p. 457). This present study hypothesises that there is the potential for a shift in attitude as a result of directed intercultural training, and the results of this will be presented in the discussion chapter.

Current research demonstrates that while intentional intercultural courses can be somewhat effective in increasing students’ intercultural competency, they also highlight the need for “more systematic pedagogical strategies” (Sakurauchi, 2014, p. 9) and cultural considerations in the teaching and learning of intercultural sensitivity. This study contributes to knowledge in the field by exploring both pedagogical strategies and in what unique ways Emirati women respond to these strategies. As mentioned previously, one of the pedagogical strategies adopted in this study, and substantiated by research is that of experiential learning, which will be discussed in the following section.

## **2.7 Experiential Learning**

### **2.7.1 Experiential Learning: Overview and Pedagogy**

As noted above research points to the need for intercultural training to contain an affective element in order to be most effective.

The conceptual framework bases the theoretical foundation on experiential learning theory and identifies the *effectiveness of experiential learning for developing intercultural sensitivity in an Emirati context* as a gap in the research. The methodological approach adopted in this study contributes to the body of knowledge on teaching intercultural sensitivity and the change in pedagogical approach from a cultural perspective.

Like intercultural studies, the field of experiential learning covers a vast array of concepts and applications through primary education to the workplace. Jane Henry, author of *Meaning and Practice in Experiential Learning* (Henry, 1989), identifies a number of educational activities that fit under the broad category of experiential. These encompass: problem solving, personal development, project work, activity based, independent learning, non-traditional, prior learning and work placement. In relation to the course at the centre of this study, the ‘non-traditional’ teaching approach is adopted, and traditional teaching is defined as “generally teacher-directed and follow cookbook steps of activities and demonstrations” (Harris, 2006, p. 1), with non-traditional incorporating problem based learning and active co-operation (Harris, 2006).



Figure 2.7 Jane Henry's Categories of Experiential Learning (1989)

Experiential learning is, however, most closely aligned to transformative learning as both utilise experience and reflection for deeper learning to take place (Kolb, 1984, Mezirow, 1997). While there is some distinction, both fields illustrate the need for some kind of inward ‘aha’ moment for this deeper learning to occur. David Kolb is widely acknowledged as the pioneer of experiential learning, while he, in turn, draws on the theoretical foundations of Dewey and Piaget as the “intellectual ancestors of experiential learning theory” (Kolb, 1984, p. 15). Kolb defines experiential learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 41); in other words, learning involves the whole person: thinking, perceiving and feeling as well as behaving. The nature of experiential learning pedagogy is that it is an approach that students find effective due to the deeper connection to the learning material than found in traditional teaching (Rivera, 2015). Experiential learning, or learning by doing, has been shown by past researchers to be an effective means of delivering an intercultural studies curriculum (Barrett & Huber, 2014; Sit, Mak, & Neill, 2017), and importantly for this study, one whose efficacy is not diminished by the medium of a second language (Busse & Krause, 2016).

Kolb posits a four phase learning cycle going from concrete experience, reflection, abstract conceptualisation, to active experimentation. Table 3.2 illustrates how these phases map to the DWC intercultural studies course content. The foundations of experiential learning today remain aligned to these core principles, such as learning being a process, not a set of outcomes, and re-learning being crucial to learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2012). With its concern for learning by doing and focus on developing a deeper connection with the teaching material than found in traditional chalk and talk type teaching (Sharp, 2010), experiential learning is perfectly positioned to meet the needs of an intercultural training program.

The Association for Experiential Education (Association for Experiential Education) has taken on a leading role in developing experiential learning theory with a number of peer-reviewed journals published annually as well as hosting a number of conferences. Journals include The Journal of Experiential Education (Association for Experiential Education) and Theory and practice of experiential education (Warren, Mitten & Loeffler, 2008). The association has fleshed out Kolb’s core principles to include such ideas as the inclusion of authentic real life tasks, and raised awareness of educator bias. What remains strong is that the learning here is an active,

subjective process not based on simply recalling abstract facts (Kolb, 1984); all attributes that marry well with intercultural studies.

More recently, Melvin Silberman likens experiential learning to ‘sticky learning’ referring to the work of Malcolm Gladwell in *Blink* (2014) in alluding to learning that is memorable, or that ‘sticks’. “Experiential learning is “sticky.” When it is done well, it adheres to you” (2007, p. 4). This ‘stickiness’, as Silberman calls it, refers to the fact that experiential learning is based around learning that has emotion attached to it, for learners to be fully engaged with the material, and for there to be an element of reflection. An example of experiential learning in the course this study is based on is in the simulation game *Barnga*, whereby students play a card game but with different instructions, and what ensues mimics the experience of intercultural misunderstanding. In order to validate and build on Silberman’s claims, one of the research questions in this study asks how participants perceive the effectiveness of experiential learning in the intercultural classroom. In turn, the research instruments are designed to incorporate explicit questions about experiential tasks and learning pedagogy.

### 2.7.2 Experiential Learning within Intercultural Studies – Past to Present

By the end of World War 2 the U.S had become more connected to the rest of the world, and alongside this came advances in both transport and technology making contact with other cultures more possible than ever (Ruben,1977). These first sojourners included missionaries, diplomats, Peace Corps personnel and business managers who needed preparation for these travels and turned to the universities for training support. This training came in the way of the ‘university model’ or the ‘didactic approach’. In this approach, sojourners were provided information about the customs and facts such as dress, language etc. of the host culture (Bass, 1969). Upon their return to the U.S many of these travelers expressed frustration in feeling inadequately prepared and reported the limitations in such types of training. Critics of the university model argued it fostered passive learning, gave practice in the form of unrealistic scenarios, and was emotionally cold – hindering development of the “emotional muscle, which is needed in intercultural interactions” (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000, p. 5). This didactic model soon became replaced with the first experiential models that focused on “creating a learning environment that allows participants to explore their own interpersonal behaviour” (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983, p. 123). The early

work of Harrison and Hopkins (1967) pioneered the use of experiential learning for cross cultural training as an alternative to the lecture style learning. Fast forward to 50 years later and this is a teaching and learning philosophy that has continued to develop. Two relevant studies are described below.

Reggy-Mamo's (2008) study, *An Experiential Approach to Intercultural Education*, describes the use of experiential learning for Intercultural Education at Beluah Heights University. Interestingly, the author chooses to use experiential learning in response to feedback from her mature adult working students on how they like to learn. Classroom tasks include work on understanding yourself as a cultural person, exploring stereotypes, the use of cultural scenarios to mimic real life intercultural experiences and game-like transformational activities such as The Emperor's Pot (Batchelder, 1996). The variety of classroom tasks that serve to elicit intercultural development are well thought out and impressive (I admit to 'stealing' some ideas myself). One of this study's limitations however, is its lack of rigour in research design, and while one can infer from the following comment that there was a pre- and post-course element: "At the end of the course, students revisited the first day's questions to assess how well the course addressed their specific learning needs" (p. 119), it is hard to establish any other principle in the design. Participants' feedback to this course was overwhelmingly positive in that they "learned how to apply insights to a given cross-cultural situation" (p. 120). Reggy-Mamo includes many firsthand accounts describing the shift in perspective as a result of doing this course: "this class helped me change my views as an American. I now truly appreciate my culture and other people's culture. I will never look down on someone's culture". It is evident that the nature and implementation of this course resonated strongly with the participants and that it positively impacted their growth as intercultural learners. How exactly this impact is captured is not quite as clear, and this present study builds on this by implementing a similar course, with the addition of a more robust research design which will contribute to the field by bringing more reliability into the work. As a missionary college, the participants in this study are all practicing Christians, which raises again the question of religion, and to what extent our faith predisposes us, or not, to intercultural understanding. This is built into the interview questions in the present study in order to dig deeper into a very important, and often overlooked, aspect of intercultural learning.

In a study by Jain (2013) *Experiential Training for Enhancing Intercultural Sensitivity*, the author starts by establishing clear defined concepts for intercultural sensitivity, adopting the definition formulated by Chen and Starosta (1998): "[an] active desire to motivate themselves to understand, appreciate, and accept differences among cultures" ( p. 231, as cited in Jain, 2013, p. 17). The author concurs with this present study in advocating the use of film in experiential intercultural learning for the access it allows to teach challenging intercultural concepts. The research design incorporated the use of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (Chen & Starosta, 1998) to measure the participants' intercultural sensitivity development in a pre-post course design. Jain's findings report a positive relationship between the intervention and participants' intercultural sensitivity development: "Results show that overall this intervention was successful as there was a significant increase in the participants' score on Intercultural sensitivity" (p. 18). The present study builds on Jain's work by delivering a very similar study in terms of pedagogy and implementation, but with two unique differences that will contribute to the body of knowledge. Firstly, Jain's participants are Caucasian with an average age of 60; the participants in this present study are Emirati women with an average age of 20. This begs the question of how much participant demographics have a bearing on the results. Secondly, while Jain describes his study as experiential, he only uses one learning activity: the use of film. This present study includes film, work on perspectives, and a transformative game, alongside theoretical content knowledge on Worldview Theory and Cultural Dimensions. The data collection instruments in the present study filter results for each classroom task to gauge their impact. While Jain's findings report the strength of film this study seeks to uncover which classroom tasks are most effective, be it film or others, thereby building on Jain's findings.

In the book *Building Cultural Competence* (2012), experienced intercultural practitioners and authors Bernando, Dearthoff, and Trompenaars draw on research (Osland & Bird, 2000 ; Osland, Bird, & Gundersen, 2007) to highlight one of the limitations in experiential learning: "However essential experiential learning may be it is nevertheless not sufficient to achieve intercultural competence in a vacuum" (p. 14). The authors urge practitioners to provide opportunities for intercultural learners to integrate and construe their experience. This is an element that is explored within the design of this present study.



To summarize, current studies in the use of experiential learning within intercultural studies demonstrate a consistently positive pattern of developing intercultural understanding. They also support the hypothesis in this present study that direct intercultural encounters are not a prerequisite for intercultural maturity to develop. The current study aims to build on this work in a number of ways through carefully constructed research design and data gathering instruments. Through this design and implementation, questions raised from these studies are addressed, specifically: the usefulness of individual classroom tasks; the approach utilized to capture the impact of a course such as this; the influence of participant demographic, especially related to faith, on intercultural learning; the use of a validated intercultural assessment tool; and finally, the role of reflection in a course such as this.

### 2.7.3 Experiential Learning: Classroom Considerations

Intercultural courses may often be personally challenging for students as they ask students to transcend their beliefs and to suspend judgment (Holley & Steiner, 2005; Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013). This is especially challenging in Dubai where the intensely culturally mixed landscape has resulted in a society where intercultural ‘bumps’ are commonplace and mistrust is the default feeling. The practice of experiential learning is used as a means to achieve a shift in perspective, therefore students need to be “challenged to expand their viewpoints and think outside the box” (Holley & Steiner, 2005, p. 55). Experiential learning is ideally suited for this type of deeper learning as it is through experience and engagement that a true connection can be made with learning; it is “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 41).

Given that this social constructivist model is a major change in the type of teaching and learning these participants are accustomed to, it is a critical area of discussion in this study. In a study of transformative learning among UAE tertiary students (Madsen & Cook, 2010), findings report the positive outcomes of this approach and “the tremendous promise that imaginative and transformative education strategies can have on the lives of individual students” (p. 146). However, previous research disputes this suggesting that that Emirati students’ learning preferences may run counter to this experiential approach as these students are accustomed to the practices of government schools in which learning is teacher-centered and where students are not

encouraged to exercise independence (Crabtree, 2010; Rapanta, 2014; Sonleitner & Khelifa, 2005). This may cultivate in students an assimilating learning style (Kolb, 2000), where instruction and explanation are key (Kayes, 2005), which therefore potentially diminishes the effectiveness of a more learning by doing experiential approach. Research by James and Shamma (2017) raises awareness of the disconnect between the expectations of academic professional expatriate faculty with those of their students, citing teacher dependence and perceived limited drive as key frustrators. This is supported by a research study at a higher educational institute in the UAE where expatriate faculty: “expressed frustration at the amount of effort and creativity to motivate, and share knowledge, and see in students a commitment to learning” (Sonleitner & Khelifa, 2005, p. 7).

In a study on the public school system in the UAE, students’ perceptions of the rote memorization method, as being the ‘best method’, appear very strongly engrained: “the students were convinced that this [rote memorisation] was the only right way to become a successful student with high grades” (Thabet, 2008, p. 54). This indicates that not only is there an academic hurdle for these students in adjusting to the move to experiential learning, but there is also a psychological barrier, one where their old way of learning is perceived as the best. The experiential learning teacher needs to navigate this classroom mindful of these cultural considerations and provide justification to ensure student ‘buy in’ if necessary.

The participants in this study, having attended mostly government schools have the potential to fit this mold, and contrast with many privately-educated students who may have been more exposed to active learning and developed a sense of agency over their learning (Al-Harhi, 2006). The present study is well positioned to explore students’ responses to this shift in pedagogy from an authoritarian to a democratic classroom and corroborate Madsen and Cook’s findings.

These types of courses are ultimately about culture; they are what Cheney and Valentine assert precisely need experiential learning tasks because “culture is experienced” (2011, p. 92). In an ideal scenario that experience would come from first hand travel; however, experiential classroom tasks can, and need to, to some extent, aim to serve to replicate the travel experience. It is clear from this section that there is a strong and pervasive argument for using experiential learning in education, and more specifically for using experiential learning in intercultural studies.

To summarize this section, so far, this discussion has centred around intercultural definitions, theories and strategies; the next logical question then concerns assessment and how we can actually measure whether these theories and strategies ‘work’.

## 2.8 Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity: Issues of Concern

Firstly, it is important to delineate between two threads of ‘measurement’ in this work in order to clarify the focus of this study. In relation to the Dubai Women’s College Intercultural Studies Course there is an assessment scheme (Table 2.7) that is determined by senior management and rolled out across the Higher Colleges of Technology System. Teaching faculty are not part of this decision making process and it is not within the bounds of this study to evaluate the merits of these assessment criteria. Suffice to say that all students sit a final exam, all students complete a report and all students are assessed on a range of coursework tasks – within which there is some ‘wiggle room’ left to the teacher’s discretion. The final exam is based on content knowledge – that is Cultural Dimensions and Worldviews Theory.

Table 2.4 Higher Colleges of Technology Intercultural Studies Assessment Criteria

<p><b>Coursework - Set Exercises: 40%</b> Students will participate in discussions (either online or face-to-face), blog entries, quizzes, independent learning exercises, field trips, etc.</p>
<p><b>Coursework - Reflection Paper: 30%</b> Students will write reflective journals and submit a reflective eFolio at the end of the course which will address topics studied throughout the course</p>
<p><b>Final Assessment - Written Examination: 30% (SA)</b> Students will complete a Final Written Exam Online on BBLearn using Respondus Lockdown Browser that covers all Course Learning Outcomes.</p>
<p><b>Total Weight: 100%</b></p>

The ‘measurement’ underpinning this study, is **not** related to this formal course assessment. What is central to the ‘measurement’ in this study is to what extent (if any) students’ intercultural sensitivity develops as a result of undertaking the Dubai Women’s College Intercultural Studies course. It is illuminating the affective element, as described previously, that students ‘learn’ as part and parcel of undertaking an Intercultural Studies course. As we shall see in the following section,

capturing this type of development is far more complex and nuanced than the assessment of content knowledge alone.

Expertise on how we assess and measure intercultural competence is hard to come by (Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003). One reason given for this is that these competencies are problematic to assess, bordering on the intuitive, more emotive type of competency (Mezirow, 1997). Another reason cited for the lack of expert literature in the field is that developing intercultural awareness is essentially unnatural and cross cultural interaction has traditionally been reserved for often aggressive political motivation (Bennett, 1993). However, research literature in the field is increasing in studies related to expatriate relocation, but even this, given the large expatriate population, is inadequate and “little research has addressed what predicts intercultural negotiation effectiveness” (Imai & Gelfand, 2010, p. 83).

Another issue is that without a leading theory in the field, the parameters of what actually constitutes intercultural sensitivity are ill-defined. A definitive construct is needed to establish first what we are measuring, in order to make the ‘how’ easier to construe: “the inability to clarify the ambiguity among the three components [intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication competence] has led to failure in developing valid and reliable measures for evaluating the effect of intercultural training programs” (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p. 3). Furthermore, this ‘failure’ is compounded by the fact that the subject matter itself is not clearly delineated, and the focus here is on attitude change, a mindset experience thus bordering on the more emotive type of competency, which is much more difficult to quantify (Mezirow, 1997). Angelo Scarino summarizes three issues which capture the complexity of intercultural language learning that are relevant here: “(1) the diverse ways in which intercultural language learning is understood, i.e. how the construct is described, and therefore determining exactly what is to be assessed, (2) the difficulty of taking variable linguistic and sociocultural contexts into account, and (3) the constraints of traditional views of assessment” (2007, p. 3).

Nevertheless with such a heavy inclusion in the curriculum of tertiary institutes, and increasingly high schools around the world, it is imperative that “one needs to develop ways of making sure that it [intercultural competency] is developed” (Dervin, 2010, p. 156) with particular attention to the more complex affective aspect of this development.

Education has radically transformed over the last 20 years with the adoption of a more constructivist approach to teaching and learning, exemplified by the popular phrase “from sage on the stage to guide on the side” (King, 1993). It is only fitting then that as students have a more active role in the classroom and in their learning, this should transfer to assessment in terms of both task and approach. One way to do this is by paying serious attention to student opinion and integrate students’ perceptions of their learning experience as a marker for learning into an assessment framework. Alongside this it is important to view these perceptions, without absolute certainty that *what* students perceive is reliable and valid, however, that is not the question in this study. The use of this type of tool is particularly relevant for intercultural learning as traditional pen and paper type tests have little to offer this type of content because of the “limits a paper test places on the complex phenomena being measured” (Pottinger, as cited in Deardorff, 2015, p. 125). Experiential learning is very much aligned to the philosophy of constructivist learning, which is the nature of intercultural studies, and therefore readily lends itself to a more alternative approach to assessment.

An important feature of this new tool is that first and foremost it must speak to a new educational paradigm by including such tasks as reflective journals and avoiding the traditional pen and paper type tests that merely give a nod to interculturality through cursory tasks such as the “inclusion of an international reading” (Deardorff, 2011, p. 69). Scarino also stresses this need to move away from assessments that focus on “accumulating atomized bits of factual knowledge” (2000, p. 7) to a more “active process of knowledge construction and sense-making”. Applicable to intercultural learning is what he calls employing “constructed response” (Scarino, 2000, p. 7), utilizing such tools as interviews, journals, reflections and storytelling that take into account the developmental nature of this type of learning, some of which are adopted in this study. To qualify this, research suggests that students’ perceptions of learning are as valid and accurate as any external measure (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2000). Indeed, Rovai and Barnum state that “students’ perceptions may be more important than reality, as decisions about learning are often based on perceptions” (2007, p. 61).

This research study contributes to work in the field that speaks of how to use experiential teaching and learning to assess intercultural sensitivity. Experiential learning theory offers a framework for understanding and deepening learning, perhaps leading to the development of

intercultural sensitivity. Kolb's experiential learning model proposes a four part learning process that can be used in classroom tasks to undergird the assessment tool and which is utilised in developing the program this study is based on.

- “1. "Do It!": actively involved in doing something (Concrete Experience);
2. "What?": reflect on what happened; what were the results (Reflective Observation).
3. "So What?": analyse what do these results imply; how do they influence the outcome (Abstract Conceptualisation); and
4. "Now What?": problem solve and decide what they will do differently next time based on ideas gained from the experience (Active Experimentation)” (Grover & Stovall, 2013, p. 86.)

Kolb's learning model has been further expanded by Jacobson and Ruddy who offer five questions to help develop critical reflection that takes participants through Kolb's four stages on a more practical level:

- Did you notice...?
- Why did that happen?
- Does that happen in life?
- Why does that happen?
- How can you use that? (Cummings, 2008, p. 6)

These provide a framework for deeper learning to occur and from which an assessment can be structured. Combine this with Deardorff and Scarinos' practical suggestions above and an assessment measure is beginning to emerge. This measure takes the shape of ongoing interviews and reflections that ask students to conceptualize their intercultural sensitivity learning as evidenced through experiential classroom tasks. One of the aims is for students to articulate whether the tasks open them up to being more positive in their views to cultural others.

As Deardorff says, unfortunately there is “no silver bullet regarding an assessment tool” (2011, p. 74) to measure intercultural competence; however, through directed ongoing inquiry, using experiential learning theory as a foundation, while being mindful of the subject matter, a

legitimate assessment measure is clearly emerging. This present study aims to build on a body of knowledge in the assessment of experiential learning in intercultural studies by providing an example of an experiential intercultural curriculum and assessment strategy. This curriculum and assessment strategy is refined and strengthened through an attempt to answer the research questions:

1: How do Emirati students perceive their intercultural learning?

2: How do Emirati students perceive experiential learning?

The end result of this study contributes to knowledge in the field by proposing a model, an answer to the call of many teachers of what to actually DO in an intercultural classroom, and a roadmap for how to measure the efficacy of such a course.

## **2.9 Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity: Validated Instruments**

Despite the fact that developing intercultural maturity takes place in a complex multi-layered arena, it still is possible and necessary to assess student's intercultural development (Sakurauchi, 2014) and to do this while ensuring that studies regarding this development meet "a certain level of methodological and theoretical rigour" (Landis, Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 30). A challenge that has fallen flat for many intercultural programs where there are considerable gaps in the research, which fails to address "the development of interculturally competent students", or which has no "designated methods for documenting and measuring intercultural competence" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 41, as cited in Sakurauchi, 2014, p. 52). However, assessment practices are increasing, albeit slowly, not only in numbers but in the repertoire of tools adopted. Deardorff's 2003-2004 study indicates that a mere 38% of intercultural education courses had a formal assessment in place, and that figure increases to 47% by 2006-2007 (Deardorff, 2011). This necessity to accurately measure intercultural competence is not simply driven by the need for academic rigour and accountability but research suggests it is also a desired outcome of those actually taking these courses. In a 2011 Macquarie University study by Sabine Krajewski, investigating the learning and teaching that leads to intercultural competence, students were asked if they thought intercultural competence should be assessed and responses positively indicated this

is a preferred student outcome of an intercultural studies course: “Yes because I will need it when I apply for a job. Anything that can prove I am competent.” (p. 61)

In order to address the need for a measure, Bhawuk and Brislin developed The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ICIS) in 1992; however, it falls short in accurately measuring this sensitivity in two aspects. Firstly, it approaches intercultural sensitivity somewhat narrowly by assessing it purely in relation to beliefs about the cultural dimensions of individualism/collectivism. Secondly the focus in this tool is on measuring behavior, a trait more associated with intercultural competence rather than sensitivity, “one way to measure intercultural sensitivity is to determine whether people can modify their behavior appropriately and successfully” (Blue, Kapoor & Comadena, 1997, p. 78). As stated earlier, an important distinction between intercultural competence and sensitivity is the critical difference between measuring behavior or attitude. In addition to this, in further tests carried out to determine the construct validity of this measure, it was proven to be both unreliable and ineffective (Blue, Kapoor & Comadena, 1997).

Bennett and Hammer (1998) make good headway in developing a measure through their Intercultural Development Instrument (IDI). The IDI comprises a total of 60 questions divided into 6 subgroups reflecting either ethnocentrism (denial, defence and minimisation), or ethnorelativism (acceptance, cognitive adaptation and behaviour adaptation) (Altshuler, 2003). However, the number of items in the IDI is high at 60, which could result in test fatigue and therefore affect validity, particularly for the demographic of students in this study who are not native English speakers. Despite this, the IDI has considerable academic standing having gone through a rigorous development process over many years and with both internal consistency reliability and proven construct reliability (Paige, 2004). There are a number of salient points regarding this measure which are pertinent to this study. The authors are widely published and accurately distinguish between intercultural sensitivity and competence (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003, p. 422), which concurs with the definitions adopted in this research study. Secondly, the IDI is widely accepted as a reliable tool for assessing the effectiveness of a training course, which is exactly the intended purpose of this study. Additionally, the IDI has successfully been used in at least four similar studies in an attempt to establish the intercultural sensitivity of students undertaking various intercultural endeavors (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen & Hubbard, 2006; Engle & Engle, 2004; Medina-Lopez, 2004; Paige, Cohen & Shievely, 2004). Finally, the developers contend that



intercultural sensitivity is a developmental process moving from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative stance, again, a theory that is in agreement with the researcher's own position. However, while it is a potentially useful tool that could be utilized in this research study, as a proprietary instrument its usage is prohibitive as training is required, costs are involved and travel is needed. In terms of accessibility, permission to use the IDI requires attendance at a two day workshop and certification, which presents a number of challenges for teaching faculty.

Both relevant to this study, and accessible in terms of usability, is the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) developed by Chen and Starosta (2000), which has been described as the "the only scientific survey so far assessing the emotional dimension of intercultural competence" (Fritz, Graf, Hentze, Möllenberg, & Chen, 2005, p. 54), an element crucially important to this study. Chen and Starosta maintain that intercultural sensitivity contains four qualities: "self-concept, open-mindedness, non-judgemental attitudes, and social relaxation" (Fritz, Graf, Hentze, Möllenberg, & Chen, 2005, p. 54). The first three qualities are strongly associated with the understanding and assessment of intercultural sensitivity in this study, while the fourth item "social relaxation" relies more on behavioral evidence and therefore has less significance in this study. The ISS was validated using the construct validity approach, and was validated in a further study by Fritz, Graf, Hentze, Möllenberg, and Chen (2005); it was again positively evaluated by Matsumoto and Hwang (2013) in their paper assessing cross cultural competence tests. However, the questions at times could be perceived as slightly offensive, e.g. "I think people from other cultures are narrow minded" (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p. 7), or they require too much detailed, almost subconscious knowledge about an individual's own behavior, e.g.: "I often show people from other cultures my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues" (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p. 7). The wording at times is also quite cumbersome frequently referring to "my culturally distinct counterpart" (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p. 7).

The Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) is a tool developed by Van Dyne, Ang, and Koh (2008) to measure intercultural intelligence based on multiple intelligence theory consisting of a 20-item Likert-type survey. The CQS is published and freely available for research purposes, and it collects data relevant to the following cultural intelligence competencies:

1: Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence: “An individual’s cultural consciousness and awareness during interactions with those from different cultural backgrounds” (Van Dyne, Ang, & Koh, 2008, p. 17).

2: Cognitive Cultural Intelligence: a measure of the more observable features of culture such as social conventions (Van Dyne, Ang, & Koh, 2008).

3: Behavioral Cultural Intelligence: a measure of a person’s capability to behave appropriately in a specific cultural context (Van Dyne, Ang, & Koh, 2008).

While this is potentially an attractive choice for scholars in the field, as it is freely available and does not require specific training, there are nevertheless limitations. The primary concern with this scale is that the questions are not always relevant nor do they speak to a developing intercultural maturity. For example respondents are asked to answer questions about marriage systems of other cultures and knowledge of arts and crafts of other cultures. Although this is a course in Intercultural Studies it is not a course in teaching cultural behaviors, which is partly what the CQS measures.

While the language used to describe each tool is different, the concepts behind the measures share common ground in that they attempt to measure the difference between ethnocentric and ethnorelative attitudes and behaviours. Question types share some mutual themes. For instance, an example question from the IDI asks: “I evaluate situations in my own culture based on my experiences and knowledge of other cultures” (Hammer et al., 2003, p. 434), whereas the CQS asks: “I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me” (Van Dynne, Ang and Koh, 2008b, p. 240). The IDI has more explicit questions related to ethnocentricity, for example: “Our culture's way of life should be a model for the rest of the world “ (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003, p. 434) whereas the CQS is more implicit and asks “I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures” (Van Dynne, Ang & Koh, 2008, p. 240).

The strength of these tools is that they have been externally validated, are statistically valid and have been widely and consistently used in the field with numerous research studies, supporting both their reliability and validity. One of the strengths of the IDI is that it recognises the developmental sequence of ICI and the bearing one’s own world view has on this development. A

key strength of the CQS is that it is grounded in intelligence theory, and as such recognises that ICI draws on both emotional and social intelligence to complement the body of its work, making it perhaps a more holistic instrument.

The major weakness in these tools is that they fail to assess the deep transformative learning identified earlier as a key indicator of developing intercultural understanding.

The type of quantitative scales described above are the most widely practiced for assessing intercultural competencies as they allow for easy data collection and analysis and are generally well designed and validated (Sinicrope, Norris & Watanabe, 2007). However they have a number of shortcomings. Firstly, as Scarino rightly points out, they reduce cultural interactions to “binary oppositions (us/them; self/other)” (2007, p. 3) missing the complexity of this development. In addition many are decontextualised, lacking in authenticity, and fail to allow for thought processes and introspection (Holmes & O’Neill, 2012). Furthermore they rely on the participants of the study having the ability to both accurately identify and rate their tendencies with regards to intercultural encounters (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005). Findings from these types of self-report surveys are the most widely practiced yet often reveal “a discrepancy of their [trainees] intercultural awareness and sensitivity and their actual abilities” (Altshuler, 2003, as cited in Sinicrope, Norris & Watanabe, 2003, p. 397). Fred Dervin calls this “the researcher’s naïve belief in her/his subject’s honesty” (2010, p. 161) and claims that it is impossible for us to test the genuineness of participants’ responses, “therefore assessing these savoir-être summatively is, to me, impossible” (Dervin, 2010, p. 161).

Dervin presents an alternative to these types of scales by providing richer, more detailed statements:

I am fully aware that every individual (myself included) is multiple and complex but that every (inter) locutor can adapt their discourse to contexts and/or interlocutors by presenting a group or a national identity in order to please, confirm a representation or defend themselves. I know how to note and analyze pieces of evidence of identification in my own discourse as well as in the other’s discourse. As a consequence, whenever possible, I try not to present myself or my interlocutor through national images, stereotypes, generalization and exaggerations... (2010, p. 167).

This approach, however, presents a pedagogical minefield in the sheer number of constructs participants need to assimilate in order to respond. A highly educated English native speaker would have to read this a number of times to fully ascertain what it is asking, and to use it on less educated non-native speakers of English even with a translation, would certainly produce unreliable results (and quite possibly demotivate the participants in the process).

In view of the limitations in many of the quantitative models, and in Dervin's proposal above, it is time to examine more qualitative approaches. Three primary instruments are utilised here: performance assessment (Bryam 1997), portfolio assessment (Jacobson, Schleicher & Maureen, 1999) and interviews (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). Performance assessment requires students to display evidence of their intercultural competence through a dialogue. While sound in theory, this would be somewhat challenging to orchestrate. Portfolio assessments asks students for ongoing reflections of their intercultural work and development, a task that is both sound and draws heavily on students perception of their learning, a key feature of this study. Finally interviews, as one would expect, involve "in depth interviews in which researchers pose questions to elicit data on the nature and development of IC [Intercultural Competence]" (Garrett-Rucks, 2014, p. 3) and as such, are an instrument adopted in this study.

Another approach that involves combining assessment tools is now gaining more ground with researchers (Fantini, 2009) who acknowledge that their strength lies in revealing the subtle nuances and layered meaning reflective of intercultural competence maturity (Sinicrope, Norris & Watanabe, 2007). Research findings from INCA (Intercultural Competence Assessment Project) also support an assessment approach that utilizes a suite of tools; specifically, in their research they advocate the use of roleplays, questionnaires and scenarios. For this study, the use of interviews and reflections is adopted, alongside quantitative survey data, a course of action supported by research findings

## **2.10 Current Studies on Developing Intercultural Competence**

Providing a comprehensive overview of all the recent (post-2000) studies on developing intercultural effectiveness is a baffling task and would require a separate dissertation. To this end it is useful to begin this section by drawing on a study by Arasaratnam (2014): Ten years of

research in intercultural communication competence (2003 - 2013): A Retrospective. In this study Arasaratnam identifies 70 articles from across three journals: International Journal of Intercultural Relations (IJIR), Journal of Intercultural Communication Research (JICR), and Intercultural Education (IE), to provide an overview of Intercultural Studies research from 2003-2013. Articles were selected on the basis of having either "intercultural competence" or "intercultural effectiveness" in their title. While the author admits there may be some flaw in this rationale, she goes on to say "the goal of this project is to *glean an overview*" (para 5); it is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis. Salient to this present study, two findings were identified. First, the Integrated Model of Intercultural Communication Competence (IMICC) was identified as a model of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC). Unique to this model is what is described as a culture general, emic approach, which examines a phenomenon, in this case intercultural competence, from the insider's perspective (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007). Secondly, findings indicated the development of *empathy* to be a key contributor to developing intercultural competence. Empathy here refers to the ability to view a situation from a culturally different perspective alongside the capacity to competently engage in intercultural dialogue (Arasaratnam, 2004). These findings validate two key aspects of the present study and provide the basis for further study - firstly, the importance of using participants' perspectives, and secondly the emphasis on developing empathy through classroom activities. While Arasaratnam's work provides a general overview, below are two studies that report directly on classroom research.

Straffon (2003) writes about assessing the intercultural sensitivity of students in an international school using the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory), a study selected because its focus is on intercultural sensitivity within an educational setting similar to the one in this study. The findings suggest that students attending international schools, often out of their home countries, have a high level of intercultural sensitivity due to their frequent mixing with other cultures. The IDI is reported as a statistically reliable and valid cross-cultural measure of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003). However, the findings are a snap shot of a student's intercultural sensitivity at a given time, and they do not measure the developmental progress. In addition to this; the tool used does not respond to the subtle changes in perspective required to discern intercultural sensitivity. According to the researcher, questions from the IDI also seem somewhat biased towards a

particular outcome, e.g. “what do you think is more important to pay attention to, cultural differences or cultural similarities?” (Straffon, 2003, p. 495).

Covert’s (2013) study is on students’ perceptions of developing intercultural competence. The notion of using students’ perceptions, she rightly acknowledges, has been used only sparingly in the intercultural assessment literature. The parallels to her study and this one are therefore unusual in that both use student perceptions as an approach to assessment and both share similar data collection methods in using semi-structured interviews. However, the themes that guide Covert’s interview questions and journal prompts are based on direct cultural encounters, unlike the present study where the course content and specific tasks are used as prompts. For example, in Covert’s study participants were asked to reflect on their intercultural exchange and describe a situation where they felt they had or had not communicated effectively. By contrast, in this present study, participants were given a writing prompt to describe what they learnt in the class: *How, if at all, is my thinking about my culture and other cultures changing from being in this class?* Utilising students’ perceptions in Covert’s study, as opposed to an external measure of intercultural development, clearly illustrates students’ intercultural experiences and developmental trajectory as evidenced through authentic journal entries. For example, one student, when writing about her adjustment to cultural norms regarding punctuality, reported that “I realized that instead of getting angry, I should just get used to it” (p. 171). Covert highlights two salient points in her study which resonate with theory behind this study. Firstly, quantitative approaches to intercultural understanding alone do not accurately convey student’s experiences and qualitative research is also needed (Aneas & Sandín, 2009; Matveev, 2002). Secondly, to gain a more holistic view of the intercultural learning, students’ perceptions need to be utilised. This is a more far reaching approach which Deardorff describes as lacking in the literature: “Information on students’ perceptions of their development of intercultural competence, however, is lacking in the research literature” (Deardorff, 2006, as cited in Covert, 2013, p. 14). Covert’s study demonstrates the success of using the students’ perspectives, not only as a measure for intercultural development maturity, but also as an instrument that gives students the opportunity to reflect and develop deeply valuable personal insights into their learning experience, thereby offering much to draw on in this study.

## **2.11 The Use of Phenomenology in Intercultural Studies**

Covert's study above uses phenomenological underpinnings as a mode of research inquiry where "researchers investigate the stories or narratives that participants tell about their lives, experiences, and understandings of phenomena" (Covert, 2013, p. 53). Similar to this study, Covert is endeavoring to capture a lived experience: "The purpose of my study was to investigate students' perceptions of their development of intercultural competence while studying abroad for a semester" (Covert, 2013, p. 13). Phenomenology is adopted in this study and will be elaborated on in the Methodology chapter. However, briefly, phenomenology is a means to capture how individuals understand or construct a phenomenon, and is designed to uncover deeper experiences that may ordinarily be hidden; it is an approach often used to illustrate the way an individual interprets the world and therefore appropriate to intercultural learning. Covert's study alongside others within intercultural education, such as Holmes and O'Neill's (2012) and Kristjánsdóttir's (2009), are outlined below.

A number of current studies in the field (Al-Harhi, 2006; Dalib, Harun, & Yusoff, 2014; Yuen, 2010) have also adopted a phenomenological approach when investigating intercultural effectiveness as it marries well with the experiential, developmental and sensitive nature of the subject: "phenomenological inquiry represents an example of qualitative research that is aptly designed to meet the challenge of providing multidimensional descriptions of various issues related to race" (Orbe, 2000, p. 605).

In Holmes and O'Neill's (2012) research article: *Developing and Evaluating Intercultural Competence: Ethnographies of Intercultural Encounters*, they describe a study with themes central to this one, through which they seek to understand how individuals acquire intercultural competence utilising a phenomenological approach. The profile of their participants is similar to those in this study in that they are university business degree students undertaking an intercultural communication course. Unique to their study is their PEER design, whereby participants are required to interact socially with a cultural other over a period of 6 weeks. As mentioned previously this type of interaction is not possible in the context of this study given the social, cultural and political backdrop of the UAE. As their findings reveal, the PEER model design positively contributes to knowledge about developing intercultural competence and is a valuable tool. Data is collected through student reports, which aim to capture their experiences of these cultural encounters. Key findings indicate that intercultural competence is not linear but "multi-faceted,

cumulative and haphazard” (p.714); that self-reflection and awareness underpins that of developing intercultural competence; and that managing emotions, i.e. “reflecting on the feelings of Self and Other in the intercultural encounter require sensitivity to the feelings of others” (p. 714), is key to developing an awareness of intercultural competence. These are all concepts that underpin the approach in this study. A limitation in their study is that the researchers only utilize one tool and are therefore unable to corroborate their findings. Furthermore, students are awarded a grade based on their reflections, bringing to question the honesty of their responses. However the study contributes to the field by illustrating a new tool (the PEER model), as well as showing the success of a phenomenological approach in building an understanding of how intercultural competence is developed, which is a theme central to this present study.

Erla Kristjánsdóttir (2009) investigates participants cross cultural adaptation utilising a phenomenological approach in her article: *Invisibly dreaded and desired: Phenomenological Inquiry of Sojourners’ Cross-Cultural adaptation*. Kristjánsdóttir advocates the use of phenomenology for measuring intercultural adaptation as responses “will yield a richer understanding of the sojourners’ conscious experience” (p. 132), and where, unlike in social science research, complex intercultural concepts may demand re-defining when uncovering the lived experiences found in the data. Like Holmes and O’Neill’s study, this one utilizes direct cultural encounters as both a platform for, and means of, evaluation of intercultural competence; in Kristjánsdóttir’s study it is vis a vis a study abroad experience of U.S students in France. Central to this is that Kristjánsdóttir’s participants undergo three interviews, pre-, during and post-intervention. However, her pre-intervention interviews focused more on practical aspects of the trip: “the students’ expectation regarding the upcoming stay in France, and their hopes and worries pertaining to communing with their hosts” (p. 134). In the study, the pre-intervention questions are used as a starting point to gauge students’ intercultural maturity, and at the end to establish any development to that maturity. This approach therefore adds more rigor as an intercultural trajectory is tracked. Key findings from the post interviews indicate, as a result of the sojourn, that participants experience a developing openness to other cultures and self-report maturing intercultural competence. “Students stated that their viewpoints regarding worldviews had shifted to some extent from seeing a world from within their “Americanness’ to seeing their home country and world through a much larger and less rigid lens” (p. 142). The study also highlights the



importance of intercultural competence being a process and one that is often not seen by the participants until the intervention is over, hence the clear need for giving participants the opportunity for final reflections.

Both these studies provide validation for the use of phenomenology in this field, but like many studies, they rely on actual cultural encounters to facilitate the development of intercultural competence, a common thread in intercultural assessment. Matveev and Merz, in their research article on intercultural assessment, state that “a goal of IC assessment is to evaluate one’s level of knowledge and ability at a given moment in the cultural encounter” (2014, p. 123). This brings us back to the discussion at the beginning of this review on presenting a case for the term and notions of *intercultural sensitivity*, which is “associated with greater potential for exercising intercultural competence” (2014, p. 123) where a direct intercultural encounter is not required. Research is limited on studies such as this one, that serve to replicate the barrage of emotions and cycle of processes that intercultural encounters bring through experiential learning, yet remain in the home country classroom. The all-important question the participants in this research study answer to is whether this is possible.

## 2.12 Conclusion

Intercultural Studies is a burgeoning field that has emerged to answer the needs that have arisen from a more complex globalised world and the subsequent increase in intercultural encounters. The current state of the literature in intercultural studies has considerable gaps (Deardorff, 2006), many conflicting theories (Halualani, Mendoza, & Drzewiecka, 2009), and the correlation between experiential learning and intercultural sensitivity has yet to be fully explored (Silberman, 2007). As a relatively new field with literature and theories still emerging, there are undoubtedly a number of key challenges ahead. Vital to this discussion is an understanding of how to clearly distinguish between the terms, and thus delineate constructs. Relevant to this present study, the researcher has presented a case for the use of the term *intercultural sensitivity*, taking into account the context of the study, notably the limitation Dubai Women's College students have in demonstrating their intercultural behaviour with cultural others in relation to their study in the course that is the focus of this research.

Literature on Intercultural Studies course development, syllabus and training material indicates that a two-pronged approach is most effective in developing students' intercultural maturity. The first is a cognitive aspect, which provides theoretical knowledge and a solid foundation of content. The second is a more affective aspect with the aim of instilling a broader world view and generating an openness to cultural others. The literature also emphasises the need for this type of teaching and learning to be developmental and progress in line with students' intercultural maturity. The course this study is based on delivers this progression and both these concepts through content which is based on Muller's Worldview theory and Cultural Dimensions theory, disseminated by the intercultural scholars Hofstede, and Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner. Besides this, there is the more transformative work actioned through an experiential approach and the inclusion of tasks, which may trigger turning points in perspective. Research findings that incorporate the use of experiential learning within intercultural training, in a *directed* way, are tenuous, with practitioners often incorporating experiential learning type tasks haphazardly without the pedagogical rigour and forward planning required.

Where there is a significant gap in the literature is in relation to the relevance of context. Much intercultural training takes place in a western environment as evidenced by the heavy

inclusion in many U.S tertiary curricula. No such study (as far as the author knows) has taken place in a deeply conservative, gender segregated, Islamic environment where students come to college, which is entrenched in a high school learning system based on rote learning, the philosophy of teacher knows best, and where taboo subjects (such as cultural introspection) are avoided. This raises a myriad of questions, such as: *How effective will this course pedagogy be for this demographic of student given it is based on a western model? How will students respond to open discussion about their own culture? Is experiential learning appropriate for these students?* These are summed up in the research questions:

1: How do Emirati students perceive their intercultural learning?

2: How do Emirati students perceive experiential learning?

Unlike many western institutions where Intercultural Studies is a component of an academic course with the aim of providing a more general liberal studies education, the teachings of this course in Dubai provide students with a much needed intercultural tool kit for students to navigate their city and their working lives. This is a city with an extreme demographic imbalance with locals making up a mere 5% of the population, where the mixing of cultures is required on a daily basis. It is imperative that this course ‘works’ as the need is real and immediate. Determining to what extent it ‘works’ is vital, and it is from this place that the discussion on measurement and assessment begins.

The literature review illustrates the need to explore students’ perceptions of their intercultural maturity. This is a question at the core of this study, which is examined in this research through capturing students’ perceptions of their learning vis-à-vis interviews, written responses and Likert Scale responses. While a number of quantitative scales have been developed, there are shortcomings, especially where trainees are asked to self-report on their intercultural maturity (Arasaratnam, & Doerfel, 2005; Kapoor & Comadena, 1996). Qualitative scales also present challenges with instruments that are difficult to replicate (e.g. dialogues) (Garrett-Rucks, 2012), and researcher bias and subjectivity creeping into the data analysis (Matveev, 2002). Research findings indicate that a more effective approach is to combine tools and use a number of instruments for both direct and indirect assessment (Mahoney & Schamber, 2004; Matveev, 2002).

As a result of this literature review, an assessment plan adopted in this present study focuses on the participants' perceptions through a variety of tools: semi-structured interviews, task feedback and written reflections. It is worth recapping at this point that the course assessment and overall final grade that these student/participants receive is based on a final system-wide exam, and not from the approach adopted here and results of this study. The purpose of the assessment in this study is to measure the shift, if any, in intercultural thinking as a result of doing the course. The purpose of the mandated course assessment is to assess students' intercultural theory content knowledge.

The literature review demonstrates that phenomenology is a preferred approach in capturing the lived experience of intercultural development, thus providing justification for the research methodology utilising phenomenology in this study. This research is unique in that it seeks to test out this approach in the context of an in-country study, without a direct intercultural exchange for the purpose of developing intercultural understanding. However, it would be remiss to portray the participants in this study as leading lives devoid of intercultural contact, as they are in fact, often on a daily basis, in contact with non-Emirati 'service employees', e.g. maids, drivers, shop assistants etc, however they may not interact as social equals in these situations with a power differential in operation.. These incidental relationships are not the focus of this study, and are mentioned purely in order to more accurately portray the participants in terms of their experience dealing with intercultural others.

This study plays a part in the development of the field by offering research that encompasses experiential learning in the teaching, learning and evaluation of intercultural sensitivity. A capability often side lined in the literature for one with a behavioral aspect - as in intercultural competence. Alongside this, it illuminates the intercultural learning experience of Emirati women who live in a gender segregated conservative Islamic environment, a context that the literature does not touch on, instead focusing more on Western or Asian environments. Finally, this study contributes to the field by exploring student perceptions of their learning through a phenomenological approach, a methodology that the literature both supports but is also somewhat lacking in. However as someone who spends much of their day in the classroom, theory only goes so far, and it is important to examine the use of experiential learning for developing intercultural sensitivity on a practical level, in a course itself. This will be examined in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DUBAI WOMEN'S COLLEGE INTERCULTURAL STUDIES COURSE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### 3.1 Cultural Context of Dubai

*“Wallah Miss[Really Miss], why did you mark me absent... I was at the hospital.....my mother is very sick....”*

The Faculty at the Dubai Women's College are very familiar with the above plea from students. Looking beneath the surface the words are a window into intercultural variances faced in Dubai; from beliefs about regulations and time, to broader concepts concerning individual or community loyalty. These variances are inevitable given that Emiratis are a minority in their own country where they are confronted on a daily basis by cultural others. The challenge for Emiratis and expatriate residents alike is to learn to navigate these differences. For the researcher and her colleagues teaching Intercultural Studies at Dubai Women's College, the challenge is to sensitively and appropriately foster intercultural understanding in Emirati women without projecting their own perceptions and attitudes. It is important that faculty are sensitive to the fact that as teachers at a women's college in Dubai, they recognise they are influential players in terms of shaping student belief and opinion, based on not only how they present themselves in the classroom but to which elements of popular culture and new ideas students are exposed to. These students are often detached from the city of Dubai and can have narrowly focused lives in highly protected environments. A deciding factor in choosing classroom tasks is to ensure both consistency with the morals and values of the UAE while ensuring tasks properly convey what is intended in terms of fostering intercultural sensitivity. The context of the UAE, specifically Dubai, reflects a culturally complex environment, with a myriad of unwritten rules and codes of conduct, which serve to accentuate the 'otherness' of those culturally dissimilar. It is the responsibility of faculty to diminish this gap, and to begin the move from seeing the 'other' to seeing the 'same'; a sensitive process where the right learning environment is a vital factor. As such this section describes an intercultural studies course that endeavours to cultivate and develop intercultural maturity in Emirati female degree students in Dubai.

## **3.2 Dubai Women’s College Intercultural Studies Course Content**

The specific course this study is based on has been shaped in order to corroborate findings on both intercultural and experiential learning theory; with this in mind the syllabus and tasks have been selected according to these theories - see Section 2.6.4. Reflecting the literature on intercultural training, the course content is based both on content knowledge and affective work, the first more focused on theoretical content knowledge, the second concerned with the more affective elements of learning related to attitudes and beliefs. Both will be expanded on below. These two strands in some ways mirror the type of intercultural learning that is common in western tertiary institutes where students develop their intercultural sensitivity through both the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, or what Deardorff calls “internationalising the campus” (2011, p. 69) through the inclusion of a high impact intercultural experience.

### **3.2.1 Course Content: Theoretical Knowledge**

In order for faculty to teach on the Intercultural Studies Course they must undertake a 7 day training program with KnowledgeWorkx (“Inter-Cultural Intelligence Certifications”, 2017 ), an intercultural training provider based in Dubai. One of their core values, relevant to this subject, is transformation, “transformation through inter-cultural wisdom that leads to personal growth and knowledge transfer” (2011, para 3). The content of this training program provides the theoretical foundation for the Intercultural Studies course and some of the teaching material. While teacher training is expected in most disciplines it seems to be remiss in intercultural studies with all too often ESL foreign language teachers being expected to pick it up as an add-on to language instruction (Borgetti, 2011). However the role of the teacher and their attitude toward intercultural understanding is crucial to developing intercultural understanding and shaping classroom activities (Williams-Gualandi, 2015). At the same time there is an expectation that this intercultural component will have both rigor and be pedagogically sound, a difficult task without clear direction or solid understanding of methodology (Borgetti, 2011). At Dubai Women’s College, faculty members who are interested in teaching intercultural studies are required to complete the Knowledgeworkx training program.

The benefits of this are twofold: firstly it provides the background theoretical knowledge and subject content needed, and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it instills in faculty the required mindset to teach this all important and quite sensitive subject. Yamazaki and Kayes (2004) rightly point out that: “Teacher’s beliefs and values toward intercultural education directly impact intercultural teaching and learning in the classroom” (p.28). Teaching Intercultural Studies should not be taken lightly, as it requires openness and flexibility and the ability to be a role model in valuing diverse cultural beliefs; qualities that can be developed through appropriate teacher training. The KnowledgeWorkx training program addresses both these components by providing a solid theoretical foundation alongside teacher training that works towards developing an empathic understanding towards cultural others in the trainers.

The theoretical foundation of the course at the center of the present study encompasses two main content areas outlined below. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the Common Course Outline.

1) WorldView theory as developed by Roland Muller. Muller’s (2001) Three Colours World View theory presupposes that different cultures align with three different world views:

- a. Guilt/Innocence: North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand
- b. Honour/Shame: Asia, Middle East, South America
- c. Power/Fear: Parts of Africa, Asia, South America (KnowledgeWorkx , 2011).



Figure 3.1 Roland Muller. Three Colors World view (James & McLeod, 2014, p168)

2) Cultural Dimensions Theory developed by Hofstede (1983), and Trompenaars and Hampden Turner (1997). KnowledgeWorkx have reviewed and adapted the work on Cultural Dimensions to ‘extract’ their own 12 Cultural Dimensions.

Table 3.1 KnowledgeWorkx 12 Cultural Dimensions (KnowledgeWorkx, 2011)

<b>12 Dimensions of Culture</b>		
Personal	<b>Growth</b>	Material
Universal	<b>Relationship</b>	Situational
Tradition	<b>Outlook</b>	Innovation
Directed	<b>Destiny</b>	Directive
Informal	<b>Context</b>	Formal
Exclusive	<b>Connecting</b>	Inclusive
Reveal	<b>Expression</b>	Conceal
Relationship	<b>Decision-Making</b>	Rules
People	<b>Planning</b>	Time
Direct	<b>Communication</b>	Indirect
Community	<b>Accountability</b>	Individual
Ascribed	<b>Status</b>	Achieved

The scholars here are well respected and the most cited in the field for their attempts to classify cultures through research on understanding cultural preferred states or behaviours. While not without their critics, for example McSweeney (2002), they provide a solid foundation to an academic course on Intercultural Studies. Having taught the Cultural Dimensions the author can say first hand that students can relate to many of the concepts, particularly those of individualism/collectivism. Explaining national culture in these very broad terms makes sense to students who often struggle to understand foreigners, and provides a good general understanding. However, a concern with classifying cultures by their differences is that it overgeneralizes and automatically equates cultural values with behaviour without taking into account other factors (Friedman & Antal, 2005). These types of distinctions serve to raise awareness; however, they are not going to provide effective training in intercultural sensitivity on their own.

### 3.2.2 Course Content: Affective Knowledge

To complement this content knowledge is training that orchestrates a shift in perspective through the development of soft skills such as self-awareness and empathy, an area that is lacking in training material: “Although self-awareness is often cited as a key ingredient in developing ICE



[Intercultural Effectiveness], so far little has been offered by way of praxis or putting theory into practice” (Stone, 2006). The affective work therefore significantly adds to the impact of the theoretical knowledge aspect of this course.

### **3.3 Dubai Women’s College Intercultural Studies Course Learning tasks**

Four key experiential learning tasks have been identified that connect with the subject of intercultural learning and reflect both experiential and intercultural learning theory; therefore they make up much of the teaching and learning material:

- 1: Barnga (an experiential learning card game)
- 2: Perspective exercises
- 3: The use of film
- 4: Exploitation of the theme of intercultural romance

#### **3.3.1: Barnga**

As noted earlier, simulation games such as Barnga (Thiagarajan, & Thiagarajan, 2006) are an integral part of experiential intercultural training with their capacity to powerfully transform life experiences (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000; Lewis, 2005). This is a card game that provides experiential learning through what Mezirow describes as a “disorienting dilemma” (1995, p. 50), an uncomfortable experience which triggers change. Barnga has been used widely as an intercultural learning simulation (Gallavan & Webster-Smith, 2009; Gerstenfeld, 2010) in order to develop cultural awareness of oneself and others “by giving them [players] insights into different cultures, by changing their thinking about new cultures, by enabling them to identify with another culture, by confirming their self-awareness, and by providing them with new personal insights (Koskinen & Abdelhamid, 2008, p. 1).

The premise of the activity is that students receive instructions for a card game while unknown to them the other players on the table have different instructions. Students are also instructed not to speak. What ensues mimics a culturally uncomfortable situation as students have

different rules of play and cannot communicate. Crucial to Barnga is the de-brief after the ‘game’ where students get to vent their frustrations and try to interpret what the deeper learning was. Students often report great ‘aha’ moments as they are unknowingly forced into a situation that replicates cultural misunderstanding. This firsthand experience they gain, albeit uncomfortably, provides the basis for students to develop feelings of empathy and understanding, often for the very first time.



Figure 3.2 Barnga. Personal photograph of candidate (permission from students to reproduce received March, 2013).

With a strong game element, in that it includes rules and competition, Barnga is both fun and provides an ideal platform to experience as near as possible to a real life intercultural experience through a process of revelation and self-discovery.

### 3.3.2 Perspective Exercises

Following on from Barnga is work on examining perspectives, which is key to intercultural maturity as it provides a framework to hang the rest of the course on and initiates the beginnings of empathic development, and as such it is a large component of the course content.

Students need a transformative experience and a shift in attitude in order to consciously re-define their worlds; “the changes in students' intercultural skills being called for today require not just knowing more facts or having more awareness, but a genuine maturity, an individual transformation” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 586). As mentioned earlier, this can come about through presenting students with a “disorienting dilemma” (Mezirow, 1995, p.50), an experience

that may be challenging while going through it but which serves to initiate change. Barnaga, as discussed earlier, is an example of a transformative type of task.

An example of an activity to facilitate this revolves around telling a personal story involving misunderstanding or conflict, which then must be retold from the 'other perspective'. Students are then asked to share a real life based conflict, present both sides of the situation and then offer a solution. More often than not, these conflicts/misunderstandings occur in airports where, with tightened security, the veiled students are sensitive to feeling targeted. Following on from this, students are asked to create a Dubai workplace based conflict, present both sides of the situation and then offer a solution. One scenario involves three private sectors workers: one Indian, one Emirati, and one North American, with a focus on how the three are treated differently in the workplace.

This type of work on perspectives mirrors Kolb's four learning modes where students experience, reflect, think and act as a response to the learning situation. A real life experience provides the foundation or the experience, which moves through Kolb's stages with a change to try out the new learning and knowledge: "These implications can be actively tested and serve as guides in creating new experiences" (Kolb & Kolb, 2012, p. 44).

### 3.3.3 Intercultural Romance

As young women with thoughts of marriage very much at the forefront of many discussions, the theme of 'romance' is one they are very attentive to. In this unit students watch a documentary on intercultural romance, answer critical questions, hold a discussion, and conduct an interview with someone who is in an intercultural marriage. This is not a difficult task given that faculty at Dubai Women's College have taught all over the world, forming families along the way. This direct contact and full experience of an intercultural marriage story has an enormous transformative effect on students as they see firsthand that not only can two different cultures show deep understanding but also love

### 3.3.4: Use of Film

Given the social and political considerations in the UAE, as touched upon earlier, it is important to create a de-sensitised third place to broach culture and therefore skirt issues that are too close to home or that could easily be misunderstood. Film provides that neutral third space.

As mentioned earlier, research indicates film is a successful medium for incorporating experiential learning into the curriculum and it has been widely used in experiential intercultural training with a number of studies publishing the effectiveness of this medium (Mallinger & Rossy, 2003; Rarrick, 2007).

Film is used extensively in this course as it is the most fitting medium for delivering an intercultural experience and feedback has always been very positive. Rarick (2007) talks about the power of film to deepen students' understanding of cultural issues. Smith, Shrestha and Evans, (2010) mention the value of film in preparing students for a global work-place, while Mallinger and Rossy (2003) extol the virtues of film as a “window to many of the cultural variables that influence management theory and practice” (p. 608).

Films and documentaries provide a neutral context and therefore a powerful mediated intercultural experience which can trigger an emotional response in students as they engage and empathize with characters. Examples of films used in this course are: *Outsourced*, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen* and *City of Life*, while documentaries include *God Grew Tired of Us* and *Millionaire Boy Racers*.

Ted Talks provide powerful messages for students that challenge their way of thinking and provide a platform to discuss topics ordinarily off-limits. Raghava KK speaking at Ted Talks India on perspective (Raghava KK, 2011) is a useful example as he speaks from the perspective of a Hindu living in a Muslim region of India being educated by Christian nuns.

In her paper on using experiential learning tasks Kim Hawtrey stipulates that “an essential aspect of experiential learning is that the learner finds the activities meaningful and worthwhile” (2007, p. 147). These four tasks fit that criteria; however, not all potential tasks have been included in this study, for example stimulations have also played a significant role in experiential teaching

and learning, especially in regard to intercultural studies. Nonetheless, the author's own attempts at utilizing this type of task have not met with success, the only exception to this being the use of Barna. This was due to a combination of self-consciousness in 'acting' in the classroom, and reluctance for Emirati students to fully engage with role play type activities.

It is worth mentioning at this point that the Intercultural Studies course is in fact one of the most popular courses at Dubai Women's College and the learning seems to 'stick' with students for many years to come. The author bases this on informal personal experience derived from countless conversations when bumping into ex-students (now working graduates) around Dubai and watching their faces light up as they speak about how much they remember from the course. The author teaches many courses across the General Studies curriculum, such as Ethics and Academic Reading and Writing, which has never happened for any other course. Additionally, after each course there is an opportunity for students to give both formal and informal feedback, which in this case consistently reveals a positive attitude towards the course, the teaching style and the content. Students report a self-perceived change for the better with regards to their intercultural understanding, particularly in developing respect for cultural others, which they attribute to the experiential tasks.

### **3.4 Dubai Women's College Course Content: Linking Theory and Practice**

The table below illustrates how the tasks that make up the Intercultural Studies Course have been tailored for this research study and planned according to both Experiential Learning Theory and Intercultural Development Theory, with the aim of testing out their theories and findings in this context. It is unlikely, but not impossible, that students will reach the final stages of sophisticated intercultural maturity in such a short course; however, the developmental process has been initiated and students are on the right trajectory.

Table 3.2 Course Tasks Mapped to Theory

<b>Learning Task and Outcome</b>	<b>Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984)</b>	<b>Intercultural Learning Theory (Bennett, 1993)</b>	<b>Intercultural Learning Theory (King &amp; Baxter) (Magolda, 2005)</b>
Delivery of content rich lessons to build students' theoretical knowledge. Cultural Object Task. Students are building knowledge and becoming culturally self-aware.	<i>Abstract Conceptualisation</i>	<i>Denial/Defence</i> Cultural differences are denied or seen through an ethnocentric lens.	<i>Initial level of Development.</i> Different cultures are seen as wrong. Identifies with others from own culture.
Use of film for students to experience an authentic cultural context. Students are becoming more open minded and developing empathy.	<i>Concrete Experience</i>	<i>Minimisation/Acceptance</i> Cultural universalities are accepted and curiosity about cultural others is initiated.	<i>Intermediate level of development.</i> Becoming more accepting of unknown and others. Cultural judgement is decreasing.
Intercultural Romance interviews. Students have the chance to hear a real voice and real story. Students are becoming reflective and developing a variety of perspectives	<i>Reflective Observation</i>	<i>Adaptation</i> Intercultural empathy is generated.	<i>Intermediate level of development.</i> Becoming more accepting of the unknown and of others. Cultural judgement is decreasing.
Case studies and conflict resolution. Students are able to put into practice their intercultural development and may experiment to see how theory transfers to real life scenarios.	<i>Active Experimentation</i>	<i>Integration</i> Sophisticated intercultural awareness	<i>Mature level of development.</i> Willingness to interact openly with cultural others. Appreciation of other cultures and differences.

This intercultural studies course utilises a validated framework of intercultural maturity and has demonstrated theoretical underpinnings within experiential and intercultural learning fields. Informal feedback suggests students develop their intercultural maturity over the duration over the course and that it is instrumental in initiating the first phases of this development.

### **3.5 Guiding Principles for Teaching Intercultural Awareness**

Clear cut guiding principles for teaching Intercultural Studies are scant and often embodied within language teaching training material. In an article on *Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching*, the authors (Newton, Yates, Shearn, & Nowitzki, 2010) cite six key principles for approaching this subject from the need for cultural and language to be integrated, to the importance of social interaction and understanding the connection between language and culture. While there is some general relevance to Intercultural Studies teaching, much is too specifically tied to language to apply in this situation. The reason for this is beyond the researcher's control as it relates to senior management's decisions about course design and teaching assignments. The detachment from language teaching is not a decision personally made by the researcher on the backing of current research, rather it is part of a decision making process made by management that relates to the bigger picture of the HCT college system. Firstly, this course sits in General Studies and as such is taught by mostly non-language teachers; the HCT college system will not allow 'ad hoc' language teaching by faculty who are not qualified language instructors. Secondly, the course outline that is implemented throughout the UAE college wide system has no allowance or objective for language inclusion. Thirdly, the participants are not language students, but have completed their entry level English requirements to enroll in a Bachelors course of study. Finally, as mentioned previously, faculty members who teach this course undergo training by Knowledgeworkxs and use their material and approach as a framework, which does not include any language work. The question of whether the course could be improved by a tie-in with language is a consideration that will be examined in the discussion. The UNESCO guidelines on Intercultural Education (2006) cite three guiding principles in intercultural education: the first emphasizes the importance of respecting the learners cultural identity; the second concerns ensuring students have the right cultural knowledge and skills to be active members of society; and the third builds on from the second in ensuring students have not only the right knowledge and skills but have generated an attitude of openness and respect for cultural others. Again, while

valuable learning outcomes, these are not applicable principles for this context as their concern is on behavior and interaction. The Handbook of Intercultural Training (Bennett, 2004b) offers a number of valuable ‘recommendations’, which can be viewed as guiding principles. The first focuses on developing trust between the trainer and participants and amongst the participants, which is highly relevant in this context and found in principle 1 below: ‘create a safe classroom’. They go on to discuss the importance of sequencing methods and topics, which again is picked up here in principle 2: ‘scaffolded curriculum’. Following this they emphasize communication style and the need to differentiate between high and low context styles, which ultimately sounds like good classroom management for any teaching and learning context. Finally they speak about selecting the right method, and as in this study, indicate a preference for experiential learning in order for learners to personally engage with the teaching material.

Below are what the researcher posits are the three main guiding principles to intercultural education in the specific context of this study: creating a safe classroom environment, providing a developmentally scaffolded program, and exploring intercultural studies in practice.

### 3.5.1 Guiding Principle One: Create a Safe and Positive Classroom Environment.

The first, and perhaps the most important guiding principle in teaching Intercultural Awareness, is to *create a safe and positive classroom environment*. Nonetheless, the literature regarding this principle is scant; perhaps reflecting the fact that teaching in the field is generally in a western or more democratic context where free speaking and independent thought is the accepted norm. Deardorff (2009) raises this issue and “highlights the shortcomings of Western (i.e., Euro/US-centric) models of intercultural competence that focus on the individual” (as cited in Holmes & O’Neill, 2012, p. 708), and asks intercultural scholars to consider wider worldviews and cultural norms. In the context of this study, the wider worldview does not take for granted freedom of speech and from the author’s experience, creating a safe classroom environment is a fundamental principle in this regard.

Courses such as these where critical self-reflection and ‘aha’ moments occur with respect to cultural difference requires a deliberate attempt early on in the course to create “a learning



context that promotes trust, cohesiveness, security, and empathy so all learners feel safe enough to freely and fully participate” (Lee & Greene, 2004, p. 3).

Female Emirati students are often not comfortable with introspection and self-disclosure (Lambert, 2008). To counter this, faculty need to constantly model non-judgmental, unbiased behaviour, stressing the neutrality of concepts and the need to suspend judgement, and through willingness on their own part to share and disclose. In this environment students are encouraged to be open, respectful, listen, and participate honestly in discussions so that within the classroom a sense of camaraderie and community is established (Holley & Steiner, 2005, p. 55). For Emiratis, relationships are crucial, and students naturally *want* to feel part of a wider circle (Riel, 2008) in order to garner respect and support before they will ‘reveal’ anything. Lynn Davie’s (2006) theory of ‘interruptive pedagogy’ captures this concept. In this type of course many of the outcomes of these activities are unpredictable and the ideas may challenge pre-conceptions of society and culture, and call into question the accepted wisdom of society; therefore, there is a certain amount of risk in teaching this subject. Davies posits that a strong sense of self is essential in working with this ‘risk’ and with Emirati citizens in Dubai being such a minority of the total population, identity issues are at play here. UAE media sources regularly voice concerns that Arabic language and culture are being threatened with the increased foreign labor and heavy use of English (Ahmed, 2013; Swan, 2014; Zayed, 2013, cited in O’Neill, 2015). Therefore a major focus in this course has to be that of identity building, self-awareness, development of trust and creating a safe classroom environment. The issues of classroom safety are paramount in teaching this course. Indeed, without it, in the UAE, it would be almost impossible. However, it is important to distinguish between being safe and being comfortable as students may need to go through a process of feeling uncomfortable in order to develop. “To grow and learn, students often must confront issues that make them uncomfortable and force them to struggle with who they are and what they believe” (Holley & Steiner, 2005, p. 50). Davies suggests a classroom setting where values such as deliberation, argument, empathy, dialogue and connectivity are encouraged in order to fully explore issues of diversity and plurality without judgement. It is in this non-judgmental, expressive environment that students are more empowered and new behaviors and indeed transformation may occur.

Given the social and political climate in the UAE there is also some caution to be taken in being overly open and self-revealing in the classroom. This is an environment where deep reflection may be misconstrued as criticism and the penalties for such are harsh. This has been witnessed increasingly over the last few years, with a number of UAE-based academics having had contracts terminated as a result of transgressing unwritten rules (Katzman, 2013; Duffy, 2012). A more recent example was seen in the case of Andrew Ross, professor at NYU, who was recently denied an entrance visa to the UAE because of his work investigating the conditions of migrant labourers in the country (Marans, 2015). Freedom of speech is not acceptable in most Gulf countries and criticism is not taken lightly as it could potentially lead to larger societal discontent. The dichotomy inherent in this study was presented in the introduction: the need to meet the demands of a course that has the potential to shift deep held beliefs about one's own and other cultures, alongside the need to be consistent with the ethics and morals of the U.A.E. These two positions are in many ways at odds with each other and some may argue it is not an ideal scenario for this work. Nevertheless, as this research study demonstrates in the results and discussion chapters, and despite these constraints, it is still possible to effectively teach this subject beyond simply the content level. While the apparent lack of freedom runs counter to many academic professionals' personal beliefs and values, on a personal level it puts intercultural sensitivity to the test. Are we willing to understand the decisions of our host nation as being just and appropriate for them, or are we going to be defensive and insist that our way is the right way? Having lived in the U.A.E for 18 years the researcher understands that longevity equates to acceptance. On a practical level, in the intercultural classroom in this context, faculty need to be sensitive and tread carefully. They need to view topical issues such as consanguineous marriage and polygyny with an open mind and be curiosity driven rather than judgemental. They also need to know when to set boundaries, and which discussions and topics to allow to flourish and which to restrain; for the students' protection as well as their own. For example the issue of homosexuality is often raised, as a side line to how different cultural norms operate, and mention of it would be acceptable, but deep discussion and debate would not.

### 3.5..2 Guiding Principle 2: Provide a Developmentally Scaffolded Program.

Developing intercultural sensitivity is a sequential process and curriculum needs to reflect a carefully scaffolded program. Utilizing Ortiz and Rhoads' framework for multicultural education (cited in King & Baxter Magolda, 2005) this intercultural studies course begins with low risk, 'comfortable' activities to those that implicitly question beliefs about how students view and understand their own and others' culture. Below are examples of scaffolded tasks, moving along this trajectory from low risk to critically engaging.

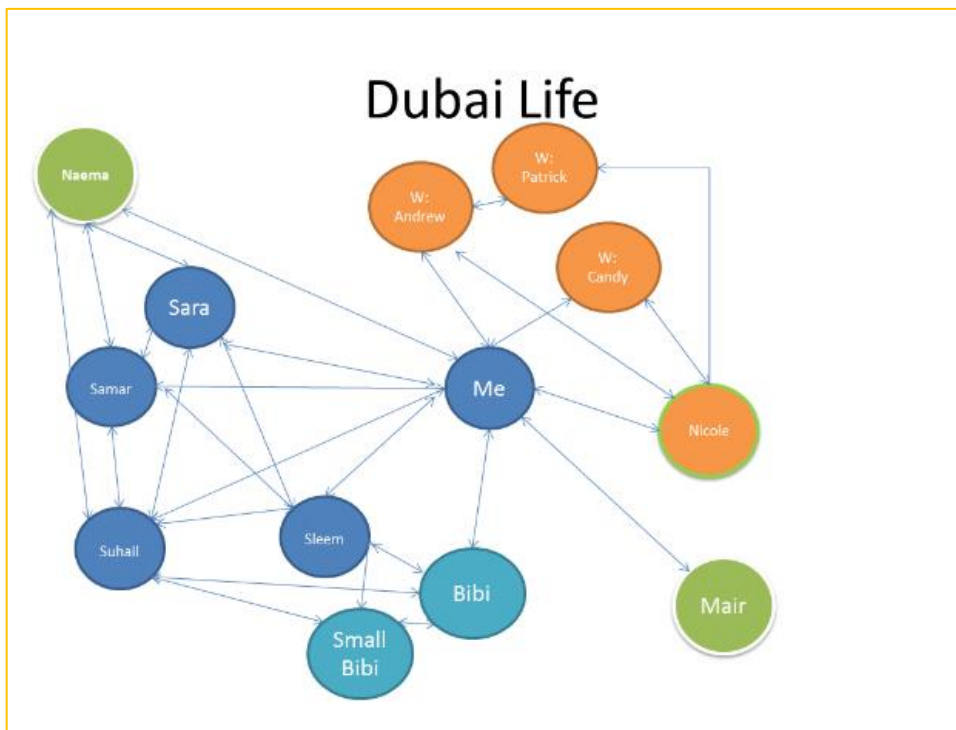
*Cultural Object:* Students bring in a culturally meaningful object (or picture) to share. This task not only provides a comfortable entry into the course content, it establishes a foundation of respect for the local Emirati culture, key to fostering intercultural awareness. In a report by UNESCO (2013) on developing intercultural competencies, this concept is paramount: "Intercultural education respects the cultural identity of the learner" (p. 27). It is interesting here to note Bennett's (2009) distinction between cultural learning and intercultural learning. He posits that cultural self-awareness must precede intercultural learning, because if an individual does not have a conception of his/her own culture, he/she will have difficulty recognizing and integrating cultural differences. Although one may learn something about a particular foreign culture, this does not in and of itself lead to intercultural understanding and the creation of "culture-general categories for recognizing and dealing with a wide range of cultural differences" (p. 4).

Figure 3.3 below illustrates cultural objects that students often choose to share as culturally meaningful to them. With grandfathers that were pearl divers or farmers, students are eager to share stories about their family's past and culture. This task also addresses the marked generational divide in the UAE (Rahman, 2008) and the serious debate regarding the need to reinforce a sense of national identity (Khalaf, 2008; Partrick, 2009).



Figure 3.3 Sample Emirati students' cultural objects brought to class (personal photographs of author).

*Sociogram*: Students draw a chart outlining the social groups they belong to. They then describe



the chart outlining differences in behaviour or attitudes within different groups and why.

Figure 3.4: Sociogram faculty example (permission to reproduce received February 2014)

The sociogram above depicts a colleague's social relationships. She is in the center, and encircling her are five social groups: immediate family, extended family – on two sides, work friends and non-work friends. As a British woman married to an Omani, the extended family relationships require navigation of Omani culture, customs and practices, such as the obligatory Friday gatherings over biryani. Friendships at work encompass norms that include professional behaviour, for example the need for self-restraint in times of crisis. A faculty member from our department was recently dismissed for no given reason, and while we all empathized with her situation we did not allow our frustration or anger to enter into the workplace environment or affect relationships. Finally as a mother, her role and behaviour changes again as one of protector, nurturer, and guide.

The socio-gram gives students a clear visual illustration of how behaviour can change according to the 'cultural' group that an individual occupies at a certain point in time. This activity can be exploited further by asking students to create a socio-gram of someone culturally and socially dissimilar to them e.g. an Indian labourer or Filipino hair dresser. This provides realistic insight into someone else's world and introduces the central concept of perspective.

*Presentations:* After the introduction of worldview theory and cultural dimensions students investigate more complex cultural themes that directly challenge their assumptions and beliefs. An assessed presentation asks students to present a UAE based intra/inter-cultural conflict, identify the causes, apply worldview theory, analyse perspectives, and offer a culturally intelligent response to it (McLeod, 2013). To date students have addressed culturally taboo issues such as mixed marriages, homosexuality, dress-code and sex outside marriage.

By carefully scaffolding the course and providing moderated input, the right conditions are created for students to both critically engage with new ideas and be receptive to new ways of seeing the world.

### 3.5.3 Guiding Principle 3: Intercultural Understanding in Practice

While an argument has been presented for the term intercultural sensitivity, a quality not characterized by the need to interact with cultural others, and, as stated previously, a scenario not possible in this context because of the difficulties in orchestrating a direct intercultural encounter,

an intercultural experience can be partially provided through the use of case studies and practice with intercultural conflict resolution. Case studies can be the next best thing to real contact as a means to connect theory to action and develop critical intercultural astute thinking (Shulman, 1992). Case studies can provide an authentic avenue that mirrors real life while preparing students for the workplace and giving valuable experience in team work and negotiation. They may even be a more powerful learning tool than direct intercultural contact as they provide the experience while giving the chance for reflection, critical thinking and assimilation of ideas. Table 3.3 below is an example of a business case studies used in the Dubai Women’s College Intercultural Course.

Table 3.3 Case Study adapted from KnowledgeWorkx (2011)

Case study
<p>A UAE oil company, run by UAE nationals has recently joined with a European oil company, run by Europeans. Cultural differences soon become very clear. The Southern Europeans think the Northern Europeans put too much emphasis on the work instead of developing relationships. They struggle with the UAE nationals as they cannot get a clear answer from them. The Northern Europeans think some of the UAE nationals are not able to do their job well and are frustrated by the Southern Europeans focus on relationships. The UAE nationals don’t like the fact that all of the Northern Europeans do is work and complain a lot, and they find the emotions of the Southern Europeans difficult to work with.</p>
<p><i>Which Cultural Factors are at work in this situation?</i></p>

“Cultural intelligence and conflict resolution ability are essential for 21st-century leaders when considering the increased interaction with individuals from different cultural backgrounds” (Templer et al., cited in Ramirez, 2010, p. 42), and it is beneficial for students to have practical experience in resolving conflicts that arise from cultural difference. This can be done by utilising the Cultural Dimensions (Table 3.1) polarities with guided questions. For example:

What would I do if I worked with someone ....

- a) with a greater material orientation than mine?
- b) with a greater people orientation than mine?

(Adapted from KnowledgeWorkx course material, 2011)

These activities have the capacity to provide the students with valuable insights that will assist them in their future professional contexts.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

Chapter Three has examined the course content at the center of this study: the Dubai Women's Intercultural Course. Highlighting the need for a course such as this to have both affective and cognitive content and discussing the course content and principles behind the need for both of these. In addition this chapter has examined how the course and learning tasks are positioned within both Intercultural Learning and Experiential Learning theory to provide a validated conceptual framework. Guiding principles for teaching Interculturality have been examined, along with practical classroom examples, detailing how these relate to the participants at the heart of the study: Emirati women. The methodological approach to assessing the effectiveness of this course, including a closer examination of phenomenology, will be examined more thoroughly in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Overview**

The literature review provided insights into both the theory and practical considerations inherent in the complex areas of both experiential and intercultural learning, with key gaps in the research identified. This chapter develops those key considerations through defining an appropriate methodological foundation and analytical framework in line with the research questions in this study. It begins by examining the epistemological foundations that undergird the methodological choice as supported by the results of the critique of existing research. The underlying research framework within this methodological choice, the use of phenomenology within a mixed methods study, will be comprehensively examined and justified as an approach to capture the participants lived intercultural learning. This chapter also describes in detail the stages of the research, the participants, the steps of data analysis and validation of that data. As a study using human subjects, ethical issues and the protocol adopted will be reviewed. Within this, the dual role of the author as teacher-researcher, and the implications of that for this study will be investigated, providing a rationale for the ethical compatibility of that role within this research context. Finally this chapter describes the limitations inherent in this study.

#### **4.2 Introduction**

The researcher is fortunate to have the luxury of academic freedom in terms of what she does as a classroom teacher related to this study, in how she approaches the classroom tasks, and what underlying philosophy she adopts. Bruce La Brack, intercultural training program coordinator at the University of the Pacific describes this as providing “a nearly perfect laboratory within which to experiment with training techniques, linkages between phases, and the application of theory to practice” (La Brack, 1993, p. 247). This aptly describes the elements of this research, incorporating training techniques, analysis of techniques, application to practice and adoption of underlying theory. This freedom allows the researcher to tailor the course, the assessment measures



and the research approach, and to be cognisant of literature in the field, and therefore construct more valid research by building on this bank of knowledge.

Observed in the literature review was that the notion of intercultural competence is interpreted differently amongst academics, from prioritising behavioural attributes to giving more significance to attitude. In order to more successfully navigate this choppy territory, in this study the researcher has isolated what is appropriate here, given the social and cultural context this study is situated in and given the background of these students. The notion of intercultural competence in this study therefore relates to intercultural sensitivity and the *attitude towards cultural others*, hence the aim of this intercultural training program is to develop a positive attitude and generate an openness to cultural others. This is an important starting point as this determines the method and collection tools which are expanded on in this chapter. As Deardorff puts it: “The starting point for assessment of intercultural competence...is not with methods or tools but rather in defining what it is we are measuring” (2009, p. 477).

The research component of this dissertation aims to determine the transformative effect (if any) of taking an intercultural studies course on Emirati Business students. As attitudinal change is internal it is notoriously difficult to capture, communicate and measure. It is from this foundation that the appropriate methodology and approach to data collection must develop, and underlying all this are the epistemological foundations.

### **4.3 Epistemological Foundations**

Jack Whitehead urges researchers to reflect on the following question: “How do I live my values more fully in my practice?” (1993, p. 32). The researcher believes that examining these core values and beliefs provides the underlying principles that consciously or unconsciously guide the research decisions and integrate the personal and the professional. The philosophical beliefs of a researcher shape views on both the nature of reality and the nature of knowledge i.e. ontology and epistemology. Ontology asks us about the nature of the social world: what exists? The two poles of ontology are *realism*, conveying the idea of an objective reality through to *constructivism*, conveying the idea of a multi-faceted reality. A person’s ontological stance then provides the basis for epistemological understanding. Epistemology asks us about how we *know* what exists.

Epistemology raises questions at the core of any research related to how knowledge can be known. The epistemological underpinnings of this study are based on constructivist theories (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997) and carry with them the belief that our internal frame of reference shapes our understanding of the world. A core tenet of this theory is that knowledge is gained through experience and events, which are then interpreted according to the individual (Sakurauchi, 2014). The notion that belief, or ‘inner workings’ manifest themselves in knowledge and behaviour is known as ‘internalism’ (Pappas, 2012). This knowledge, however, is often negotiable and complex, and meaning is often discovered through interpretation. Our decision making process therefore is interpretivist in nature in that it allows for multiple layers of meaning and reality (Scotland, 2012). Interpretivism, as the word suggests, asserts that we interpret the world according to our own unique individual standpoint and construct meaning over time (Waring, 2012).

On the other side of the coin of interpretivism and internalism we have positivism and externalism. Proponents of these approaches would argue in favour of their use due to the emphasis on the scientific and logical; an understanding that the world exists independently of the researcher; and adherence to the principle of generalization i.e. consistency in research results (Lowe, 2007). However, this research’s interest sits with people and how people become (or do not become) more inter-culturally competent and how they respond to experiential learning. In order to do this, the research needs to look at the whole person and the inner experience and not “define life in measurable terms” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 14).

As an educator, first and foremost the researcher values people and believes in the potential of people. The work of Nobel memorial prize recipient Amartya Sen speaks of the value of people when writing about human capital versus human capability, defining the latter as “the ability of human beings to lead lives they have reason to value” (Sen, 1997, p. 1959). The idea of leading a life with value marries well with an interpretivist outlook as interpretivism embodies the value of an individual and holds the individual perspective in high regard. Interpretivist research methods align well with this research study as they allow for open-ended interviews, questionnaires and focus groups, producing a rich tapestry of qualitative data that the researcher then needs to interpret (Scotland, 2012).

Scientific empiricism and interpretivism have traditionally been at odds with each other with both sides viewing the other's approach as invalid. The root of this dispute lies in their differing ontological and epistemological beliefs; in that quantitative purists value objectivity and a singular reality, whereas qualitative purists favour subjectivity and the idea of multiple realities (Christiaans, 2009). The different ways of knowing that stem from these ontological and epistemological backgrounds, be it through experience, logic or evidence, influence the research design. The way of knowing and assumptions that shape this research study constitute what Creswell calls a pragmatic worldview, according to which "instead of focusing on methods, researchers emphasise the research problem and use all approaches available to understand the problem" (2009, p.10). The flow chart below illustrates the concepts behind ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods and their interconnectedness.

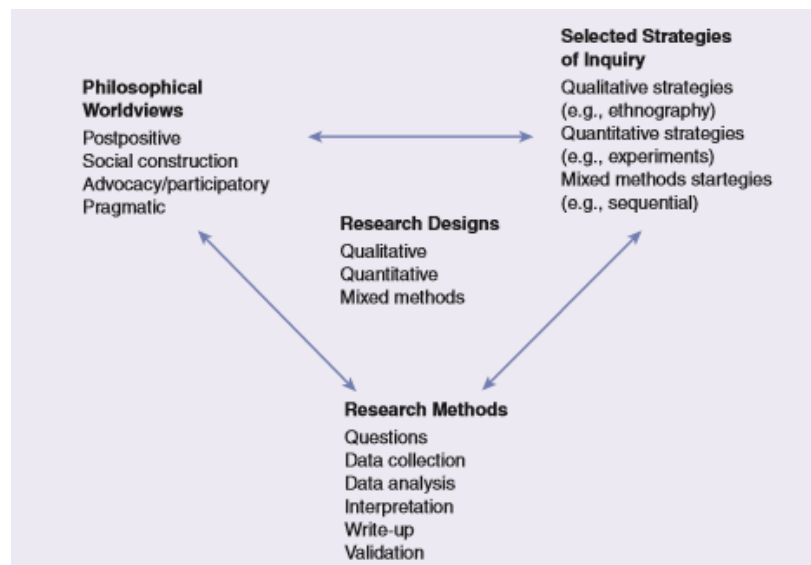


Figure 4.1 Creswell's (2009) Framework for Research Design

In this study the world, or events which are being interpreted, are intercultural in nature. This study aims to capture a student's individual learning 'journey' and their experience of that process and the deeper implications about people (Somekh & Lewin, 2005, p. 346). In this case there is no single reality (Neil, 2006), as intercultural and experiential learning are multi-faceted concepts, reflecting the undergirding worldview or epistemology that truth is 'murky' and evolving. It is therefore a study that falls within a constructivist approach as it aims towards gaining a deeper subjective understanding of an individual's experience. The following sections

demonstrate how the strategy of inquiry (mixed methods) and research methods/data collection, both answer to the research questions and connect with this epistemological foundation.

#### **4.4 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework underpinning this study is illustrated in the literature review. To elaborate, the research questions drive the study and seek to find out how Emirati students perceive intercultural learning using an experiential learning approach. Answers to these questions are hard to find, yet much needed in the current context, with up to 5,000 students taking Intercultural Studies annually system-wide at the HCT, and with the UAE government pushing for Emiratis to develop these kinds of skills in order to be more prepared to work in the private sector. This is the research gap. In order to reliably answer these questions, and to posit a practical framework, the theoretical underpinnings of both intercultural learning and experiential learning are utilized, drawing on the work of leading scholars in the field. The methodology is that of phenomenology as this study centres on a classroom experience, a tangible lived experience, and seeks to uncover meaning from the participants' perspective. The data collection aligns with both phenomenology and the needs of Emirati women in employing interviews and written reflections. Finally, the research contributes to building theory in regards to the emergence of intercultural sensitivity through experiential learning in the attitudes of Emirati students; yet as a practical model it is transferable to any context that seeks insight into both intercultural and experiential learning.

#### **4.5 Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches**

The building blocks from which all educational research stems are qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches; therefore, a grounding in these strengthens and validates the research approach adopted here. These will be elaborated on in the following sub-section.

#### 4.5.1 Approaches to Educational Research – Terms and Concepts

A quantitative approach to educational research, as defined by Smith (1983), is a “journey of the facts” (cited in Hara, 1995, p. 351). In this paradigm the researcher’s viewpoint and beliefs are second to the research content. Indeed, the researcher is considered the outsider or neutral observer and as much as possible the research is value-free (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Quantitative research is typically concerned with statistical truths that can be applied to all similar research designs (Hara, 1995).

In contrast to a quantitative approach, a *qualitative* approach highly values the researcher’s viewpoint, and trusts that an understanding of the research cannot exist separately to the researcher’s values and beliefs (Hara, 1995). In this paradigm the researcher is considered the insider, or subjective observer (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). This approach recognizes that human experience cannot be mapped to a set of numbers and that the research design needs to accurately reflect the variability of the human experience.

The goals of a mixed *methods* approach are to marry the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Proponents of a mixed methods approach argue that this merger enables researchers to more precisely answer their research question through the freedom to tailor their research design (Biesta, 2012). Being driven by the research question is what Tshakkori and Teddlie (1998, p. 20) succinctly call the “dictatorship of the research question” (cited in Biesta, 2012, p. 147).

The underlying philosophy inherent in the *qualitative*, or *post-positivist* paradigm, is strongly aligned with that of interpretivism. Indeed, Williams (2000) states that consensus still needs to be reached on how we actually differentiate between the terms. A qualitative approach views that reality is not rigid and that the researcher’s and the subject’s viewpoints not only matter but cannot be separated (Crossan, 2003). This resonates well with the researcher’s ontological and epistemological standpoint as it values the murkiness of the human story and human experience and also fits the personal, introspective responses found in this study.

The *qualitative* paradigm provides a framework for three key research methods, namely: ethnography, phenomenology, and grounded theory (Hasselkus, 1995). These methods all have

elements relevant to this research and applicable to this teaching context; however, *phenomenology* is the most philosophically relevant as it provides a tool-kit for examining the lived experience and examines phenomena from the perspective of those living it (Titchen and Hobson, 2005), concepts that are crucial in this research. Phenomenology will be examined in more detail in section 4.6.

The underlying philosophy inherent in the quantitative or positivist paradigm, on the other hand, has less application here in its concern that “objective reality exists which is independent of human behavior” (Crossan, 2003, p. 50) and this is harder to relate to this study, which characterises society and human nature as multi-layered and complex. However, it would be remiss not to recognise the quantitative approach as an immensely useful tool in the arsenal of a researcher. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) speak of the importance in distinguishing between epistemological beliefs and preferred research methods and cite that these differences “should not prevent a qualitative researcher from utilising data collection methods more typically associated with quantitative research, and vice versa” (p. 15).

By utilizing this credo in relation to this research design, and in considering the participants and the inherent difficulty in capturing internal changes, the most logical decision here is to adopt a mixed methods approach to the research in order to provide a wider reach of data.

#### 4.5.2 A Mixed Methods Approach

Although a mixed methods approach is becoming increasingly popular (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), Biesta (2012) cautions against indiscriminate mixing, asking us to carefully examine the possibility of mixing approaches considering areas such as data collection, epistemological views and research purpose. While this research is largely qualitative, in both epistemology and in nature, in that its purpose is to uncover participants’ perceptions of a complex lived experience (Wiersma, 2008), it is a mixed methods study in that it incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data collection. This research design is what Greene (2005) calls a classic mixed methods research design with the quantitative tools collecting data to “gather and represent human phenomena with numbers” (p. 274) along with a method that collects data in words. In this case, it is the best ‘fit’ as it allows for reach through the use of triangulation: “the combination of two or more different research strategies in the study of the same empirical units”

(Denzin 1978, as cited in Wiersma & Jurs, 2009, p. 287). Utilising this triangulation design framework, the holistic qualitative interview results and written responses to classroom tasks complement and flesh out the quantitative statistical data derived from the Likert survey to not only provide a fuller picture but also to “enhance the strength and validity of research findings” (Biesta, 2012, p. 147). While there is obvious personal appeal in this approach, as it speaks to the researcher’s humanistic leanings and belief in human capability (as defined by Amrta Sen), it also provides the academic rigour needed to produce both valid and reliable results.

The mixed methods framework adopted here is one that Creswell (2003) calls sequential exploratory design. This design is typically used with mostly qualitative data to explore a phenomenon - then supplemented with a quantitative phase (Harwell, 2011); an approach similar to an embedded research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The rationale behind this approach is that results are strengthened and more robust than with purely qualitative data (Frechtling & Frierson, 2002).

This design then takes further shape based on the aim of the research, which can be classified into three types: descriptive, comparative and experimental (Kervin, Vialle, Herrington & Okely, 2006). The use of experimental research is considered the gold benchmark in measuring cause and effect and is cited as the most important method for exploring causality (Cohen et al., 2011). Its place in research is in the “measurement of objective variables that affect individuals or groups” (Guthrie, 2010, p. 87). The purpose of experimental design is largely exploratory and is generally implemented when there is minimal knowledge of the research area and when the researcher needs to firmly establish the factor causing the situation, therefore reflecting the nature of this study. As outlined in the literature review there is clearly ‘minimal knowledge’ of the research area in this context, and this research study asks about the cause and effect of an explicit phenomenon. In this case then experimental research is the best ‘fit’ as it “most commonly addresses cause – effect relationships” (Guthrie, 2010, p. 33), and is considered ideal for assessing a new course (or approach), as it is “the design that most teachers would use if they wanted to trial a new program or teaching method in their class” (Kervin, et al., p. 57).

The discernible feature of experimental design is, as mentioned earlier, the design of a pre- and post-test. It is this model that clearly demonstrates causality and can explain outcomes

or the results of an intervention. The challenge is to tightly control and manipulate the conditions so that the intervention is indeed the only plausible reason for the change (Cohen et al., 2011). This will be expanded on in the validity and reliability section.

Judith Bell (2010) cites the fluoride case as a classic example of experimental research. In this intervention, two identical groups are established, both of which are given a pre-intervention dental check. One of the groups (the research subjects) uses fluorinated toothpaste over the course of a year and the other group (the control group) does not. After a year both groups are given dental checks and conclusions are then drawn. The research principles behind the fluoride case apply to all experimental design with key features being the pre- and post-test design. The only difference between the control group and the subjects is the intervention, thereby making experimental research valid. Critics of experimental research report that there are too many threats to internal validity to render it reliable. A threat can be considered anything that could “cause a change in what a researcher is measuring” (Kervin et al., 2006, p. 57). These threats can be numerous and the risks catastrophic. A common example of a ‘threat’ is participant drop-out or becoming desensitised to the intervention (Kervin et al., 2006). Cohen et al. (2011) counter this criticism by asserting that randomisation (the random selection of participants), and the control and separation of variables, are the solution to potentially unreliable experimental research design. In this study threats are minimised through the control of variables.

To sum up, this research utilises a mixed methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, a mixing considered by Biesta to be “relatively uncontroversial” (p. 148). The qualitative data is more dominant reflecting the nature of this study, and therefore provides the most valid and reliable picture of results that enable the researcher to most fully answer the research questions. The advantage of using this mixed method approach is twofold. Firstly, the questionnaires and Likert scale responses allowed the researcher to target a larger pool of participants and to get a broader view of the phenomenon, and secondly, the interviews provided personal experiences and deeper responses that then generated more in-depth consideration of the issues in the research questions.

#### **4.6 The Use of Phenomenology**



As fundamentally a study of a shared group's fairly complex lived experience, this research is qualitative in nature in that its purpose is to uncover participants' perceptions of their intercultural learning experience (Wiersma, 2008). More specifically, this is an ethnographic study, reflecting the reporting of a first-hand social experience, what is described by Wiersma as "holistic and scientific descriptions of educational systems, processes, and phenomena, within their specific context" (p. 273). Ethnographic research encompasses a broad range of research approaches; however, the research methodology that brackets this study is phenomenology as it holds dear the encounter or phenomenon as it is understood by the participants, as opposed to "imposing a predetermined theoretical framework" (Dalib, Harun, & Yusoff, 2014, p. 132). A phenomenological approach is ideally suited to this kind of research study as it provides the best opportunity to elicit the opinions of students and delve into areas where meaning and understanding are complex. These opinions are generally not black and white, are more concerned with personal experience, and require exploration and time to develop (Scotland, 2012). This study meets the criteria for a phenomenological procedure through key features which will be elaborated on below.

There are two schools of thought in phenomenological research: those who follow the Husserlian philosophy and those who follow the Heideggerian. Husserlian philosophy originates from the founding father of phenomenology – Edmund Husserl. Phenomenology came about as result of Husserl's reaction against psychology for being overly objective and scientific in studying human issues and his wish to examine life "as it is experienced" (Savin-Badin & Major, 2013, p. 26). Husserl is closely associated with 'bracketing' theory whereby a researcher attempts to set aside their beliefs so as not to influence the data collection (Lowes & Prowse, 2001). Heidegger was a student of Husserl but came to develop his own theory known as hermeneutic phenomenology. Heidegger rejects Husserl's claims that a researcher needs to remove their own subjectivity and boldly states that "reduction is impossible" (Kafle, 2013, p. 186). Indeed, Heideggerian philosophy presupposes that you can only understand a phenomenon through your own experience and preconceptions, and that this is a "legitimate part of the research process" (Lowes & Prowse, 2001, p. 474). Adding fuel to Heidegger's argument is the fact that research is generally carried out precisely because of a genuine interest in the subject, and this interest and curiosity naturally generate ideas and standpoints that are near impossible to bracket.

The phenomenological position underpinning this research study is situated in Heideggerian philosophy, reflecting Heidegger's belief that we cannot completely bracket our assumptions and biases. Heidegger believed that a researcher needed to examine contextualized lived experiences, including the researcher's, within the study and that the researcher's prior knowledge and understanding of the phenomena was a legitimate part of the study (Dalib, 2015). The following quote neatly sums up the researcher's phenomenological position: "Phenomenology means a way of staying true to what must be thought" (Harman, 2007, p. 155, as cited by Smythe et al., 2008, p. 1390).

When writing about phenomenology, Richard Pring states: "We each inhabit subjective worlds of meaning through which we interpret the social world" (2000, p. 98). The social world in this study is seen through participants' reflections on experiential learning and their perceptions of cultural others. This social world is the phenomenon being interpreted and the subjective worlds are the participants' voices.

While it may seem self-evident, a phenomenological approach can only be adopted if there is actually a phenomenon to explore in the first place. John Osborne cites the first step of a phenomenological approach is to ask the question: "What is the phenomenon that the researcher seeks to illuminate?" (1990, p. 80-81). In this study the phenomena are experiential learning and intercultural sensitivity. Pring concurs when stating: "We each inhabit subjective worlds of meaning through which we interpret the social world" (2000, p. 98).

Secondly, and fundamental to phenomenology, the method of data collection is deliberately intended to capture the participants' voices, the "primacy of subjective consciousness" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 18). Data collection reflects the phenomenological approach of interviews and written reflections and seeks to illuminate the research questions and build theory in regards to the emergence of intercultural sensitivity through experiential learning in the attitudes of Emirati students.

Following on from this is that phenomenological principles are found in the approach to analysing the data, in that it needs to focus on the description of these lived experiences rather than an analysis, explanation or attempt to look for answers (Creswell, 2006).

Conclusive overarching principles, while not avoided in phenomenology, are not as common as in a more structured tradition. Osborne states: “There is no such thing as the phenomenological method. Phenomenological methodology is more of an orientation than a specific method” (1990, p. 83). However, here we have the basic foundations of a phenomenological approach, which can be summarised as: define a phenomenon, view the phenomena from the experience of the participants, and describe rather than analyse.

Finally, this research is explorative rather than confirmatory; it aims to uncover a phenomenon where no similar study exists, and no answers are presumed.

## **4.7 Data Collection: The Participants**

### **4.7.1 Introduction**

To begin this section, it is important to first question the use of the word ‘participants’, a term that is often shunned by phenomenological researchers in favour of terms such as “co-investigators” (Worthen, 2002, p. 140) or “co-researchers” (Osborne, 1990, p. 82), which espouses a more equal researcher – participant relationship. In this study the word *participant* is used because it is a term that the researcher is most comfortable with and one that is widely recognized. Nevertheless, the phenomenological spirit of co-operation remains steadfast.

The purpose of this section is to not only provide the demographic data of these participants, but to understand more deeply the nature of Dubai Women’s College students and ask profoundly who these women are and what is their unique standpoint, information that will specifically inform what they bring to the research design.

### **4.7.2 Compulsory use of English in tertiary federal institutions**

Key to this is an understanding of what the compulsory use of English language as the medium of instruction in tertiary institutions in the UAE brings to this study. It is somewhat ironic that a course such as this, with one of its aims to develop Emirati cultural identity, is taught in English, given that the widespread use of English in the UAE is cited as one of the reasons for cultural fragility in the region (Hopykyns, 2014). Questions of national identity regularly appear

at the forefront of social and political rhetoric in the UAE (Kirk & Napier, 2009) with the widespread use of English, “leading to serious concerns about the future of Arabic and local culture” (Hopkyns, 2014, p. 3).

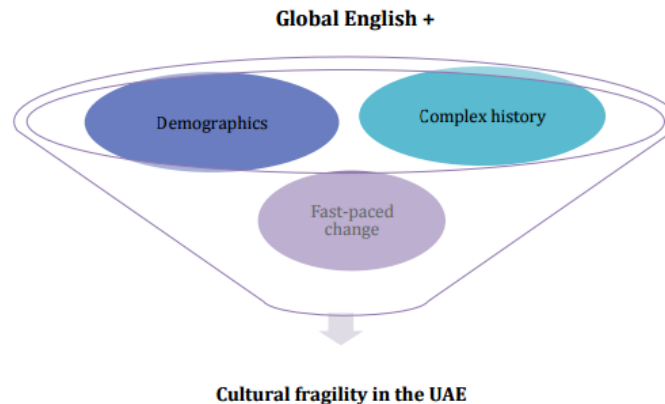


Figure 4.2 Factors contributing to cultural fragility in the UAE (Hopkyns, 2014)

While it is not within the scope of this study to explore the complex issues of language and identity, it is important to recognise and justify the use of English in this study and demonstrate that it does not impede the data collection or negatively influence the validity of the data collection, and consequently the study as a whole.

The students in this study all cite Arabic as their first language and English as their second. Research demonstrates that for this Gulf demographic of students, English is considered important in students’ lives and their attitude towards it is positive (Hopkyns, 2014; Hanani, 2009). This positivity is a crucial factor in the successful implementation of this course as it demonstrates that students are motivated to interact and learn in English. Alongside this positive attitude is that most of these students are both comfortable and confident in English as it is considered the lingua franca of the UAE, reflecting the sociolinguistic shift from Arabic to English in the region (Randall & Samimi, 2010). This shift is nicely captured in the new Dubai number plating system, which was introduced in 2015. In these plates Dubai is now written both in English and Arabic within the same word, reflecting the everyday dual language system.



Figure 4.3 New Dubai license plate (author's own photograph).

One can determine from this that the language struggles felt by many students who consider English as their second language is not as pronounced in this context, and that the use of English in this course is neither a barrier to understanding, to being open to the course content, or more importantly, hinders communication in the data collection process. Consequently the interviews are conducted in English and reflections written in English. It is important to note at this point that while these participants may be comfortable and confident in the English language; this does not always transfer to cultural knowledge. The researcher's experience has been that this demographic of student knows little about the world outside the UAE: "this educational background, combined with gender segregation, translates into students, in general, being shy, lacking information on global issues and events" (Sonleitner, & Khelifa, 2005, p. 4). An example of this is illustrated in a classroom activity that involved watching a speech by then President Obama: when one student asked who would take over if he died, the class answered 'his wife'. In addition to this, reading, a source of gaining broader knowledge, is not a common cultural practice in the UAE and "most students fail to read adequately" (Sullivan, 2004, p. 3).

The assumption is that language and culture are intertwined, and that "the meanings of a particular language represent the culture of a particular social group. To interact with a language means to do so with the culture which is its reference point" (Guessabi, 2017, p.1), whilst valid for most language learners is not as relevant here for two reasons. Firstly, the participants in this study are English second language learners within their home culture, thus getting less of a 'direct cultural hit'. It is those learners who move to the second language culture who achieve greater cultural learning: "second language learning within the second culture is inextricably intertwined with cultural learning" (Brown, 1980, p. 158). Secondly, there is a subtle psychological barrier to Western culture present in the Gulf. Edward Said (2003) argues that the West's sense of cultural and intellectual superiority is born from an othering of the Gulf countries, depicted as the 'opposite' of the West. The West is simply not a culturally attractive proposition. The researcher noticed a stark contrast in this aspect after moving to Dubai from Seoul, Korea. In Seoul, English language students would often take on English names, have English movie clubs, and organise English-only social activities. In Dubai, students are glued to Hindi movies or Egyptian soap operas at break time, they are not at all interested in mimicking the speech of their favorite

Hollywood actor, taking on an English name is not within their realm of thinking and Arabic is the social language used around campus. In short, they are not interested in adopting the culture alongside the language. The researcher argues that *in this context*, language and culture are only sparingly intertwined, and that for the reasons mentioned above these participants have limited cultural knowledge.

#### 4.7.3 Federal versus private tertiary institutes

The fact that these participants are Dubai Women’s College students, as opposed to students from a privately funded tertiary institution, is a significant factor when examining what they bring to the research. Exact figures on how many Emirati high school graduates attend government funded versus one of the 26 branch campuses of international universities private institutions, for example Middlesex University and Wollongong University, are hard to come by. However the KHDA (Knowledge and Human Development Authority) confirm that in 2013 there were 22,694 Emiratis in Dubai enrolled in Higher Education Institutions and that of these, for Emirati women, “65% are enrolled in Federal institutions” (Knowledge and Human Development Authority , 2012, p. 14), indicating that the majority of Emirati high school graduates (or their parents) prefer a more controlled conservative environment and that therefore the participants in this study are largely representative of female Emirati tertiary students.

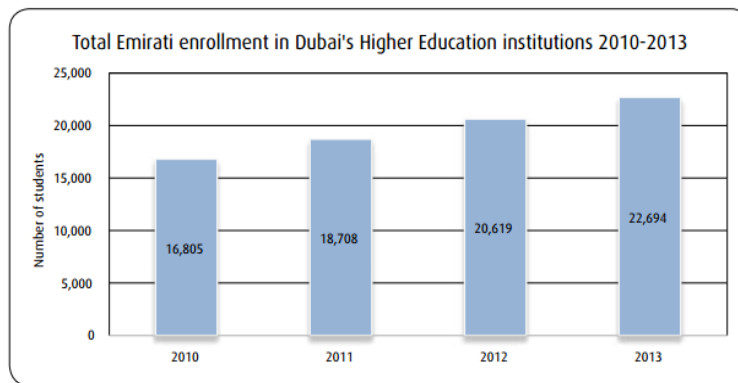


Figure 4.4 Emirati higher institution enrolment 2010-13 (The Higher Education Landscape in Dubai, 2012)

For those Emiratis studying at international branch campuses, one of the main reasons cited for their choice is the opportunity to study in a multi-cultural environment (Wilkins, Balakrishnan, & Huisman, 2011). For those choosing to study at the federal institutions the reverse is true, where

a more conservative environment is preferred. This is evidenced in the building of UAE University, which, when established in 1977, was strategically positioned far from both Dubai and Abu Dhabi to address “considerations of suitability for young women from conservative families” (Findlow, Brock, & Levers, 2007, p. 61). This, combined with a strictly enforced gender segregation policy, made the university more popular than anticipated with double the numbers of applications than expected (Findlow, Brock, & Levers, 2007). The participants in this study fall into the latter category with the majority having attended government schools and then choosing to enroll at the federal institution of HCT.

Students (or parents) make HCT their first choice as there are strict codes of conduct and dismissal for behavior “which disrupts the educational and related activities of other students or staff, including behavior which brings into disrepute the reputation, academic standing of the HCT or the political, religious or cultural values of the UAE” (“Regulations, Academic Policies and Procedures”, 2017, p. 35). The HCT published Methaq code of conduct outlines in detail HCT expectations of students to ensure conformity and consistency with the morals and values of the UAE, for example: “You must dress in UAE national attire, in conformity with the cultural and religious values of the community” (“Methaq Student Code of Conduct”, 2017, p. 11). What these students bring as participants to the research is a conservative family background, and a strong conviction to follow authority. The UAE scores highly on Hofstede’s (1980) Power-Distance continuum, especially compared to a western country such as Australia, exemplifying the fact that UAE society accepts that power is not equal across society and there is a strong need for power to be seen as hierarchical.

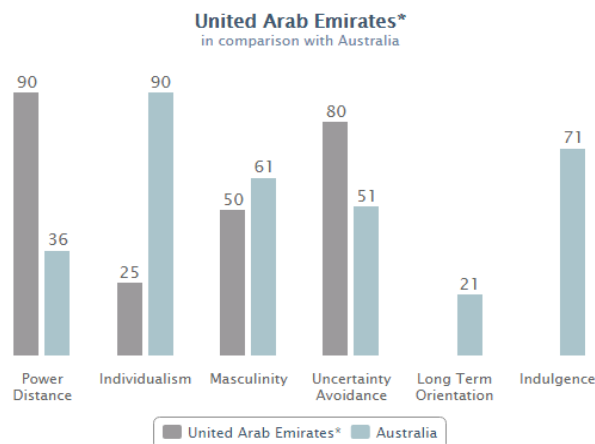


Figure 4.5 Hofstede's power-distance dimension: United Arab Emirates in comparison with Australia (<http://geert-hofstede.com/arab-emirates.html>)

Twenty out of twenty two participants in this study attended government schools which are notorious for having a teacher-centered, rote memorization system (Rapanta, 2014). Therefore, students come to college already entrenched in a very passive way of learning. What this translates to in the classroom is a dependence on the teacher, a mindset that 'teacher knows best', challenges in learning to think critically and independently, and a learning context where "giving the students total freedom to produce a learning outcome might lead to confusion rather than creativity" (Rapanta, 2014, p. 3). As mentioned in the literature review, this creates the need for a carefully scaffolded program and an obligation to create a safe and positive classroom environment where students understand (from the instructor) that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers and feel empowered to give their opinions freely.

Parallel to this, in regards to the data collection, there is a limit to the number of questions in each data collection tool to ensure small transparent chunks of language. Data collection is spread out over the course to reduce 'response fatigue' and the wording of questions is carefully considered to provide 'comprehensible input', i.e. that appropriate vocabulary and syntax are used to ensure comprehension (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2016). Given that the participants may lack the skills that enable them to critically express their views within pedagogic situations, a variety of tools has been used in this study in order to more successfully capture students' perceptions. In addition, question prompts were repeated to avoid the need to decipher new meanings in each tool and to therefore focus more on the response. For example:

*Did watching film scenes help you understand people from different cultures?*

*Did playing Barnga help you understand what it feels like to be culturally different?*

*Did the perspective activities help you understand people from different cultures?*

#### 4.7.4 The role of Religion

For these participants religion plays a very important role in their lives, guiding both their thinking and behavior. Research cites that in Islamic societies such as this, where religion plays a



fundamental role, the Western approach has limitations (Abdulla, 2005). In these societies there are few distinctions made between state and society. “Islam is therefore not just a religion institutions (sic). It is inseparable from all of the affairs of believers. Religion and culture go hand in hand” (Abdulla, 2005, p. 53). It is therefore argued that the role of religion can provide insights into understanding both the behavior and cultural norms of a society. The role of religion in the participants’ lives is thus a key question in the interviews and, as the findings will show, this research study demonstrates a clear link between the participants’ religious principles and views on cultural others.

#### 4.7.5 Participant Selection and demographic

This is a study of one class of approximately 22 Year Two female Emirati Dubai Women’s College Business students who undertook an Intercultural Studies course. Criterion sampling was used in this study as in phenomenological research it is essential that all the participants have “experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 1998, p. 118). Although participation was entirely voluntary, most of the class was involved at different stages; therefore, a full range of students was surveyed in what was a typical sample of these students. Participants were the researcher’s own students and were assured that the research had no grade bearing (see Ethics).

The participants demonstrated homogeneity by being of the same age, gender, and major, English language level and by having the same cultural and religious backgrounds. This homogeneity is an important factor in minimising variants, thereby increasing the study’s validity (Huberman & Miles, 2009). All participants were full-time students living in Dubai.

#### 4.7.6. Sample size

There is much debate in the literature as to an adequate sample size in this type of study. Marshall argues that “an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research question” (1996, p. 523). Adequately answering the research question in this type of qualitative data collection is determined when saturation is reached and themes stop emerging. Osborne reiterates this in relation to phenomenological research when he writes that “the researcher needs as many participants as it takes to illuminate the phenomenon” (1990, p. 82). In this study eight participants volunteered to be interviewed, just less than half the full participant

size. The reason for this is that interviews are time consuming and these students are accustomed to going home directly after class. There is no ‘campus culture’ and the concept that a student could stay at college after class time, like western institutions, is alien to many. Two interviews were conducted, at roughly the beginning and then again at the end of the course, and while not strictly a pre-post intervention design, the time lapse generates more robust data as the end result of the intercultural and experiential learning tasks will have come to the surface.

In this type of study more interviews does not necessarily equate to more validity as the aim is for most, if not all, of participant perceptions to be uncovered. Once repetition occurs, this is an indication that saturation has been reached (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). The number of interviewees may be relatively small compared to large scale studies; however, this is defended and offset by a number of factors. Firstly, although research seldom pinpoints an exact number needed for sufficient data, Creswell (2006) cites 5-25 as being sufficient in a phenomenological study. Secondly, these participants are extremely homogenous, thus minimising variance, and thirdly, there were two in-depth interviews per participant – with the aim here being depth rather than breadth.

## **4.8 Ethics**

The five ethics issues that are particularly relevant to this context and will be discussed in this section are: situated ethics, anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent and the dual role of teacher as researcher.

### **4.8.1 Situated Ethics**

Linked strongly to the ethical issues in this research is the social and political context of Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. This impacts on almost every facet of this work from instigation to implementation, and it is prudent therefore to start with the concept of situated ethics. Situated ethics, as defined by Anteliz and Danaher (2005), “eschews adherence to a timeless and universal code in favour of understanding ethical practice as contingent and located in the specific power grids of particular institutions” (p. 2).

Ethics in this research, and in this ‘particular institution’, is shaped by the context of the research in two significant ways. Firstly, on a geographical level, situated ethics links the social, cultural and political factors central to the United Arab Emirates with the research considerations of freedom of speech and political risk, which in turn impact on issues in anonymity. Secondly, situated ethics has relevance on a socio-psychological level as participants’ maturity levels and world knowledge are taken into account when examining informed consent.

The course this research is based on requires introspection and asks participants to examine their own Emirati culture and to explore and attempt to understand ‘cultural others’. For them it is the first time they have critically examined their own culture, and by the end of the course they are often left with facing a new reality and changed perspectives. For example:

*Before I thought they [foreigners] should respect our culture if they are here, not that we should respect them or the amount of respect I have now.*  
(Thani, M., pers. comm, February 2013).

The backdrop to this is Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, where any societal discontent is nipped in the bud fairly swiftly (The National, 2011). In a country where it is illegal to criticize the government, “the law prohibits criticism of rulers and speech that may create or encourage social unrest” (U.S. Department of State, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2011 United Arab Emirates, p. 9), there is a risk that comments made while critically reflecting on Emirati culture and cultural norms could be misconstrued as something more ‘sinister’. As stated in the HCT catalogue, students are expected to “uphold the good name of the Higher Colleges of Technology as an organization and as a community, and the reputation of all its staff and students, in any communications within or outside the HCT” (Regulations, Academic Policies and Procedures, 2017, p. 35). As a researcher, “the importance of being sensitive to socio political contexts” (Simons & Usher, 2012, p.11) is crucial in this context, alongside the ability to accurately interpret specific socio-political beliefs and behaviour to orchestrate appropriate ethical practice (Pendlebury & Enslin, 2001).

#### 4.8.2 Anonymity

Given this context, assuring *anonymity* is vital. Anonymity delivers a ‘double benefit’ in that it provides participants with security from reprisal, which in turn bestows on them ‘unconscious permission’ to speak freely; a researcher’s ideal scenario. Tickle puts it succinctly when he writes that anonymity ensures “information from participants may be forthcoming without jeopardizing publication” (Tickle, 2001, p. 348, cited in Jarzabkowski, 2004, p. 84). The question of anonymity and how to guarantee it is a core principle of ethical research and one that can create considerable tension for participants, especially when there is some degree of risk. This risk comes from participants’ views and intercultural development being misinterpreted as being disloyal and even deviant. It is therefore prudent, particularly in this situation, to withhold participants’ names and provide anonymity for their own safekeeping. Anonymity in this research is achieved by using pseudonyms, which are commonplace in this kind of research (Jarzabkowski, 2004).

#### 4.8.3 Confidentiality

A principle closely aligned to anonymity is that of confidentiality. Wiles, Crow, Heath, and Charles describe anonymity as “the vehicle by which confidentiality is operationalized” (2008, p. 417). Confidentiality is concerned with the public release of information that could identify participants (Wiles et al., 2008). In this case confidentiality is assured through the restricted access to data by the researcher only, adherence to an ethical protocol regime, and informing participants (prior to the research) of the purpose of the research and plans for the results.

#### 4.8.4 Informed Consent

This leads us to the notion of informed consent; potentially hazardous when dealing with participants using English as a second language, and all the more so when one considers statistics coming out of research demonstrating how few participants purport to accurately reading consent forms (Cassileth, Zupkis, Sutton-Smith, & March, 1981). It is also important to acknowledge at this point that while these participants are legally adults, aged between 18 – 22, their maturity level is often that of teenagers (Shammas & Tarazi, 2012). Additionally, ideas around academic research and informed consent are completely foreign to them. Add language issues into the mix and there is great potential for ‘just say yes to get a good mark from the teacher consent’. Salient points that

begin to address the questions of informed consent, while considering the emotional make up of these participants, are as follows:

1: While informed consent communicates a readiness to participate in the research, informed dissent is equally acceptable and communicates an unwillingness to participate (Bourke & Loveridge, 2013).

2: Establishing that participating in this research is not a college activity, and will not affect grade outcome; “children sometimes find it difficult to refuse to take part as they perceive the research to be a ‘school’ activity” (Bucknall, 2012, p. 46, cited in Bourke and Loveridge, 2013).

3: Understanding that informed consent is continuous, that participants are free to withdraw at any time, and that the researcher must provide “ongoing opportunities for children [or participants] to express both informed consent and dissent” (Bourke & Loveridge, 2013, p. 5).

In addition to these are three steps identified by Bourke and Loveridge (2013) as important in the informed consent process:

4: Providing accurate information with regards to the research covering such things as: what the research is and why it is important, expectations of the participants, and how anonymity and confidentiality will be safeguarded.

5: Ensuring that participants’ understand the ‘accurate information’.

6: Establishing how participants consent or refusal will be documented.

#### 4.8.5 Ethics Concerns for Researcher

There is also a need for the researcher to regard herself with the same ethical courtesy for her own security, be it personal or professional. Exemplifying this risk can be seen in the 2012 case of U.S. academic Matthew Duffy who “had his contract with a UAE university terminated for lectures advocating media and journalistic freedom” (Katzman, 2013, p. 8). Any researcher in this context must always ensure they speak about Emirati society, culture and politics neutrally (or positively), are always courteous, and most importantly spend time and energy developing

relationships - vital to Emiratis (Shammas, 2010). The aptly named paper by “Damned if you do, Damned if you don’t” (Simons & Usher, 2012.) fittingly illustrates the researcher’s predicament in this context.

#### 4.8.6 Dual Role Teacher/Researcher

The introduction outlined the author’s place in this study as both teacher and researcher, a model typically described as one of action research where the teacher is investigating their own teaching and/or their student’s learning (Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007). It is a position that Trondsen and Sandaunet (2009) accurately describe as the ability to wear different hats (p. 5). The participants in their study faced huge emotional scars dealing with issues such as domestic violence and self-harm, therefore the sensitivity of the researcher and awareness of their dual roles was paramount as their words and actions had the potential for serious consequences. While the risk and ethical dilemma in this study was not as life threatening, in that participants’ emotional and physical well-being was not at risk, there were still inherent challenges to ensure the emotional wellbeing of the participants and academic integrity of the program.

At the forefront of outlining key ethical considerations in research studies in the United States is the Belmont Report created by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1979). The report describes three ethical principles applicable to all research involving human subjects: “respect for persons, beneficence, and justice” (Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007, p. 401). While providing a benchmark for ethical standards, according to Noel and Putten, they apply more to experimental or scientific research and lack clarity on more complex ethical issues involved in action research, citing that the report provides “an inelegant fit for action research by its very nature, thus creating gaps in practice and procedure” (Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007, p. 402). To address this ‘inelegant fit’, Nolen and Vander Putten propose a number of recommendations that respond to the gaps in the Belmont Report. Table 4.1 summarises their recommendations and details how they apply to this study.

Table 4.1 Belmont Report aligned with ethical principles actioned in this study

<b>Nolen and Vander Putten’s ethical considerations concerning the dual role of teacher as researcher</b>	<b>Action taken to meet ethical protocol in this study</b>
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<p>1: Teacher researchers must make it clear to the participants that there is no penalty for refusing to participate in the study, and that not participating will not affect student grades.</p>	<p>All participants were given a participation information sheet and consent form stating:</p> <p><i>Participation in this research is voluntary and will not be given any academic grading value. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are able to withdraw at any time.</i></p> <p>See Appendix 2</p>
<p>2: Ensure that research data is collected by a neutral third party.</p>	<p>The interview questions required in depth knowledge of the course and the classroom tasks, in order to fully capture students' responses. This could not be done 'cold' by someone with no knowledge of the course material.</p>
<p>3: Include on all data collection instruments an opportunity for students to inconspicuously opt out of the study by ticking yes or no to the instruction: "Please include my answers in the study" (p. 405)</p>	<p>Participants are informed that they may opt out of the research at any stage with no repercussions.</p>
<p>4: Develop an open and positive relationship between the participants and researcher to empower participants to be part of the research decision making process.</p>	<p>The importance of developing a good relationship and ensuring a sense of classroom safety is paramount to this study and discussed in the literature review.</p>
<p>5: Make research ethics training compulsory for teachers who wish to do classroom research.</p>	<p>As a doctoral student at USQ all students are required to take EDR8001 Effective and Ethical Educational Research practice</p>

The governing ethical body at the Mount Royal University in Canada presents clear guidelines (2012) on conducting research where teachers are using their own students as research participants. Key issues are around voluntary consent, informed consent, and conflicts of interest. These have been addressed in the collection of data in this study through an ethical planning process. Firstly, in this study there was a clear division between teaching time and research time. Apart from introducing the research project, class time was used solely to work on the class content and research tasks were completed on a voluntary basis without any grade awarded, after or before class time, therefore minimising conflict of interest. Students knew they were free to go as soon as class was over, and many did. Those who volunteered to be part of the research were told clearly, both verbally and in writing, what was expected of them, and the benefits and risks. Their decision to be part of the project was completely voluntary, confidentiality was assured, and they were free to withdraw from the research project at any time.

Central to the dual role of teacher as researcher is the question of how to minimize potential bias in order to produce more reliable and accurate research outcomes, whereby “bias is defined as any tendency which prevents unprejudiced consideration of a question” (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010, p. 619). Overcoming researcher bias is not easy. Norris (1997) writes about the inevitability of bias in research due to the simple fact that we are fallible humans who “make mistakes and get things wrong. There is no paradigm solution to the elimination of error and bias activity” (p. 174). However, researcher bias does need to be mitigated and addressed as much as possible, and there are a number of key areas that need examining. First of all the risk of selection bias is not a factor in this study as the participants are students enrolled in a class through a process controlled by student services that automatically generates a student list. Secondly, favouring a pre-conceived position on intercultural/experiential learning is perhaps the biggest bias risk factor, with the potential to steer participants’ responses in the interviews. This was countered through a number of ways. Interview questions were thoroughly planned and approved by the dissertation supervisors of this study ahead of time. While it was hard to fully adhere to the script once the interviews were underway, they were a strong guide in the interviews. The first few minutes of the interview were spent reminding participants that there were no right or wrong answers, thereby attempting to avoid acquiescence bias, and this also helped in building rapport to ensure the participants were in a relaxed state. During the interview the researcher was mindful of avoiding leading questions. In addition to this, the questions in the post interviews were re-framed in the end of course written feedback which was done anonymously out of class time. Thus, two tools were used to illuminate the same questions, one of which was untouched by the researcher. Any significant differentiation to these findings would raise alarm bells, which was not the case in this study as will be seen in the next chapter. Finally, the importance of controlling response bias was particularly relevant here as the participants were all women and “research also indicates that females are more prone to responding in a socially desirable fashion” (Dalton, & Ortegren, 2011, p. 74). To counter this, the researcher emphasised the confidentiality of the research, knowing what they say would never be identified to them, which created the potential for participants to reveal the truth more readily. Also the researcher’s manner in all aspects was non-judgemental with active listening being practiced.



Who I am as a teacher/researcher, my positioning, also has bearing on this study. I am well aware that I am teaching and researching a subject that resonates strongly with my philosophical beliefs: that what we do as educators matters deeply and that teaching and researching in the field of interculturality matters because, in a very simplistic way, it has the potential to open minds, increase understanding and make the world a better place. I know I want my life to be about contributing in this manner. However, as a researcher first and foremost, I understand the only clear path to contribute of value is for social enquiry research to be robust and hold up to scrutiny. I also know that my experience as a resident in the UAE for 18 years shapes my positioning. The question of whether I am an outsider or an insider is not as black and white as that as I am both. With my Iraqi heritage, family name, 18 years in the country and as a teacher, I have a limited in, a restricted pass perhaps. However, I am still very much an outsider as I am not Emirati, it is a tightknit community that for political, social and cultural reasons understandably excludes foreigners. Being considered an outsider or an insider though both have their ‘baggage’, and neither can provide a more accurate picture “ what an ‘insider’ sees and understands, will be different from, but as valid, as what an ‘outsider’ sees” (Merriam., et al, 2001, p.415).

#### *4.8.6.1 Benefits of Dual Role Teacher/Researcher*

While this section has described and addressed the problems faced by the dual role of teacher and researcher, it is also important to consider what this unique position brings to the research and how the study may be benefit from accommodating such a dual-role. Research points to the gap between university-based researchers and classroom teachers, reflecting the increasing disparity between theory and practice, i.e. what we know about education and what actually happens in education (Banegas, 2012). To address this, Banegas calls for teachers to take on the role of researcher and to contribute to the body of knowledge in their field through conducting action research. “Teachers should not be perceived as mere implementers but as knowledge generators. Therefore classrooms within classroom research could be regarded as ideal laboratories to test education theories and produce new insights” (Banegas, 2012, p. 1). From this standpoint, instead of policy makers and researchers imposing their own theories and agendas to classroom teaching, teachers come to determine the issues that need addressing and consequently explore solutions to those issues. Research (Mitchell, 2004; Borg, 2010, cited in Al Hinai, 2015) concurs with this reasoning, arguing that third party researchers would be unfamiliar with the participants

thereby raising a number of more pertinent ethical issues, and often making communication more distanced and forced. In Al Hanai's (2015) study on Omani students, who share cultural similarities with Emirati students, she argues that for her demographic of students the dual role may actually empower them as they are already familiar with the teacher. This type of research is what Suter (2006) describes as giving teachers the potential to make admirable, considerable contributions to their field, and as a result improving both classroom and institutional effectiveness. Mitchell (2004, cited in Al Hinai, 2015) goes one step further by theorising that this power differential should not be an ethical issue at all, as the primary purpose is to improve learning and teaching.

The researcher's experience mirrors these views in that this study was born from her curiosity in wanting to understand how effective the course she teaches actually is in reality. In order to answer this question it was vital that the author would be the one to implement the study utilizing her 'inside knowledge' which then guided both the classroom teaching pedagogy and the research design. It is also important to point out here that the participants are Emirati women, the subject matter of this course is sensitive, reflection is not a familiar task, and trust and rapport are essential for Emirati students to open up. In a Zayed University study, Dawn McBride (2004) describes that the importance and benefits of gaining trust with Emirati students, "particularly early in the term, is that they are often forthcoming in sharing their thoughts and feelings about their culture, religion and lifestyle" (p. 2). When describing phenomenological research, Osborne notes that "good rapport between researcher and co-researcher is crucial. Unless rapport and trust are established the researcher is unlikely to get authentic descriptions of a co-researcher's experience" (1990, p. 84).

In a study by James and Shamma (2017) on factors that motivate Emirati female students to study, findings indicate that these types of students work best and are more motivated when the teacher takes on a parental role. Observations from participants in the study include comments such as:

*They should show us that they actually care about us, as a parent side and as a teacher side so we know that we're not in this alone, there should be a really good relationship and they have to show us that they really care about us.*

It is therefore imperative in a study in this context that the researcher establishes a relationship with the participants, and one that shows caring in order to elicit openness and generate authentic responses. The classroom teacher is ideally situated to fit this role as a trusting relationship develops over time.

While there is always risk involved in a study where the teacher-researcher plays a dual role, the researcher believes she has mitigated that risk through following ethical protocol and proposes that in her specific cultural context it could in fact be an advantage by bringing more legitimacy to her participants' responses.

The researcher's role here as both teacher and researcher contains a power differential that has potential bearing on the ethics of this research. By following ethical practice, outlined below, any potential ethical problems were mitigated and a situation avoided where students could feel coerced into participating in the research.

#### 4.8.7 Ethical protocol

In order to diminish any potential ethical issues participants have been fully briefed about the aims and purpose of the study, and about what is expected from them. They were assured that participation was entirely voluntary, and would not affect their grades in any way as assessment was by a final online multiple choice test. Indeed final interviews were only conducted *after* grades were released. The researcher's demeanour in the classroom was friendly and warm; a factor that contributed to participants feeling empowered to say no if they did not wish to participate. Participants were given a consent letter to sign, or not, as they wished, and they were assured of confidentiality. They were also informed that they were able to withdraw from the research at any stage with no repercussions and that all information about them would be destroyed. Interviews were held at the college, outside of class time, in the library, and participants were asked for permission to record the conversations. They received interview transcripts and if they were uncomfortable with anything they had said, it would be removed. The final written reflection was distributed as a voluntary anonymous take home task. Participants were assured of confidentiality in any published work related to this study and that collected data would be stored securely and be

only be available to the researcher on a password protected computer. Please refer to USQ Ethics Committee approval in Appendix 10.

#### **4.9 Data Collection: The Tools**

The triangulation approach applicable to this research is what Denzin (1970) calls *between method* triangulation, which incorporates two (or more) different research methods as seen in this study. As well as enhancing confidence in the research findings a key feature of triangulation applicable to this research context is that it provides a greater understanding of a variety of “values, stances and positions” (Greene, 2005, p. 275) through the use of different methods that themselves advance different values (Greene, 2005). It is this variety of values and positions inherent in the measurement of intercultural competence that makes the mixed methods approach most appropriate.

The parameters for data collection are set by both the research questions and the phenomenological approach. A hallmark of this approach is the very deliberate attempt to capture the lived experience of the participants and their descriptions of the phenomenon. While there is much scope to collect data in a phenomenological study, the most common methods in this type of study are the semi-structured interview (Smith & Osborn, 2008) and reflective writing (Smith & Osborn, 2008), two tools adopted in this study. As a mixed method study, and in addition to these, a Likert type scale survey was also utilized in order to corroborate and strengthen this data by providing quantitative results. Following mixed methods principles, the qualitative and quantitative data was collected concurrently (Creswell, 2003), although not separately, with both data sets placed on the same tool. The range of measures in this research study supports the researcher’s intention to “build up a thick, rich picture of the learning situation and track changes over time” (Jackson, 2009, p. 63). When transcribing, the responses have been left verbatim, with grammar and punctuation errors as is, in order to present the data in its purest form without unintentionally altering the meaning in any way.

The four data collection tools used in this research study were:

- 1: Interviews: pre and post intervention. See Appendix 3
- 2: Written reflections on four experiential learning classroom tasks. See Appendix 4

3: Likert scale survey on four experiential learning classroom tasks. See Appendix 5.

3: Post-course final written reflections. See Appendix 6.

Table 4.2 illustrates how the research questions link to the data collection tools and align to the data.

Table 4.2: Link between research questions and data collection tools

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Interviews</b> N = 8 2 x interview per student Beginning & end of course	<b>Feedback on classroom tasks. Likert scale and written responses.</b> N = 20 -22 During the course	<b>Final written reflections</b> N = 18 End of the course
<i>1: How do Emirati students perceive their intercultural learning?</i>	<p><u>Pre course interview sample questions:</u></p> <p>What language do you speak at home? What is your first language?</p> <p>Do you prefer to interact with Emiratis or non-Emiratis, or both?</p> <p><u>Post course interview sample questions:</u></p> <p>Has your way of thinking or behaviour changed since taking this course.</p> <p>Has this course changed the way you relate to cultural others? No...what it is about you....anything particular about you...?</p>	<p><u>Sample questions:</u></p> <p>Did playing Barnga help you respect people from different cultures?</p> <p>Did the perspective activities help you understand people from different cultures?</p>	<p><u>Sample questions</u></p> <p>Do the activities we are doing in this class help me understand people from different countries and cultures? Why or why not?</p> <p>How, if at all, is my thinking about my culture and other cultures changing from being this class?</p>

<p>2: <i>How do Emirati students perceive experiential learning?</i></p>	<p>The types of activities we have done in this course may be quite different from other courses, how do you feel about these types of activities? Do they help you learn? If so, how?</p>	<p>Did you enjoy this activity?  Did this activity help your learning?  How? How not?</p>	<p>How useful are the kinds of activities we are doing in this class? In what way are they or are they not?  Do the activities we are doing in this class help me learn how to understand people from different countries and cultures? How? How not?</p>
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#### 4.9.1 Data Collection: Interviews

Interviews give participants the opportunity to describe their own experience and help them construct their understanding of a phenomenon through their inherent ability to channel a narrated experience (Lindlof & Taylor, 2016) and they are therefore the preferred choice of tool for this study.

As noted, there were two interviews – pre- and post-intervention - in order to capture the developmental trajectory of participants’ intercultural development and responses to experiential learning. The questions were modified over time to build on themes extracted from the initial interviews. Merriam advises researchers to “analyze data in a qualitative study...simultaneously with the data collection” (2009. p. 171) and it is important to “plan to pursue specific leads in your next data collection session” (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, cited in Merriam 2009, p. 172). Therefore, interview questions were adapted as the study developed.

Interview questions were based on the theoretical work of King and Baxter Magolda’s model of Intercultural Maturity (2005). This captures the sequential nature of intercultural competence development, moving from an ethnocentric belief where cultures others are seen as wrong, to a more ethno-relative outlook and recognition of the value of other cultures (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). The table below illustrates the connection between King and Baxter’s theoretical framework and the interview questions.

Table 4.3 Interview questions mapped to King and Baxter Magolda's Intercultural Trajectory

<b>Domain of Development Theory</b>	<b>Initial Level of Development</b>	<b>Intermediate Level of Development</b>	<b>Mature Level of Development</b>
<i>Cognitive</i>	<p><i>Assumes knowledge is certain.</i></p> <p><i>Naïve about cultural practices and values.</i></p> <p><i>Resists challenges to one's own beliefs.</i></p>	<p><i>Evolving awareness and acceptance of uncertainty and multiple perspectives.</i></p> <p><i>Able to shift from accepting knowledge to personal knowledge claims.</i></p>	<p><i>Ability to consciously shift perspective and behaviours into an alternative cultural worldview.</i></p> <p><i>Use multiple cultural frames.</i></p>
<p><b>INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:</b></p> <p><b>How do you feel about having foreigners living in your own country?</b></p> <p><b>Do you prefer to interact with Emiratis or non-Emiratis or both?</b></p>			
<i>Intrapersonal</i>	<p><i>Lack of awareness of one's own values and intersection of social identity.</i></p> <p><i>Lack of understanding of other cultures.</i></p> <p><i>Difference viewed as a threat.</i></p>	<p><i>Evolving sense of identity as distinct from external perceptions.</i></p> <p><i>Self-exploration of values, racial identity, beliefs.</i></p> <p><i>Recognizes legitimacy of other cultures.</i></p>	<p><i>Capacity to create an internal self that challenges own views and beliefs.</i></p> <p><i>Considers social identities in a global and national context.</i></p>
<p><b>INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:</b></p> <p><b>What does it mean to you to be Emirati? How do you identify yourself? What are the cultural practices that make you feel Emirati?</b></p> <p><b>Do you think that it is possible to appreciate other cultures without giving up your own cultural values? Is there any conflict between your culture and other cultures?</b></p> <p><b>What did you learn about your own beliefs towards your own culture?</b></p>			
<i>Interpersonal</i>	<p><i>Dependent relations with similar others is a primary source of identity and social affirmations.</i></p>	<p><i>Willingness to interact with diverse others and refrain from judgment.</i></p> <p><i>Begins to explore how social systems affect</i></p>	<p><i>Capacity to engage in meaningful, interdependent relationships with diverse others.</i></p>

	<i>Egocentric view of social problems.</i>	<i>group norms and intergroup relations.</i>	<i>Appreciation of human differences.</i>
<b>INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:</b>			
<b>How, if at all, is my thinking about my culture and other cultures changing from being in this class?</b>			
<b>What did you learn about your own beliefs towards other cultures?</b>			

The interviews were semi-structured in that, although questions were written, there was a possibility for the direction of the interview to move in unanticipated ways, enabling the participants to “project their own ways of defining the world” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2012, p. 146-147). The interview questions were written with the following principles in mind (Merriam, 2009), and using question types developed by Jacobson and Ruddy (Cummings, 2008), inspired by Kolb’s experiential learning model.

Table 4.4: Merriam (2009): Principles of good interview questions

<b>Principles of good interview questions</b>	<b>Sample interview questions</b>
1: Includes background questions.	<i>Tell me a little about your family.</i>
2: Ask about an experience.	<i>Tell me about what you are learning in this course. What did you notice in _____ activity?</i>
3: Ask about opinions and beliefs.	<i>Do you think everyone in the class is having/had the same experience as you? Why? Why not?</i>
4: Ask a hypothetical question.	<i>If you could make any changes to the activity, what would it be?</i>
5: Ask a devil’s advocate question.	<i>Some people say that Emiratis don’t like living in such a multi-cultural country, what would you say to them?</i>
6: Use open ended questions that will “yield descriptive data, even stories about the phenomenon” (Merriam, 2009, p. 99)	<i>Has your attitude or behavior changed – since doing this task - when you interact with people from other countries? In what way?</i>
7: Uses comprehensible language.	Questions have been trialed with former students to ensure linguistic and conceptual comprehension.

The questions were chosen to draw out two specific themes: responses to experiential learning and perceived notions of intercultural sensitivity. Pertinent to phenomenological research is that the interview questions do not only seek to uncover what individuals experience but also how they experience it (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).



#### 4.9.1.2 Phenomenological approach to interviewing

Interviews are considered the hallmark of phenomenological study, and indeed of most social inquiry, as they provide a first-hand window into the world being studied (Gubrium 2006). The purpose of holding pre and post course interviews was firstly, to adhere to the phenomenological tradition where repeated interviews are held in order to “gain deeper insights” (Crist & Tanner, 2003, p. 203), and secondly, to most effectively assess the effect of the intervention (i.e. the course) on participants’ intercultural sensitivity maturity and response to the experiential learning tasks. The pre-course interviews determined the participants’ starting point in terms of intercultural understanding and also established participants’ educational experiences thus far, to more fully understand the impact of experiential learning. The post-course interviews measured the learning and learning experience as a result of the intervention.

Respected phenomenological practitioner Giorgi encourages researchers to ask open ended questions, “so that the subject has sufficient opportunity to express his or her view point extensively” (1997, p. 245). This approach was adopted as far as possible in this study, examples of these include:

*Some people say that Emiratis find it in difficult living in such a multi-cultural country, and what would you say to that?*

*How would you describe the learning style of this course?*

See Appendix 3 for complete questions.

In utilising the phenomenological approach, the interviewing process required careful consideration. Firstly, as touched on previously, there are two premises to interviewing in phenomenological research:

- 1) The purpose of the interview is to capture the participants’ lived experiences, in whatever way they make meaning in their life.
- 2) This meaning is best conveyed through reflection and depth of thought in an ongoing narrative.

Attinasi (1991) describes six phases, below, that the phenomenological interview may move through from description to interpretation. The phases do not necessarily all need to be covered, or be traversed in order: “the offering of each phase has their own worth and can stand and be utilized independently of the others” (Wertz, cited in Attinasi, 1991, p. 3).

- 1) The participant freely describes their experience.
- 2) The participant gleans new understandings in their life-world from their descriptions.
- 3) The interviewer listens actively by paraphrasing the interviewees’ descriptions in order to seek confirmation that the message was interpreted correctly.
- 4) The interviewer transcribes the interviews and interprets the data according to how the interviewee understands their world, how the interviewer understands the interviewee’s world, and finally, how answers may be relative to existing social theory.
- 5) The interviewer conveys their interpretations to the interviewee at a follow-up interview to confirm or reject their findings.
- 6) In this phase there is potential for action, whereby the interviewee may feel or behave differently according to their new insights. This mirrors the ‘now what’...stage in Kolb’s experiential learning model.

These guiding principles were adopted to some extent in this study. As mentioned previously, the interviews took shape throughout this process as needed, and while this is a framework, the researcher was mindful of the fact that the participants’ responses or reactions were authentically theirs and the researcher needed the freedom to respond to the moment or the data collected.

#### 4.9.2 Classroom Tasks within this Study

As a study on the effectiveness of experiential learning four classroom tasks were selected that fit into the category of ‘experiential’. In order to qualify as ‘experiential’, the tasks, or ‘concrete experiences’, in this study are participatory and interactive in nature and design, and engage students on an affective level in order to stimulate higher order thinking. Subsequent to the task, in following Kolb’s model, there is a time to pause to consider and integrate the learning, or what Kolb calls reflection. It is important to note that it is not a matter of simply being exposed to

an ‘experience’ that makes learning more meaningful but to make the experience more concrete, reflection needs to follow.

The assumption is that we seldom learn from experience unless we assess the experience, assigning our own meaning in terms of our own goals, aims, ambitions and expectations. From these processes come the insights, the discoveries, and understanding. The pieces fall into place, and the experience takes on added meaning in relation to other experiences (Saddington, 2001, p. 1, cited in Knutson, 2003, p. 53).

Reflection is therefore key to cementing the learning experience and it is what transforms experience into learning.

In short, four classroom tasks were identified as pedagogically ‘experiential’ in that they shared a common element of eliciting an affective response, and building learning through inquiry and reflection. Examples of this approach are utilised throughout the course, and an illustration of this can be seen where participants watch a documentary on Babies and need to identify deeper cultural differences across each culture. This is elaborated on in 4.2.3 Film Scenes. The sections below outline how each of the four classroom tasks that were implemented in the classroom and the rationale for their use in an Intercultural course.

#### *4.9.2.1. Barnga*

The first experiential classroom task participants undertook was Barnga, an experiential card game ‘rigged’ to mimic an intercultural experience. Students were instructed to sit in groups of four and informed of the rules of the game. Each player was given 5 cards and an instruction sheet, the notion of ‘tricks’ was explained. Players were told to proceed to play, *without speaking*, until there were no cards left. After the first round of play players were moved to play in a new group, which, unbeknownst to them, had a different set of rules. Without being able to communicate or fully understand that the rules were different some confusion and disorientation occurred. The purpose of this was to immerse players into what resembled an intercultural experience where communication was limited and there was little common ground. After the game a full debrief was held where players had the opportunity to express how they felt and discuss the intercultural learning. Full instructions are in Appendix 7. Cultural sensitivity was especially

important with this task as card games are associated with gambling for many participants and therefore *haram* (forbidden by Islamic law). Careful explanation was needed, extolling the educational value prior to beginning play.


#### 4.9.2.2 Perspectives

As preparation for this task, and to ensure students were led into it correctly with adequate ‘scaffolding’, an understanding of the concepts of perspective were introduced through images and discussion:




Figure 4.6: Perspective Images

In this task students were asked to discuss a situation in their life where there was conflict or a problem. The teacher started by modelling her own real life situation and presented the example below from her own perspective.



### Nicole's story of the Dirty Shoes



- My children and I flew to Auckland in July to visit family. It was such a long flight and we were so tired at the airport. Our shoes were a bit dirty as we had just been on a farm in England but I didn't think it would be a problem and I knew NZ was strict about not bringing food in so made sure we didn't have any. I was shocked when we were fined \$400 at the airport for having grass and mud on our shoes! I was so angry with the man at the airport and thought he was being too strict.

Figure 4.7 Nicole's story of the dirty shoes

What ensued was that the participants sympathised with the teacher's problem and felt the customer's officer was acting too harshly. Following this the teacher presented the 'other side', i.e. the situation from the customer's officer's perspective.

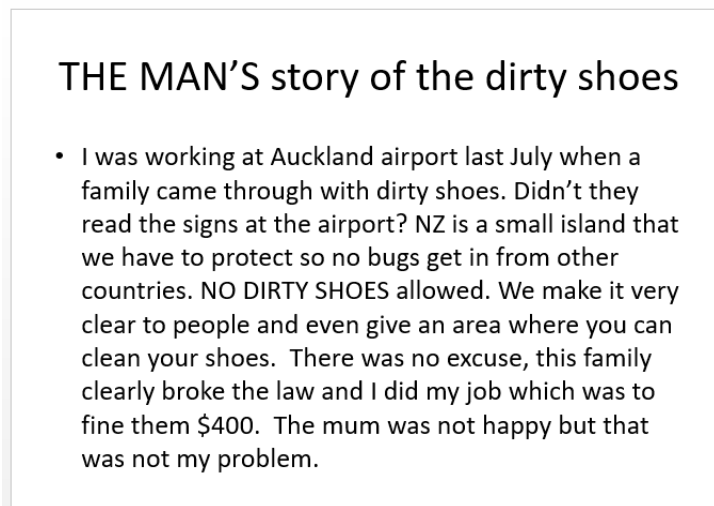


Figure 4.8 The customer's officers story of the dirty shoes.

After some deliberation and discussion students realized they were limited by not seeing both perspectives and began to believe the teacher was in the wrong (which she confesses she was), illustrating a change in their perspective. Students continued by relaying their own personal life stories, and presenting all perspectives, which varied in range from an argument with a sibling to perceived harassment at an airport. The lesson continued with more examples and videos, for example: What do you think of Arabs? ("Toronto on Arabs || The Epic Interview", 2017), and it became clear from the voices and banter that participants were excited and engaged with this type of exercise.

#### *4.9.2.3 Intercultural Romance*

The theme of Intercultural Romance was selected based on personal experience, having taught these students for close to 18 years and having built an understanding of what interests them. Marriage and romance is often at the forefront of these participants' minds, with Emirati woman generally marrying in their early 20s usually after graduation (Marmenout & Lirio, 2013). Issues such as Emirati men choosing to marry foreign women are regularly reported in the press

and it is a topic that generates “very publicly conducted discussions” (Bristol-Rhys, 2007, p. 20), unusual for this part of the world. This social trend evokes both anxiety and anger in Emirati women (Bristol-Rhys, 2007), and while not wanting to create a forum to ‘vent’, the assumption was that this topic would be of interest to these participants. Having taught this part of the course, from my perspective as a teacher, I still believe the topic of ‘intercultural romance’ was suitable as the students were engaged with the work and interested in the subject. It is worth noting that emotions are heightened even more when it is an Emirati woman who marries a foreigner, which is illustrated in the newspaper article below where an Emirati father won custody based on the fact that his ex-Emirati wife had married a foreigner.



Figure 4.9 Newspaper Article Mixed Marriages in the UAE  
("Emirati father: No Foreigner raising my girl", 2017)

Again, this is an issue dear to these participants' hearts as ‘husband shopping’ in an ever reducing pool of available men is a topical issue. This is compounded by the fact that for them, marrying a foreign man, even from the GCC, carries with it a host of unwelcome legal ramifications such as questions around the nationality status of children from this marriage (McGinley, 2012).

In this task participants were first asked to discuss mixed marriages with question prompts written on the board. They then had to watch a video on Intercultural Romance and answer questions.



Figure 4.10 Intercultural Romance (“Intercultural Romantic Relationship”, 2017)

Participants were asked at the end of the video to write down what they learnt from the video and if their thinking changed in any way. Whilst not part of the data collection per se, it is interesting to note how participants’ beliefs shifted from participating in this activity and how more open they became.

*I learned that being in a relationship with a person from another culture doesn't always mean that this relationship will not be successful. (Participant A, 2016).*

*I always thought that an intercultural relationship is not a good relationship and people should be dating people from their culture but after watching this video I think being with a person from another culture is interesting, you always will have difficulties but the more you can go through from your cultural differences the more you became bond to each other. (Participant B, 2016).*

*Yes, actually I have learned that no one is better than anyone. Like Locals are not better than Indians, so Indians can married locals or white are not better than black as the Quran said. (Participant C, 2016).*

#### 4.9.2.4 *Film*

As covered in the literature review, films are a much used tool for experiential learning within Intercultural Studies (Truong & Tran, 2014) and they feature widely in the course at the centre of this study as “they can provide useful preparation for those [intercultural] encounters by fostering understanding and developing sensitivity” (Roell, 2010, cited in Greene, Barden, Richardson & Hall, 2014, p. 64). They are especially relevant in this U.A.E. context, as they provide a neutral third space in which to discuss culture while taking the focus off the local culture and therefore desensitizing it. As mentioned previously, films are carefully chosen to reflect the morals of the U.A.E.

Film is used throughout the course within this study with various aims. As film is used so frequently throughout the course, from beginning to end, feedback on the use of film was elicited at the end of the course, not after one specific viewing. Short segments were only used, as these are often ‘punchier’ than the whole film and focus directly on the concept at hand without distraction or boredom setting in. Also, given the time constraints of such a course, watching whole films was not practical. The intercultural practitioner has much to thank HSBC for as their adverts provide ‘nuggets’ of intercultural difference that act as fairly light warmers to any intercultural lesson. An example shown below, which is used at the start of the course, shows a British business man in China, who is struggling to finish his bowl of eel. Despite not seeming to enjoy it he eats every last mouthful in an example of typically British cultural behaviour: when you are offered food it is polite to finish your plate to show that it was delicious. Chinese on the other hand, believe it is a slur on the host if the guest finishes the bowl as it signifies the food was insufficient and they are still hungry and so the Chinese hosts continued to re-fill his bowl (to the horror of the British business man).





Figure 4.11: HSBC Eels (“HSBC ‘Eels’ Ad”)

This led to an interesting discussion on how culture influences our shared eating habits, and participants were surprised when I gave the example from my culture, that whenever my children eat at a friend’s home I insist they eat everything given to them and say ‘thank you it was delicious’.

On to more serious examples, the documentary *Babies* is tailor made for Intercultural learning as it is often through how we raise our children that our cultural tendencies play out (“How Culture Affects Child-Rearing”, 2017). In this documentary five babies from around the world are filmed from birth to one year old. Participants were asked to watch segments in an attempt to uncover aspects of deep culture and cultural difference. Themes that surfaced were: differences between the roles of men and women, communal or individual living and our varying relationships to nature. Figure 4.12 is a beautiful illustration of how the Mongolian baby lives immersed in the natural world.



Figure 4.12: Babies Documentary ("Babies,2010, Official Trailer - Documentary HD")

Examples from popular movies were also routinely drawn upon. The example in Figure 4.13 is taken from the film *The King and I*, and the segment depicts a conflict between the King's son and Anna's son that escalates to a physical fight. The conflict arises through a difference in how status is achieved and perceived, with the King's son believing his right of birth gives him automatic power and respect and Anna's son believing that one's status in life is earned through work. This is a cultural concept that resonated with these participants as the use of 'Wasta' – exploiting connections for your own benefit - is still practiced in the U.A.E. (Al-Ali, 2008).

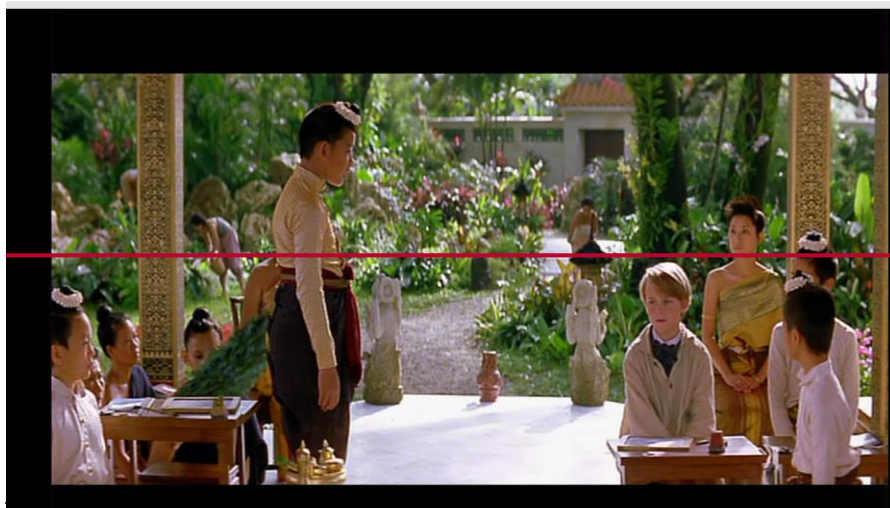


Figure 4.13 *Anna and the King* (Jodie Foster, 1999)

#### 4.9.3 Data Collection; Feedback on classroom tasks – written responses

Two methods were used to collect written reflections. The first instrument used was a one minute paper, which was administered as a hard copy at the end of each task to elicit student feedback on the classroom tasks. There were four sets of responses over the duration of the course matching the four experiential learning tasks. The one minute paper is a feedback technique assigned at the end of class where, as the name suggests, students have one to two minutes to answer two to three questions about their learning. The merits of the one minute paper are that it can be used as a series of questions over time, that it requires little investment in time and effort, and that it has proven effectiveness. “It is seen as a valuable means of obtaining timely feedback about students’ understanding of course material” (Almer et al., 1998, cited in Stead, 2005, p. 121).

The written responses were intentionally kept short by instructing students that they didn’t need to write at length and that grammar and spelling were not being checked – i.e. that it was okay for them to make mistakes. This ensured the focus was on the content, not on producing error free text, which therefore made it more achievable. Writing is notoriously challenging for Emirati students, requiring higher order thinking alongside organisational and reasoning skills. Hourani (2008) confirms that challenges in writing are rarely addressed in the state school system and notes:

Writing in general and essays in particular form problems to secondary students in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Teachers of composition or writing classes in the UAE secondary state schools are generally faced with students who have memorized a good amount of English vocabulary and grammar rules, but have seldom put that knowledge to practical use (Hourani, 2008, p.1).

Feedback was elicited after each classroom task, and following any discussion or follow up activities to ensure that students had been given sufficient time to cement, understand and reflect on their experience before giving their feedback.

Questions were as follows:

*Did you enjoy this activity?*

*Did this activity help your learning?*

*How? How not?*

#### **4.9.3.1 Data Collection; Feedback on classroom tasks – Likert scale responses**

In tandem with the written reflections above, participants also had to rate their responses to the classroom activities on a Likert scale. This was at the same time, and indeed on the same paper, as the reflections. The purpose of the Likert scale alongside the written responses was to both corroborate the findings, looking for agreement or discord, and to get a fuller picture from the participants through broadening the responses to the underlying phenomena. As participants were non-native speakers of English key terms were pre-taught prior to conducting the survey. Although participants were familiar with the lexical items, this step was taken as an extra precaution. Items include: *respect*, *to understand yourself*, *behavior*, and to be *confident in communicating*. (See Appendix 8 for these vocabulary teaching and learning ideas). Items were taught as discrete items, independently of the survey, so as not to influence participants' responses to the survey questions. However, participants were also shown how the Likert scale rating worked and assured that giving a 1 (the lowest ranking) does not equal, for example, disrespect or a lack of understanding of oneself, but rather that it is on a developing scale. Participants were also told that they could elaborate in the 'any other comments' boxes.

While the purpose of the qualitative data is to provide underlying meaning and general impressions, this quantitative data delivers objective 'quantitative' results, thus allowing for more overall accuracy. The Likert scale questions explored the experiential classroom activities on three elements of Chen and Starosta's (2000) model of intercultural sensitivity (see table below): understanding other cultures, respecting other cultures, and confidence levels of communicating with other cultures. Chen and Starosta's scale is relevant to this study as it measures the affective, emotional element of intercultural development (Fritz, Graf, Hentze, Möllenberg & Chen, 2005) and has been validated in replicated studies.

Table 4.5: Chen and Starosta's (2000) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) link to Likert Scale survey

1: I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.
2: I think people from other cultures are narrow minded

3: I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.
4: I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.
5: I always know when to say when interacting with people from different cultures.
6: I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.
7: I don't like to be with people from different cultures
8: I respect the values of people from different cultures
9: I get upset easily when interacting when interacting with people from different cultures
10: I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures
11: I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally distinct counterparts
12: I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures
13: I am open minded to people from different cultures.
14: I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.
15: I respect the way people from different cultures behave
16: I would not accept the opinion of people from different cultures.
17: I think my culture is better than other cultures.
18: I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction.
19: I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.
20: I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally distinct counterpart and me.

### Understanding Cultural Others

### Respect for Cultural Differences

Interaction Confidence items:

Interaction Enjoyment items

### 4.9.4 End of course written responses

The second written tool was a summative written reflection (home task) with the aim of capturing students' perceptions of the entire course in terms of both intercultural understanding and experiential learning. This instrument is essential to the findings as it represents the entire group of students and seeks to directly answer the research questions through questions based on perceptions of both intercultural development and experiential learning. The underlying benefit of

this task is that it gave participants a chance to reflect on and integrate their learning. Nagata (2004) speaks strongly about the need to reflect in a course such as this: “reflexivity—having an ongoing conversation with your whole self about what you are experiencing as you are experiencing it—is a crucial skill for interculturalists (Nagata, 2004, p. 139). The questions for this summative writing task were pedagogically based on both King and Baxter Magolda’s (2005) Intercultural trajectory model and Chen and Starosta’s (2000) Intercultural Sensitivity scale. It was designed to employ questions that directly seek to determine the effects of the course asking participants to reflect on their thoughts and behaviour prior to the course and at the end of the course. For example: *What did it mean to me to understand people from different countries and cultures before doing the course and what does it mean now?* Like all the research tasks, the aim was not only to collect the data but also to provide a learning task that fostered learner autonomy through reflective self-assessment where participants had the opportunity to evaluate and judge their own learning. Research suggests that post course reflections support students in making sense of their experience and it cements the learning (Leberman & Martin, 2004, Hsieh, Jang, Hwang & Chen, 2011).

To sum up, developing intercultural sensitivity is a challenging process and one that is difficult to articulate for anyone. However, for this particular demographic of participants it is especially hard to express their internalized intercultural development for two reasons: firstly, they are unaccustomed to, and rarely required to utilise higher order thinking skills, and secondly they live in a cultural context which does not encourage freedom of speech and individual expression. The research design was planned with these considerations in mind with a variety of tools incorporated and tasks that, while aimed at fully exploring the research questions, were written clearly and simply both to avoid confusion and ensure the challenge was achievable, and to keep respect for both Emirati and other cultures at the forefront of all discussion.

## **4.10 Data Analysis**

### 4.10.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

With the primary dominance given to qualitative data in this study it is necessary to look at an overview of basic concepts of qualitative data analysis that apply to three of the four data collection instruments: interviews, written responses to classroom tasks, and longer end of course written responses. While the medium used to collect the data varied, the objective was the same: to extract organized meaning particular from this group of participants, and to glean the insiders' perspective. Indeed, this is the goal of all qualitative data analysis, to "uncover emerging themes, patterns, concepts, insights and understanding (Patton, 2002, cited in Suter, 2012, p. 344) in an inductive manner by allowing the data to speak for itself and to be managed through a coding process.

This qualitative approach reflects the phenomenological principles adopted in this study, more specifically Heidegger's phenomenological philosophy, which refutes the idea of bracketing, as "a researcher's consciousness is engaged in the world and as such is a perpetual process which cannot be transcended" (Lowes & Prowse, 2001, p. 473). Phenomenologists are often averse to detailing a data analysis procedure, suggesting that phenomenological data analysis is more of an orientation or an attitude (Osborne, 1990) and they encourage the researcher to allow "the essence to emerge" (Cameron, Schaffer & Hyeon-Ae, 2001, cited in Groenewald, 2004, p. 13). The researcher's intention in the data analysis was to let the data surface unobstructed and allow these essences to emerge. One way this was achieved was through listening repeatedly to the interviews and reading the transcripts frequently in order to "develop a holistic sense, the gestalt" (Cameron, Schaffer & Hyeon-Ae, 2001, cited in Groenewald, 2004, p. 18).

These essences are what qualitative researchers call a meaning unit, and meaning units with the same central meaning are referred to as coding units, based on interpretation and valid inference (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The diagram below illustrates how this initial develops into theoretical concepts or generalizations.

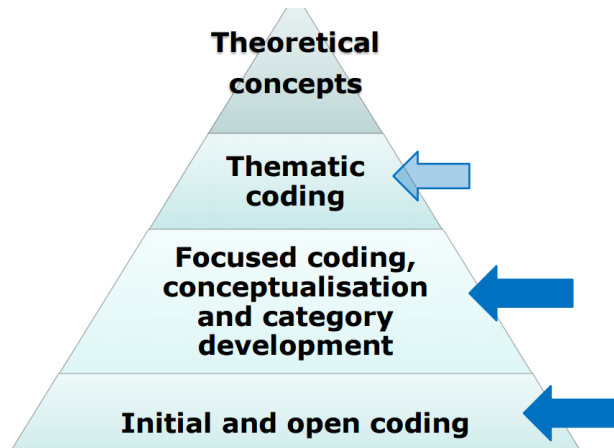


Figure 4.14 Analyzing interview data, University of Warwick ( De Hoyos, & Barnes, 2012).

Below is an example of this in practice in this study where participants responded in writing to: *The biggest thing I have learnt from this course is*. After initial coding, responses were grouped into category development or meaning units that then related to a theoretical concept.

Table 4.6 Example of coding system adopted in this study

Meaning Unit/Focused coding	Condensed Meaning Unit/Thematic Coding	Theoretical Concept
<p>I: The biggest thing I have learnt from doing this course is.....</p> <p>every country has their own culture, this course makes everything clear to me about other culture. there are no bad or wrong culture</p> <p>I: The biggest thing I have learnt from doing this course is.....</p> <p>different cultures have things that are okay in their culture but not in others but it is not wrong.</p> <p>..... before doing this course and how do I</p>	<p>Developing a positive attitude towards other cultures; that cultural others are valid and not viewed as wrong.</p>	<p>Respect</p>

A summary of the qualitative data analysis steps is as follows:

1. Transcripts read as a whole.
2. Phrases/sentences/ key words labelled; coding based on what was repeated, relevant or surprising.
3. Selection of which codes were more important; categories generated from codes; interconnectedness of categories examined.
4. Categories organised into a hierarchy of importance.



5. Concepts and knowledge generated that answered the research questions.

The qualitative data analysis in this study was not equal in terms of the inductive reasoning required and therefore the analysis was approached differently. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) distinguish between the need for deductive or inductive interpretation of the data. In this study the interview data and final summative written responses required more inductive analysis as less pre-determined themes and categories emerged “from the data through the research’s careful examination and constant comparison” (Zhang, 2006, p. 2). The aim was to see patterns and develop a theory based on those patterns. However, for the shorter written responses to classroom tasks, analysis was based more on the manifest content (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) as the content was more obvious and easier to decipher with less abstraction and level of depth. The aim was to generate findings based on established categories. For example, in short written responses to the question: Did you enjoy watching film scenes? typical responses were as follows:

- *It help me in understanding more than reading a piece of paper.*
- *Yes it was really fun and interesting and it made it easier to understand the class work.*
- *It was a nice change.*
- *Watching films helps us understand more and it’s also entertaining.*

While there was less layered meaning or deeper interpretation required at this level, with the focus more on description rather than interpretation, the steps of qualitative analysis were still required with careful coding and the generation of salient themes.

Frequency of recurrent themes determined the weighting of each theme. Flanagan has noted the difficulties of coding this type of data as it is “more subjective than objective” (1954, p. 346). To counter this he suggested submitting found categories to peers for review by presenting raw data to a number of colleagues, in order to compare the themes identified and to gain insight and new perspectives the researcher may have missed. This strategy was adopted to some extent only in this study, as faculty workloads are demanding in this context and non-teaching time very precious. Only one faculty member was available to be involved in this process who confirmed the salient themes. Once themes were established they were weighted and categorised according

to importance in relation to answering the research questions. These weightings are examined in the findings chapter.

Alongside this, for the final course feedback the data was examined through a critical discourse lens, with the understanding that identity, specifically in this case intercultural positioning, is constructed in and through discourse (Bauman, 2000), and that “it is language that gives us the tools to construct and reshape our identities” (Versluys, 2007, p. 93). This was achieved by honing in on the discourse fragments containing ‘I’ and ‘they’ statements to see how the participants position themselves in their intercultural learning, and whether they were actively involved and engaged or passive participants. This type of analysis also gives subtle clues as to how ‘the other’ is seen and whether the relationship between ‘I’ and ‘they’ is viewed as equal, or if the ‘I’ dominates.

#### 4.10.2 Interviews Data Analysis

The interview data was manually analyzed immediately in order to inform the next round of interviews. In this analysis coding was used to generate themes. As there were no definitive predetermined categories, the process of categorising and coding was inductive, i.e. informed by the data. All data was examined and treated as having equal weight in the initial step, a procedure typical in phenomenology and known as horizontalisation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Through this coding process, themes were both constructed and de-constructed and they adhered to the criteria proposed by Merriam (2009) in that they answered the research questions, were comprehensive, were mutually exclusive, exactly captured the meaning of the experience, and were “conceptually congruent” (p. 186). In the course of this procedure a hierarchy of categories and their interconnectedness emerged, thereby providing credible data to inform the results. Relevant to pre- and post-data analysis was the need for a match of elements, respondents and case treatment. Key questions remained largely the same for pre- and post-surveys, and coding was used to ensure surveys corresponded to the correct individuals and all cases had the same exposure to the learning activities. Each element of intercultural sensitivity understanding was analysed separately, through coding, to refine the results, and it was compared at the pre-intervention and then again at the post-intervention for each participant.

### 4.10.3 Likert Scale Data Analysis

The numbers-based quantitative Likert scale data followed the model for descriptive statistics incorporating numerical analysis. The first step was to assign a value to each response and create a frequency distribution table to find the central tendencies; the results were then divided into positive and negative in order to more clearly present the participants' inclinations. The mean was also calculated and can be found in Appendix 9. The Likert scale results contribute to this study not only through the data gleaned but by providing an objective judgement.

### 4.10.4 Merging Data

With such a varying amount of data collected a useful method of analysis in this instance was through the constant comparison model developed by Glaser and Strauss (1999). In this model, coding is layered in that each analysis of data is compared to the one before it, in order to establish patterns of emerging theory, until core categories become clearly defined.

In a mixed methods study such as this, the type of triangulation is what Denzin calls "Methodological triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one method for gathering data" (cited in Bryam, 2003, p. 1142). This type of triangulation strengthens the study as it provides more comprehensive data and consequently increased understanding of the phenomena (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). Here the purpose of the qualitative data in the written responses tool and interviews was to compare and contrast with the quantitative data, which is essentially asking the same question but in a different format. With both qualitative and quantitative data collected, the salient question in a mixed methods study is how the data will be weighted? Three of the four data collection sets in this study were qualitative; therefore more weighting had to be given to these. Strengthening this is the fact that the worldview driving this is qualitative, which, according to Morse (cited in Creswell, 2003), provides justification for a more unequal weighting. The table below illustrates the data analysis procedure.

Table 4.7 Data analysis procedure showing triangulation of data

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Method of analysis</b>	<b>Triangulation/Comparison of data</b>
Interviews	Coding with the aim of conceptualising patterns.	Interviews and final written responses tasks asked the same questions using different prompts. Eight participants agreed to be interviewed, 18 completed the final written task. Thus, a larger pool was drawn on.
Final written responses incorporating reflections on participants' intercultural learning and responses to experiential learning pedagogy.	Coding with the aim of conceptualizing patterns.	<p>Example questions:</p> <p><u>Interview question:</u></p> <p>In your view, how did your understanding of intercultural sensitivity change during this course?</p> <p><u>Written task</u></p> <p>How did I feel about people from different countries and cultures before doing this course and how do I feel now?</p>
Written responses to classroom tasks.	Coding with the aim of providing descriptions.	Written tasks and survey questions asked similar question using different prompts.
Likert scale survey responses to classroom tasks.	Descriptive statistics.	<p><u>Written task</u></p> <p>Did this activity help your learning?</p> <p><u>Survey question</u></p> <p>Did the Intercultural Romance work help you understand people from different cultures?</p>

To summarise, the data collection methods were chosen to complement each other, to fully speak to the research questions, to remain true to the phenomenological approach, and to provide more valid results through triangulating the data. In this way the procedure aimed to provide new

knowledge about the place of experiential learning in the teaching and learning of intercultural sensitivity from the perspective of students experiencing that ‘learning’.

#### **4:11 Reliability and Validity**

The challenge in this type of research is in marrying the creativity required in identifying patterns with maintaining the rigour required to ensure results are valid. While Lincoln and Guba have provided the criteria for ensuring validity through fundamentals such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Savin-Badin & Major, 2013), they do not provide a definite roadmap, particularly for a phenomenological study where ‘building truth’ is imperative. As a representation of peoples’ lives, a sure-fire way to ensure validity in a phenomenological study is by seeking validation from the participants and ensuring the individual’s lived experience is indeed accurately captured (Groenwald, 2004) “Dialogue between the co-researchers and researcher is a good way of checking the congruence of the researcher's interpretations” (Osborne, 1990, p. 87-88). This was a relatively easy process for the interview data as it was transcribed and presented back to the participants for confirmation after each interview. Finally, and most importantly, in order for a phenomenological study to claim validity it must provide a detailed and accurate paper trail so to speak, a logical sequence of stages and interpretations made that clearly illustrate how the findings were ‘found’. Lester claims that “the reader should be able to work through from the findings to the theories and see how the researcher has arrived at his or her interpretations” (1999, p. 2). This study delivers a transparent cohesive argument that serves to illustrate the phenomenological journey this research study has taken.

Validation of data in phenomenological research also refers to what Moustakas (2010) calls the statement of the researcher as the instrument. With qualitative research being mostly interpretive, the researcher becomes the primary instrument and therefore an important element of the validation process (Cresswell, 2009). In this case the teacher of this course is the researcher who also collected and analysed the data for this study. This all-encompassing role can be beneficial as it assists the researcher’s capacity for more valid research, as researchers are able to “complete and disseminate effective research” (Swanson & Holton, 2005, p. 421). The primary question is how the researcher can avail themselves of their biases and assumptions, in order to let the participants’ authentic voices be heard. This challenge can be met in phenomenology by

disclosing a sort of personal inventory. In phenomenological terms the word epoche is used, to suspend all judgement” (Husserl, 2015). However, this is a near impossible task given that as human beings our default system is to judge the natural world. Nevertheless, the researcher was cognisant of this and with reflective practice and an understanding of herself within the context of the study, her prior assumptions and biases were lessened. Additionally, the teacher of this course was the researcher who also collected and analysed the data for this study.

A discernible feature of experimental design is, as mentioned earlier, the design of a pre- and post-test. It is this model that can explain outcomes or the results of an intervention. The challenge is to tightly control and manipulate the conditions so that the intervention is indeed the only plausible reason for the change (Cohen, et al., 2011). In this study these participants demonstrated homogeneity, thereby minimising variants (Huberman & Miles, 2009), by being the same age, the same major, being at approximately the same English language level, and by sharing the same cultural and religious backgrounds. They were also all exposed to the same course (intervention) at the same time.

The questions in the data collection tools were based on external frameworks, specifically the work of King and Baxter Magdola, and Chen and Starosta, thereby drawing on established research in the field and adding rigour and validity to this study.

Importantly, as a mixed methods study internal validity was established here through the triangulation of data, ensuring data was valid through the confirmation of findings. “Collecting information from a variety of sources and with a variety of techniques can confirm findings” (Zohrabi, 2013).

#### **4.12 Limitations**

One of the limitations in this study could be the duration and time of the intervention programme. A total of 64 hours, 2 hours a day over a little more than 6 weeks, is possibly not adequate for covering the basic components of an intercultural studies course, and less so when assessments are factored in. However, this is not in the researcher’s control as the college calendar and other timetabled classes need to be taken into consideration.

This study focused on four experiential classroom tasks as part of the participants' intercultural studies course. As a result feedback on other classroom tasks that may have also had bearing on the participants' intercultural development was neglected. This type of study may benefit in the future from including questions relating to the whole suite of classroom tasks.

Another possible limitation is the double edged sword of the researcher wanting to collect as much data as possible while also needing to maintain respect for the participants who may feel vulnerable exposing their personal opinions given the social and political context. Indeed the data from the interviews was not as rich or forthcoming as anticipated. This could be due to a number of reasons, perhaps reflecting a general reluctance for participants to fully expose themselves, or possibly the fact that the researcher was herself an outsider.

The language issue may be perceived as a limitation in this study as all the work was conducted in English, the participants' second language. However, the participants in this study are expected to complete all their college work in English, and are comfortable and confident using English. This issue has been examined fully in section 4.7.2.

As part of the phenomenological process the participants who agreed to be interviewed were told in advance that they would be given their interview data for clarification and validation. However, they showed little interest in reading this or the need to verify their statements. The researcher concurs with Giorgi (2012) in this regard that the researcher is in fact the validation instrument, and there is no need to put the participants through the arduous process of reading and confirming their interview data.

Another limitation is in the use of self-reports as the data collected is on participants' perceptions of their learning. The risk here is two-fold, firstly that participants will be influenced by social desirability and the desire to be seen in a socially favourable light (Arnold & Feldman, 1981), and secondly that they may be motivated to please the researcher. This has been mitigated in a number of ways. The written responses were all anonymous and there is no way for the researcher to trace the response to the student. The aims of the research were clearly explained to the participants at the beginning of the study. This was articulated in a way so that the participants understood their feedback would assist in both understanding the field of interculturality and the

strengths and weaknesses of the course without their responses personally benefitting me, known as the What's In It For Me variable (Gaskell, 2012). Also, by following the protocol for mitigating the Hawthorne effect outlined by Oswald, Sherratt and Smith, (2014), specifically: creating a non-threatening persona, developing rapport and creating a relaxed atmosphere. It is also worth noting that despite their being caution in utilizing the self-report it has also been cited as useful in providing an accurate picture of how people feel (Spector, 1994) and "should not be automatically dismissed as being an inferior methodology to others" (Spector, 1994, p. 391).

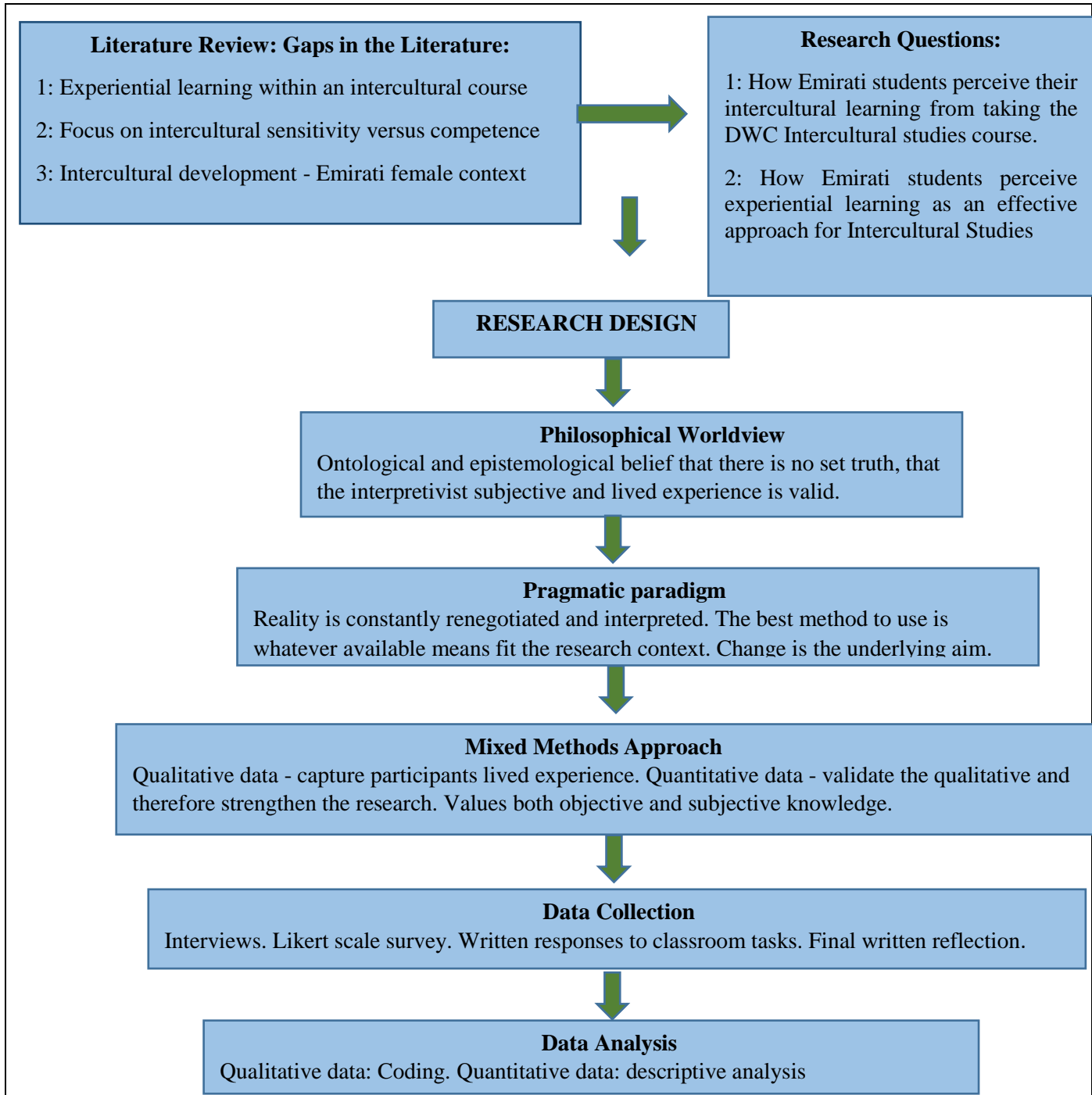
Finally, this is a snap shot of Emirati women, it targets Emirati female students from fairly conservative families, and therefore it would be remiss to generalize this study as representing an Emirati perspective without males or a wider demographic of women.



### 4.13 Conclusion

To conclude, the chart below shows how the elements of this study connect and build on each other driven at the outset by the gaps in the knowledge and the research questions.

Table 4.8 Summary of methodology chapter



This table demonstrates how the epistemological constructivist world view shapes the approach. In this case the approach employs both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry as a best fit to answer the research questions in this study. The data collection tools commit to both the needs of the participants as inexperienced critical thinkers and the phenomenological approach in aiming to capture a classroom experience. Data analysis treated all the data as equally important, with layers of coding leading to conceptualisation of themes and therefore generation of knowledge. The aim of generating this knowledge was to shape the thinking and advance the public body of knowledge on both experiential and intercultural learning. This study shows the direct connection between knowledge and practice and therefore contributes by proposing effective ways of approaching intercultural development and applying experiential learning.

The next chapter continues where Table 4.8 ends by discussing the data analysis and the results of this research study in relation to the two research questions.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESULTS

#### 5.1 Overview

This chapter reports on the results of the research investigating two classroom phenomena: (1) participants' perceived effectiveness of experiential learning as an instructional pedagogy for teaching and learning Intercultural Studies; and (2) participants' perceived development of intercultural sensitivity as an outcome of studying an Intercultural Studies course. These are positioned within the research questions:

*1: How do Emirati students perceive their intercultural learning as a result of taking the Dubai Women's College Intercultural studies course?*

*2: To what extent do Emirati students perceive experiential learning as an effective teaching and learning approach for Intercultural Studies?*

As a mixed methods phenomenological study, participants' *perceptions* of their learning generated the data through both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools, with the qualitative data more heavily weighted. The results chapter is divided into three sections representing the three sets of data collection:

- 1) Participants responses to classroom tasks: Likert survey and written responses.
- 2) Pre-and post-course interviews
- 3) Final course written reflections.

#### 5.2 Participants Responses to Classroom Tasks

Feedback was captured through short written one minute papers, along with results from a Likert scale survey. The results for each classroom task are shown and described in the following sections. Likert survey questions were based on Chen and Starosta's (1997) model of intercultural sensitivity, incorporating three layers of intercultural sensitivity: understanding other cultures,

respecting other cultures, and confidence levels of communicating with other cultures. Two tools were used in this instance in order to validate and corroborate the findings: Likert survey and written responses. The Likert survey results are presented in a table format and results are categorised into positive or negative responses. The positive responses are an accumulation of ‘yes a lot’ and ‘yes a little’ answers. The negative responses are an accumulation of ‘no not really’ and ‘no, not at all’ answers.

## 5.2.1 Results of Experiential Classroom Task 1: Barnga

### 5.2.1.1 Barnga Likert Scale Results

Table 5.1: Barnga - Likert survey results

N=22	Positive Responses	Negative Responses
1: Did playing Barnga <b>help your learning</b> ?	100 % (22)	0% (0)
2: Did you <b>enjoy</b> playing Barnga?	100 % (22)	0% (0)
3: Did playing Barnga help you <b>understand</b> what it feels like to be culturally different?	100 % (22)	0% (0)
4: Did playing Barnga help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?	100 % (22)	0% (0)
5: Did playing Barnga help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking?	95.5% (21)	4.5% (1)
6: Did playing Barnga you feel <b>more confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?	73% (16)	27% (6)

Results indicate a positive response to playing Barnga and the usefulness of this type of task in facilitating intercultural learning, with the majority of overall responses showing agreement with the questions posed. Noticeably, 6 participants, or 27%, felt that playing Barnga did not increase their *confidence in communicating* with people from different cultures. This can perhaps be attributed to the limitations of a game between people they know, and without any further data it is difficult to know whether the results would have been different had the participants been given a task that involved intercultural contact with those outside their peer group. It is also somewhat of a reflection of the task itself, in that it is not designed to develop communication skills, but rather a broadening self-awareness and heightened respect for cultural others. This was raised in the discussion and debrief after the game.

Four items achieved almost equivalent scores indicating participants rated these items with equal agreement. Playing Barnga helped learning, was enjoyable, taught participants what it felt to be culturally different, and helped initiate respect for cultural others. The question pertaining to enjoyment indicates that participants responded well to this type of experiential task, and addresses the research question on participants' responses to experiential learning. With hindsight the question "Did playing Barnga help your learning" is potentially ambiguous as it is not clear *what* learning it refers to, although the assumption and intention was that the learning referred to intercultural learning. This is a limitation in the design of the items, which impacts the results through needing to align this question with *both* research questions: response to experiential learning and effectiveness of this intercultural course for developing intercultural sensitivity. Nonetheless, the written responses reported in the next sub-section give a clearer indication of *which* learning the participants are referring to, and therefore, provides a more accurate fuller picture to this question.

#### *5.2.1.2 Barnga Written Responses*

As mentioned the written responses were elicited at the same time as the Likert scale results. Six questions were asked, which mirrored the Likert scale questions. The purpose of this was to verify the findings across tools. Table 5.2 presents the results of each question.

Table 5.2: Barnga – Written Responses

<p>Did playing Barnga help you <b>understand</b> what it feels like to be culturally different?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It felt weird at first cause you don't know if what you are doing is right or wrong. The other team looked annoyed and that makes you think and doubt your choice. (R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>Each culture have different way. (R3)</i></li> </ul>
<p>2: Did playing Barnga help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>After the game I saw where they were coming from with how they were playing. (R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>Because every culture have different rule than other culture. (R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>It help me. (R3)</i></li> <li>• <i>Everyone has their point of view and as much as I want people to respect me I should respect them. (R4)</i></li> <li>• <i>Little because they didn't were allowed to say there rules as well. (R5)</i></li> <li>• <i>Know about what is their culture and respect their rules. (R8)</i></li> </ul>
<p>3: Did playing Barnga help you feel more <b>confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>This motivated me even more to learn the languages I so want to learn. (R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>Because I still feel strange a little bit. (R2)</i></li> </ul>
<p>4: Did playing Barnga help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behavior and way of thinking?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I think that I am a bit considerate and that makes me feel a bit better. (R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>Because I think I am right and there are wrong but when I set and know they have different culture it will be fine. (R2)</i></li> </ul>
<p>5: Did you <b>enjoy</b> playing Barnga?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Definitely a good and new experience. (R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>I was confused little. (R4)</i></li> </ul>
<p>6: Did playing Barnga <b>help your learning</b>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It made me aware of few mistakes that I do with others that I wasn't aware of. (R1)</i></li> </ul>

7: Any other comments?

- *Thank you. (R1)*
- *Its good to knows other culture and rules to respect each other and don't make mistake. (R6)*
- *It helped me understand what foreign people feel when coming to the UAE. (R7).*

Three “patterns of experience” (Kostere, Levinskas, Percy, & Piotrowski, 2008, p. 83) emerge from these written responses. Firstly, there are three words that relate to a bigger theme of **disorientation**: *weird, strange, confused*. This is a normal reaction after playing Barnga: “The purpose of BaFa BaFa and Barnga is to provoke emotional confusion in learners, thus sensitising them to perceive the world from the perspective of a culturally different person” (Koskinen & Abdelhamid, 2008 p. 55). In some ways then, this disorientation is a good thing and evidence that Barnga had its intended effect, and therefore ‘worked’. The second pattern to emerge relates to developing an understanding of others, and key phrases include a non-judgemental awareness that cultures have *different ways*, their own *point of view*, and *different rules*, and together these relate to the bigger theme of **empathy**. The final theme to emerge here is that of **respect** for cultural others, illustrated through items such as *respect each other* and *respect their rules*. Appendix 11 presents Table 4.2 with colour-coded responses showing each of these three themes. Overall, findings from the written responses and Likert survey suggest that from the participants’ perspectives, playing Barnga has the capacity to facilitate developing an understanding, empathy and respect for cultural others. The literature review examined the boundaries of intercultural concepts, and provided an argument for the term intercultural sensitivity as focusing on the “affective aspect and on developing a positive emotion towards cultural others” (Chen, 1997). Therefore, the results demonstrate that playing Barnga has the potential to increase the participants’ capacity to develop intercultural sensitivity through developing these soft skills of understanding, empathy and respect for cultural others. The majority of participants reported that they *enjoyed* the activity, and while this cannot be said to directly contribute to developing intercultural sensitivity, it does speak to the second research question and is encouraging in terms of how well these participants reported to respond to experiential learning. While often uncomfortable during the actual game, student oral feedback in the debrief phase confirms the transformative capability of this activity:

*Everyone has their point of view and as much as I want people to respect me I should respect them*

*Because I think I am right and there are wrong but when I set and know they have different culture it will be fine.*

*It helped me understand what foreign people feel when coming to the UAE.*

The second classroom experiential task builds on the Barnaga work through exploring perspectives.

## 5.2.2 Results of Experiential Classroom Task 2: Perspectives

### *5.2.2.1 Perspectives: Likert Scale Results*

Table 5.3: Perspectives– Likert scale results

N= 23	<b>Positive Responses</b>	<b>Negative Responses</b>
1: Did you <b>enjoy</b> these perspective activities?	100% (23)	0% (0)
2: Did the perspective activities help you <b>respect people</b> from different cultures?	100% (23)	0% (0)
3: Did these perspective activities <b>help your learning</b> ?	100% (23)	0% (0)
4: Did the perspective activities <b>help you understand</b> people from different cultures?	100% (23)	0% (0)
5: Did the perspective activities <b>help you understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking?	91% (21)	9% (2)
6: Did the perspective activities help you feel more <b>confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?	91% (21)	9% (2)

According to the ranking, *enjoyment* of these tasks scored the highest, which, as mentioned previously, relates to participants' responses to experiential learning. Themes of *developing*



*respect* and *helping learning* also scored highly and ranked second and third. Results indicate a positive correlation between perspective exercises and the capacity to develop intercultural sensitivity. Comparing the results, *confidence in communicating* was ranked the lowest, although still highly, reflecting the points mentioned above in Barnaga where communication was not an objective of the task. It is also interesting to note that two participants felt that these perspective exercises did not significantly contribute to their understanding of their own behavior and way of thinking; however, when elaborating in the written responses, this understanding was raised as meaningful to this learning experience.

### 5.2.2.2 Perspectives Written Responses

Table 5.4: Perspectives – Written Responses

<p>1: Did the perspective activities help you <b>understand</b> people from different cultures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Yes it even showed how people from different places in the world think or act. (R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>Because I will understand how they thinking or what are they perspective from someone who are from other culture. (R2)</i></li> <li>• <i>Hearing about your own culture from other people makes you wonder about it. (R3)</i></li> </ul>
<p>2: Did the perspective activities help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>They see their culture in a different way of me (R2)</i></li> <li>• <i>Hearing their opinion made me put myself in their shoes. (R3)</i></li> </ul>
<p>3: Did the perspective activities help you feel <b>more confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Yes it even made me feel curious to try to do an interview myself about this topic. (R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>I will get more information about them and I will educated more. (R2)</i></li> <li>• <i>It's easier to see where their opinions are coming from now. (R3)</i></li> <li>• <i>I'm not that confident. (R6)</i></li> </ul>
<p>4: Did the perspective activities help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own way of thinking?</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Yes it even showed the importance of being open minded with others (R1)</i></li> </ul>
<p>5: Did you <b>enjoy</b> the perspective activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Yes it was really fun and interesting, I really enjoyed it! (R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>Videos are always a great way to understand a point. (R3)</i></li> <li>• <i>Yes because I have learned a lot (R4)</i></li> </ul>
<p>6: Did the perspective activities <b>help your learning</b>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Yes it made things much clearer to me (R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>How people see Arabs (R10)</i></li> </ul>
<p>7: Any other comments?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Perspectives will teach a lot of how to know the people. (R4)</i></li> <li>• <i>Great lesson (R5)</i></li> <li>• <i>I learned from the perspective activities to not judge a person before understanding him. Don't judge a book by its cover. (R7)</i></li> <li>• <i>It help to see other cultures how they think. (R8)</i></li> <li>• <i>Perspective help people to know other countries culture and help them to respect them. (R9)</i></li> </ul>

The first pattern of experience to emerge through recurring phrases such as *understand how they thinking*, and *made me put myself in their shoes*, relates to an understanding of others, or **empathy**. The second pattern of experience relates to the learning experience, and phrases such as *I have learned a lot* and *it made things much clearer* relate to a larger theme of **deepening learning** or *broadening of the mind*. A final theme to emerge was around a developing cultural self-awareness: *hearing about your own culture from other people makes you wonder about it*, which relates to the theme of understanding one's own culture.

While not part of the data collection per se, students, of their own volition often emailed myself, the researcher about their responses to the course, indicating again informally, that the work on perspectives was meaningful.

*So I can appreciate and respect the variety in cultures now. Like fruit. When you see a bowl of oranges and mixed fruit. It adds more beauty to the country to the place if it's mixed.*

(Ibrahim F., Personal communication, February 2013)

*I have learned in Culture Course that we as people should look at things from another point of view or different perspective and try not to be bias and that there is always two side of any story.*

(Ali A., Personal communication, September 13, 2013).

This is particularly noteworthy when viewed with the knowledge that some of our students were raised to believe, for example, that “all Indians are thieves” (personal communication, name withheld).

### 5.2.3 Results of Experiential Classroom Task 3: Watching Film Scenes

#### *5.2.3.1 Film Scenes - Likert Scale Results*

Table 5.5: Film Scenes Likert Scale Results

N= 21	<b>Positive Responses</b>	<b>Negative Responses</b>
<u>1</u> : Did watching film scenes help you <b>understand</b> people from different cultures?	100% (21)	0% (0)
<u>2</u> : Did you <b>enjoy</b> watching film scenes?	100% (21)	0% (0)
<u>3</u> : Did watching film scenes <b>help your learning</b> ?	100% (21)	0% (0)
<u>4</u> : Did watching film scenes help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?	100% (21)	0% (0)
<u>5</u> : Did watching film scenes help you feel <b>more confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?	100% (21)	0% (0)
<u>6</u> : Did watching film scenes help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking?	95% (20)	5% (1)

Results indicate a positive correlation between watching film scenes and the capacity to develop intercultural sensitivity with a 95% strong agreement with film scenes *helping understand people from different cultures*. Results also indicate a positive response to experiential, with *enjoyment* and *helped learning* both scoring equally highly at 95%. Again, gaining *confidence in communicating*, while still scoring highly, was in the lower ranking. While still relatively high, the use of film scenes to *help understand yourself* was ranked the lowest at 68%. This is consistent with the results in Barnaga and Perspectives and indicates that these participants have not yet fully developed their ability to self-reflect or their capacity for self-awareness. A study by Richardson on student reflective practice, set in the same tertiary institute as this study, claims that the cultural framework underpinning the UAE is “incongruent with the underlying assumptions of reflective practice” (Richardson, 2004, p. 432). This will be examined more deeply in the Discussion chapter of this study.

### 5.2.3.2 Film Scenes Written Responses

Table 5.6: Film Scenes – Written Responses

<p>1: Did watching film scenes help you <b>understand</b> people from different cultures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It shows how every culture is different. (R13)</i></li> <li>• <i>It made it really clear and much easier to absorb. (R14)</i></li> <li>• <i>Yes I learned things that will prevent me from making mistakes. (R15)</i></li> </ul>
<p>2: Did watching film scenes help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The characters in the film were meet together and I can learn about it. (R12)</i></li> <li>• <i>We should respect other cultures even if they are different from ours. (R13)</i></li> </ul>
<p>3: Did watching film scenes help you feel more <b>confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Not a lot because I'll feel confused and I'll think what should I do and what I'm doing is right or wrong. (R10)</i></li> <li>• <i>I know now what I should and what I shouldn't do in some cases. (R15)</i></li> </ul>

4: Did watching film scenes help you **understand yourself** and your own behavior and way of thinking?

No comments

5: Did you **enjoy** watching film scenes?

- *It help me in understanding more than reading a piece of paper. (R13)*
- *Yes it was really fun and interesting and it made it easier to understand the class work. (R14)*
- *It was a nice change. (R15)*
- *Watching films helps us understand more and it's also entertaining. (R16)*

6: Did watching film scenes **help your learning**?

No comments

7: Any other comments?

- *It was nice. (R1)*
- *It was helpful. (R2)*
- *Film is a good example for us to watch because some of them might be from real life. (R3)*
- *It is a good and enjoyable way. (R4)*
- *It's useful. I enjoyed. (R5)*
- *It helps us to understand. (R6)*
- *Yes it helps me to learning by understanding their culture. (R7)*
- *Some informations are hard to understand without film example. (R8)*
- *Because I understand every dimension. (R9)*
  - *We have learned a lot to how we respect people from different culture. (R11)*
- *We need to respect other cultures. (R16)*

What is most noticeable about the written responses to the film scenes is the high number of comments under 'any other comments' – a total of 11, as compared to 3, 4 and 5 for the other classroom tasks. This points to the fact that the participants had something they felt of value to say and that they wanted to be heard. The recurring theme in these 11 comments centre around the

*educational value* of watching film scenes: *it was helpful, it's useful, it helps us to understand etc.* This theme also crossed over into the other responses, relating to a larger theme of *deepening learning* or *broadening of the mind*. Participants also reported enjoying film scenes through phrases such as *really fun and interesting* and *good and enjoyable way*. These results indicate that participants responded well to the use of film scenes and that it was a very useful experiential classroom practice. Another recurring theme here relates to respect for other cultures: *we need to respect other cultures* and *we should respect other cultures even if they are different from ours*. A new theme to emerge from the responses to watching film scenes was that some participants are now considering appropriate intercultural behaviour, e.g.: *I know now what I should and what I shouldn't do in some cases*. As this feedback was taken at the end of the course, it is interesting to see that by the end of the course 'behaviour' was being paid attention to, while these participants were not demonstrating their changed behaviour (as explained previously, due to the constraints of the course), but it is worth noting that these thoughts have surfaced.

## 5.2.4 Results of Experiential Classroom Task 4: Intercultural Romance

### *5.2.4.1: Intercultural Romance Likert Scale Results*

Table 5.7: Intercultural Romance - Likert survey results

N=20	<b>Positive Responses</b>	<b>Negative Responses</b>
<u>1</u> : Did the Intercultural Romance work help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?	100% (20)	0% (0)
<u>2</u> : Did the Intercultural Romance work help you <b>understand</b> people from different cultures?	95% (19)	5% (1)
<u>3</u> : Did you <b>enjoy</b> the Intercultural Romance work activities?	95% (19)	5% (1)
<u>4</u> : Did the Intercultural Romance work help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking?	95% (19)	5% (1)
<u>5</u> : Did the Intercultural Romance work <b>help you feel more positive about other cultures</b> ?	95% (19)	5% (1)

Results to the questions in the Likert scale are ranked quite closely with little difference between the lowest to the highest, indicating that there was little significant difference in the responses. Developing *respect* and *understanding* for other cultures along with *enjoying* the activity were ranked the highest, indicating the capacity for this task in developing intercultural sensitivity and the positive response to this experiential learning task. Overall the intercultural romance tasks ranked the lowest in comparison to the other tasks, which will be discussed in 4. 3.

#### 5.2.4.2 Intercultural Romance - Written Responses

##### 5.2.4.2 Intercultural Romance: Written Responses

Table 5.8 Intercultural Romance – Written Responses

<p>1: Did the Intercultural Romance work help you <b>understand</b> people from different cultures?</p> <p>No comment</p>
<p>2: Did the Intercultural Romance work help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Every culture have the same respectful. (R1)</i></li> <li>• <i>Accept people from different cultures. (R2)</i></li> <li>• <i>It did because it showed and proved that whichever culture you come from you'll still face difficulties and obstacles that you'll have to overcome. (R3)</i></li> </ul>
<p>3: Did the Intercultural Romance work help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behavior and way of thinking?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Change my way of thinking. (R2)</i></li> <li>• <i>I usually don't give this topic much thought but watching and listening to these people got me thinking about it. (R3)</i></li> </ul>
<p>4: Did you <b>enjoy</b> the Intercultural Romance activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I enjoyed watching the films. (R1)</i></li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It was interesting to know what intercultural couples thought of intercultural romance. (R3)</i></li> <li>• <i>It was interesting hearing about other cultures. (R9)</i></li> </ul>
<p>5: Did the Intercultural Romance work help you feel more <b>positive about other cultures</b>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>We should accept and respect about other cultures. (R2)</i></li> <li>• <i>We cannot deny the differences between cultures but we can acknowledge the similarities and accept the differences. (R3).</i></li> <li>• <i>It even made me more open minded and accepting others of different cultures. (R4)</i></li> <li>• <i>I can understand what people think and what should I think about other cultures. (R8)</i></li> </ul>
<p>6: Any other comments?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It change my thinking and my point view. I learn also that we should accept and respect other cultural. (R2).</i></li> <li>• <i>It's useful to meet people from different cultures to get to know them better. (R5)</i></li> <li>• <i>It was easy. (R6)</i></li> <li>• <i>The intercultural romance video that I saw makes me understand more about it and it really helped me to respect them point of view. (R7)</i></li> </ul>

A number of themes emerge from these written responses. Developing respect for other cultures surfaces, as seen in responses such as *helped me to respect them* and *respect about other cultures*. This relates to the theme of empathy, through developing an understanding of others, which also emerges: *I can understand what people think* and *makes me understand more about it*. What is interesting to note here is that a new theme has emerged specifically acknowledging a new way of thinking: *Change my way of thinking* and *It even made me more open minded*. These responses illustrate that the intercultural romance learning tasks have the potential to broaden minds and raise participants' intercultural sensitivity. In addition, participants report an interest and enjoyment in these tasks: *It was interesting* and *I enjoyed watching the films*, indicating that participants respond well to this type of learning pedagogy.



### 5.2.5 Comparison of Experiential Learning Tasks

In order to fully gauge which tasks are most impactful, and therefore glean the most benefit from this study in order to make more informed decisions for a course such as this, it is useful to compare the results of each task. This will be examined through the Likert scale results in order to provide quantifiable results, without any interpretation. There are two sets of results: firstly a comparison of the overall accumulated responses to each experiential learning task, and secondly a comparison of each discrete item within the task.

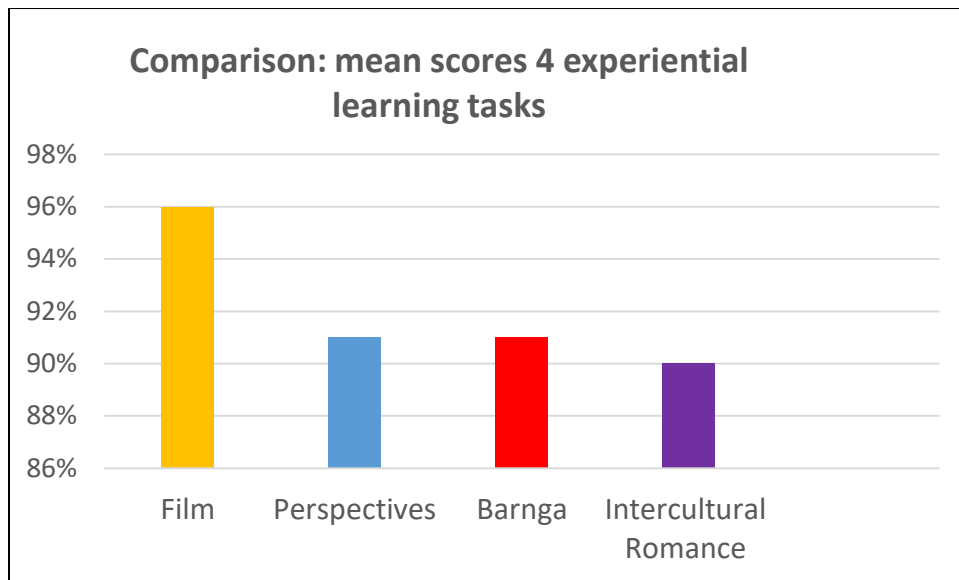


Figure 5.1: Comparison of Four Experiential Tasks

This chart shows the mean results of each question for the four experiential classroom tasks. The results show that the participants perceived all the tasks as helpful in terms of facilitating the start of intercultural learning, and as being effective and enjoyable in terms of teaching pedagogy, indicating these participants responded well to experiential learning. Perspectives and Barnga were rated equally at 91%, Intercultural Romance at 90%, while watching film scenes was rated the highest at 96%. This validates the findings in the literature review on the perceived effectiveness of film in Intercultural teaching and learning.

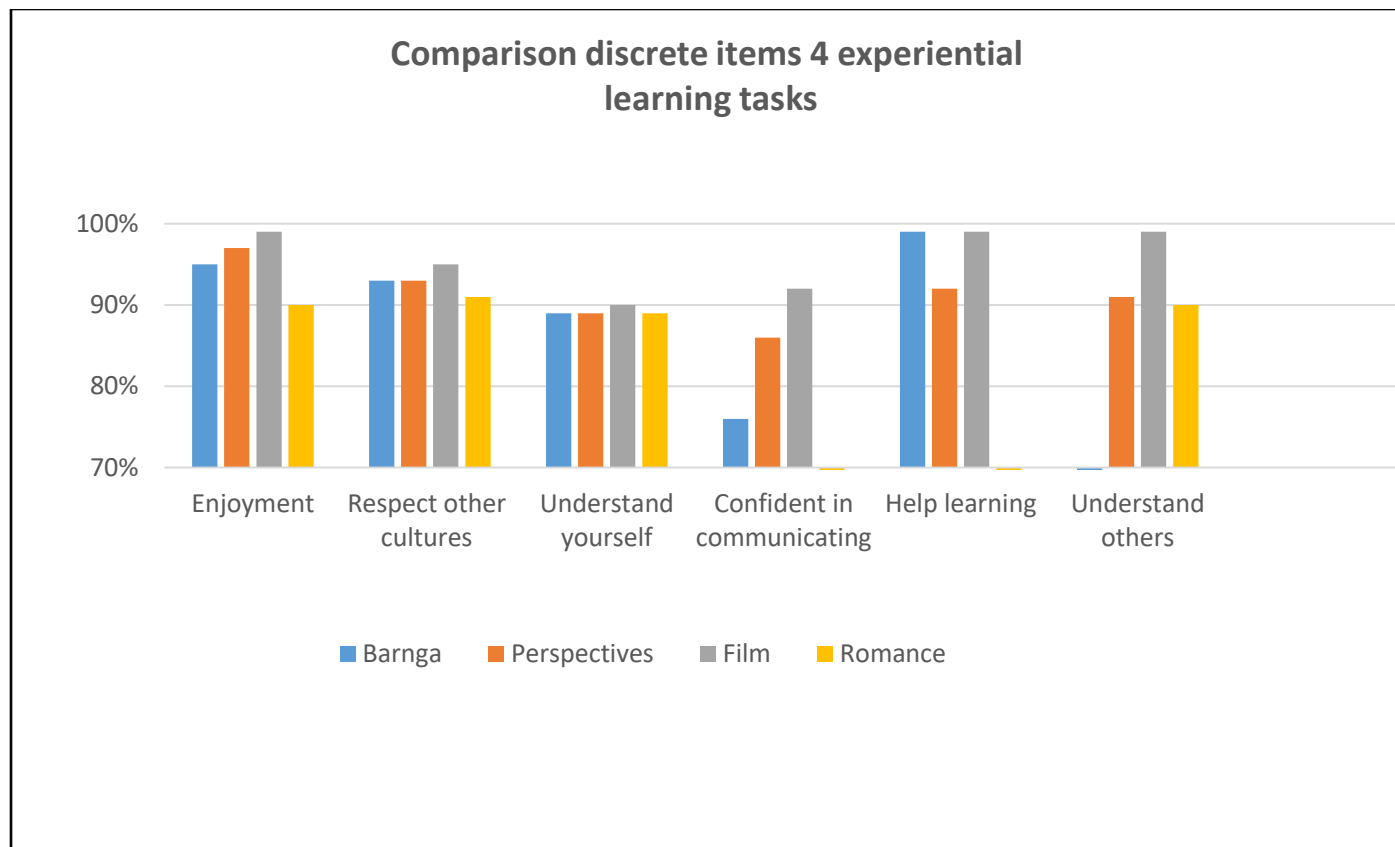


Figure 5.2: Comparison of Discrete Items in Four Experiential Tasks

As seen in the chart above, the use of film scores most highly in each of the discrete items, but especially in terms of helping *understand cultural others*. All four tasks generated even scores for helping to *understand yourself* and *respecting cultural others*. The effectiveness of the work on Perspectives and Barnga in developing *confidence in communicating* was ranked relatively low compared to the other items, which have been raised above. The results of the discrete items indicate that participants felt that all the tasks were enjoyable, helped learning and raised their sensitivity to cultural others.

The Likert scale results only present half the picture though, and through the written responses participants are able to fill this picture in and provide a more composite analysis. These themes have been extracted in the sections above and corroborate the Likert scale results on the effectiveness of these tasks, especially the use of film as demonstrated in the large number of affirmatory responses to this task.

### 5.2.6 Summary Experiential Classroom Tasks

This study centers around two research questions, the purpose of the data collection and subsequent analysis is to answer those questions. The questions in this instrument align with each research question as seen in the table below.

Table 5.9: Research Questions Mapped to Questions Items in Classroom Tasks

Research Questions	Question Items
How do Emirati students perceive their intercultural learning as a result of taking the Dubai Women’s College Intercultural studies course?	1: Did (the task) help you <b>understand</b> people from different cultures? 2: Did (the task) help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures? 3: Did (the task) make you feel more <b>confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures? 4: Did (the task) help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking? 5: Did playing Barnga help you understand what it <b>feels like</b> to be <b>culturally different</b> ? 6: Did (the task) <b>help your learning</b> ?
To what extent do Emirati students perceive experiential learning as an effective teaching and learning approach for Intercultural Studies?	7: Did you <b>enjoy</b> (the task)? 8: Did (the task) <b>help your learning</b> ?

Despite categorising the questions in the data collection tool with the research questions, there is clearly some overlap and to some extent each research question contributes to the other. *If* Emirati students perceive experiential learning as an effective teaching and learning approach for Intercultural Studies, then this in turn positively impacts on their intercultural learning. The reverse

is also true: *to what extent* Emirati students perceive their intercultural learning as a result of taking the Dubai Women's College Intercultural studies course, is in part due to the teaching pedagogy of experiential learning being adopted.

As demonstrated in this section, the results of the classroom learning tasks, from both the Likert Scale and written responses, indicate the potential for developing the participants' intercultural learning through increasing empathy, respect and understanding for cultural others, which are key attributes of intercultural sensitivity (Olson & Kroeger, 2001). Further to this, participants reported they *enjoyed* these tasks, indicating both an increased receptivity to learning (Ainley & Ainley, 2011) and a positive response to experiential learning. Participants also reported these tasks helped their learning. However, as pointed out earlier, with hindsight this question is slightly ambiguous as it is not clear *which* learning participants are referring to, or if they are referring to learning in general. However, whether specific or general learning, the results show a positive correlation to the classroom tasks and participants' 'learning'. The use of film scenes was ranked most highly across all the discrete items, indicating that of the four experiential classroom tasks, this was the most effective, with intercultural romance the least effective, albeit only marginally so. The next section moves away from investigating the classroom tasks in isolation by examining how the results from the interview responses address the research questions.

### **5.3: Interviews**

Due to the voluntary nature of the participation, 8 out of the 22 students attending the course agreed to be interviewed. Spending extra time in college before or after class is not something these students are accustomed to. Combined with potential transport issues involved in arriving to college earlier or later than normal, this potentially made attending the interviews more challenging.

While participants have been referred to by name in order to humanize the process, their names have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

### 5.3.1: Pre-Course Interviews

General question themes in the pre-course interviews center around three areas:

- 1: Demographic information
- 2: Educational background
- 3: Exposure to and beliefs about cultural others

#### *5.3.1.1: Demographics*

All participants were Emirati, both parents were Emirati, and the language spoken at home was Arabic. None were married. Participants varied in majors: Bachelor of Education, Business, Health Science and Engineering, while year groups ranged from Year One to Year Three. All had reached the required English language level to enter a Bachelor Degree course, and, from a teacher's perspective, seemed competent and confident enough in English to work at the level required. All lived in Dubai and were born and raised in the UAE. While the question was not asked, the assumption was made that they were all Sunni Muslim. The college does have a small number of Shia Muslim students, but given the social and political divide between these two groups this would not be an appropriate question to ask. Overall the participants demonstrated demographic homogeneity with no significant variables.

#### *5.3.1.2: Educational Background*

Establishing a baseline of educational experiences and expectations is important as the purpose of this study is to gauge how responsive participants are to experiential learning within intercultural studies. A number of variables may impact on this, for example whether participants had practice in this type of teaching and learning approach beforehand, and whether they had attended an international school – thereby having had extensive mixing with cultural others (whether experienced positively or negatively). An important distinction needs to be made at this point between what 'private' school means to these participants. When Emiratis say they go to private school, this generally means Emirati private schools, which are gender segregated and have students and teachers who are mostly Emiratis and/or other Arab nationals, unlike private

international schools, which in Dubai are usually dominated by North Americans, Europeans, Brits etc. For example, Roudha cites having attended the *private* New Academy School, which in reality has a largely Emirati student population sitting at around 75% (Admissions New Academy School, private communication, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

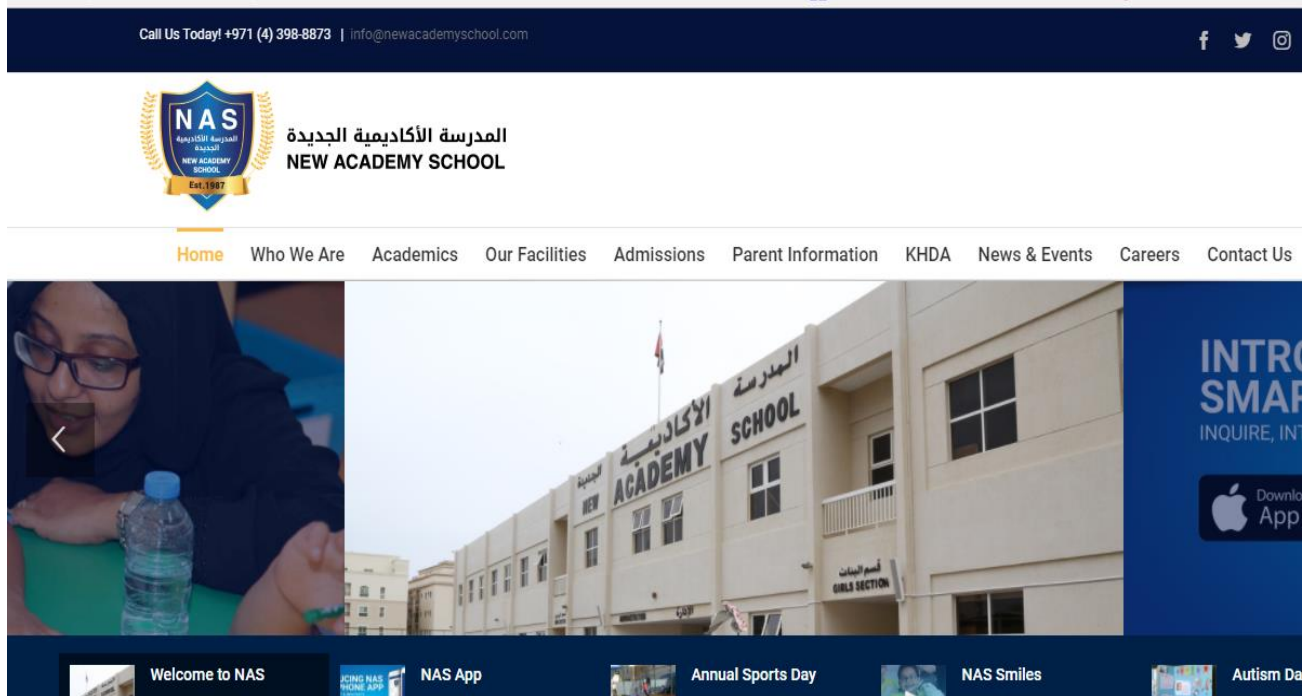


Figure 5.3 New Academy School ("Home", 2017)

The table below summarises the participants' responses to questions about education.

Table 5.10: Summary of Educational Experiences

NAME	HIGH SCHOOL	SCHOOL EXPERIENCE	DIFFERENCE SCHOOL – COLLEGE?	PREFER SCHOOL - COLLEGE?	WHY PREFERENCE?
Alya	Government	Good	College more study focused.	College	Responsible for self.  More focused.
Hamda	Private	Happy	Depend on selves at college	College	More fun  Use of technology.

Amna	Government	Not good: Teachers too strict.	College more presentations.	College	Use of technology and more interesting e.g. videos.  Responsible for self.
Marwa	Government	Not good: Teachers don't explain well.	College more freedom.	College	More freedom.  Focus on one subject.
Nouf	Government	Happy	School – Reading and exams.	College	Learn something.  More technology.
Roudha	Private	Happy	School more pressure – but appreciate it now.  College more activities – better.	School	Relationship with teachers stronger at school.  More familiar, used to the school environment.
Suhaila	Government	Not good	School – Memorization. No presentations.	College	Teach useful skills. Work preparation.  More activities.
Sharifa	Both	Good	School – teachers kind.	School	College rules too strict. Studying harder. Better relationship with teachers at school.

Amongst the eight participants, five went to government school, two to private and one to both. Three out of eight participants were **not** happy with their high school experiences citing reasons such as: *Everything we should memorize* (Suhaila), *the teachers not giving us enough*

(Marwa) and *the teachers are strict* (Amna). Four participants **were** happy with their high school experience, providing reasons such as: *the teacher understands the students* (Roudha), *they take care about our study* (Alya) and *they [the teachers] were kind* (Sharifa). Notably, the participants who attended government schools were unhappy. Six of the participants prefer college to school, down to the prevalence of technology, the independence and more interesting activities. This paints a picture of these participants entering college with mixed high school experiences and with a largely positive experience of college. Sifting through the descriptions of high school, there is little indication that experiential learning was used, although it is possible that these participants may have been exposed to more experiential type activities at college as they cited the variety of activities, the need for self-reliance, and the fun aspect in relation to what makes college more attractive. Participants attended government or Emirati private schools indicating that they would have had little exposure to a variety of cultures throughout their time in high school, typically a time of negotiating beliefs about the world. One can say that based on their high school experiences alone, it is likely these participants may not have developed beliefs, one way or another, about cultural others gained from this type of intercultural interaction. On reflection, a question pertaining to what the participants learnt in High School from their peers, teachers and the curriculum about cultural others, could have been added to this study.

### 5.3.1.3: *Exposure to and beliefs about cultural others*

While most of the participants may not have had the opportunity for direct intercultural contact through high school, it became apparent through the interviews that they have led lives with some intercultural element, largely through a foreigner marrying into the family, through travel abroad, or simply by mixing in Dubai. This section will be organized by firstly presenting each participant's 'story', and then through an examination of recurring salient themes. The aim here is, importantly, to *describe*. "The operative word in phenomenological research is 'describe'. The aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 46), and from this description the essence will emerge (Cameron, Schaffer & Hyeoun Ae, 2001). Concurrent with this, the researcher has attempted to find a balance between these descriptions and her impressions. To do this, the interviews were listened to and read a number of times in order to



capture the gestalt, or holistic sense, which is supported by direct quotes from the participants. The challenge inherent in phenomenological research is in the attempt to both allow the data to speak for itself and to also interpret this data skillfully, focusing upon the “deep structure of meaning rather than surface linguistic structure” (Osborne, 1990, p. 85), which is described by Osborne (1990) as an ability to “read between the lines” (p. 85).

#### 5.3.1.4 Pre-course Interview Descriptions

##### 1: Alya

Alya’s father took a second wife from Tunisia when she was 14 years old, although they had minimal contact. This is not unusual with second and sometimes third wives often housed in their own quarters. This marriage created problems in the family; however, they were not related to cultural difference, just *something else*. Alya herself would be reluctant to marry a foreigner because her children would lose Emirati nationality and because of the perceived cultural challenges: *maybe their society different*. Her family taught her that it was okay to mix with others but with limits. Although this relates to both foreigners and Emiratis, she was not taught anything specifically about foreigners. Islam, more specifically, has taught her to understand people from other cultures: *We respect everyone have a different religion*, and she made reference to an Arabic phrase along the lines of *you have your religion, I have my religion, [and there is no discord]*. Alya’s respect for other cultures is intertwined with other religions, which is interesting as it is the researcher’s experience, especially from teaching a course in Faith, that Emiratis hold respect for those who have religious beliefs, but that it is often more difficult to accept the position of an atheist. The high number of foreigners in the UAE is described by Alya as a positive influence: *It’s nice because you meet someone else, you can communicate with others from different cultures*. Alya’s intercultural contacts have come largely through her uncle who would bring friends and business acquaintances home on a semi-regular basis. She feels proud to be Emirati and her sense of pride comes from the fact that the UAE is seen as being attractive to foreigners: *Because now Emirates is popular, and everyone if you say that I am Emirati, say oh wow because we have a different city*. This pre-course interview indicates that Alya has had some, but fairly limited, contact with cultural others, and appears to hold positive views about cultural others as perceived through experiencing foreigners in Dubai. It should be noted that the researcher failed to ask Alya

about her international travel in the pre-course interview, so this was picked up in the post-course interview where she said she had traveled a lot, for example to England. She also said she spoke to foreigners when she traveled but that traveling did not make her more open to other cultures.

## 2: Hamda

Hamda's uncle married an Egyptian woman, who was initially not accepted by the family; this was attributed more to her personality than to the cultural difference. Although she believes that intercultural marriages play a role in opening Emiratis up to other cultures, Hamda's family taught her to accept everyone regardless of their religion, looks or beliefs. However, her religion had a stronger impact on her than her parents (which she admitted to perhaps being unusual) in cementing this belief: *Islam teaches us to accept people regardless of their religion*. Having gone to a private school, she was accustomed to mixing with other Arabs, mostly Lebanese, Iraqis and Syrians, which she describes as *fun and interesting because every day we got to mix with a new person and what does she believe*. Hamda believes that the large number of foreigners in the UAE is beneficial to the country and that it will make Emiratis more open. She goes on to say that being more accepting of others does not detract from your own cultural identity, and her pride in being Emirati stems from Emiratis holding a welcoming attitude to others and being a people who accept *everyone from everywhere, from any religion*. Interestingly, as with Alya, the idea of culture and religion are intertwined. Hamda enters the course having experienced intercultural friendships through high school and with some positive beliefs about cultural others stemming from her family's and her own religious beliefs.

## 3: Amna

On first reading Amna appears to enter the course more closed to intercultural understanding than the other participants. This is not a negative judgement, but may suggest she is still formulating her beliefs. Phrases that infer this include a reference to the possible 'othering' of her brother's Moroccan wife: *she's not with us she has another home, it's better for her*. When asked if she wanted to understand other cultures better she replied: *I happy with what I know*, indicating a disinclination to broaden her mind or further her intercultural education. Amna commented that her family did not teach her anything about other cultures and she expressed a half-hearted interest in teaching her own children about cultural issues: *maybe I will teach them*. She states that she

prefers to interact with Emiratis, although as the interview transpired she clarified that she is open to friendship with both Emiratis and non-Emiratis but would not entertain the idea of marrying a foreigner because of nationality issues related to children from that marriage and fear of gossip about her: *if the women married for non-Emirati their children she will bring problem also their family they will talk a lot of her*. Unlike for the other participants, the role of Islam does not seem to have shaped her personal beliefs towards cultural others, citing the mixed views Muslims have about others: *Not every Muslim same, they have different...* Amna had a sense of pride in being Emirati, although this pride is rather general: *Yes I am proud to be Emirati*, with little to say about the reasons behind this, and what it is that makes her proud. She merely cited *National Day* and the people as making her feel proud. Apart from having a friend from Saudi Arabia, Amna appears to not have had much intercultural contact. When asked about the influx of foreigners in the UAE Amna reported feeling open, saying *it's a good thing as we can know more thing about them*. Overall Amna's interview sees her as wavering in-between openness and maintaining a distance to cultural 'others', and she seemed to lack a sense of curiosity about both her own and other cultures, yet seems approving about the number of foreigners in the UAE. It will be interesting to see if the course impacted on Amna's beliefs and whether it established more resolve in her thinking.

#### 4: Marwa

Like the previous participants Marwa also has an intercultural marriage within the family as her grandfather married an Iranian woman. The Iranian wife was not accepted by the family, as they questioned her loyalty and sense of care to the grandfather, *because they thought that if it [the wife] is from another country she will not care about him like the one from UAE*. Marwa's family did not raise her with any particular beliefs about foreigners; it was not a topic of discussion at home. Marwa indicates some signs of being, at times, at the ethnocentric pole of the intercultural maturity continuum. When discussing the impact of Islam on her beliefs about interculturality, she states: *because nowadays there are too many studies show that we [Muslims] are right*. When pressed on this, she clarifies that the Muslim religious 'rituals' of fasting and prayer have been shown to be beneficial, justifying why Islam is *right*. Marwa also acknowledges how religion is important in thinking about other cultures and has taught her that *all people are same*. Marwa has travelled extensively to Malaysia, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Thailand, although she has never made

foreign friends as she claims *I don't meet them*. This indicates that her travel experiences were probably typically Emirati in style in that she most likely stayed with her family, in hotels mostly frequented by other Gulf Nationals. Marwa is receptive to the large numbers of foreigners in the UAE and thinks it improves UAE society as it is *better to learn about new cultures and traditions*. Marwa displayed some curiosity about cultural others when talking about her house maid and how she enjoys hearing about her life and her family. She has a sense of pride in being Emirati, which she attributes to the admiration she feels for the leadership to *make the country how it is now*, and she believes that intercultural understanding does not detract from one's one cultural identity. Overall Marwa has had limited contact with cultural others, despite frequent travel, and her beliefs about cultural others have been shaped by her religious views rather than explicit family guidance. In some ways she appears open, discussing a genuine interest in her housemaid, yet in other ways she has the potential to come across as slightly inward looking. Again, it will be interesting to see how the course has affected her thinking.

#### 5: Nouf

Similar to the other participants, one of Nouf's family members has married a foreigner; however this was someone from her *far family*. She was easily accepted into the family: *it's okay to us*. Nouf does not have any foreign friends, more by accident than design though. Nouf was slightly conflicted in the interview and it became apparent she had not really formulated her views. In response to how she feels about so many foreigners in the UAE she begins by saying: *maybe it's good maybe it's bad, everything in life has positive way and the negative way*. When asked about how she personally feels she said, *maybe it's too many*. Some confusion arose here about what she meant by this; she mentioned *losing time*, but could not clarify. Regarding foreigners in the UAE, Nouf went on to say *it's okay because it's okay, I don't know*. She then clarified by saying *it's good* that foreigners are in the UAE as it helps in developing the economy: *they make our country the money*. Nouf spoke about how working with foreigners benefited the country: *We have many minds so the minds connect to their culture and build something amazing*. She felt she could understand people who are not Emirati. Her family did not teach her anything explicitly about other cultures but to always respect their housemaid (who would not be Emirati). Nouf feels proud to be Emirati and thinks about the contribution she can make: *This is my country and I have to do many thing to make my country be in the first place in every time*. This chimes with the Emirati

sense of always striving to be the best. Islam has had a big impact on her intercultural beliefs, teaching her that *we [Muslims] respect every culture*. Nouf describes the impact of Islam on her thinking to be greater than that of her parents. Overall Nouf presents a mixed bag of thinking, and she acknowledges that foreigners in the UAE bring both rewards and unfavorable aspects, although the contribution to the economy seems to override any negative aspects. Her Faith has had a significant impact on her thinking, specifically in developing intercultural awareness and respect for others. Nouf came across as uncertain in this interview, and the post course interview would determine whether the course had cemented her thinking in any way.

#### 6: Roudha

Roudha's uncle is married to a Filipino woman. Her family, she reported, accepted the marriage with time. She has a friend from Algeria, and mixed with Afganis, Iranians and Syrians in high school. She spoke about a deep interest in Japanese and Korean culture, and said she enjoys watching their cartoons and drawing anime. Roudha admits she is unusual: *I open up easily to others, like people from outside, rather than like locals; understands them [non-Emiratis] more than I understand Emiratis and I prefer foreign people because I like not feel shy but Emirati judge me when I talk about these things [hobbies] because it's unusual*. Roudha is not sure how to attribute her way of thinking, although it transpired later in the interview that her mother was quite open minded and encouraged her to make friends with foreigners, to help *opening my mind to others and understanding people in general*. She also acknowledged the place of religion in shaping her beliefs citing *our religion encourage us to learn and to explore*. Roudha reported that her identity as an Emirati has been strengthened by her mixing and openness to others and that she felt proud to be Emirati. This pride, she described, was felt most strongly in relation to the country's progress and achievements, alongside keeping the past and cultural traditions alive. When asked about the influx of foreigners in the UAE, Roudha claimed that it was good for the country as it broadened minds and made Emiratis more accepting of others. She elaborated further on this by saying that newspaper and social media reported this openness. Roudha entered this Intercultural studies course with a rich history of intercultural openness and connectedness, it would be interesting to see how the course impacted on her.

#### 7: Suhaila

Suhaila came across as mature and thoughtful in her interview with clear views. While these views and her comments may appear on the surface to lean contrary to interculturality, the researcher's sense was counter to this as she came across as inquisitive, curious and thoughtful. Like the other participants there was an intercultural marriage in her family, however, as it was between cousins (Emirati and Qatari) *it's okay*. Suhaila said she would not want an intercultural marriage as she would not want to leave the country and not staying within the UAE would not be an option as: *I would want my children to have an Emirati passport*. This aligns with the views of the other participants and corroborates an earlier discussion that laws in the UAE do not work in the favour of Emirati women marrying non-Emiratis. She commented on the negative influence foreigners could have on Emiratis, saying *it's our culture some of girls they want to be like not wear abaya and sheila*. Abaya and sheila are the traditional black robes and head scarves worn by Emirati women. Suhaila went on to say it's okay to have foreigners in the UAE but they should follow local protocol: *it's fine but they should follow the procedure and the law*. She gave an example of the dress code: *If you go to the malls, I'm talking about the clothes. They [foreigners] are not follow the procedure or the laws*. Suhaila admits to preferring to have Emirati friends because: *she will understand me and it's easy to communicate with her* and said she needed more time to understand foreigners: *I feel I need more time to understand them because they are different culture*. Her parents taught her to be cautious of any stranger, Emirati or non-Emirati, but to be especially wary of foreigners: *because you know there is many problem, maybe they will steal something or I don't know*. Being a Muslim has taught Suhaila to respect every culture and care and help them. Suhaila is proud to be Emirati because of the achievements and success of the country and finished by saying: *I respect other culture and my culture also*. Whilst Suhaila did not explicitly express any positive responses to having foreigners in the UAE, and mentioned preferring Emirati friends and annoyance at breaches of the dress code, her comments did necessarily mean she was not open. With clear views already, it would be intriguing to see how Suhaila's beliefs were shaped, or not, by the impact of the course

## 8: Sharifa

Sharifa's interview revealed some clear differences to the other participants. Firstly, she was very well traveled, having visited Europe, Bahrain and India *often* as both an adult and a child. Secondly, she raised issues around gender. Interestingly, on her travels Sharifa moved independently from her family and communicated freely and openly with others: *Like for example, if I'm by my own going shopping for example in Europe I do sit with other people speak where you from are and what are you doing here.* She spoke about liking to be social without fear of strangers and a desire to understand people who are non-Emirati: *I do, I like to know.* Sharifa has also worked in the college holidays, which was in a mixed cultural environment, which she described as *nice, they were kind, they were talkative with me.* Bachelor of Education students often choose this major, or rather, have this major chosen for them by their family, as it equates to a working life without mixing with men. Hence, it is often the more conservative students who are enrolled in this major. Sharifa goes against the grain in this respect by having chosen Early Childhood Education for herself, as she likes to be *creative with children.* Like the other participants there were a number of family members who have chosen to marry non-Emiratis. Her father married a (presumably second wife) woman from Syria, and her uncle a Bahraini. The acceptance into the family of these wives, although a little apprehensive at first, seemed smooth: *Everyone accepted her; it's good, she was good, yes she was nice, she tried to be like to do our culture about tradition to be good with us.* Unusually, Sharifa admitted to preferring marriage with a foreigner but was bound by her cultural norms: *I would like from outside but we can't because we are a woman.* This was raised twice, and was obviously an important issue for Sharifa, along with a seeming frustration about gender inequality: *you know when the women go to divorce she will be the lose not the man because the man he has his power,* and again later: *the man he has his power as we are Arabian woman we saw this since we were small.* As far as her feelings towards foreigners in the UAE were concerned, she described the difficulties the country faced at the beginning when the first foreigners came: *before it was little difficult when they start coming to our country because you know they were simple life only the Arabian people together.* Moving to the current day she described it positively, as *nice to see other people know about other traditions our culture other religions, it's nice yes.* Sharifa felt proud to be Emirati which tied in strongly with importance of and loyalty to family, and she believed it was her choice how much her interaction with cultural others would affect her own identity. She said her family taught her growing up to be careful of

other people and rightly acknowledged that this was *a usual thing to be careful of other people*. Her family allowed her to interact with non-Emiratis freely, if they *feel someone is good*. Like the other participants Islam determined to some extent how she felt about interculturality: *we read about prophet Mohammed [PBUH] but he was kind to like Jewish he was kind to them...so he was good to other people other religions*. Sharifa came across as a confident, independent young woman with a vast life experience of mixing with cultural others, she appeared to embrace this type of mixing, reaching out to people while traveling, at work and even going so far as to admitting she would prefer a non-Emirati husband. She also held independent views and was both aware of, and vocal about, the social and political constraints Emirati women may experience. Sharifa entered the course with a clear openness to others, having had successful direct intercultural encounters, and possessed an unusual savviness about the world, and how the course impacted on her would be interesting to see.

### 5.3.1.5 Interview Themes

The participants showed consistency in their responses to a number of key themes. Firstly, in relation to how they viewed foreigners in Dubai, a window to capturing their intercultural views within the context of Dubai. Although it was not as black and white as this, concepts which would be elaborated on in the discussion as far as accurately relaying the data, but overall the participants expressed an appreciation and openness to foreigners in Dubai and were aware of their contribution to the country and the exposure it gave Emiratis to understanding other cultures. There were some mixed feelings but these were in the minority. There were no overtly negative comments.

Table 5.11 Summary of Participants Responses to Foreigners living in Dubai

<i>How do you feel about foreigners living in Dubai?</i>	
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
Alya	Nice/see different cultures
Hamda	Beneficial/makes Emiratis open
Amna	Good thing/learn different languages
Marwa	Better/learn new cultures
Nouf	Some mixed views but general good thing/develops UAE economy
Roudha	Good thing/learn from different cultures/become open.
Suhaila	Mixed feelings - okay but foreigners need to respect local customs



Sharifa	Nice/learn from different cultures
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Table 5.11 shows the participants' responses to foreigners in Dubai in general; however, when it comes to intercultural attitudes closer to home i.e. within the family through an intercultural marriage, all but one reported that the foreign spouses were not fully accepted, or that it took time and there appeared to be minimal contact. The question this raises then is that while participants espoused a relative openness to cultural others, it was not one that was necessarily always put into practice within the family.

Secondly, the influence of Islam on shaping participants' beliefs about cultural others, was a strong and consistent theme where all the participants felt that beliefs learnt from their Faith contributed to them respecting cultural others. Amna was the only exception to this who expressed that Islam has mixed beliefs.

All participants expressed a strong sense of pride in being Emirati and the influence of other cultures could not detract from that. Pride was associated with family ties, the success of the country and the strength of the leaders.

The participants were inconsistent in terms of the maturity of their beliefs, with some seemingly still formulating their views, and others being more shaped.

The researcher's holistic impression is that overall the participants showed a civility, a kind of neutral warmth, perhaps ambivalence, to other cultures, as interpreted from how they viewed foreigners in Dubai. There was little real curiosity in these pre-course interviews, or passion, and interculturality was not something these participants seemed to have thought about or considered in their lives, despite living in a vastly multi-cultural city. However, this was understandable and would be taken up in the discussion. What is at the crux of this research study is how the participants' views on both experiential learning and interculturality have been influenced by attending the Intercultural Studies course. The following section addresses this through examining the post-course interviews.

### 5.3.2 Post-course Interviews

This section will follow the same formatting as the pre-interview descriptions, the questions are generated to uncover:

- Participants' feedback and perceptions on experiential learning within the course.
- Participants' perceptions of any changes in intercultural understanding as a result of doing the course.

A summary of participants' responses to these is presented in Table 4.12. Following this is an analysis of any recurring themes.

#### 1: Alya

Alya apologised and confessed to feeling *sleepy* at the end of the post-course interview, which accounts for the limited, sometimes contradictory responses, and the frequent number of *I don't know* or *maybe* answers. Alya mentioned in the pre-course interview she would not be open to marrying a foreigner because of societal constraints, and this view remained the same. She spoke with enthusiasm about the style of teaching and learning in the course: *I like it, it is interesting because we do a lot of activities and we learn a lot; I enjoyed*. She also liked the more student centered nature of the course: *always you are not talking and we are sitting*. Alya felt that the use of film especially helped her learn: *I like the movie and really I understand worldviews when you give us this*. If she could change anything in the course it would be the written report as she felt it was too long. Alya was unsure as to whether her thinking had changed due to the course; she replied twice with *maybe* and when asked if she could answer more fully she replies *no*. She admitted that she was unsure of herself, but that she did **not** feel held back by her English. Contrary to this, in reference to her thinking about other cultures as a results of doing the course, she said: *I understand them more, I'm more open*. She then referred to travel as being a more powerful change agent than an Intercultural Studies course *because we stay in this country and this environment*. This contradicts her earlier statement that traveling had not made her more open. Interpreting Alya's interview was challenging; however, despite the contradictions, the impression is that she responded well to the experiential learning and that she perceived herself as having developed her intercultural understanding as a result of doing the course.

## 2: Hamda

Hamda reported a favorable response to experiential learning, describing it as *interesting, beneficial, enjoyable, and made thing much easier to absorb*. She particularly liked the group work and use of film, citing that they *made us understand things clearly*. Hamda perceived her thinking to have changed as a result of doing the course, saying: *I learnt we have to respect other people and their different perspective no matter if they disagree with our culture*, and that prior to the course she felt *they had their own culture so we don't care, we are not interested*. At the beginning of the course she *respected people for their cultures but didn't want to know more about their cultures*. After participating in the course she *felt more curious to learn more about people and different cultures and their perspective and points of views*, and became *more open minded*. She also believed that her behavior had changed and that she would now help someone from a different culture or to try to understand them. Hamda said she would not change anything in the course. From Hamda's perspective she had had quite a shift in thinking from doing the course. While her pre-course interview saw her as viewing others favorably, this had matured considerably over the time of the course, illustrated through a new found curiosity towards cultural others.

## 3: Amna

Amna entered the course with some hesitancy about other cultures and a sense of still coming to terms with how she perceived cultural others. The post-course interview saw her as excited about the learning, transformed by the experience and with positive views about others. She mentioned talking about culture at home now, describing this as a *big change* for her. It is worth noting that Amna took an unusually long time to answer the questions; there were many long pauses as she was formulating what she wanted to say. This did not detract from the interview; in fact, it affirmed Amna's answers were well thought out, and she was assured she was under no pressure to answer quickly. Amna was enthusiastic about the style of teaching and learning in the course saying that *it works* for her, she *enjoyed* it, felt *interested* and learnt well: *the information will keep in my mind*. She also said the teaching style prevented her from being bored because the routine changed. Amna especially liked the group work and discussion questions and said she would not change anything about the course. When asked about what she learnt from the course she first referred to behavioural aspects about culture, e.g. Greek wedding traditions, learnt from watching *My Big Fat*

*Greek Wedding*. She was then asked to reflect on whether she had learnt any *unseen* aspects of culture. She said before the course she did not see the unseen aspects of cultures but she *sees it now* and felt better able to understand how people think. Prior to the course she had mixed feelings about other cultures, some good, and some bad. After the course she described herself as: *I feel more open, I [was] closed, I can think more now* and she had *more understanding*. Significantly, Amna said that now she would teach her children about other cultures, while in the pre-course interview she had said *maybe* to this, and she also expressed a new interest in traveling: *I want to travel all over the world*.

#### 4: Marwa

Marwa's pre-course interview saw her as conflicted in her thinking, in some ways open and in other ways not. Her post-course interview, while at times showing she responded well to the course, still exhibited contradictions or a seeming lack of clarity in her thoughts. This may have been the result of her needing more time to integrate the learning, or it may have been genuine uncertainty. The researcher was mindful of not wanting to make the wrong assumption. When asked if her understanding of other cultures had changed, she replied with *I don't know*. When asked if her thinking or behavior had changed she said *no*, followed by: *actually my opinion doesn't change. Maybe little bit help me to understand more*. However, she then went on to say she had learnt *not to judge people. Everyone has different kind of worldview*. She said this helped her in her life because she could understand others more and felt that understanding was important. As a researcher this is difficult to interpret as she had given clear examples of what she *has* learnt and *how* she had changed yet also said she did not know or she had not learnt or changed. As far as the learning experience goes Marwa was a lot clearer when it comes to experiential learning saying it was enjoyable and interesting, that *it help us to not feel bored*, and that the film scenes in particular helped her learn.

### 5: Nouf

Like Marwa, Nouf came across in the pre-course interview as slightly unsure or conflicted in her views. However, unlike Marwa, Nouf now had clear views and came across in the post-course interview with a lot more certainty. It was clear from the post-course interview that Nouf gained a lot of valuable insights about interculturality from doing this course. She said she learnt a lot, especially about the cultural dimensions and that now her thinking had *changed to a better way*. Nouf described herself as positive at the beginning of the course but stated *it grew* throughout the course. She felt more *open* and *respectful* of others and cited that her behavior had also changed as a result of doing the course. She offered as an example of this a new found patience with foreigners in the UAE: *to not be angry when I see other cultures because they didn't know anything about my culture. So we have to be respectful to them and talk to them in the way they understand*. Nouf responded favorably to the experiential learning pedagogy: *I love the teaching in this course*. She appreciated the lack of teacher talk and especially enjoyed the use of film. Barnga also hit a chord with Nouf and she described how during the game she was angry but *after that it made my mind open*. The only thing Nouf would change in the course is the quiz.

### 6: Roudha

Roudha entered the course already with a developed intercultural sensitivity, an openness to others, alongside a sense of not feeling accepted by Emirati society, and she admitted that her stance was not typical. Her openness and intercultural sensitivity developed throughout the course with Roudha even reflecting on her pre-course attitude as being a *bit narrowed* and acknowledging that *after this it became wider*. Roudha showed maturity in her thinking by taking her learning one step further through questioning what she was learning: *since I started taking this course I've wondered whether the things that we are doing are based on the culture or personal things, it made me really wonder, I never thought about this before*. She described the changes in herself from doing the course as feeling more *open*, more interested in meeting and understanding people from different cultures, and that her beliefs had *become wider, or like more understanding or more knowing*. The course had also influenced her behavior, and she reported that she would not judge someone without trying to understand them and learning first where they came from. Roudha reported that the teaching style helped her learning, that it made things easy to understand, and that it was *engaging and fun*. She accentuated this last point by stating *I honestly experienced that*. Although

Roudha learnt from all the activities, the film scenes had a particularly strong impact on her, saying that they *made the situation real*.

#### 7: Suhaila

In the pre-course interviews Suhaila was clear in her views and expressed a maturity in her thinking. Unlike the other participants, she aired her criticisms of foreigners in the UAE, citing the dress code as a way foreigners disrespect local laws. In the post-course interview Suhaila again raised this point that *not all of them* [foreigners] *follow our rules*, which illustrates that Suhaila had considered her views on foreigners in the UAE. She raised what the researcher also feels was a valid point, and gave no impression this limited her thinking; in fact, she gave an impression of being more balanced. Again, Suhaila came across as thoughtful and considered in the post-course interview, as she described her learning as an evolution, a *slow* process she said, where ultimately *I learnt many things, it gives me benefits and new knowledge*. This can be illustrated in her views on marrying a foreign man. Prior to the course she was sure this is something she would not want for herself, but afterwards she said *it has changed, I feel that it's okay, the important thing now it's understanding the partner*. Interestingly Suhaila cited the course as enabling her to more fully understand Emiratis now, *not all Emirati families are the same*, she said. She also said doing the course gave her the confidence to enroll for a course at the Men's College (where she would be in a very small female population), and believed everyone should do a course such as this: *not only college, also the school, because it gives us clear understanding for the others people*. Suhaila enjoyed and benefited from the teaching approach, saying *all activities changed my thinking*, and felt Barnga to be the most impactful, as it helped her to understand other cultures.

#### 8: Sharifa

Sharifa was untypically enthusiastic in the pre-course interviews, expressing a clear openness to cultural others, formed from numerous trips outside the county. She also seemed to have considerable worldly knowledge, and was well aware of the gender issues Emirati women face in the UAE. Her attitudes and understanding from doing the course, she believed, had *changed very much*, and she gave an example to explain this by saying: *when we go to Europe most people are independent....so now when I learn about the culture I know that every culture have different view from each other*. Sharifa said the course had helped her understand others more, and importantly

had helped her understand how others see Emiratis. Her openness, she said, had *grown* and the way she thinks - *it's stronger now, it's different*. Sharifa did not believe her behavior had changed, validating this by saying that she would always have spoken to foreigners – pre- and post-course. Sharifa was nevertheless enthusiastic about the teaching approach in this course, saying it was fun, exciting, enjoyable and beneficial. She especially liked watching the film scenes and they helped her learn because *it's from the real life*.

Table 5.12 Summary of Participants Responses to Post Interview Questions

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response to Experiential Learning from the course.</b>	<b>Shift in Intercultural thinking as a result of doing the course.</b>
Alya	Enjoyable, helps learning, especially film.	More open. Understands other cultures more.
Hamda	Interesting, beneficial, enjoyable, helps learning, especially film and group work.	More curious, more open minded, more understanding. Wants to learn about other cultures now.  Behavioural change: would help someone from a different culture now.
Amna	It works. Interesting, enjoyable, not boring. Helps learning.	More open. Desire to travel more and teach her children about other cultures. Can understand how others think now.
Marwa	Enjoyable. Helps learning. Especially watching movies. Interesting – not boring.	Mixed: 1) No change or unsure of change in thinking or behaviour.  2) Learnt not to judge others, accepts everyone's different worldviews and understands others more.
Nouf	Love teaching style. Opened mind. Helped learning. Barnga impactful.	More open and respectful. Thinking changed to a better way. Change in behavior – no longer angry with foreigners if they don't understand UAE culture.

Roudha	Interesting. Fun. Engaging. Helped learning. Films made situations real.	Developed a broader perspective. More open. More understanding towards others. More interested in meeting and knowing others. Change in behaviour: understand first. Questions more: what is culture? What is personal?
Suhaila	Interesting. Helped learning. Beneficial. Activities changed her thinking. Barnga most impactful.	More understanding of others, especially her family and other Emiratis. More confidence in mixing with men. Open to marrying a non-Emirati.
Sharifa	Enjoyable. Fun. Exciting. Beneficial. Helped learning. Film scenes most impactful.	Thinking changed – different now/stronger. More open, more understanding. Openness has grown. No change in behaviour – always confident in communicating. Understands how others see Emiratis now.

### 5.3.2.1 Post-course Interview Themes

As a researcher, despite trying to distance myself, the post-course interviews were admittedly touching, and there was an obvious shift in thinking. For these participants this was clearly a strong learning experience, expressed not only through their words but in their excitement for the course, the subject and their own development.

Responses to the experiential learning teaching pedagogy indicate that this was a teaching approach that the participants felt was effective. Key recurrent words were: *enjoyable*, *interesting*, and *helped learning*. Film scenes were described as the most impactful as they provided understanding within real life situations; this was followed by Barnga as being helpful in understanding cultural others. This corroborates with the results from the four experiential tasks.

All participants felt that they had a positive shift in their intercultural thinking as a result of doing the course. Marwa was the only possible exception who, although acknowledging the course developed her understanding of others, overall displayed some inconsistencies. Key recurrent words were that participants became *more open*, *more understanding*, *more tolerant* and *more curious*. Four of the participants went so far as to say that their intercultural *behavior* had, or



would change, from doing the course, and while there is no way to test this out, it does indicate a shift. There were also signs of higher order thinking coming through in the post-course interviews. Roudha expressed how she was now more questioning about what culture was; Sharifa explained how the course not only helped her understand others but how others understand her; and Suhaila spoke about understanding her own culture and the nuances between Emiratis more now.

The Discussion chapter will elaborate more on the findings from these interviews. It is time now to examine the final instrument, the written responses to the course. Like the post-course interviews, these were conducted at the end of the course and therefore give a fuller picture of the learning from the entire course. These will broaden the interview findings through representing a greater majority of the participants within a new instrument.

#### **5.4 End of Course Written Responses**

Participants were given an end of course feedback sheet to fill in on a voluntary basis, out of class time. Thirteen of the twenty two participants opted to do this. In line with the post-course interviews, and the research questions, the end of course feedback questions were directed around two themes:

- 1) Intercultural learning as a result of doing the course
- 2) Response to Experiential Learning

There were eight questions in total, with one final ‘any other comments section’. Five of the questions aimed to uncover the participants’ intercultural learning, two questions related to experiential learning, and one asked if there was anything the participants would change in the course. Questions can be found in Appendix 4.

##### **5.4.1: End of Course Written Feedback: Intercultural Learning, Question 1**

Thirteen participants answered this question. In question one, the participants had to complete the question prompt: *The Biggest Thing I learnt from this course was....*

The major theme to emerge here comes through the word *different* or *difference*, which appeared seven times in the responses to this question and was inferred a number of times more,

showing an increased awareness of cultural difference alongside an acceptance of this difference. This is captured in the response: *Every person sees the world in different perspective, I learned that every culture have it's different believes and we have to be patient and understanding with other cultures* (P2). Further responses expanded on this by saying *no culture is wrong or bad*. The theme that emerged most strongly and consistently from this question was *understanding and acceptance of cultural difference*.

#### 5.4.2: End of Course Written Feedback: Intercultural Learning, Question 2

Twelve participants answered this question. In question two, the participants had to answer the question: *How did I feel about people from different countries and cultures before doing course and how do I feel now?*

Before the course participants cited consistently unfavourable views about different cultures or cultural interactions: *people doing things intentionally without caring; hard to communicate with; I didn't like some other cultures; they are wrong and bad; they were weird; having bad behaviors and bad tradition*. From doing the course, the participants' responses had adapted to become more complementary. After the course: *I can understand them well; now I respect more because I understand; I will know how to open a conversation; now I feel like meeting more people from different countries; now I feel that we are similar; I feel more positive*. The word *understand* appeared four times and this was a strong theme in the responses: *I really understand them well*. Second to this was the theme of wanting to know more about cultural others: *now I feel like meeting more people from different countries and knowing more about them*.

Participants' responses to question 2 demonstrated a consistent shift in attitude towards cultural others as a result of doing the course, with the theme of *developed cultural understanding* emerging most strongly.

#### 5.4.3: End of Course Written Feedback: Intercultural Learning, Question 3

Eleven participants answered this question. In question three, the participants had to answer the question: *What did it mean to me to understand people from different countries and cultures before doing the course and what does it mean to me now?* The aim of this question was to draw out what interculturality meant for these participants, and in what ways, if any, it had changed from attending the course. However, on reading the responses the nuance of this question may have been lost on some of the participants, and at times this question was answered as if it were question 2; the data is still valuable though.

Six of the participants said that prior to the course understanding people from different cultures and countries meant little to them: *Before I didn't care to understand people; it was not important; I didn't care; before it didn't mean anything to me.* Other participants described a difficulty in understanding and accepting other cultures before the course: *before doing the course I didn't know how other countries think; it was hard for me to accept what they thinking.* After doing the course participants perceptions relayed a distinct difference in thinking, with the overall themes of increased understanding, respect and curiosity: *now I should understand them well; I respect other people's cultures; I feel excited about what is their culture.*

The responses to question three demonstrated a difference in thinking from before to after the course. At the start of the course many of the participants felt that it meant little to them to understand other cultures, yet by the end of the course this had become significant, conveyed through a *developed respect, curiosity* and *understanding* of cultural others.

#### 5.4.4: End of Course Written Feedback: Intercultural Learning, Question 4

Question four asked the participants: *Do I understand people from other countries and cultures more/less/same after doing this course?* Twelve of the participants answered this question.

As this was a closed question, the answers were short, without explanations. All twelve of the participants perceived that they understood people from other countries/culture *more* after doing the course. The word *more* featured 12 times, indicating the consistency of this response. There were no other significant comments to build on this.

#### 5.4.5: End of Course Written Feedback: Intercultural Learning, Question 5

Question five asked the participants: *How, if at all, has my thinking about my culture and other cultures changed from being in this class?* Twelve participants answered this question, although one participant answered simply 'yes', giving no indication as to what. The remaining 11 participants concur that their thinking had changed to the better from doing the class: *Yes it changed to better; my thinking has improved; yes it has, I understand other culture well.* There was no distinction made to the thinking directed to my own culture or other cultures. In hindsight this would have been better as two separate questions. There was little elaboration to these responses, indicating participants were possibly losing writing steam at this stage or that they were satisfied with their answers. However, one insightful comment spoke about how learning about others teaches us about ourselves: *Yes it's changed a lot because when I see other cultures how they act or think it makes me understand my own culture very well.* What we can conclude from the results is that all the participants who answered this question felt that they had made a *positive shift in their thinking* from doing the course.

#### 5.4.6: End of Course Written Feedback: Experiential Learning, Question 6

Question six related to experiential learning and asked participants: *How useful and enjoyable are the kinds of activities we are doing in this class? In what way are they or are they not?* Thirteen participants answered this question. All participants felt the activities were likeable using adjectives such as: *enjoyable, useful, interesting and exciting.* Perhaps more importantly though, the participants felt the teaching pedagogy benefitted their learning: *makes me understand every word; they help in delivering the idea and point; make the idea clear.* Participants did not expand on part 2 of this question: *In what way are they or are they not?* There was no doubt from these findings that the participants responded very well to experiential learning, and that it was both enjoyable and helped learning.

#### 5.4.7: End of Course Written Feedback: Experiential Learning, Question 7

Question seven related to whether the experiential learning pedagogy and tasks helped the participants develop their interculturality through a heightened understanding of cultural others: *Do the activities we are doing in this class help me learn how to understand people from different countries and cultures? How? How not?* Thirteen participants answered this question. It was not surprising as a yes/no question, that 10 of the responses start with *yes*, and that the others, while not using the word *yes*, indicated *yes*. Expanded responses raised themes around understanding others more: *the activities give me full knowledge and I can understand them more; helped me to understand and know about other cultures; showed how people around the world have different values and culture*. The second learning theme centered around the tasks designed to help strengthen the theoretical content of the course: *from the movies we know exactly the Cultural Dimensions; the activities were good because I remember the world views and cultural dimensions*. The use of film was raised seven times as a beneficial activity: *it helps because some of them was documentary and from real life; you show us film, it helps us to learn more*. *Barnga* was referred to twice: *The activities like Barnga let me to imagine myself and my cultures and other cultures*. These findings demonstrate that the participants felt that the teaching approach facilitated their intercultural learning through developing an understanding of others and cementing the theoretical content, with film cited as being the most effective, followed by *Barnga*.

#### 5.4.8: End of Course Written Feedback: Changes to Course, Question 8

Participants were asked at the end of the questionnaire whether there was anything they would change in this class. Only three participants responded, indicating that the majority were satisfied. The three comments included a suggestion for another film: *Try (movie) Rich Boys in London*, and *the way of the quiz*. The third was simply verifying that there was nothing she would change: *No, there is nothing it's an interesting class by watching video which didn't make me bored or feel unhappy, it was enjoyable*. Apart from the comment about the quiz, there was no constructive feedback that could be used to build on a subsequent course. Findings from Question 8 indicate that the participants were satisfied with the course.

#### 5.4.9: End of Course Written Feedback: Any other Comments, Question 9

Three participants responded to the *any other questions* section. Two of these related to the inclusion of more film: *We would like to see more of movie; more film*, with one citing more group work. This corroborates the findings so far that these participants found the use of film to be most effective.

#### 5.4.10: *Written Tasks: Summary of Themes*

To summarise the findings from this instrument, the participants related that the experiential learning approach was both enjoyable and effectively facilitated learning and that they experienced a shift in their intercultural thinking from the start of the course to becoming more tolerant, understanding, curious and respectful of others by the end of the course. The participants' written responses to the end of course feedback was consistently positive; the only possible negative comment was one about Barnga being confusing – which as mentioned previously was the aim of Barnga, and one saying the movies were too long. The responses were fairly limited, lacking a rich depth typical of phenomenology; however, they were expressive and provided clear insights into the research questions. As a take home task, equating to homework, which this demographic of student are typically reluctant to complete, the fact that 13 participants made the effort to respond is significant and indicates that the course had enough of an impact on them to compel them to write in their free time. When these findings are examined alongside the previous tools they provide a consistent picture, which illuminates the research questions. This corroboration of data will be examined in the next section.

#### 5.4.11: *Written Tasks: Discourse Analysis 'I' and 'they'*

As part of analysing these written responses the number of 'I' statements followed by active verbs and 'they' items were highlighted in order to gauge how participants positioned themselves in their intercultural learning, and who 'they' were and how they were perceived. On further reading the 'I' statements have also been extended to include 'me/my' items alongside active verbs as they capture the same meaning. This analysis is limited to only the first five questions as they relate to intercultural learning.

Table 5.13 Discourse Analysis of I and they items

Question	Number of <i>I/me</i> items	Number of <i>they/them</i> items
<p>1: The biggest thing I have learnt from this course is:</p> <p>N 13</p>	<p>5</p> <p>E.g. <i>I learned, I know, I understand.</i></p>	<p>2</p> <p>7 preferred to use phrases with culture as an alternative to they/them:</p> <p><i>their culture, their own culture.</i></p>
<p>2: How did I feel about people from different countries and cultures before doing course and how do I feel now?</p> <p>N 12</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Includes instances where one participant used <i>I</i> more than once e.g. <i>I learn everything about their culture, I understand them.</i></p>	<p>13</p>
<p>3: What did it mean to me to understand people from different countries and cultures before doing the course and what does it mean to me now?</p> <p>N 11</p>	<p>19</p> <p>High number reflecting the two part question.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p><i>I didn't care but now I want to learn.</i></p>	<p>11</p> <p>Two references to <i>other/their cultures.</i></p>
<p>4: Do I understand people from other countries and cultures more/less/same after doing this course?</p> <p>N 12</p>	<p>9</p> <p>As a direct answer to question 4, 7 of these 9 responses are: <i>I understand</i></p>	<p>2</p> <p>Three references to <i>other/their cultures.</i></p>
<p>5: How, if at all has my thinking about my culture and other cultures changed from being in this class?</p> <p>N 12</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Four of these refer to a change in thinking, e.g. <i>I changed my thinking.</i></p>	<p>1</p> <p>Two references to <i>other cultures.</i></p>

Results show a relatively high number of 'I' statements with 74% of responses containing an 'I' item and 62% of responses containing a 'they/them' item. The implications of this will be taken up in the Discussion chapter.

### 5.5 Triangulation of Data

This mixed methods research study presents both quantitative and qualitative data, with a heavier weighting on the qualitative, as seen through the interviews and final written responses, than the quantitative through the Likert scale results. The integration, or conversation, between these three tools is vital in order to provide findings where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts (Barbour, 1999). This integration is called triangulation, to “describe a process of studying a problem using different methods to gain a more complete picture” (O’Cathain, Murphy & Nicholl, 2010, p. 1147). Specifically, in this study it is data triangulation, with the purpose to consider whether data is in agreement (convergence), if it provides more information (complimentary), or whether the data sets disagree (dissonance) (O’Cathain, Murphy& Nicholl, 2010). The approach adopted is the intuitive approach “in which a researcher intuitively relates information obtained from different instruments to each other” (Farmer, Robinson, Elliott, & Eyles, 2006, p. 379). The pre-course interviews are not explicitly included in this section as their purpose was to establish participants’ baseline positioning in relation to ideas around interculturality and education at the start of the course. Table 5.14 Triangulation of Data

Research questions	Tool	Tool	Result 1	Tool	Result 2
To what extent do Emirati students perceive experiential learning as an effective teaching and learning approach for Intercultural Studies?	Post Course Interviews	Final written feedback	Convergence	PLUS + Likert Scale Survey	Complimentary
How do Emirati students perceive their intercultural learning as a result of taking the Dubai Women’s College Intercultural studies course?	Post Course Interviews	Final written feedback	Convergence		



What the table above shows is that the post-course interviews and final written feedback were in agreement and demonstrate convergence. Results from the Likert scale compliment this convergence in bringing in more information about how the impact of the four classroom tasks address the research questions. Note that for purposes of clarity the *Likert scale* is referred to, which encompasses the scale and the additional written comments. This is to avoid confusion with the final written comments.

### 5.5 1: Triangulation of Findings: Participants Perceptions of Experiential Learning

To recap the previous analysis, the post-course interviews indicate that participants perceived the experiential learning approach to be effective, and key recurrent words and themes were: *enjoyable*, *interesting*, and *helped learning*, with a special emphasis placed on film as having the most impact, followed by Barnga. The written feedback corroborated these findings with results displaying the same trends and themes. Participants described the experiential learning approach to be *enjoyable*, *useful*, *interesting* and *exciting* and that it *benefited their learning*. The use of film was highlighted as having the most impact, and second to that was Barnga. The Likert Scale results complement these results by highlighting the effectiveness of each classroom task. Within the discrete items in the Likert scale, *enjoyment* and *helped learning* rank both highly and as the highest of these items, recurrent themes include *enjoyment*, *fun*, *interesting* and *useful*, which corroborates the interview and written feedback results. Also, importantly, the Likert scale results, as seen in demonstrate that film was ranked the highest in terms of impact followed by a joint second with Barnga and Perspectives, which is in agreement with the interviews and written feedback.

To summarise the findings on the experiential learning approach, the three instruments display consistency in the results illustrating students perceived this approach as both enjoyable and helping learning. There was little discord in these findings, bar one or two comments about Barnga being confusing, an aspect that is fundamental to the game and that has been addressed previously.

### 5.5.2: Triangulation of Findings: Participants Perceptions of Intercultural Learning

The post-course interviews indicated that all the participants, with the possible exception of Marwa, perceived a self-reported shift in their intercultural learning and understanding as a result of doing the course. Participants had indicated that their views prior to the course were more limited. Recurrent words and themes from this tool were: *more open, more understanding, more tolerant and more curious*. A number of participants said that how they behave with cultural others has also changed. Finally, participants showed a shift in higher order thinking from the pre-course interviews, for example by becoming more questioning. The written classroom feedback displayed themes of increased *tolerance, understanding, curiosity and respect* of others by the end of the course. Participants also noted that at the start of their course they were more judgmental of cultural others: *I didn't like some other cultures*. These findings are in agreement with the post-course interviews and indicate a distinct shift in thinking. Unlike the interviews there was no mention of a shift in behavior in this tool; however, this reflects a flaw in the research design. Participants were explicitly asked in the interviews about any change in behavior, and this was omitted from the final classroom feedback. In hindsight this question should have been included in both tools, which will be discussed in the limitations section of this study. The Likert scale results demonstrate consistency with the post-course interviews and final written feedback. Participants reported that through the four experiential tasks they developed increased intercultural learning, centered around the themes of empathy, respect, and understanding for cultural others.

To summarise this section, data from the post-course interviews and written feedback converges, even to the extent where high frequency lexical items are repeated in both tools, e.g. *enjoyed, helped learning*. The Likert scale results compliment this convergence by highlighting how participants perceived the four experiential tasks in relation to their intercultural learning and response to experiential learning.

## 5.6 Summary of Results Chapter

The data in this chapter came from the participants' first person accounts of their experience in taking this intercultural course. Without a hypothesis, the aim here was to discover and relay this data into meaningful knowledge. This chapter has analysed the data from the present study in relation to the two research questions. Firstly, the four experiential tasks were analysed with key themes identified that addressed the research questions. The tasks were then compared to provide an overview of which task participants' identified as most effective, which was reported to be the use of film. Discrete question items were also compared to reveal that *enjoyment* and *helped learning* were ranked the highest. Following this, data from the pre- and post-course interviews were analysed. The first step was to describe each participant's account, with quotes to support the researcher's direction. The second step was to identify recurrent patterns or themes, which were clustered into groups. Finally, the data sets were compared to provide a picture of interculturality, and extracted by pinpointing before and after the course results. Significant here was the self-reported positive shift in thinking. The third tool, the final written responses, were analysed according to the research questions. A similar procedure to the interviews was followed, replacing the description with a summary. Again, themes were extracted with particular attention paid to the key question of whether any perceived shift in thinking had occurred as a result of doing the course. Results confirmed the learning experience to have positively impacted on participants' intercultural understanding. Discourse analysis was also utilized here, identifying 'I' and 'they' statements. Finally, the three data tools were examined alongside each other in order to triangulate the result and thereby validate the study. Chapter Four culminates by demonstrating that the tools converge and complement each other, and are consistent in reporting that participants responded favorably to experiential learning and demonstrated a self-perceived capacity for intercultural sensitivity from doing this course. It is important at this point to view the results as self-reported and remain cognizant of the fact the results show participants' *perceptions* of their learning. Without an external measure in place it is impossible to determine the validity of intercultural sensitivity actually being developed, and therefore this is not a claim that this study can make. However, the study can report that from the participants' perspectives intercultural learning has taken place. This now leads to the Discussion chapter, which further develops these findings, examining what underpins them and tying in the constructs from the literature review.



# CHAPTER SIX

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1 Introduction

This dissertation so far has presented findings from the literature related to the teaching and learning of both experiential learning and intercultural studies; it has posited a research methodology for exploring these areas within the context of this study in order to most reliably answer the research questions; and finally, it has presented the results of the study from the three data collection instruments. Chapter Five, the Discussion chapter, builds on this through discussing the findings in light of the conceptual framework; revisiting the literature review to connect with the analysis and synthesis of the research results; drawing conclusions that contribute to the body of knowledge in the field; and finally, providing recommendations for further research. In doing so this chapter, takes into account, and is guided by, the two research questions:

*Research Question One: To what extent do Emirati students perceive experiential learning as an effective teaching and learning approach for Intercultural Studies?*

*Research Question Two: How do Emirati students perceive their intercultural learning as a result of taking the Dubai Women's College Intercultural studies course?*

### 6.2 Overview

To foreground the work in this chapter it is important firstly to re-cap the 'journey' in this dissertation so far and also to preview the work to come. This is done in Table 5.1, which presents a model encompassing the teaching, learning and measuring of intercultural sensitivity. This model melds the conceptual framework of this study with research in the field, as outlined in the literature review, and it then illustrates the classroom application and assessment approach leading to the results. It is partly a guide for the intercultural practitioner, and partly a consolidation and explanation of the work in this study, bringing the pieces together to provide a more comprehensive overview.

Table 6.1 Model for Teaching, Learning and Assessing Intercultural Learning

<b>Theoretical Foundation</b>	
<p><b><i>Intercultural Development Theory</i></b></p> <p>Key Question: Define focus of Intercultural competency. See: 2.4.2 <i>Defining Understanding – Terms</i></p> <p>Consider the curriculum: plan for both affective and cognitive content see: 2.5.2 <i>Overview: Intercultural Training – Context and Pedagogy</i>, 2.5.3 <i>Intercultural Training: Past to Present</i></p> <p>Consider role of teacher and attitude towards intercultural learning see 3.2.1 <i>Course Content: Theoretical Knowledge</i></p>	<p><b><i>Experiential Learning Theory</i></b></p> <p>Consider curriculum, see: 2.7.1 <i>Experiential Learning Theory</i> for framework (Kolb)</p> <p>Select core learning tasks that meet experiential learning criteria. See 4.9.2 <i>Classroom Tasks within this Study</i></p> <p>Reflect on own teaching practice and beliefs see: 1.2.3 <i>Background: Role and Stance of the Researcher</i></p>
<b>Application in the curriculum in this study</b>	
<p>Intercultural Sensitivity, see: 2.4.2 <i>Defining Understanding Terms</i> for justification.</p> <p>Theoretical/cognitive:            1) Cultural Dimensions (Knowledgworkx – based on Hofstede)            2) World Views (Muller)            See 3.2.1 <i>Course Content: Theoretical Knowledge</i></p> <p>Affective content provided through four core classroom tasks</p> <p>Consider guiding principles for teaching Intercultural Studies, see: 3.5 <i>Guiding Principles for Teaching Intercultural Awareness</i></p>	<p>Include experience, reflection, thought and action. See 3.3.2: <i>Perspective Exercises</i>, 2.8 <i>Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity: Issues of Concern</i>, Table 5.2</p> <p>Consider the cultural context. See 5.3.2.3 <i>Experiential Learning Pedagogy</i></p> <p>Four core tasks selected:            Barnga            Perspectives work            Intercultural Romance work            Use of Film            See 3.9.2 <i>Classroom Tasks within this Study</i></p>
<b>Assessment of Course Efficacy</b>	
<p>Methodology: Qualitative approach utilising phenomenology. See: 2.11 <i>The Use of Phenomenology in Intercultural Studies</i></p>	<p>Research on Assessment, see: 2.11 <i>Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity: Validated Instruments</i>,</p> <p>Use of participants’ perceptions, see 2.8 <i>Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity: Issues of Concern</i></p>
<b>Results</b>	

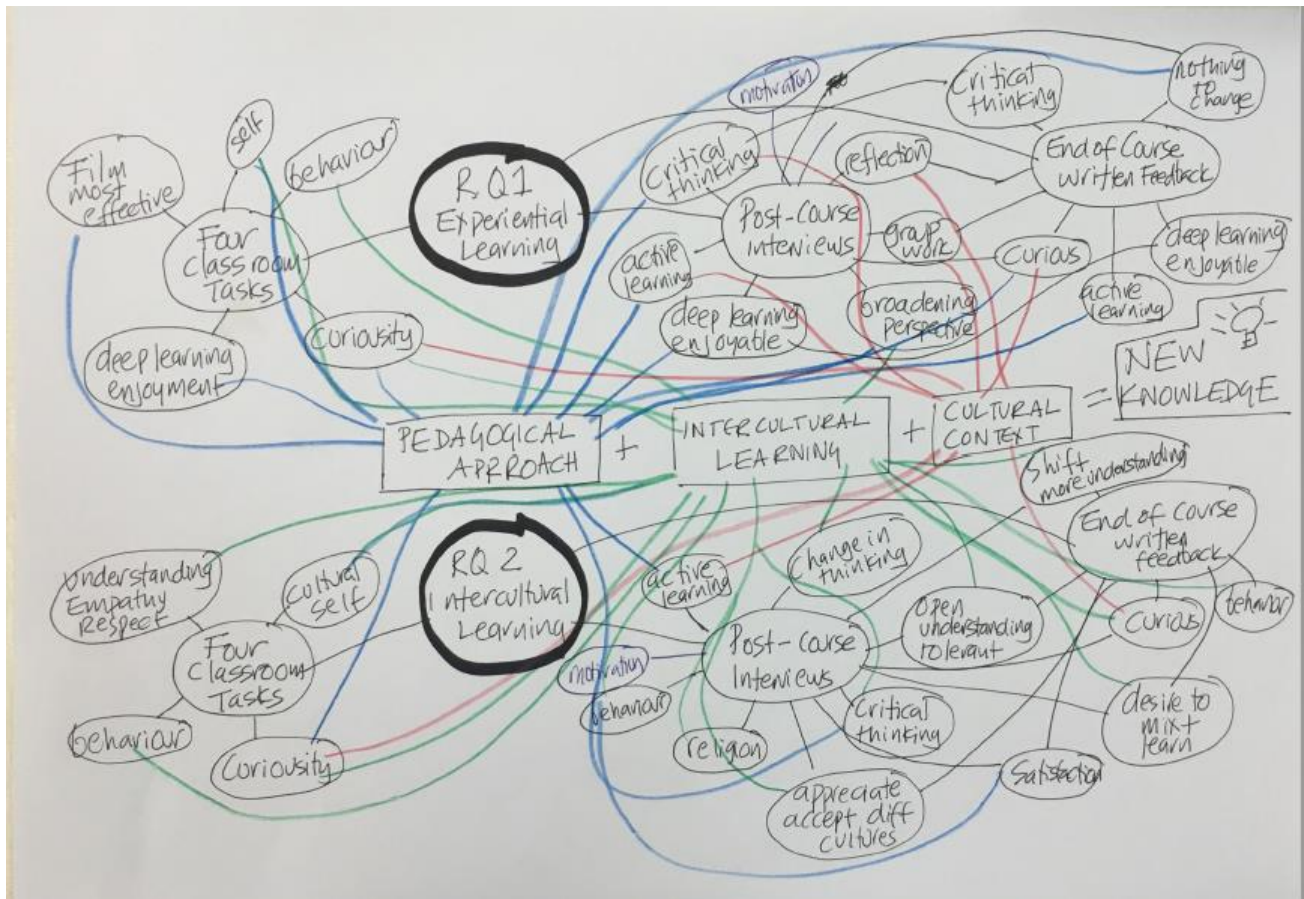
<p><b><i>Intercultural Learning</i></b></p> <p>Transition in participants’ intercultural maturity from initial to intermediate levels as aligned to leading scholars in the field. See 5.4.2.2 <i>Participants Post-Course Beliefs about Cultural Others</i></p>	<p><b><i>Experiential Learning</i></b></p> <p>Positive response to experiential learning pedagogy citing both enjoyment and deeper learning. See 5.3.3 <i>Pedagogical Approach: Summary</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Contribution to Knowledge</b> See Section 6.6 <i>Significance of the Study and Key Findings</i></p>	

Underpinning this model are the theoretical foundations of Intercultural Development and Experiential Learning. Embedded within these are firstly the need to define the focus of the intercultural learning; then to consider the implications for the curriculum; and finally the need for the teacher to prepare him/herself for the kind of teaching practice and the set of values this approach embodies. A practical application of experiential learning within intercultural studies follows, identifying the importance of both cognitive and affective content and for reflection; the need to identify core guiding principles; to select core classroom tasks; and to take into consideration the cultural context. Following on from this practical application is the need to consider how effective this work and model actually are. As mentioned in the literature review, “one needs to develop ways of making sure that it [intercultural competency] is developed” (Dervin, 2010, p. 156). Two elements marry together in this section: the methodology and prior research on assessment tools. The methodology incorporates a qualitative phenomenological path to capture participants’ lived experience, the prior research on assessment tools indicate they fall short in measuring this type of *experience*, concluding with the recommendation to use participants’ perceptions. The primary results are then presented, with the assessment of intercultural learning aligned to validated assessment frameworks and the effectiveness of experiential learning gleaned from participants’ responses as seen in the data collection instruments. The cumulative effect of the elements presented in this model then work together to generate new knowledge which is discussed in the key findings.

While a model such as this can only ever present the ‘bare bones’ of this work, each of the sub-sections have been fleshed out throughout this dissertation and the pertinent section numbers provided for reference.

Following on from this table is an examination of the findings, which is the purpose of this chapter. The mind map below in Figure 6.1 brings together the work in this study to date, to help portray the complexity of the field under study. It positions the findings relationally to answer the two research questions as identified in the three data collection tools and then organizes them into the overarching emergent themes of: pedagogical approach, development of intercultural sensitivity, and cultural context. It can be seen that there is much overlap between these themes as they build together to confirm or refute the literature to date. Importantly, this map shows how the conglomeration of all these elements contributes to building new knowledge. This chapter is guided by the themes mentioned above, structured under the two central areas of pedagogical approach and development of intercultural sensitivity, with cultural considerations interspersed in both.

Figure 6.1 Mind map of Findings





In this chapter the findings represented in the mind map above, are presented in light of the research questions, and discussed in relation to the literature review. The discussion sections investigate three areas: to corroborate findings already known in the literature, to contribute to new knowledge, and to suggest further investigation.

The next section explores these ideas through the key findings in this study, and delivers research from the findings in the present study, into the perceived effectiveness of experiential learning for developing intercultural sensitivity within the context of the UAE.

### 6.3 Experiential Learning

#### 6.3.1 Experiential Learning: Key Findings

Despite the previous learning experiences of these participants being the antithesis of this experiential approach, and the fact that they are immersed in a second language context, it is clear from their perspective they responded well to this approach. Importantly, not only did these participants respond well to experiential learning, the findings in this present study illustrate that they developed intellectually, becoming more curious, more questioning, more motivated, and more able to think critically. This present research study not only fills a gap in the literature on how this demographic of student responds to experiential learning, but it also provides new knowledge that demonstrates its success in an intercultural studies curriculum.

Findings from the three data collection tools validate the effectiveness of experiential learning as a teaching and learning pedagogy that these participants respond well to. Two strands emerged from the findings: *enjoyment* of experiential learning tasks, and self-reported *enhanced learning* from this classroom experience. Table 6.2 presents sample responses from the three data collection tools detailing participants' perceptions of experiential learning relating to these two themes.

Table 6.2: Experiential Learning Sample Responses

	<i>Enjoyment</i>	<i>Enhanced learning</i>
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Written responses to four classroom tasks	<i>It was fun and interesting, I enjoyed it.</i> <i>It's a good and enjoyable way.</i>	<i>Great way to understand a point.</i> <i>Help me in understanding more than a piece of paper.</i>
Post course interviews	<i>They [classroom tasks] were really fun and interesting.</i> <i>It was so much fun, I honestly experienced that.</i>	<i>Yes it was really beneficial, it's like it made things much easier to absorb.</i> <i>It work for me, I feel so interesting because the information will keep in my mind.</i>
End of course written reflection	<i>Everything are enjoyable and I enjoy the class.</i> <i>It was useful and fun and excited too.</i>	<i>They were very useful because it makes me understand every word.</i> <i>They help in delivering the idea and point.</i>

Corroborating this, Table 5.2 in the previous chapter compares the Likert scale scores of the discrete items within the four classroom tasks where *enjoyment* and *help learning* score highly.

In addition to this, participants expressed a desire to be more active in the classroom with less teacher monologue and passive listening, providing new insight into these participants' learning preferences.

*Yes, because not always you are talking and we are sitting like this. You let us do more activities and from this activities you tell us why we do this.*

*I really love the teaching in this course because of watching more movie by watching is better than hearing all the class.*

*If the Miss come and talk talk talk and we don't understand anything, but if we watch it's better to understand more.*

The findings also show that alongside being enjoyable and helping learning, experiential learning also facilitates the development in these participants of soft skills such as critical thinking, higher order thinking, curiosity, and intrinsic motivation.

*Because I really see my friends emotion and I feel that I must understand other cultures before we decide what we do and because in the game I was angry so after that it made my mind open.*

*Yes it's a big change, [from doing this course] before in the house I didn't talk about the culture...what will happen...what they think...but now I talk with my sister I said to her like...in India some people...the girl married the dog how it come from Worldviews*

*I think my understanding or my view to the intercultural was a bit narrowed but after this it became wider because I knew that not everyone has the same thinking even from the same culture people have different thinking so I think it made my expectation higher or my imagination wider.*

*I do feel more open to the extent that I'm really interested into even meeting more people from different cultures, some unusual cultures or just knowing how to people live and deal with each other in different places in the world.*

There are a number of factors that can explain these responses: good classroom practice; choice of task; experiential learning pedagogy; motivational factors for Emirati students; camaraderie and UAE collectivist culture; and finally the use of multiple experiential learning tasks. These are examined below.

#### **6.3.1.1 Good Classroom Practice**

Firstly, in some ways these positive responses to experiential learning and the preference to be more actively involved in learning can be explained by simply good classroom practice that is generic to students across the board. Interestingly, student-centred classes with a variety of activities are generally more engaging, enjoyable and effective for any demographic of student (Bonwell, & Sutherland, 1996; Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Shneider, & Shernoff, 2003). Specific to the participants in this study though, is that this type of learning compares well to both their previous and concurrent educational experiences. Typically their degree courses are lecture style, content heavy, and, as mentioned earlier, these participants have exited from a high school system entrenched in passive learning. This 'new' style of teaching and learning is no doubt a welcome relief for this particular demographic of student.

#### **6.3.1.2 Choice of Task**

The literature review highlighted the importance of selecting meaningful experiential learning tasks (Hawtrej, 2007) and points to the use of film and simulations (Jain, 2013; Sullivan & Duplaga, 1997), as instrumental experiential tasks for inclusion in an experiential learning-centred Intercultural Studies program. The course at the centre of this study utilized four purposeful experiential learning tasks in line with the literature, with film and simulations (Barnaga)

being key. Along with their student counterparts world-wide, the participants in this study also responded favourably to these tasks, particularly the use of film, as it provides a neutral space to discuss critical intercultural issues, and provides an almost real life experience.

#### *6.3.1.3 Experiential Learning Pedagogy*

As mentioned in 5.3.1, experiential learning is positively associated with the teaching and learning of Intercultural Studies globally. The findings in this study show that it is a pedagogy the participants in this study also respond well to and whose impact is not limited due to their previous traditional learning environments. In fact, the researcher argues that the participants in this study have the capacity to flourish in an experiential learning environment and that they embrace it as a legitimate alternative to the rote-memorization government school models they are accustomed to.

#### *6.3.1.4 Motivational Factors for Emirati Students*

Unique to the participants in this study are beliefs and behaviours related to motivation which may predispose the participants to respond favourably to experiential learning. Emirati students are easily dissuaded by perceived difficult classroom tasks (James & Shammas, 2017) and are more motivated to study by extrinsic factors such as financial security rather than for intrinsic reasons (Halawah, 2006). While not wanting to diminish the rigour of the course, as part of the General Studies program, it *is* lighter than many of the participants' degree courses, and the tasks, in being game-like, possibly don't *feel* difficult to the participants. This perceived sense of ease is motivating for these students therefore accounting for the large number of positive responses to experiential learning.

#### *6.3.1.5 Camaraderie and UAE Collectivist Culture*

Another thread in the post course interviews was that these participants valued working in groups.

*It was not boring...like we had to guess and we had to work in groups  
[I enjoyed] Playing in the groups*

This validates the social constructivist approach to learning which “posits that human development is inherently a socially situated activity” (Burt, 2004, p. 286). It also supports self-

system theory which endorses the development of interpersonal relationships for increased motivation and performance (Burt, 2004). Importantly, this falls in line with Hofstede's categorization of cultures and identification of the United Arab Emirates as more collectivist, which values the importance of group ties and working together for the benefit of all (Engin & McKeown, 2012). The inclusion of group work and class discussion, a central component of this Intercultural Studies course, taps into a preferred tendency for this demographic of student, thereby deepening the learning experience and generating positive feedback.

#### *6.3.1.6 The Use of Multiple Experiential Learning Tasks*

Finally, a study by Hammer (2000) provides evidence that the use of multiple experiential learning techniques is more effective than just one: "student learning increased when multiple experiential techniques were used relative to learning that occurred when a single experiential technique was combined with a lecture format" (p. 22). The course at the centre of this study employs a variety of techniques in an experiential learning immersive environment, and therefore this factor may be useful in explaining the effectiveness of this approach.

#### 6.3.2 Summary

This study corroborates key findings from the literature review supporting the usefulness of experiential learning as a teaching and learning pedagogy for Intercultural Studies, specifically in classroom practice, choice of learning task, and the use of multiple experiential learning tasks. Importantly it contributes to the literature by presenting findings from the perspective of Emirati women in higher education that bear testament to the effectiveness of experiential learning within Intercultural Studies. This study also raises awareness on the motivational impetuses of Emirati women in Higher Education in relation to learning challenges. It suggests that in order to leverage intrinsic motivation in these students learning tasks should be enjoyable with consideration of the level of difficulty, factors which account for the favourable responses to experiential learning. In addition, this work also takes into account the social and cultural context of these participants where collectivism and group work are favoured, a key part of these participants' interactions in experiential learning. Finally, the results show that undertaking this work in a second language environment does not impede learning or limit the reach of experiential learning. However, language may be seen as something of a barrier in that it potentially limits participants' ability to

respond in writing or speaking to a level of sophistication needed to gain greater depth in the analysis. The next section will examine the purpose of the experiential learning, in this case to deliver an Intercultural Studies curriculum.

## **6.4 Intercultural Studies: Theorists and Findings**

This section focuses on issues that emerged regarding the students' intercultural learning, the course pedagogy and curriculum, and the current study's research contribution to knowledge. The conceptual framework underpinning this study draws on Intercultural Learning theory which is guided in the literature review by the theoretical work of King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) model of intercultural maturity, the work of Chen (1997), and Bennett (1993), all of which are related to intercultural sensitivity. Collectively these models allowed the researcher to bring to the present study a sophisticated conception of intercultural sensitivity through which the phenomenon could be characterised in terms of its most basic constituents, and through which they could be judged against a nuanced standard for assessing its level of development. This conception of intercultural sensitivity also allowed the data in this study to be understood in the context of a rich and well-tested theoretical background. To further understand and position intercultural learning theory in relation to this study, this section begins by describing in more detail the intercultural frameworks of each theorist. It then concludes with Table 5.3 which provides an overview of the intercultural mapping of each of these theorists aligned to the findings in this study, providing evidence for the participants' shift in interculturality.

### **6.4.1. King and Baxter Magolda's Model of Intercultural Maturity**

King and Baxter Magolda (2005) present a model of intercultural maturity integral to this study of Emirati student perceptions of their intercultural learning by identifying three domains in which intercultural development occurred; which have been identified in Table 5.3.

The three levels of development that are attainable in each of these three domains are described by Perez, Shim, King and Baxter Magolda (2015) as: *initial*, or an undeveloped and ethnocentric level of intercultural maturity; *transitional*, or the phase in which maturation is progressing but not yet complete; and *mature*, in which the student's cultural development may be characterized as ethnorelative.

Significantly for the present study, development in each of these three domains can occur with some degree of independence of development in the other two, such that each domain constitutes a dimension of intercultural maturity that must be deliberately cultivated if a well-rounded process of maturation is to be encouraged (Perez et al., 2015).

In the cognitive domain, the initial level of maturity is characterized by: ignorance of other cultures; a binary us/them outlook where perspectives are viewed as right or wrong; a limited understanding of what *culture* itself signifies and a still merging understanding of their own cultural identity.

Across all three domains, the intermediate phase of development signals an increased openness on the part of the student, and a willingness to explore their own and others' identities by means such as cultural immersion (Perez et al., 2015), yet this phase of maturity still tends to view cultural identities in terms of simplistic stereotypes.

In the most developed, mature phase of development, the student has the potential to reach a level of cultural agency that allows them to experience a sophisticated and nuanced process of identity formation and to respect both the choices and agency of others. They acknowledge the impact of cultural differences on all interpersonal dialogue and take responsibility for achieving meaningful and equitable exchanges across cultural differences.

King and Baxter-Magolda's Intercultural Development Trajectory has provided a validated theoretical framework to plot the developmental levels of the participants in the present study more precisely than would otherwise have been possible.

#### 6.4.2 Chen: Intercultural Sensitivity

Chen (1997) has been instrumental in providing the intercultural field with a concept of intercultural *sensitivity* which has been fully explored in 2.4.2 Intercultural sensitivity is characterized by both a positive attitude towards cultural others and a motivation to apply positive behavioral outcomes in real world intercultural exchanges. According to Chen, intercultural sensitivity, the affective component of intercultural development, is composed of six elements,

which the learner must master order to successfully convert intercultural awareness into intercultural competence (Chen, 1997).

- 1) Self-esteem: Optimism and confidence necessary to be open to intercultural exchanges.
- 2) Open-mindedness: Acceptance of others.
- 3) Self-monitoring: Ability to translate appropriate responses.
- 4) Empathy: A facilitation of developing sensitivity.
- 5) Non-Judgement: Related to open-mindedness, prevents biases from interfering.
- 6) Interaction Involvement: Emotional and intellectual presence of mind in intercultural exchange.

Alongside King and Baxter-Magolda's trajectory, Chen's work has provided the present study with a model of intercultural sensitivity through which the data can be viewed and its relevance to intercultural development more fully understood.

#### 6.4.3 Bennett: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Bennett's (1993) work provides the intercultural practitioner with the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), a six phase developmental model of intercultural development. The initial or denial phase of development is characterized by a simplistic understanding of cultural difference and beliefs that other cultures are inferior to one's own. At the opposite end of the scale is the integration orientation encompassing an awareness and appreciation of cultural difference and the ability to move in and out of different world-views. Bennett argues that intercultural competence increases exponentially relevant to learners' perceptions of cultural difference.

Bennett has provided a validated intercultural developmental theory that has allowed the present study to more accurately map the intercultural development of the participants in this study.

#### 6.4.4 Summary Intercultural Theorists and Findings

The three intercultural practitioners outlined above provide a framework for examining the intercultural maturation of the participants in this study and a method to more reliably answer the



research questions. Table 6.3 consolidates the work of these scholars, mapping an intercultural competency along a trajectory from a more ethnocentric to an ethnorelative outlook to align with the results from the data. While Chen’s work does not follow a trajectory like Bennett’s and King and Baxter Magolda’s, it details attributes that align with the same kind of maturity.

Table 6.3 Intercultural Learning Theorists and Findings

<b>Chen (1997)</b>	<b>King and Baxter Bagolda (2005)</b>	<b>Bennett (1983)</b>	<b>Participants pre-course attitudes</b>
Judgmental Indifference Closed	<i>Initial level of Development. Different</i> Cultures are seen as wrong. Identifies with others from own culture.	<i>Denial/Defence</i>  Cultural differences are denied or seen through an ethnocentric lens	<i>Pre-Course Attitudes</i>  <i>Before I used to say that they are wrong and have bad culture.</i>  <i>I feel they are having bad behaviours and bad tradition.</i>  <i>In the past I didn't care about other cultures.</i>
Non-Judgmental Empathy Open – appreciate different views Enjoyment of other cultures	<i>Intermediate level of development.</i> Becoming more accepting of unknown and others. Cultural judgement is decreasing.	<i>Minimization/Acceptance</i>  Cultural universalities are accepted and curiosity about cultural others is initiated.	<i>Participants post-course attitudes</i>  <i>Now I respect them and think more positive about other cultures.</i>  <i>I learned it from this course is that we have to respect other people and their different perspectives.</i>
Non-Judgmental Empathy Open Enjoyment of other cultures Appreciate different views	<i>Intermediate level of development.</i>  Becoming more accepting of unknown and others. Cultural judgement is decreasing.	<i>Adaptation</i>  Intercultural empathy is generated.	<i>I learn to not judge people. Everyone has different kind of uhh...worldview.</i>  [change of attitude toward others] <i>Maybe thinking in open way.</i>

Non-Judgmental Empathy Sensitivity ability within an interaction. Enjoyment of other cultures Self-monitoring Appreciate different views	<i><b>Mature level of development.</b></i> Willingness to interact openly with cultural others. Appreciation of other cultures and differences.	<i><b>Integration</b></i> Sophisticated intercultural maturity. Ability to generate appropriate alternative behavior with cultural others.	

This table shows that the participants displayed more ethnocentric, closed, judgmental attitudes prior to doing the course, and exited the course with more empathy, respect, curiosity and appreciation for cultural others. The next section will expand on the findings illustrated in this table.

**6.5 Intercultural Learning: Key Findings**

A major finding in this study is that participants reported a distinct shift in intercultural maturity from pre- to post-course. These perceptions are captured through the pre-course interviews, the post-course interviews and final written responses, and show how the participants position themselves quite differently in the pre- versus post-course instruments. This can be explained by participants’ heightened awareness by the end of the course of their own thinking and beliefs in terms of interculturality and a more mature, nuanced level of thinking. This is elaborated on below.

6.5.1 Participants’ Pre-Course Beliefs

As noted in the results chapter, in the pre-course interviews the participants exhibited a warmth, a kind of civil neutrality, which was sometimes superficial, and at times an ambivalence towards other cultures. There seemed little curiosity or real interest and a sense of distancing

themselves from other cultures. These attitudes can be explained in a number of ways. Firstly, as mentioned previously, these participants are not accustomed to critical higher order thinking, which this type of questioning demands. Also, as this was at the very beginning of the course, and intercultural concepts were still unknown to them, and they had not had time to deliberate, develop their beliefs or awareness re cultural others. Additionally, this is also a reflection of how society is ordered in the UAE, with each culture living quite separate lives: “various expatriate populations and Emiratis live their lives detached, in separate community based silos, with little mutual community building and no shared vision even between religiously and linguistically connected groups” (James & Shamma, 2013, p. 3). It is possible to live in Dubai with relatively little intercultural interaction that is beyond the daily ‘service’ (gas stations, shops, etc.) conversations.

Given time to ruminate on their intercultural learning, at the end of the course these participants’ freely admitted to having had a more judgmental way of thinking about cultural others prior to doing the course:

*In the past I didn't care about other cultures.*

*Before I used to say that they are wrong and have bad culture.*

In connection to the theoretical frameworks described in the preceding section, the participants would fall under the *initial* phase of intercultural sensitivity development, with a superficial understanding of others, a more ethnocentric stance, and a sense that other cultures are not as real or valid as Emirati culture.

While no explicit reasons were given for this thinking, it may be attributed to the segregation of Emirati society, mentioned above where each cultural group leads lives both geographically and emotionally detached from one another thereby limiting opportunities for intercultural dialogue and understanding. Also, as outlined in the introduction, as a vast minority in their home country, Emiratis are understandably keen to make sure their power base remains strong, which can only happen by ensuring relationships with other cultures remain socially and politically unequal.

This inequity is exemplified in the number of court cases against foreigners by Emiratis for transgressing social norms. The below case is somewhat striking as the witness was an Emirati child whose word in court held more sway than the British woman's own defence, and that of other non-Emirati witnesses, explaining that the kiss was a 'greeting', which is permissible in the UAE.

### British woman goes to jail in Dubai kissing case

Charlotte Adams, a British woman convicted of kissing in public in Dubai, has been taken to jail after dropping her attempts to appeal against the ruling.



Figure 6.2 British Woman Goes to Jail (Spencer, 2010)

Another thread that came through strongly in the pre-course interviews was the role of religion in shaping these participants' views on cultural others. Almost all the participants noted in these interviews that Islam teaches tolerance of cultural others:

*[Through Islam] we should respect every culture. And so they will we should errr...care and errr...help them*

*We read all about prophet Mohammed but he was kind to like Jewish he was kind to them and if someone dead in the Jews he go and he sat and he feeling sad so he was good with other people other religions.*

The assumption here is that this demographic of student is potentially predisposed towards an acceptance of cultural others through religious beliefs. A study by Dalib, Harun and Yusoff (2014), discussed previously, describes a group of Muslim students in Malaysia as viewing cultural and religious factors as significant in positioning their interculturality, and that intercultural sensitivity is viewed as harmony with cultural others versus control. While this is an important issue, and one that requires further study, it may be difficult to marry this religious tolerance with more conservative views of cultural others that are manifested through the political and social

make up of Emirati society. It therefore accounts for the civility rather than curiosity or empathy, displayed in the pre-course beliefs of these participants. However, it may help contribute to the participants' self-described positive shift in their intercultural maturity, which will be examined in the post-course discussion.

#### *6.5.1.1 Summary of Participants' Pre-course Beliefs*

To summarize, the pre-course interviews and perceptions of participants' interculturality, gleaned from the end of course written feedback and post-course interviews, show these participants to be at the *initial* level of intercultural maturity at the beginning of the course, despite having an Islamic worldview that urges acceptance of cultural others. The findings from the pre-course interviews suggest a civility to cultural others, combined with a distancing. The written feedback and interviews demonstrate that these participants have reflected on the positioning of their interculturality at the beginning of the course, possibly shaped by the social and political make up of their society, and cite having had more closed attitudes towards others at the beginning of the course. It is necessary to now examine the post-course results in order to understand more fully the shift in intercultural maturity and heightened awareness that has taken place as a result of undertaking the Dubai Women's College Intercultural Studies course.

#### 6.5.2 Participants Post-Course Beliefs

The post-course findings indicate a distinct positive shift in attitude and a progression in participants' intercultural maturity. Key themes to emerge were that participants became more open, more understanding, more tolerant and more curious about cultural others.

*The thing I learned it from this course is that we have to respect other people and their different perspectives no matter if they disagree with our culture because there is nothing wrong in cultures for them it's perfect.*

*After studying this course I felt more curious to learn more about people and different cultures and their perspective and points of views.*

*Now I could understand them and understand their culture which makes me respect them now.*

*Now I feel excited about what is their culture.*

This positive shift aligns with a *transitional* domain of intercultural maturity as identified by leading intercultural scholars in the field, equating to an intermediary stage between immature and advanced thinking, illustrated in Table 5.5. King and Baxter Magolda (2005) describe this as: “shows appreciation rather than fear of difference [and] recognizes legitimacy of other cultures” (p. 767). Chen (1997) posits that intercultural sojourners must develop a number of attributes to develop their intercultural sensitivity, the key ones including being non-judgemental, open-minded and having empathy, which these participants displayed in their responses. Chen also argues that high self-esteem and self-monitoring are elements of intercultural sensitivity; however, the course at the center of this study was not designed to incorporate these elements. Further still, Bennett’s (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, as shown earlier in Figure 2.5, maps the participants as at the intermediary acceptance stage (Table 5.3), “characterized by increasing levels of ethnorelativism—a person’s indigenous culture is viewed in the context of other cultures and all cultures are appreciated” (Anderson et al., 2006, p. 4).

Despite the perceived shift in the intercultural maturity of the participants in this study, it is worth considering here what these scholars consider as *advanced* intercultural maturation. Bennet’s integration stage includes understanding issues relating to the learners’ own cultural marginality and adaptation as involving a demonstrable shift in *behaviour* (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). King and Baxter Magolda’s advanced level of intercultural maturity also includes the ability to shift behaviour, alongside working towards the advancement of social justice, which “considers how to challenge overt acts of oppression and how to act as an advocate” (Perez et al., 2015, p. 768). For reasons outlined earlier in this study, the focus of this study is on intercultural sensitivity, a competency not characterized by behaviour or work on social justice. The limitations within current research excludes participants, such as the ones in this current study, from even the possibility of being mapped to an advanced intercultural maturity through defining maturity as containing a behavioural element. This will be taken up in the section on recommendations for further study. However, the results do show a clear transition from *initial* to *intermediate* intercultural maturity.

The intercultural maturity models provided the present researcher with a precise and well-researched set of standards for describing and interpreting the intercultural maturity of

the participants in this study. This move along the intercultural trajectory is attributable primarily to the intervention of the Dubai Women's College Intercultural Studies course as there were no other variables, such as increased intercultural contact or travel during that period. It is important now to understand this shift in intercultural maturity through intercultural development theory.

### 6.5.3 Findings related to Intercultural Development Theory

This present study uncovers three critical elements related to intercultural development theory, including developed sense of own cultural self/identity; role of intercultural contact and shift in behaviour; and course curriculum-guiding principles and reflective practice. These areas will be examined below.

#### *6.5.3.1 Identity*

Findings indicate that participants' own cultural identity and understanding of cultural self is developed over the course. This ties in with a number of concepts and theories raised in the literature that are key to intercultural development. The UNESCO guidelines on intercultural education (2006) emphasize this as a starting point for intercultural competence to develop, confirming the work of intercultural theorists such as Bennett (2009) and King and Baxter Magolda (2005) who note that an evolving sense of identity is part of an intermediate intercultural maturity trajectory. This confirms the course curriculum and guiding principles are effective and that practice on cultural self should be included in this type of work. It also challenges notions of Emirati identity, which are traditionally positioned in terms of the nation rather than the self (Partrick 2009), and it indicates that free and independent thought, while perhaps discouraged (Raven, 2011), are indeed fertile. This is a distinct move away from notions found in the literature around issues of Emirati identity and a (lack of) independent critical higher order thinking.

#### *6.5.3.2 Intercultural Contact and Behaviour*

As noted in the literature review, there has been much debate about the place of direct intercultural contact in a course such as this, with many theorists claiming that without it interculturality is limited (Earley & Ang, 2003; Fantini, 2009; Hawes & Kealey, 1981; Ruben,

1977). Other theorists have taken a different approach more aligned with this study (Gaskins & Roberts, 2001; Mendenhall et al., 2004) in arguing that intercultural sensitivity does not warrant the need for behavioural change and that sensitivity is a potent precursor of competency, which is achieved through transformative type training rather than subject knowledge or behavioural components. What is interesting in the findings in this present study is that notions of changed behaviour were a recurrent theme. Participants reported that they *would* behave differently with cultural others after doing the course. This is crucial in terms of knowledge building about interculturality. What this demonstrates is that shifts in intercultural behaviour have the capacity to occur through sensitivity training alone, and not only that, but interestingly, through sensitivity training that explicitly excludes work on behaviour. This present study contributes to the body of knowledge on interculturality by providing evidence that sensitivity training facilitates thinking around behavioural changes. While this is ‘untested’ in a real interaction, there is indeed potential for it through these participants’ developed motivational impetuses directed towards behaviour.

#### *6.5.3.3 Course Curriculum, Guiding Principles and Reflective Practice*

As noted earlier, best practice for an intercultural studies course provides for the inclusion of both content and affective knowledge. This was achieved through Cultural Dimensions and Worldview theory, and transformative elements through the experiential learning tasks. It is a model that theorists espouse (Bennett, 2011; Mahoney & Schamber, 2004; Deardorff, 2006) and one that is commonly practiced, often with a strong inclusion of Hofstede’s (1980) work. While the course in this present study also includes work on Hofstede it stands out in being one of the few, indeed perhaps the *only* course, that includes work on Muller’s (2001) Worldview Theory, an approach that “provides us with a valid and reliable way to investigate how different people see the world” (James & McLeod, 2014, p. 18). The value of Muller’s work contributes to the effectiveness of this intercultural studies course and findings from this present study provide a unique insight into the potential this has for any intercultural studies course. This study therefore contributes to the body of knowledge on course content by providing an alternative model for understanding intercultural difference.

Guiding principles related to this course were described previously and include: creating a safe classroom environment, providing a developmentally scaffolded program, and exploring



intercultural studies in practice. The self-reported results of the present study, in relation to the course, were positive and do not indicate that any of the participants felt the course was lacking or limited by poor design or guiding principles. As a teacher-researcher I was also satisfied with the course, but felt that it could also benefit from some improvements, specifically in the area of 'intercultural studies in practice'. The remit of the Dubai Women's College Intercultural Studies course is to help prepare students for the multi-cultural interface of both Dubai and a more globalised world. The inclusion of case studies and 'what if' discussion scenarios were helpful, but my sense was that the course needed to tap more into the 'real world' in order to more fully develop global citizens.

A key element of experiential learning found in this course is the need for students to reflect on their learning. As mentioned previously, a study by Richardson (2004) on student reflective practice claims that Emiratis are limited in the art of reflection due to their cultural frameworks. The findings in this study refute this claim and cite the recurring number of responses that demonstrate both reflection and deliberation as evidence. This knowledge contributes to the scant body of knowledge related to Emirati learners.

*Since I started taking this course I've wondered whether the things that we are doing are based on the culture or personal things, it made me really wonder I never thought about this before but now I was thinking that maybe this is because of culture of they're following something specific.*

Another participant shows she is now considering intercultural concepts within Emirati society through realizing that *not all Emirati families are the same*, an issue she had not considered before. This shows significant consideration and reflection and how it applies to her context.

This discussion chapter has so far presented findings that relate to the research questions, and it is now time to re-consider the aims and significance of this study as outlined previously and provide a discussion on how the results support these projected areas of contribution.

## **6.6 Significance of the Study and Key Findings**

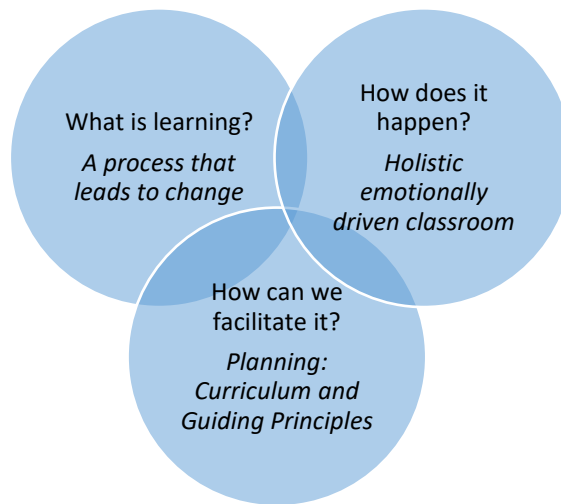
When examining the significance and key findings of this current study it is useful to first take a broader view and relate these to central themes in a social constructivist classroom: the meaning of learning and best practice pedagogy. A definition of best practice pedagogy has been offered by the US Department of Health and Human Services (2003) as “a program process, and/or procedure that continuously and regularly produces superior results when compared with other strategies” (cited in Kivunja, 2015, p. 3).

In practical terms this transfers to developing in learners:

- Self-direction
- Critical thinking and reasoning skills
- Deeper connection to the learning material through analysis
- Intellectual creativity

Best practice pedagogy in many ways mirrors the tenants of experiential learning through striving for active student-centred learning, culminating in deep mastery. It synthesizes and integrates three key questions: What is learning? How does it happen? How can we facilitate it? (Kivunja, 2015). This is illustrated in relation to this current study in Figure 3 below.

Figure 6.3: Best Practice Pedagogy Model: Experiential Learning for Intercultural Studies



Identifying learning as a process that leads to change is fundamental to this current study. Here, such *change* is constructed through a transformation, or progression, in the understanding and attitudes of these participants' interculturality, rather than the ability to *apply* the learning. This is "a fundamentally constructivist process in which learners actively build or construct their understanding of the information they come into contact with" (Kivunja, 2015, p. 7). This has been evidenced in Table 5.3, where the results of these participants' intercultural development moved throughout this course, along a trajectory from an initial to intermediate maturity. The answer to *how* this happens can be seen through experiential learning which provided for these participants: motivation; time for reflection; collaboration; and it tapped into a learning style that matched their preferences. As mentioned previously, this demographic of learners is discouraged by perceived difficult tasks, yet when given the right conditions they are able to think more critically and reflect. Despite being accustomed to a rote memorization system of learning they thrive when they are active, collaborate and emotionally invested in the learning tasks. Finally to address the third question, this learning is facilitated by a curriculum, which, for intercultural studies, contains both cognitive and affective learning, alongside guiding principles, such as the need to create a safe classroom environment, and it does so through providing carefully selected experiential learning tasks, taking into consideration the cultural context of these learners in relation to experiential learning theory. The results relating to these three key questions come through in the findings, which will be discussed below.

The key findings are organized into three sections:

- Research Question 1: To what extent do Emirati students perceive experiential learning as an effective teaching and learning approach for Intercultural Studies?
- Research Question 2: How do Emirati students perceive their intercultural learning as a result of taking the Dubai Women's College Intercultural studies course?
- Assessment

### 6.6.1 Research Question 1: Experiential Learning

Research question 1 relates to the effectiveness of experiential learning for intercultural learning and is a key component in this study. The results of this study corroborate research to date that experiential learning is an effective pedagogy for intercultural learning. More important though is that it contributes to research by demonstrating that it is an effective pedagogy for Emirati women in Higher Education, an area of research that is substantially lacking. The results show that these participants challenge previous notions, and change what we know about their learning. They are keen to move away from their passive rote learning high school experience, have a preference for active, collaborative learning, and when engaged in their learning are able to think critically and reflect. The impact of the course and this teaching pedagogy has also shown to awaken intrinsic motivation and a curiosity for these participants' in their learning. This counters both previous literature and the beliefs of many western expat faculty in the institute in which this study took place, who experience discord, through this demographic of student not conforming to their (Western) expectations (James & Shammas, 2017). This is especially felt in relation to areas such as high grade expectation, motivation and curiosity. This research study argues that given the right learning conditions that match these participants' learning styles and needs, they will flourish into more motivated, curiosity-driven learners. .

The opening of the section presented a list of four criteria that equated to best practice pedagogy 'in action', including self-direction, critical thinking, and deeper connection to learning material through analysis and intellectual creativity. The social constructivist teaching and learning pedagogy adopted in the course at the centre of this study contrasts sharply with these participants' previous educational contexts. The results of this study indicate that this new approach is most effective for these participants and challenges commonly held beliefs related to how they learn

and their academic tendencies and shows that it facilitates in them a deepening intellectual maturity, which mirrors the four criteria presented above as best practice pedagogy in action.

### 6.6.2 Research Question 2: Intercultural Learning

In relation to research question 2, which asks how these participants perceive their intercultural learning as a result of undertaking this course, the results provide insight into their interculturality that has not been examined in the literature to date. Importantly the findings relay a connection between intercultural sensitivity work, leading to intercultural maturity. Specific to this demographic of student, it counters previous research indicating that Emiratis may be predisposed to binary, us/them thinking. On the contrary, in fact, they have a strong capacity for openness and understanding. The influence of Islam on these participants' thinking and also their ability to reflect on their own cultural self are factors contributing to this. This research also addresses a much debated topic in the literature about whether direct intercultural contact is needed to trigger this change, providing evidence that it is *not* a requirement. Interestingly, the results in this study also show that intercultural sensitivity has the capacity to lead to behavioural changes, a notion that is refuted in the literature. The word *capacity* is key here though, as these behavioural changes were not 'actioned' and therefore difficult to determine; however, an underlying *willingness* emerged throughout the course. As second language learners, previous researchers have argued that language and culture are entwined and need to be combined for more effective learning. This study demonstrates that this type of learner is able to successfully navigate an intercultural studies course that is devoid of explicit language teaching.

The impact of this Intercultural Studies course on these participants' demonstrates the effectiveness of the course curriculum, learning tasks and pedagogy. It argues the need for both cognitive and affective knowledge and introduces an alternative model for presenting the cognitive content through Muller's Worldview theory (2001). The affective learning is provided through the four experiential learning classroom tasks and supports the literature for both film and simulations as key components of this type of curriculum. This also provides evidence that supports the use of multiple experiential learning tasks, as opposed to a single exposure. The impact of these tasks links to the previous sections when discussing motivation and the use of group work, both contributing factors to the success of this course.

### 6.6.3 Assessment

Finally, this study provides evidence which supports the use of participants' perceptions of their learning as an assessment tool, which counters arguments in the literature that support the use of validated external assessment tools. While it has been recognized these perceptions may at times have not been as sophisticated as those native speakers may be able to deliver, the participants do convey clear and consistent messages, which illustrate that the perceptions of their learning provide valid and reliable assessment results.

### 6.6.4 Summary: Significance of the Study and Key Findings

The findings in this section have been summarized in table form and can be found in Appendix 12. These illustrate that the potential significance of this study has been realized, providing new knowledge, or 'wisdom' "coming up with new paradigms that fit the truth of our reality or challenge it in new ways" ("Knowledge Management using Mind Maps", 2017), reaching across the fields of interculturality and experiential learning within the context of Emirati women in Higher Education. It is a significant study as it challenges many previous findings and stereotypes and re-positions these learners as having the capacity for both intellectual and intercultural maturity when exposed to a more social constructivist model of learning

### 6.6.5 A Sociolinguistic Approach

Further results presenting an alternative framework for viewing participants' perceptions of their learning are described in the results chapter describing the prevalence of '*I*' and '*they*' statements in participants' responses. These results present undefined conclusions and require further study. Sociolinguistics may argue that with the high number of these items, the participants position themselves at a distance from cultural others (*they*). However, with such succinct responses it appears to be a natural language feature devoid of hidden meaning. This is compounded by the linguistic ability of these second language learners who would not be converse with lexical items such as 'cultural others' as an alternative to 'they' items.

## **6.7 The Way Forward**

In regard to feedback on what students would change, there were 5 comments:

- *Try (movei) Rich Boys in London*
- *Maybe the way of the quiz*
- *Add more group activities*
- *More film*
- *We would like to see more of movie it make me understand more in better way while enjoying it*

While film is a significant component of this course, feedback indicates that this could also be developed. Particularly films with an Emirati/Arab/Muslim focus such as *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen* and *City of Light*. This is based on observations of student engagement while viewing *Millionaire Boy Racers*. This documentary describes how young wealthy Gulf Arab males take their super sports car to London for the summer months and the cultural tensions that arise between them and the residents of London. The theme was one that many students could relate to, with less conceptual ideas to integrate, and therefore they were more engaged with the topic and were able to contribute more in class.

As noted previously, students' responses to experiential learning indicate that they were satisfied with this approach, and that it facilitated learning and was enjoyable. With the buy in of management and faculty, this type of pedagogy is one that could transfer to students' core content subjects as well, and thus could substantially ease the learning burden of these more challenging courses.

In regard to the researcher's perceptions, despite attempts to convey to students the limitations in the cultural dimensions, as potentially perpetuating stereotyping and creating binary opposition, it is unclear how successful this was. This danger can be mitigated through the inclusion of work that develops a more critical and reflexive position towards knowledge (Baker, 2012). In practical terms this could take the shape of asking students questions to challenge how cultures are being depicted and to encourage them to look beyond the surface. An idea by Gomez (2015) is to use authentic short stories with themes around identity, acculturation and social justice,

this would more accurately paint a picture of society as a whole, with many diverse views, rather than a narrow generalization that may surface through the use of cultural dimensions alone.

## **6.8 Further recommendations**

The present study identifies five key areas of further study to build on the work in this dissertation: development of a scale for intercultural sensitivity; the use of experiential learning for degree content subject; an examination of male students' responses to both experiential learning and intercultural studies; the need for a more extensive study across the whole department; and the need for a longitudinal study.

### **6.8.1 Intercultural Sensitivity Scale**

A key finding in this study was that participants expressed a shift in their intercultural development related to their behavior and the potential for this to have changed. The word *potential* is used as these students were not exposed to intercultural contact and therefore had no way of demonstrating a visible shift in behavior. However, the scales for assessing intercultural development largely include a behavioural competent as actualized through intercultural contact. The field would benefit from a scale that includes this potential for changed behavior, without the need for actual demonstrated behaviour.

### **6.8.2 Experiential Learning within Degree Courses**

While the findings in this study indicate the positive impact of experiential learning within intercultural studies, for these students, it is unknown whether the success of this type of learning is transferable to their core degree courses. This current study demonstrates the great potential of experiential learning for these students, particularly in leveraging their intrinsic motivation. As such, further investigation on the effectiveness of this approach within more content-heavy, conceptually challenging courses would be beneficial.

### **6.8.3 Extension to Male Emirati Students**

The findings in this study are significant but at this stage can only be applied to Emirati *women* in higher education. We know that gender plays a role in students' responses to teaching



and learning pedagogy with females often preferring a nurturing classroom environment such as the one in this course, in order to succeed (Hamre & Pianta 2001, Baker, 2006), whereas dominance and competition are more associated with male learning environments (Abu El-Haj, 2003). We also know that despite the social transformation in the UAE over the last 20 years, Emirati women are still not considered equal to men in many areas of the law (Gallant & Pounder, 2008) and consequently Emirati men may feel more empowered than their female counterparts. Both these areas of difference could conceivably impact on Emirati male students' responses to a course such as this and a study into this would contribute significantly to the field.

#### 6.8.4 Extension to Department

The results of this study relate to one classroom experience and one teacher (myself). It would be valuable to see this study replicated across the department. This would provide further evidence in two important areas. Firstly, with up to 100 students at any given time enrolled in this course it would enable a much larger pool of participants to be involved therefore generating a more robust study. Secondly, the variable of myself as a teacher, my teaching style and my interest in developing a nurturing teacher-student relationship may have had some bearing on these results. Would other teachers generate the same results? This is an important question that can be answered with further study.

#### 6.8.5 A longitudinal study

Kivunja (2015) states that real learning is permanent: "the learning process is seen as leading to permanent changes in behaviour and attitudes" (p. 7). Despite the fact that the results from this study show that the participants have had a significant shift in their intercultural maturity; it is uncertain how long lasting this could be. A further study involving interviewing these participants 6 months, 12 months and 2 years after the course would be beneficial to determine the long term effect (if any) of this learning.

### **6.9 Conclusion**

In one of his final speeches at General Electric Jack Welch, CEO said:

The Jack Welch of the future cannot be me. I spent my entire career in the United States. The next head of General Electric will be somebody who spent time in Bombay, in Hong Kong, in Buenos Aires. We have to send our best and brightest overseas and make sure they have the training that will allow them to be the global leaders who will make GE flourish in the future.

(Javidan & House, 2001, p. 289)

Jack Welch acknowledged that times have changed and that in a world characterised by globalisation and knowledge economies, culturally literate leadership is a necessary priority. This cannot happen without changes to our education system and a commitment to the underlying philosophy that Intercultural Studies embodies.

The researcher argues that it is very much in the interests of students for educational institutions to provide a domestic equivalent of *internationalization* (i.e., experience and comfort with intercultural exchange at home) through an intercultural studies curriculum. The intercultural competence this training develops in students makes their skill sets more marketable to businesses that are operating in increasingly multicultural contexts (Jones, 2013), such as Dubai.

The rapid rate of globalization and therefore the need for intercultural studies is undisputable, given its importance more research is needed which moves beyond study abroad and international student programs and provides knowledge about intercultural development *at home*. Factors leading to the development of intercultural sensitivity ‘at home’ have been explored and evaluated here; therefore this study helps contribute to the literature in this regard.

More specifically, this study has examined, and has shown the effectiveness of experiential learning in delivering an Intercultural Studies course in regard to Emirati women, yet applicable to any context. It is therefore hoped that this research study has identified a pedagogical approach that facilitates both intercultural sensitivity and, as discussed, intellectual maturity such as developed curiosity for learning.

This study has provided a roadmap for the teaching and learning of intercultural sensitivity utilizing experiential learning, and provides a means for capturing the effectiveness of such a

learning strategy by utilizing students' perspectives. While set within the context of the UAE, the core tenets are transferable to any Intercultural Studies course globally and provide the intercultural practitioner with a valuable toolkit for the teaching and learning of such an important subject.

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## APPENDIX 1: COMMON COURSE OUTLINE

### Higher Colleges of Technology Common Course Outline

- **Course Title:** Intercultural Studies
- **Course Number:** LSS 2113
- **Course Credit Units:** 3.00
- **Total Contact Periods Per Week:** 4
- **Degree Level:** AAS/BAS
- **Course Description:**

Provides a platform for students to explore intercultural issues in contemporary global society. Describes the key concepts and components of culture and compares and contrasts cultural frameworks. Raises awareness of cultural diversity, multiculturalism and social change, and explores issues of intercultural communication. Recognises how cultural differences may result in conflict and provides various strategies toward conflict resolution.

- **Additional Information:**
- **Grading Mode:** N - Normal Grading Mode
- **Prerequisite Course(s):**
- **Corequisite Course(s):**
- **Equivalent Course(s):**
  - LSS 2053 OR 
  - LSS 2063 OR 
  - LSS 2093 OR 
  - LSSS N205 OR 
  - LSSS N206 OR 
  - LSSS N252 
- **Grade Scale:**
- **Must Pass:**
- **Course Learning Outcomes:**
  - 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; recognise how culture may result in conflict and apply different strategies to resolve it.
  - CLO 5- Apply the key concepts, theories, and terms studied in CLOs 1-4 through an applied group project.
- **Delivery Framework:**

#### **CLO1: In order to meet CLO 1 students should engage in the following:**

- Define culture in multifarious ways (iceberg, rivers, pizzas, onions etc.).

- Define and identify the components of culture.
- Demonstrate comprehension of key terms related to customs, traditions, beliefs and values in different cultural groups.
- Define and identify examples of assimilation, acculturation, cultural differences.
- Distinguish between universal, cultural and personal behaviours.
- Describe the challenges and benefits of cultural diversity and difference.

**CLO2: In order to meet CLO 2 students should engage in the following:**

- Explore and critique frameworks associated with cultural analysis which could include:
  - Hall's Cultural Dimensions
  - Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions
  - Lewis's Model of Culture
  - KnowledgeWorkx' Three Colours Worldview Theory
  - KnowledgeWorkx' 12 Cultural Dimensions
  - Trompenaars and Hampden – diversity at work

**CLO3: In order to meet CLO 3 students should engage in the following:**

- Define stereotyping, prejudice, bias and discrimination.
- Discuss problems associated with stereotyping, prejudice, bias and discrimination.
- Define and discuss ethnocentricity and ethno-relativity.
- Explore and discuss culture shock and culture change.

**CLO4: In order to meet CLO 4 students should engage in the following:**

- Undertake self-discovery and self-reflective activities related to personality and preferred communication and conflict styles (for example Myers-Brigs/attitudes to conflict (online)).
- Explore intercultural communication issues and strategies.
- Explore cultural perspectives on conflict and conflict resolution.
- Explore diversity in the workplace.
- Develop comprehensive communication strategies which address cultural differences and diversity.

**CLO5: To demonstrate the application of CLOs 1-4, students should engage in a group applied and research-based project which could include any of the following:**

- Ethnographic Case Study
- Intercultural Conflict Case Study (using cultural dimensions and/or worldview analysis)
- Analyse film or print media to identify cultural dimensions and/or worldview in practice
- Inter-faith Conflict Case Study
- Material Culture Project
- Cross-Cultural Themes (beauty, marriage, parenting)
- Cross-cultural communication and research project



- **Teaching AND Learning Strategies:**

Each course topic will be taught in a theoretical and practical manner. Concepts will be introduced in class through lectures, readings and videos. Independent learning exercises will be planned and blended learning approach will be used.

Students will learn more about the concepts through further readings, discussions either online or face-to-face, blog entries, reflective journals, applied research, role-plays, quizzes, and online cloud collaboration of documents, and in-class presentations.

Hands on activities give the students a holistic integration of knowledge and skills. Students will be encouraged to self-reflect upon their learning and areas of growth with regards to their intercultural attitudes and skills.

- **Assessment Strategies:**

<p><b>Coursework - Set Exercises: 40%</b>          Students will participate in discussions (either online or face-to-face), blog entries, quizzes, independent learning exercises, field trips, etc. to meet the CLOs 1-4.          (Outcomes: 1,2,3,4)</p>
<p><b>Coursework - Reflection Paper: 30%</b>          Students will write reflective journals and submit a reflective eFolio at the end of the course which will address topics studied in CLO 1-4          (Outcomes: 1,2,3,4)</p>
<p><b>Final Assessment - Written Examination: 30% (SA)</b>          Students will complete a Final Written Exam Online on BBLearn using Respondus Lockdown Browser that covers all Course Learning Outcomes.          (Outcomes: 1,2,3,4,5)</p>
<p><b>Total Weight: 100%</b></p>

- **Required Educational Resources:**

- **Student**
- Blankenburgh, M. (2013) *Inter-Cultural Intelligence: from surviving to thriving in the global space* KnowledgeWorkx ISBN: 9781483511528

- **Additional Educational Resources:**

- Parvis. L. (2006). *Understanding Cultural Diversity in Today's Complex World*. Lulu Press.

KnowledgeWorx Cultural Mapping and Navigation ©

Hall, B. J. (2003). *Among Cultures: The Challenge of Communication*. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth.

Hofstede, Geert H. (2005). *Cultures and Organisations: Software of the Mind*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Hofstede, Geert H. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviours, Institutions and Organisations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Hofstede, Gert Jan (2002). *Exploring Cultur: Exercises, Stories and Synthetic Cultures*. Boston: Intercultural Press.

Storti, C. (1994). *Cross-Cultural Dialogues*. Boston: Intercultural Press.

DVD: *Cross Cultural Communications*, Insight Media, 2004.

## **APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM**

### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to understand more about teaching and learning Intercultural Studies and how Emirati female students value the type of learning activities in this class.

### **Participation**

Participation in this research is voluntary and will not be given any academic grading value. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are able to withdraw at any time. Any information already received from you is completely confidential, in fact I will not even be able to identify you, and therefore this information will need to remain in the research. Your decision whether to take part or not or to withdraw, will not affect your relationship with Dubai Women's College. If you have any questions about the progress of this research, you can contact the main researcher: nicole.shammas@hct.ac.ae (04) 2089417.

### **Time**

There will be two sets of interviews, at the beginning and end of the course, these will take approximately 30 minutes each.

The written work will take approximately 20 minutes during the course and a further 20 minutes at the end of the course.

You may participate in as much or as little, or none, as you wish. Interviews will take place at college in the library. Interviews will be recorded (audio only) so that I can remember what you said. Your name will not be used in any written information.

### **Benefit/Risk**

The benefit to of this work is that it will help contribute to an important field of study and that it will enable teachers to understand Emiratis on an educational level. For you personally, you may appreciate the one on one time to discuss your experiences. Apart from a loss of time there are no negative consequences to participating in this research.

*If you have any ethical concerns with how this research is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a participant please feel free to contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Officer on the following details.*

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project and the researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, without having to give a reason and without any consequences.
- I understand that I can withdraw my data from the study at any time.
- I understand that any information recorded in the investigation will remain confidential and no information I provide can identify me
- I consent to being a participant in the project

I  (PRINT NAME)	Hereby agree to take part in the above project
Signature of Participant:	Date

## **APPENDIX 3: PRE AND POST COURSE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **Pre intervention Interview Questions**

#### Personal Information

Name:                              Age:                              Year of study and major:

#### Social Habits

What interactions do you have with non-Emiratis. E.g. Twitter? Movies?

Have you travelled overseas? How often? Where? What do you do? How much interaction do you have with people from other cultures?

Have you ever worked? What was the environment like in terms of other cultures?

#### Family background

Where are your parents from?

What language do you speak at home? What is your first language?

What other languages do your parents speak?

Do you speak any other languages? Explain.

Is anyone in your family married to a non-Emirati?

Have you or your parents ever lived outside the UAE?

Both parents Emirati?

Language at home? Other languages?

Intercultural marriage in family?

#### Intercultural Views

Some people say that Emiratis find it difficult living in such a multi-cultural country, what would you say to that?

How do you feel about having foreigners living in your own country?

Do you prefer to interact with Emiratis or non Emiratis or both?

Do you find it easy to understand non Emiratis? Do you want to understand them better?

What does it mean to you to be Emirati? How do you identify yourself? What are the cultural practices that make you feel Emirati?

What did your family raise you to believe about other cultures? Do you agree with them?

How do your religious beliefs impact what you think about non-Emiratis?

Do you think that it is possible to appreciate other cultures without giving up your own cultural values? Is there any conflict between your culture and other cultures?

## Learning

School – private/government.

How would describe learning style? Helped you learn? Anything didn't like?

Notice difference college style?

*Thank you for all your valuable input, is there anything you would like to add before we end?*

## **Post Intervention interview Questions**

*Note: Questions may be modified as the interviews progress*

### Intercultural Views

Some people say that Emiratis find it in difficult living in such a multi-cultural country, what would you say to that?

How do you feel about having foreigners living in your own country?

Do you prefer to interact with Emiratis or non Emiratis or both?

Do you find it easy to understand non Emiratis? Do you want to understand them better?

What does it mean to you to be Emirati? How do you identify yourself? What are the cultural practices that make you feel Emirati?

What did your family raise you to believe about other cultures? Do you agree with them?

### Educational Impact

Tell me about what you are learning in this course.

Has your way of thinking or behavior changed since taking this course. Explain.

Has this course changed the way you relate to cultural others? No...what it is about you....anything particular about you...?

Can you remember some of the activities we have done in class? Which activities helped you learn?

Do you recall any particular event or activity during this course which had an impact on the way you think about other cultures? A particular activity?

The types of activities we have done in this course may be quite different from other courses, how do you feel about these types of activities? Do they help you learn? If so, how?

How is this learning experience to your high school experience?

Do you think everyone in the class has the same experience as you? Why? Why not?

What is challenging about this course?

Do you think that it is possible to appreciate other cultures without giving up your own cultural values? Is there any conflict between your culture and other cultures?

What did you learn about your own beliefs towards your own culture?

What did you learn about your own beliefs towards other cultures??

If you could make any changes to the course what would they be?

Has your attitude or behavior changed – since taking this course - when you interact with people from other countries? In what way?

In your view, how did your understanding of intercultural sensitivity change during this course?

How can you use what you have learnt in this class in your life?

*Thank you for all your valuable input, is there anything you would like to add before we end?*

## **APPENDIX 4: WRITTEN REFLECTIONS ON EXPERIENTIAL TASKS**

### Free writing:

Did you enjoy this activity?

Did this activity help your learning?

How? How not?



## APPENDIX 5: LIKERT SCALE SURVEY ON EXPERIENTIAL TASKS

### BARNGA: Survey 1

	Yes a lot	Yes a little	No not really	No, not at all
<u>1</u> : Did playing Barnga help you <b>understand</b> what it feels like to be culturally different?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>2</u> : Did playing Barnga help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>3</u> : Did playing Barnga you feel <b>more confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>4</u> : Did playing Barnga help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>5</u> : Did you <b>enjoy</b> playing Barnga?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>6</u> : Did playing Barnga <b>help your learning</b> ?				
<i>Comment:</i>				

**PERSPECTIVES: Survey 2**

	Yes a lot	Yes a little	No not really	No, not at all
<u>1</u> : Did the perspective activities help you <b>understand</b> people from different cultures?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>2</u> : Did the perspective activities help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>3</u> : Did the perspective activities help you feel <b>more confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>4</u> : Did the perspective activities help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>5</u> : Did you <b>enjoy</b> these perspective activities?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>6</u> : Did these perspective activities <b>help your learning</b> ?				
<i>Comment:</i>				

Any other comments?

**WATCHING FILM SCENES: Survey 3**

	Yes a lot	Yes a little	No not really	No, not at all
<u>1</u> : Did watching film scenes help you <b>understand</b> people from different cultures?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>2</u> : Did watching film scenes help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>3</u> : Did watching film scenes help you feel <b>more confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>4</u> : Did watching film scenes help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>5</u> : Did you <b>enjoy</b> watching film scenes				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>6</u> : Did watching film scenes <b>help your learning</b> ?				
<i>Comment:</i>				

Any other comments?

**INTERCULTURAL ROMANCE: Survey 4**

	Yes a lot	Yes a little	No not really	No, not at all
<u>1</u> : Did the Intercultural Romance work help you <b>understand</b> people from different cultures?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>2</u> : Did the Intercultural Romance work help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>3</u> : Did the Intercultural Romance work help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>4</u> : Did you <b>enjoy</b> the Intercultural Romance work activities?				
<i>Comment:</i>				
<u>5</u> : Did the Intercultural Romance work <b>help you feel more positive about other cultures?</b>				
<i>Comment:</i>				

Any other comments?

## **APPENDIX 6: POST COURSE FINAL WRITTEN REFLECTIONS**

*The purpose of this task is for you to think more deeply about what and how we have been learning.*

1: The biggest thing I have learnt from doing this course is.....

2: How did I feel about people from different countries and cultures before doing this course and how do I feel now?

3: What did it mean to me to understand people from different countries and cultures before doing the course and what does it mean now?

4: Do I understand people from other countries and cultures more/less/same after doing this course?

5: How, if at all, is my thinking about my culture and other cultures changing from being in this class?

6: How useful and enjoyable are the kinds of activities we are doing in this class? In what way are they or are they not?

7: Do the activities we are doing in this class help me learn how to understand people from different countries and cultures? How? How not?

8: Is there anything you would change in this class?

9: Any other comments?

## APPENDIX 7: BARNGA RULES

### BARNGA RULES (Floman, 2017)

#### How Barnga is played

Players form small groups of 3-6 each. Try to keep the groups about the same size. Each receives a modified deck of cards (Ace-1-2-3-4-5 or Ace-1-2-3-4-5-6-7 depending on how large the groups are). Each individual receives a sheet of instructions for playing the simple game "Five Tricks" and a sheet of "Tournament Rules." They have a few minutes to learn the rules and practice the game for several hands. Then a signal indicates the start of the "tournament," and silence is strictly enforced as a "No Verbal Communication" rule. This means no written notes or even finger-writing in the air, and no spoken communication. At this point, the facilitator collects the rules and game instruction sheets. \*\*Actually, every group has been given different rules, and the facilitator must ensure the players don't realize that fact until after they have engaged in the card play. This simple strategy is the basis for this highly effective simulation. In one set, Ace is high; in another Ace is low. Spades are trump for one group; diamonds for another; one group has no trump. These simple differences are the only things that are not identical for all groups, but of course they are significant differences. Everything seems to be the same, but because of the differences the result is bewilderment, misunderstanding, and misjudgments. After another signal, some players move: those who have scored the most tricks move "up" and those with the fewest move "down" to new groups. They sit down at their new table, look around, and begin at once playing "Five Tricks." Facial expressions register surprise, disbelief, even outrage. Participants experience being an outsider—if they have moved groups—or being a "native" with outsiders coming in and insisting on doing things differently. Some participants try adaptation techniques, while others try to have their rules dominate. Many who move experience a desire to go "home." Some are sure things would have been better if they had been able to talk, while others think more communication would have led to argument instead of play. There is no "tournament" for its own sake; no player is identified as the winner (although you can designate the winner and make a small award in order to maintain the authenticity of the tournament). The object of the simulation game is to have everyone experience the shocks and feelings that come from interaction with members of other cultures whose rules are not known completely. Even when players perceive the differences, they have great difficulty working out a way to bridge them. The game is rich in metaphors of real life.

**Debriefing Barnga Debriefing:** After playing a number of rounds- either use a set time limit, or allow the number of rotations according to the number of tables in play (6 rounds for 6 tables)- students should be aware that they were playing by different rules, and the following questions should be discussed. Students can stay in the last group they were in, or return to their home groups at the teacher's discretion. Questions: ♣ If you could describe the game in one word, what would it be? ♣ What did you expect at the beginning of the game? ♣ When did you realize that

something was wrong? ♣ How did you deal with it? ♣ How did not being able to speak contribute to what you were feeling?

## APPENDIX 8: VOCABULARY TEACHING AND LEARNING IDEAS

*Vocabulary Teaching Activities: Respect, Confidence Communicating and Behaviour, and understand yourself.*

### **1: Respect**

Teacher asks how the students are behaving in the images. Elicit responses like listening, paying attention, doing what they are told, not-listening, being rude etc.



Ask: What is the difference in the two images? What word could you use to describe? Elicit word 'respect'

Ask: What does respect mean to you? Give own example.

### **2: Confident Communicating**

Teacher demonstrates examples of confident/unconfident communication towards class. Elicits difference. Elicit ideas on how confidence in communicating transfers to intercultural dynamics.

### **3: Behaviour**

Ask students what they did when they walked in to class today. Typical responses – greet their classmates (often with a kiss – Emirati style), say good morning, get out their laptops, rearrange their desks, greet the teacher etc. Ask students what these are all an example of – elicit 'behavior', the ways we act, what we do.

### **4: Understand yourself.**

Give personal example, this is who I am – my roles in life, mother/teacher/student. This is my personality – often shy with strangers, caring, good at managing my time, terrible at finding new



locations. Ask students to do the same. Was it easy or difficult? Illustrates how well you understand yourself.

## APPENDIX 9: MEAN RESULTS FROM LIKERT SCALE RESPONSES

### Barnga

N=22	Yes a lot (4)	Yes a little (3)	No not really (2)	No, not at all (1)	Mean
1: Did playing Barnga <b>help your learning</b> ?	95.5% (21)	4.5% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	21.75
2: Did you <b>enjoy</b> playing Barnga?	82% (18)	18% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	21
3: Did playing Barnga help you <b>understand</b> what it feels like to be culturally different?	82% (18)	18% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	21
4: Did playing Barnga help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?	73% (16)	27% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)	20.5
5: Did playing Barnga help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking?	59.6% (13)	36% (8)	4.5% (1)	0% (0)	19.5
6: Did playing Barnga you feel <b>more confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?	32% (7)	41% (9)	27% (6)	0% (0)	16.75

## Perspectives

N= 23	Yes a lot  (4)	Yes a little  (3)	No not really  (2)	No, not at all  (1)	Mean
1: Did you <b>enjoy</b> these perspective activities?	87% (20)	13% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	22.25
2: Did the perspective activities help you <b>respect people</b> from different cultures?	74% (17)	26% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)	21.5
3: Did these perspective activities <b>help your learning</b> ?	70% (16)	30% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	21.25
4: Did the perspective activities <b>help you understand</b> people from different cultures?	65% (15)	35% (8)	0% (0)	0% (0)	21
5: Did the perspective activities <b>help you understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking?	65% (15)	26% (6)	9% (2)	0% (0)	20.5
6: Did the perspective activities help you feel more <b>confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?	52% (12)	39% (9)	9% (2)	0% (0)	19.75

## Film

N= 21	Yes a lot (4)	Yes a little (3)	No not really (2)	No, not at all (1)	Mean
<u>1</u> : Did watching film scenes help you <b>understand</b> people from different cultures?	95% (20)	5% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	20.75
<u>2</u> : Did you <b>enjoy</b> watching film scenes	95% (20)	5% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	20.75
<u>3</u> : Did watching film scenes <b>help your learning</b> ?	95% (20)	5% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	20.75
<u>4</u> : Did watching film scenes help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?	86% (18)	14% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	20.25
<u>5</u> : Did watching film scenes help you feel <b>more confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?	67% (14)	33% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	19.25
<u>6</u> : Did watching film scenes help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking?	67% (14)	28% (6)	5% (1)	0% (0)	19

## Intercultural Romance

N=20	Yes a lot (4)	Yes a little (3)	No not really (2)	No, not at all (1)	Mean
<u>1:</u> Did the Intercultural Romance work help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?	65% (13)	35% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	18.25
<u>2:</u> Did the Intercultural Romance work help you <b>understand</b> people from different cultures?	65% (13)	30% (6)	5% (1)	0% (0)	18
<u>3:</u> Did you <b>enjoy</b> the Intercultural Romance work activities?	65% (13)	30% (6)	5% (1)	0% (0)	18
<u>4:</u> Did the Intercultural Romance work help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behaviour and way of thinking?	60% (12)	35% (7)	5% (1)	0% (0)	17.75
<u>5:</u> Did the Intercultural Romance work <b>help you feel more positive about other cultures?</b>	60% (12)	35% (7)	5% (1)	0% (0)	17.75


## APPENDIX 10: USQ ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

USQ HREC H15REA211 Human Research **Ethics** Progress Report - Accepted

Inbox x



People (3)

 Human Ethics <Human.Ethics@usq.edu.au>

11/11/16 ☆



to me, Shirley, Aniko

Human Ethics

human.ethics@usq.edu.au



Show details

Dear Nicole

**RE: H15REA211 – Emirati students' perceptions of intercultural learning through an experimental learning approach**

Thank you for submitting your Progress Report for the above project.

The Human Research **Ethics** Committee has reviewed your report and have deemed that it be accepted as "Satisfactory".

Please be aware the next report is due: **26 October 2017** (Progress Report). For any changes to the research project (i.e. extension of time), please submit a [Request for Amendment](#).

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the [Ethics Office](#).

Kindest regards,

Sam

*Samantha Davis*

**Ethics Officer**

Office of Research | University of Southern Queensland

Toowoomba | Queensland | 4350 | Australia

Ph: +61 7 4687 5703 | Fax: +61 7 4631 1995 | Email: [human.ethics@usq.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@usq.edu.au)

## APPENDIX 11: LIKERT SCALE RESULTS COLOUR CODED RESPONSES

### 1: Barnga: Colour Coded Responses

<p>Did playing Barnga help you <b>understand</b> what it feels like to be culturally different?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>It felt weird at first cause you don't know if what you are doing is right or wrong. The other team looked annoyed and that makes you think and doubt your choice. (R1)</i></li><li>• <i>Each culture have different way. (R3)</i></li></ul>
<p>Did playing Barnga help you <b>respect</b> people from different cultures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>After the game I saw where they were coming from with how they were playing. (R1)</i></li><li>• <i>Because every culture have different rule than other culture. (R1)</i></li><li>• <i>It help me. (R3)</i></li><li>• <i>Everyone has their point of view and as much as I want people to respect me I should respect them. (R4)</i></li><li>• <i>Little because they didn't were allowed to say there rules as well. (R5)</i></li><li>• <i>Know about what is their culture and respect their rules. (R8)</i></li></ul>
<p>Did playing Barnga help you feel more <b>confident in communicating</b> with people from different cultures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>This motivated me even more to learn the languages I so want to learn. (R1)</i></li><li>• <i>Because I still feel strange a little bit. (R2)</i></li></ul>
<p>Did playing Barnga help you <b>understand yourself</b> and your own behavior and way of thinking?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>I think that I am a bit considerate and that makes me feel a bit better. (R1)</i></li><li>• <i>Because I think I am right and there are wrong but when I set and know they have different culture it will be fine. (R2)</i></li></ul>
<p>Did you <b>enjoy</b> playing Barnga?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Definitely a good and new experience. (R1)</i></li><li>• <i>I was confused little. (R4)</i></li></ul>
<p>Did playing Barnga <b>help your learning</b>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>It made me aware of few mistakes that I do with others that I wasn't aware of. (R1)</i></li></ul>

Any other comments?

- *Thank you. (R1)*
- *Its good to knows other culture and rules to respect each other and don't make mistake. (R6)*
- *It helped me understand what foreign people feel when coming to the UAE. (R7).*

Empathy = Blue

Disorientation = Yellow

Respect = Pink

## 2: Perspectives: Colour Coded Responses

Did the perspective activities help you **understand** people from different cultures?

- *Yes it even showed how people from different places in the world think or act. (R1)*
- *Because I will understand how they thinking or what are they perspective from someone who are from other culture. (R2)*
- *Hearing about your own culture from other people makes you wonder about it. (R3)*

Did the perspective activities help you **respect** people from different cultures?

- *They see their culture in a different way of me (R2)*
- *Hearing their opinion made me put myself in their shoes. (R3)*

Did the perspective activities help you feel **more confident in communicating** with people from different cultures?

- *Yes it even made me feel curious to try to do an interview myself about this topic. (R1)*
- *I will get more information about them and I will educated more. (R2)*
- *It's easier to see where their opinions are coming from now. (R3)*
- *I'm not that confident. (R6)*

Did the perspective activities help you **understand yourself** and your own way of thinking?

- *Yes it even showed the importance of being open minded with others (R1)*



Did you **enjoy** the perspective activities?

- Yes it was really **fun and interesting**, I really enjoyed it! (R1)
- Videos are always a great way to **understand a point**. (R3)
- Yes because **I have learned a lot** (R4)
- 

Did the perspective activities **help your learning**?

- Yes **it made things much clearer to me** (R1)
- **How people see Arabs** (R10)

Any other comments?

- Perspectives will **teach a lot of how to know the people**. (R4)
- **Great lesson** (R5)
- I learned from the perspective activities **to not judge a person before understanding him**. Don't judge a book by its cover. (R7)
- It help to **see other cultures how they think**. (R8)
- Perspective **help people to know other countries culture** and help them to respect them. (R9)

Empathy = Blue

Educational Value = Green

Cultural Self-Awareness = Grey

### 3: Film Scenes: Colour Coded Responses

Did watching film scenes help you **understand** people from different cultures?

- **It shows how every culture is different**. (R13)
- **It made it really clear and much easier to absorb**. (R14)
- **Yes I learned things that will prevent me from making mistakes**. (R15)

Did watching film scenes help you **respect** people from different cultures?

- The characters in the film were meet together and **I can learn about it**. (R12)
- **We should respect other cultures even** if they are different from ours. (R13)

Did watching film scenes help you feel more **confident in communicating** with people from different cultures?

- *Not a lot because I'll feel confused and I'll think what should I do and what I'm doing is right or wrong. (R10)*
- *I know now what I should and what I shouldn't do in some cases. (R15)*

Did watching film scenes help you **understand yourself** and your own behavior and way of thinking?

No comments

Did you **enjoy** watching film scenes?

- *It help me in understanding more than reading a piece of paper. (R13)*
- *Yes it was really fun and interesting and it made it easier to understand the class work. (R14)*
- *It was a nice change. (R15)*
- *Watching films helps us understand more and it's also entertaining. (R16)*

Did watching film scenes **help your learning**?

Any other comments?

- *It was nice. (R1)*
- *It was helpful. (R2)*
- *Film is a good example for us to watch because some of them might be from real life. (R3)*
- *It is a good and enjoyable way. (R4)*
- *It's useful. I enjoyed. (R5)*
- *It helps us to understand. (R6)*
- *Yes it helps me to learning by understanding their culture. (R7)*
- *Some informations are hard to understand without film example. (R8)*
- *Because I understand every dimension. (R9)*
  - *We have learned a lot to how we respect people from different culture. (R11)*
- *We need to respect other cultures. (R16)*

Educational Value = Green

Behaviour = Blue

Respect = Pink

Interest/Enjoyment = Red

#### 4: Intercultural Romance: Colour Coded Responses

Did the Intercultural Romance work help you **respect** people from different cultures?

- *Every culture have the same respectful.* (R1)
- *Accept people from different cultures.* (R2)
- *It did because it showed and proved that whichever culture you come from you'll still face difficulties and obstacles that you'll have to overcome.* (R3)

Did the Intercultural Romance work help you **understand yourself** and your own behavior and way of thinking?

- *Change my way of thinking.* (R2)
- *I usually don't give this topic much thought but watching and listening to these people got me thinking about it.* (R3)

Did you **enjoy** the Intercultural Romance activities?

- *I enjoyed watching the films.* (R1)
- *It was interesting to know what intercultural couples thought of intercultural romance.* (R3)
- *It was interesting hearing about other cultures.* (R9)

Did the Intercultural Romance work help you feel more **positive about other cultures**?

- *We should accept and respect about other cultures.* (R2)
- *We cannot deny the differences between cultures but we can acknowledge the similarities and accept the differences.* (R3).
- *It even made me more open minded and accepting others of different cultures.* (R4)
- *I can understand what people think and what should I think about other cultures.* (R8)

Any other comments?

- *It change my thinking and my point view. I learn also that we should accept and respect other cultural.* (R2).
- *It's useful to meet people from different cultures to get to know them better.* (R5)
- *It was easy.* (R6)
- *The intercultural romance video that I saw makes me understand more about it and it really helped me to respect them point of view.* (R7)

Respect = Pink

Empathy = Blue

Interest/Enjoyment = Red

New way of thinking = Grey

## APPENDIX 12: KEY FINDINGS SUMMARISED IN TABLE FORM

Significance of the study	Key Findings/Contribution to Knowledge
1: Connection between experiential learning as an approach to teaching intercultural studies.	Corroborates findings in literature that experiential learning is an effective approach to intercultural studies.
2: The contribution of <i>intercultural sensitivity</i> to participants' intercultural maturity.	<p>Corroborates findings that a focus on intercultural sensitivity leads to intercultural maturity, providing evidence of these participants developing from an <i>initial</i> intercultural maturity outlook to an <i>intermediate</i> trajectory.</p> <p>Contributes to literature by asserting that intercultural maturity is possible without intercultural contact, and more importantly, intercultural sensitivity may lead to changes in behaviour.</p>
<b>3: Research questions and cultural considerations</b>	
3A) How Emirati women respond to experiential learning.	<p>Effective approach: enjoyable and deepens learning. Leads to higher order critical thinking skills.</p> <p>Counters argument in literature about this demographic of student potentially being biased towards this type of learning based on familiarity with 'traditional' type learning in High school. Refutes literature on students' limited capacity for critical thinking.</p> <p>Contributes to literature by presenting results which posit that this demographic of student have a preference for active learning.</p> <p>Contributes to literature by demonstrating participants are more motivated by perceived easier tasks and discouraged by perceived harder tasks.</p>
3B) How Emirati women perceive the effectiveness of an Intercultural Studies course.	<p>Counters literature indicating Emiratis predisposed to binary, us/them thinking.</p> <p>Contributes to literature through greater understanding of Emirati women's interculturality and indicates strong capacity for openness</p> <p>Contributes to literature through demonstrating the effectiveness of an Intercultural Studies course for Emirati women. Evidenced through mapping</p>

	<p>participants' intercultural learning trajectories to leading scholars showing a distinct move in their intercultural development.</p> <p>Contributes to literature through presenting findings that the role of religion shapes these participants' views towards cultural others.</p> <p>Supports theory in literature that work on cultural self is key to developing intercultural maturity.</p>
3C) Ability to reflect	<p>Counters literature on these participants' potentially limited capacity for reflection, demonstrating evidence to the contrary and thereby contributing to knowledge.</p>
3D) Impact of being second language learners	<p>Refutes literature that intercultural studies is entwined with language learning.</p> <p>Builds knowledge to demonstrate Intercultural Studies taught in isolation to second language learners is equally effective as those courses incorporating language work.</p>
3E) Importance of group work	<p>Supports Hofstede's theory of collectivist cultures being more predisposed to group work.</p>
4: The use of participants' perceptions as an assessment tool.	<p>Refutes literature that validated external assessment tools are most effective in capturing intercultural learning.</p> <p>Contributes to field by asserting that participants' perceptions of their learning provide valid and reliable assessment results.</p>
5: Practical knowledge for the classroom teacher.	<p>Reinforces literature that film and stimulations are most effective experiential learning tasks within intercultural studies.</p> <p>Supports literature that multiple experiential learning tasks are superior to a single exposure.</p> <p>Provides new knowledge to the field by presenting Muller's (2001) Worldview theory as an effective alternative framework for intercultural learning.</p> <p>Supports guidelines presented in literature review, suggesting more work on real world issues.</p>