Experience Matters: The Differential Impact of Pedagogy on Students' Cultural Intelligence – An Exploratory Study

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This study was conducted to evaluate the effect of different pedagogies on students' cultural intelligence. The study compared three pedagogical approaches – a lecture-only approach, lecture supplemented by a short-term immersive experiential approach, and a medium-term virtual experience approach. Analysis of the data suggests that experiential approaches result in significantly higher cultural intelligence in students across knowledge, skills and attitude levels. Further analysis indicates that lectures with intensive immersive experience generally result in higher cultural intelligence than a virtual experience approach on the knowledge and skills components, whereas a virtual experience approach has a better impact on the attitude component.

INTRODUCTION

A recent survey of potential employers for AACU by Hart Associates (2013) indicated that nearly 95% of the respondents acknowledged the importance of intercultural skills in hiring decisions. Organizations that wish to compete in a global market are realizing the need for a cross-cultural workforce (Eisenberg et al., 2013). Managers must develop cross-cultural skills to effectively deal with customers, employees, distribution channels, supply chains and other stakeholders in multicultural environments (Kurpis & Hunter, 2016). There is a growing need for cross-cultural education that prepares management students for a multicultural and complex world (MacNab, 2012). Business students planning to enter management positions are expected to possess a certain level of cultural intelligence in order to effectively adapt and perform in multicultural environments (Putranto et al., 2015). Preparing business students to face the challenges associated with working in a globalized environment has become a key objective for business schools. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) emphasizes the need for cultural understanding in graduates of accredited business schools (AACSB, Standard 9). Business students are expected to take courses that prepare them with the skills to adapt to different cultures (Putranto et al., 2015). These factors have resulted in an increased effort of educational

institutions to internationalize their curriculum. Such internationalization efforts are expected to result in the development of culturally competent individuals (Deardorff, 2006).

Past studies have looked at the impact of different pedagogical approaches on cultural intelligence (Eisenberg et al., 2013; Li et al., 2013). The focus of this paper is to extend past studies by attempting to assess the differential impact of various pedagogical approaches on the relative effectiveness on the cultural intelligence of students. Past studies have generally concluded that experiential learning is more effective than lecture driven approaches in enhancing cultural intelligence. However, they do not adequately demonstrate the differential impact of various experiential approaches. In other words, we are trying to answer the following question – "In the world of experiential learning techniques, is there a first among the equals when it comes to developing cultural competence across the board?" Our pilot study was designed to assess the plausibility of undertaking a more comprehensive study to assess the impact of pedagogical approaches on students' cultural intelligence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Eisenberg et al. (2013) studied the effects of cross-cultural management courses on the students' enhancement of cultural intelligence over time. Their study indicated that the use of traditional, lecture-based courses enhanced only limited aspects of cultural intelligence (CQ) - cognition and meta-cognition components . They concluded that such cross-cultural courses with lecture-only delivery often resulted in an increase in the knowledge component of CQ, but had limited impact on the attitude and skills components of CQ. Other studies (MacNab et. al., 2012; Erez et. al., 2013; Li et al., 2013; Putranto et. al., 2015) have researched the relative importance of experiential learning on the enhancement of cultural intelligence. According to Li et al. (2013), CQ is an important quality for global leaders and tends to be positively correlated to the amount of international work experience. Li et al. (2013) showed that international experiences provide cultural exposure, which often leads to improved communication and relationship building within a global context.

Various studies have been conducted to determine what leads to the development of cultural intelligence in students (Deardorff, 2006; Earley & Mosakowski, 2004; Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013). Deardorff (2006) proposed a Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence to provide a visual framework representing various levels associated with intercultural competence. At the base of the pyramid lies requisite attitude, which leads to the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Deardorff, 2006). These, in turn, lead to flexibility, adaptability, empathy and an ethnorelative view, culminating in behaviors and communication that are indicative of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). Requisite attitude, knowledge and skills, in relation to cultural competence, are captured in the concept of cultural quotient (CQ) and its three components proposed by Earley and Mosakowski (2004). Earley and Mosakowski (2004) defined cultural competence as being comprised of three components – emotional/motivation CQ, cognitive CQ, and physical CQ. These three components correlate to Deardorff's (2006) competencies of requisite attitude, knowledge, and skills, respectively. These concepts are further reflected in Thomas et al.'s (2015) 10-item, short form cultural intelligence scale (SFCQ). The SFCQ is comprised of three sub-scales – knowledge, metacognition and skills – which correspond to the concepts of knowledge and skills, as defined by Deardorff (2006).

Requisite Attitude and Cultural Intelligence

Deardorff's model (2006) indicated that respect, openness, and curiosity positively contribute to a student's requisite attitude competence. An individual who has had success working with diverse teams often develops confidence in dealing with unfamiliar situations. Such confidence can lead to success when faced with obstacles, failures, or setbacks (Earley & Masakowski, 2004). An individual who is confident in his/her ability to deal effectively with different cultures is more likely to develop the requisite attitude necessary for success, particularly in unpredictable intercultural situations. This is similar to Early and Mosakowski's (2004) notion of emotional/motivation CQ. An individual can learn about being open and respectful toward different cultures through both lecture-based and experiential learning approaches. However, exploring the roles that curiosity and discovery play in tolerating uncertainty, through

experiential learning, can have a far greater impact on overall CQ. Experiential learning, as a pedagogical approach, provides a student with the opportunity to explore first-hand the different behaviors and norms that arise in intercultural situations. These experiences require a student to adapt to the needs and expectations of others. Although requisite attitude (emotional/motivational CQ) can be positively influenced by lecture-only learning, it will not be as significant as experiential learning (Putranto et al., 2015). Experiential learning allows for more opportunities of interpersonal interaction, relationship building and immediate feedback, resulting in a higher overall CQ in students.

Knowledge and Cultural Intelligence

Deardorff's model (2006) indicated that cultural self-awareness, sociolinguistic awareness, and understanding of contexts and culture-specific information contribute to a student's knowledge and comprehension competencies. Knowledge and comprehension can lead to adaptability, flexibility, empathy, and an ethno-relative view, which are important components of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). This is similar to Early and Mosakowski's (2004) notion of cognitive CQ. Knowledge/cognitive CQ enables an individual to effectively assess foreign situations and develop appropriate strategies to deal with them (Li et al., 2013). Such strategies are critical for working in multicultural environments. An individual working on an assignment in a foreign country must learn what to expect in terms of business-specific norms, professional communication, and mannerisms. This information can be taught through lectures, guided discussions, and case studies, typically found in a lecture-based pedagogical approach. Lectures about cultural differences, local preferences, beliefs, habits, greetings, and historical influences can provide a solid foundation for approaching common situations. However, these methods do not fully expose individuals to the nuances, norms or dynamics that make a culture unique. If a situation arises out of the ordinary, a student needs to adapt his/her behaviors to suit the cultural environment (MacNab, 2012). Experiential learning provides opportunities to experience other cultures first-hand, leading to the development of better strategies for dealing with unexpected situations. Experiential learning methods may include virtual intercultural group-based projects or traveling to a foreign country and engaging with the local students. Putranto et al. (2015) showed that experiential learning as a pedagogical approach, where students actively engaged with others, increased cognitive CQ to a higher level.

Skills and Cultural Intelligence

Deardorff's (2006) model included listening, observing, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, and relating as contributing to students' skills competence. In order to truly understand culture, one has to have physical exposure to the environment. This is similar to Early and Mosakowski's (2004) physical CQ. Physical CQ is associated with an individual's ability to behave in certain ways through actions and demeanor that mirror other cultures (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). Using body language that reflects members of the community, along with other physical techniques, can create an impression of trust and openness that enable an individual to adapt more effectively in unfamiliar situations (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). These are key components of effectiveness for individuals working in an intercultural environment. Skills/physical CQ can be best developed through actual engagement, communication, and frequent interactions with others. Such engagement can occur through pedagogical approaches that provide immersion in a foreign country (short or long-term) or intercultural virtual group-based projects involving regular and frequent interaction. These approaches expose a student to the subtle cues, jargon, behaviors, and expectations that determine how to behave in intercultural situations. A student can learn (cognitively) what to expect in an intercultural environment through lecture-based learning, but that is quite different than actually experiencing the uncertainty inherent in intercultural situations. Cultural learning can be increased through international experiences that expose an individual to other cultures (Crowne, 2013). Through experiential learning, an individual can develop a better understanding of the customs, communications and expectations of another culture. It is through such engagement that an individual can begin to truly understand how body language, mannerisms, nuances and other non-verbal cues influence one's behavior and thoughts. Experiential learning, as a pedagogical

approach, helps a student develop skills that will enable him/her to analyze, evaluate, observe and interpret the citizens of other cultures more effectively, resulting in a higher overall CQ.

This review of past literature on pedagogy and development of cultural intelligence leads us to the following hypotheses,

H1a: Attitude/emotional component of cultural intelligence in students is significantly increased with the use of an experiential approach, compared to a lecture approach in a learning environment.

H1b: Knowledge/cognitive component of cultural intelligence in students is significantly increased with the use of an experiential approach, compared to a lecture approach in a learning environment.

H1c: Skills/physical component of cultural intelligence in students is significantly increased with the use of an experiential approach, compared to a lecture approach in a learning environment.

These hypotheses serve to reconfirm results of past studies on the role of experiential learning. However, as stated in the Introduction, one additional objective of this pilot study is to measure the relative impact of different experiential approaches on students' cultural intelligence. We therefore pose this as a research question

RQ1: Among experiential approaches in enhancing cultural intelligence, are some methods more effective than others?

METHODOLOGY

We evaluated students' cultural intelligence across three pedagogical approaches. The following section details the methodology adopted to choose respondents, and the process by which data was gathered.

Respondent Selection

The participants in the research study were all undergraduate students enrolled in a small private liberal arts university in the Northeast region of the US. Specifically, students from three courses were chosen to participate in the study - freshmen taking an International Business and Culture (IBC) course; freshmen taking a Preview (PV) course; and juniors/seniors taking an International Marketing (IM) course. These specific courses were chosen because one of the stated learning outcomes for each of these courses was the development/enhancement of students' cultural intelligence. Each of these courses adopted a different pedagogical approach to attain the learning outcome of improved cultural intelligence.

The IBC course is an introductory level business course usually offered to freshmen in the business school. This course adopted a traditional, face-to-face lecture mode of delivery supplemented by some independent library research and discussions by students to learn about various cultural differences and their relevance to global business strategies. The course also explored the impact of macroeconomic factors on strategic issues faced by entrepreneurs and managers operating in the global market.

The PV course is a unique course delivery system of the University. PV is a credit-bearing academic course offered (primarily) to freshmen students, that incorporates lectures, discussions, team projects, and a week-long visit to another country. The outcomes include building global connections, increasing knowledge in an academic discipline, and developing cultural awareness and sensitivity. Students meet as a class on-campus for six weeks, and then spend seven days visiting organizations and observing the local culture and sites in a foreign country. Students may participate in exchanges with local students to further enhance their cultural awareness. The course culminates with a final team project integrating each student's travel experience with the academic content of the course.

The IM course consists of students partaking in a global virtual team project (X-Culture). This project is comprised of students being put in cross-cultural teams from various countries, working together to develop a business plan for a real client. The objective is to develop stronger team-working and cultural skills among the students. The class is structured as a project-based class, involving an intensive project

with very little formal lectures related to the concepts. Students are required to learn both concepts and cultural intelligence actively through experiences, rather than through passive lectures, to deliver a strong report for the project.

Thus, the focus of each of the three courses, in spite of similar learning outcomes, is to adapt distinct approaches, to realize the outcomes. One course relies on a traditional lecture/library research approach whereas two courses adopt aspects of experiential learning. The IBC course uses only lectures and library research but no real interaction with different cultures to enhance cultural learning. The PV course uses lectures to familiarize with cultural differences, and later exposes students to actual, intensive, and immersive interaction with a foreign culture for seven full days, by taking students on a trip to the foreign country. Finally, the IM course uses a virtual team project, involving students from various cultures, to interact and improve their cultural intelligence, through hands on project execution (without any dedicated didactic approach to teach cultural intelligence) with little or no formal lectures.

Data Collection

Each of the students who were enrolled in the three classes were administered both the 12 item scale of Earley & Mosakowski (2004) and the 10 item SFCQ of Thomas et al. (2015). In addition, basic demographic information about the students was collected (age, gender and major). Surveys were administered to all students at the end of their respective courses during the spring 2016 semester. In addition to the end of the semester administration of the survey, students enrolled in the PV course were administered this survey a second time during the course. This survey was administered to these students after completion of the lecture sessions related to familiarizing them with cultural differences but before they went on the foreign trip for immersive interaction with a foreign culture. The timing of the administration of this survey served a significant research objective.

Sample

Because of the small size of the university and class sizes, our initial sample frame was small. The IM class had a total enrollment of 8 students, the IBC class had an enrollment of 15 students and the PV class had an enrollment of 23 students. Diligent administration and persistence of the instructors of these courses resulted in a sample size of 8 for IM, 12 for IBC and 23 for PV. In addition, past students who had taken the IM course with X-Culture were contacted to complete the survey in an attempt to boost the sample size. A total of 28 students were contacted who had taken the course within the last 12 months and of these 28 students, 19 students responded, resulting in an overall size of the IM class of 27 students. Evaluation of non-responders of the IM course showed that these students had already graduated and no longer had access to the email address used for the online survey. The final sample size that was achieved and used for the purpose of analysis was 62 students (23-PV, 12-IBC and 27-IM).

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

As stated above, the objective of this study was to assess the extent to which different pedagogies impacted students' cultural intelligence. We also wanted to see if the two experiential approaches had any differential impact on the development of students' cultural intelligence. Therefore, to determine the differential impact of pedagogies on cultural intelligence, one-way ANOVA was performed, by using the summated scores on the components of cultural intelligence (Earley & Mosakowski's 2004 CQ, PQ, EQ and JIBS 2015's SFCQ) as dependent variables. The results of the one-way ANOVA are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1
RESULTS OF ONE WAY ANOVA ON COMPONENTS OF CQ ACROSS PEDAGOGIES

Component of Cultural Intelligence	Group Means			df (n,d)	F	*p*
	Lecture	Immersive	Virtual			
Attitude (ECQ)	3.90	4.27	4.32	2,62	2.192	.120
Knowledge (CCQ)	3.33	4.04	3.84	2,59	6.792	.002
Skills (PCQ)	3.21	4.28	3.80	2,59	9.758	.000
Knowledge + Skills (SFCQ)	3.42	4.18	3.90	2,59	7.530	.001

In addition to the omnibus test of mean differences, post-hoc comparison between means were conducted using Bonferroni Adjustment as well as Dunnett (keeping the lecture mode as control and testing for one way differences as hypothesized). These pairwise comparisons indicated that experiential approaches (PV and IM) resulted in significantly better learning than the lecture method. Further, the two experiential approaches were not significantly different from each other on the cultural intelligence scores. Thus, our hypotheses were supported on all three areas of learning – attitude, knowledge and skills, but this analysis did not provide any insights to address our research question.

Moreover, a limitation of this analysis is that the students undergoing the virtual experience were significantly older than students in the immersive experience and lecture modes. This age/maturity may impact the extent of cultural learning, so a simple ANOVA may not reflect the impact of these age differences. To tease out the effect of age, and to possibly address the research question, a dummy variable regression was performed on the pooled data. The three pedagogical approaches were converted to dummy variables with the lecture method being the baseline. Additionally, age of the respondent was used as a covariate to control for the effect of age on cultural intelligence. Results of the dummy variable regressions are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
RESULTS OF DUMMY VARIABLE REGRESSION

Variable	Attitude (ECQ)			Knowledge (CCQ)			Skills (PCQ)			Knowledge + Skills (SFCQ)		
	B	SE	B	B	SE	B	b	SE	b	b	SE	b
Intercept	4.01	0.36		3.64	0.33		3.73	0.41		3.63	0.33	
PV	0.47*	0.22	0.37	0.68*	0.20	0.57	1.07*	0.25	0.67	0.72*	0.20	0.58
IM	0.55*	0.22	0.44	0.56*	0.20	0.47	0.73*	0.25	0.46	0.48*	0.21	0.40
Age	-0.01	0.02	-0.10	-0.02	0.01	-0.14	-0.03	0.02	-0.19	-0.01	0.01	-0.08
F statistic (df1,df2)	2.187# (3,57)			4.48* (3,57)			7.339* (3,57)			4.361* (3,57)		
R^2	0.103			0.191			0.279			0.187		

Note: * $p < 0.05$# $p < 0.10$

As seen from Table 2, even after accounting for students' age, the experiential learning techniques used in the PV and IM courses have a significantly higher impact on students than the lecture based IBC course. This further supports our hypotheses. Another observation from Table 2 is that although there were no significant differences between the experiential modes as seen in the pair-wise ANOVA, the two approaches did exhibit differential impact on the extent of learning after controlling for age. For knowledge and skills related components of cultural intelligence, the immersive experience approach

used in the PV course was more impactful than the virtual experience approach used in the IM course as seen by the standardized betas of the regression models.

A final analysis was done to see the extent of improvement within a particular pedagogical approach as a pre-post assessment was conducted for the PV class, where the survey was administered twice. There were a couple of reasons why this pre-post assessment was done for the PV class: (a) to see the extent of impact of lecture and experience on the improvement in CQ; and (b) to be able to compare more critically between IBC and PV as both pertained to students in their freshman year. Results of the pre-post analysis are provided in Table 3.

TABLE 3
PRE-POST ANALYSIS OF CQ SCORES FOR THE IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

	Before	After	Difference (Aft-Bef)	T	*P*
Attitude (ECQ)	3.935	4.272	0.337	-2.499	.020
Knowledge (CCQ)	3.609	4.043	0.435	-4.597	.000
Skills (PCQ)	3.598	4.283	0.685	-4.374	.000
Knowledge + Skills (SFCQ)	3.709	4.178	0.470	-5.276	.000

Results indicate that the immersive experience did play a role in enhancing students' cultural intelligence on all dimensions. The "Before" score represents the cultural intelligence scores of students after lecturing about cultural similarities and differences. The "After" score represents the cultural intelligence after the students underwent the immersive experience in a foreign culture (1 week after their return from the international experience). As Table 3 clearly shows, students exhibited a significant improvement in their cultural intelligence on all dimensions after going through the immersive experience.

Extending this analysis to compare across pedagogical approach, we compared the "Before" score of the PV course to the score at the end of the semester for the IBC course. The rationale for such an analysis was that (a) students partaking in both of these courses were mostly freshmen and so were similar to each other (unlike students in the virtual experience approach who were older and closer to graduation) and (b) both of the scores - "Before" score of the immersive and the "After" score of the lecture based approaches) are similar to one another, as both of these scores were obtained after students went through a lecture mode to gain cultural understanding. Results of this comparison are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4
COMPARISON BETWEEN IMMERSIVE (BEFORE) AND LECTURE (AFTER) APPROACHES

	Immersive (Before Experience; n=23)	Lecture (After; n=12)	Absolute Mean Difference	T	*P*
Attitude (ECQ)	3.934	3.896	0.038	0.206	.838
Knowledge (CCQ)	3.608	3.333	0.275	1.430	.162
Skills (PCQ)	3.598	3.208	0.390	1.818	.078
Knowledge + Skills (SFCQ)	3.708	3.416	0.292	1.854	.079

Table 4 shows that students did not exhibit statistically significant differences in their scores. These results, combined with the results of Table 3, provide additional support for our hypotheses on the role of experiential learning to enhance knowledge, skills, and attitude components of cultural intelligence.

DISCUSSION

We began this analysis by trying to assess the role of experiential learning in enhancement of cultural intelligence. To this effect, both ANOVA and Regression analysis supported our hypotheses and confirmed findings of past studies that experiential learning does enhance students' cultural intelligence significantly more than a lecture-based approach.

Another objective of the study was to observe the differential impact of experiential approaches on cultural intelligence. As seen from Table 2, a combination of lecture and experience rather than unprimed experience is probably better to improve students' cultural intelligence. Additionally, Table 2 shows that real interactive, immersive experience yields greater improvements in students' cultural intelligence over virtual experiences. This is evidenced by the higher standardized co-efficients associated with the PV course rather than the IM course. However, it has to be noted that once age was included in the model, standardized beta for the attitude/motivational component for the IM was higher than the PV course, indicating that once controlled for age, virtual experience provides a higher motivation and a stronger improvement in attitude component. This is likely explained because attitude is a fairly long term construct compared to knowledge, and takes more time to develop. The IM course had a substantially longer experiential component to the course compared to the PV course which might have resulted in such findings.

Table 3 further supports our hypothesis and is consistent with past studies (MacNab et. al., 2012; Erez et. al., 2013; Putranto et. al., 2015 & Li, Mobley and Kelly, 2013) that have found that experiences significantly improve students' cultural intelligence over mere lectures. This significant improvement can come with an immersive experience as short as seven days providing rich context and opportunities to demonstrate skills of cultural competence.

Table 4 shows a marginal significance ($p < 0.10$) on the PQ and SFCQ components of the cultural intelligence for two pedagogical approaches. Students in the immersive approach show a marginally higher score on the skills (PQ) and SFCQ (K+S) compared to the lecture only approach even though both courses had adopted only lectures at that point of time. This is likely to be indicative of the role of anticipation of the upcoming experiential component, influencing the students to focus on the requisite skills to perform better during the experiential component of the course. This may have resulted in a more focused and conscious effort by these students to acquire requisite skills. However, lecturing alone had no significant difference on knowledge or attitude of the students in both approaches which indicates that short term approaches may not have desired effects on attitude. This finding is also consistent with our results from Table 2, where a longer term virtual experience resulted in higher scores for the attitude component over the short term immersive approach.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Although this is an exploratory pilot study, it does suffer from some limitations. One limitation of the study is that the sample sizes were small and that all subjects were part of a single, small US private university. This affects generalizability of the findings. Future studies should aim at larger and more representative samples from different types of institutions to enhance generalizability. Another shortcoming of this study is that a pre-post assessment was not done for all the pedagogies evaluated. Again logistic limitations prevented us from doing this but should be addressed in future studies. A final limitation was that only age and gender information were collected from students, as we did not want to unduly burden the students with questions. The courses used in the study were intensive courses, and long questionnaires would have resulted in poor response rates, which we could not afford. This was also the reason why only the short forms of CQ scales were used. Future studies should consider testing using multiple conceptualization of cultural intelligence as well as obtain more individual specific factors that are known to influence cultural intelligence (such as extent of international experience, race/ethnicity, domestic/international student, etc.).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study reconfirmed the findings of past studies that experiential learning leads to higher students' cultural intelligence across all its components compared to a traditional lecture-based approach. Our study also teased out the differential effects of experiential techniques and our limited data indicates that even short term face-to-face immersive experiences can have a higher impact than virtual experiences that may be more long term. Limitations and future directions of the study were also discussed.

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