Galvanizing Intercultural Competence

A Qualitative Analysis of the Influence of High-Impact Practices on First-Year Students' Attitudes

Towards Intercultural Competence Development

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In the 21st century, there exists an imperative to engage with the global community. Business professionals, in particular, have long understood the importance of global perspectives and the ability to interact not only in the business and economic sectors but also within the interconnected realms of culture and language. However, this skill set is not unique in business nor is it confined to international exchanges. Even within our own borders, fields that once operated entirely domestically now have a greater appreciation for intercultural communication - physicians speaking colloquial Spanish to better communicate with patients, east coast partners understanding west coast regional culture in order to better market a product, or teachers working with students and parents from all over the world in ever-intensifying refugee resettlement movements.

With increased attention in higher education on students' ability to engage with and prepare professionally for work within a pluralistic global community, institutions, faculty, and student services have turned to identifying intentional interventions to galvanize student intercultural competence. Simply being in the vicinity of difference does not make for strong intercultural experiences where understanding of others can take place (Bennett, 1998). In recent years, institutions have enacted rapid internationalization of both academic curricula and extracurricular activities to better prepare students as global citizens (Altbach & Knight, 2007; De Wit, 2014). An American Council on Education's working group on Assessing International Learning developed a series of learning outcomes that globally competent students should meet. Knowledge of one's own culture within a comparative context, knowledge of other

cultures and global issues, the skill to communicate and connect with people in other languages, the skill to use one's intercultural knowledge in an array of settings, and an appreciation for other cultures different from one's own are among the outcomes outlined (Olson, et al, 2005). By developing this set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, students are expected to have achieved the ability to more successfully interact and do business with the world at large.

These learning outcomes were developed using the most commonly agreed upon definition of intercultural competence available at this time: the "ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, to shift frames of reference appropriately and adapt behavior to cultural context; [and the] ability to identify behaviors guided by culture and engage in new behaviors in other cultures" (Deardorff, 2006). While the field of intercultural development in higher education is still relatively new and scholars and practitioners alike continue to make more precise interpretations of intercultural competence, this definition and accompanying tools for student assessment, i.e. the Intercultural Development Inventory used in this study, are considered sound and valid as scholarship around these ideas continues to advance.

This study aims to add to prior research, particularly the limited qualitative knowledge around intercultural competence development in higher education, asking specifically:

What is the effect of high-impact practices on first-year students'
intercultural competence development in higher education?

The research herein investigates those high-impact practices employed at a four-year private business college in Massachusetts. High-impact practices, later fully defined in the literature reviewed, are pedagogical tools used to more deeply engage students in learning processes

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both inside and outside the classroom (Kuh, 2008). Intentionally designed high-impact practices have been seen to enhance the student experience, drive students' motivation to learn, and even positively impact student retention (Bleicher, 2020; Katsumoto & Bowman, 2021; Kilgo, et al, 2015; Watson, Kuh, et al, 2016; Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

There is also an emphasis in intercultural competence scholarship on lifelong learning, and the idea that intercultural competence is not developed in a moment in time but rather through increasing and continuous curiosity about the world and its people (Deardorff, 2006, 2015). This idea significantly influenced this study and questions about the timing of intentional interventions in a student's college career. Specifically, a secondary research question evolved:

Can intentional interventions in the first year of college help to galvanize students' positive attitudes towards intercultural competence learning?

In other words, this study aimed to assess particular high-impact practices and activities geared to first-year students and the impact those interventions have on student attitudes towards continuing their intercultural competence development throughout college and into the future.

- LITERATURE REVIEW -

Introduction

This literature review provides historical context as well as a snapshot of the current trends in intercultural competence in higher education, offering a definition employed for the purposes of this research. For this study with Babson College, it was also important to review intercultural competence as a critical skill for students of global business. The confluence of higher education and the field of business provides a stark framework through which to examine the importance of intercultural competence for today's students.

Secondly, the review surveyed literature defining high-impact practices (HIPs) and intentional interventions in intercultural competence in higher education. Specifically, this research focused on two learning communities at Babson College designed to affect global learning. Therefore, the review sought to identify similar scenarios influencing learning among college students, additionally pinpointing what circumstances, activities, and pedagogies are most impactful and why.

And finally, literature was analyzed for instances of intercultural competence in first-year undergraduate students. A secondary goal of this study was to determine if the timing of certain high-impact practices affected the attitudes of undergraduate students towards intercultural competence development and thereby helped to galvanize students' inclinations to continue learning in the future.

Historical Context and Definitions

Even with recurring demand for a singular definition of intercultural competence in scholarship of the last decade, mixed approaches and understandings remain pervasive. While it is considered imperative by most institutions both in the U.S. and abroad that students gain some level of aptitude as global citizens, exactly what constitutes intercultural competence and how to measure student outcomes varies. Despite this fact, two definitions and two instruments of measure have emerged as the most widely accepted among scholars and practitioners and therefore will guide this research as well.

In its 2009 VALUE Rubrics (AAC&U, 2009), The Association of American Colleges & Universities used both Bennett's (Bennett & Bennett, 1993) and Deardorff's (2006) definitions

of intercultural competence to frame fundamental criteria related to learning outcomes in undergraduate education. These Rubrics provided institutions with the means to "articulate and measure the skills, abilities, and dispositions that students need and that parents, policymakers, and employers demand" (AAC&U, 2009). Bennett and Deardorff's definitions, therefore, are seen as foundational in the field of intercultural competence and higher education learning in general.

Milton Bennett first introduced, and later revised, his Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) in 1986 to formally assess student development in intercultural encounters. Bennett used the term *intercultural sensitivity*, defined as an ability to recognize cultural differences (Bennett & Bennett, 1993), as the basis of his model. Bennett proposed that experience is "constructed through perception" and therefore students learn to perceive differently, and thereby become *more sensitive*, as they experience people and cultures other than their own. He explained that this type of learning happened on a spectrum from *ethnocentrism* to *ethnorelativism (Figure 1.1)*. In other words, as students grow and attain greater competence through intercultural exposure, they will work through stages or "orientations" through which they view cultures (Bennett, 1986, 1993). This early work was fundamental to future models of assessment and definitions used in scholarship today (Hammer, et al, 2003; Hammer, 2019).
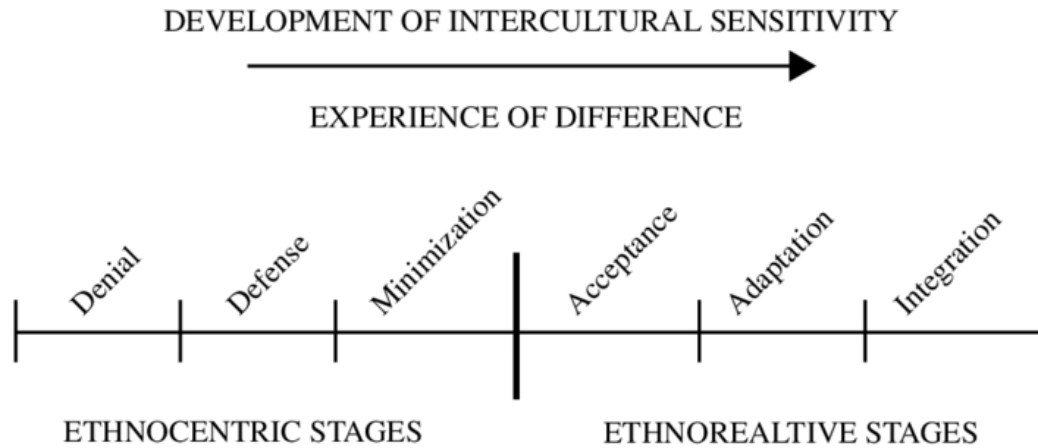
DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY

EXPERIENCE OF DIFFERENCE

| Denial | Defense | Minimization | | Acceptance | Adaptation | Integration |

ETHNOCENTRIC STAGES   ETHNOREALTIVE STAGES

Figure 1.1 (Bennett & Bennett, 2004)

The DMIS would later inform the design of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)(*Figure 1.2*), used as the quantitative instrument for this research. The IDI is widely accepted as a valid instrument for "assessing and building cultural competence" (Hammer & Bennett, 2019). While Bennett's work defined *intercultural sensitivity*, there are important distinctions between that and *intercultural competence*. Intercultural sensitivity, measured by the DMIS, describes a student's development of deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural differences. Intercultural competence, by contrast, is "a range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication [and interactions] with people of other cultures" (Deardorff, 2006). While *sensitivity* refers to perceiving, acknowledging, or appreciating other cultures, *competence* is the ability to effectively operate within and around other cultures, a skill deemed essential to success in a range of fields and careers, particularly business.
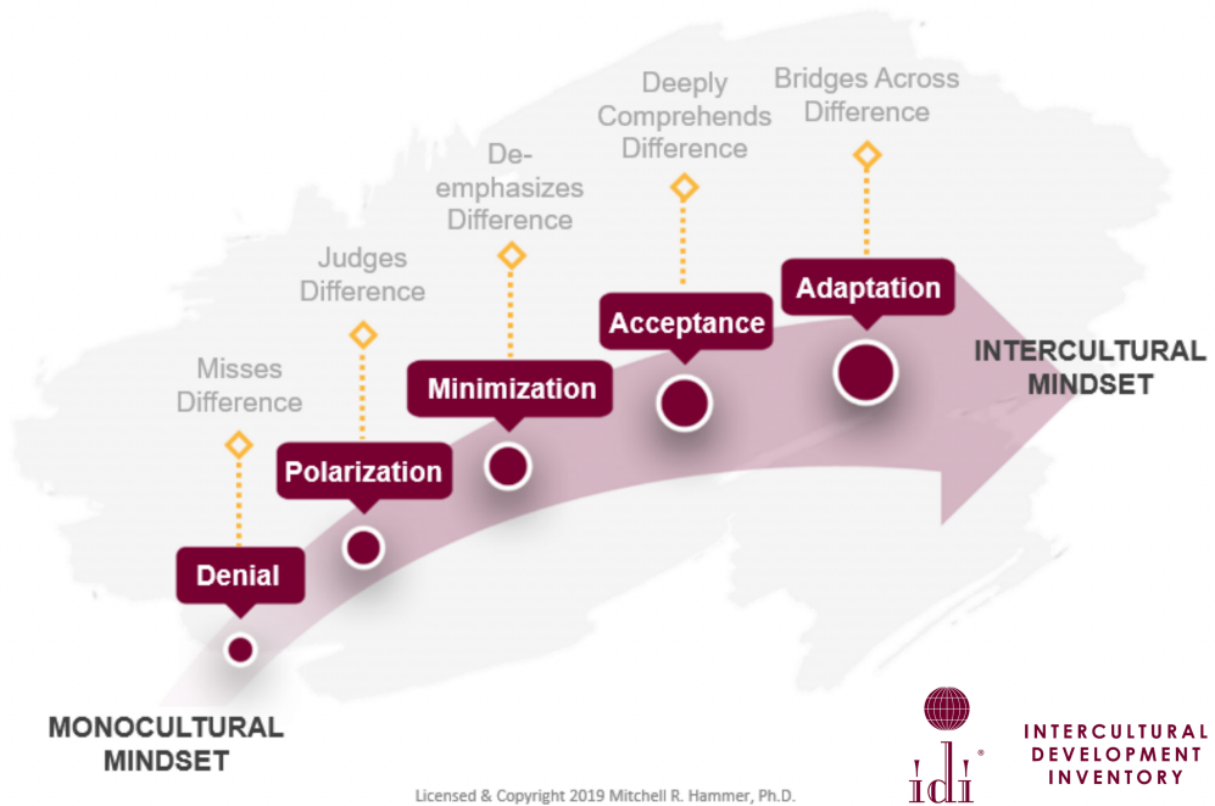
Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC™)

Deeply Comprehends Difference

Bridges Across Difference

De-emphasizes Difference

Judges Difference

Misses Difference

Adaptation

Acceptance

Minimization

Polarization

Denial

INTERCULTURAL MINDSET

MONOCULTURAL MINDSET

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY

Figure 1.2 (Hammer, 2019)

Like the DMIS, the IDI situates students along a continuum of learning and understanding. In the IDI, individuals move from a *Monocultural Mindset* to an *Intercultural Mindset*, from *Denial* to *Adaptation.* In *Denial*, individuals do not experience cultural difference. It is assumed that these individuals generally have not yet been exposed to other cultures and, therefore, cannot recognize differences. The next orientation on the continuum is *Polarization*. This is often referred to as the "us and them" stage, in which individuals see cultural difference only as opposed to their own. Individuals within the *Minimization* orientation minimize

differences, instead focusing on cultural commonalities. This stage is often seen as interfering with one's true understanding of cultural differences as it rejects nuances between cultures.

Intercultural Mindset moves through *Acceptance* and *Adaptation*. Within the *Acceptance* orientation, individuals begin to *deeply comprehend differences*; to recognize both differences and similarities in a way that encourages curiosity and further exploration of other cultures. Individuals in the *Adaptation* orientation both recognize and appreciate cultural differences and similarities and are also able to shift their behaviors to operate within another culture in more appropriate ways. It is important to distinguish *Adaptation* from *acculturation*, or assimilation to a dominant culture. A good example of *Adaptation* would be learning appropriate greetings within a culture and using those greetings appropriately. Whereas *acculturation* would mean an individual adopts a new culture's beliefs or customs instead of their own, *Adaptation* involves learning the new culture's beliefs to more appropriately and effectively communicate with others. This mode of operation is particularly important for businesses operating globally, as explored in the next section.

One additional definition of intercultural competence significantly informed this research, particularly as the learning communities in question included both U.S. students at an American institution as well as international students studying in the U.S. Leung, Ang, and Tan (2014) provided this interpretation:

> *Intercultural competence is the ability to function effectively across cultures, to think and act appropriately, and to communicate and work with people from different cultural backgrounds - at home or abroad*.

This interpretation goes further than previous definitions to include an implicit requirement of self-reflection, which proved valuable to the methodology of this study.

As seen in Figure 1.3, one's skills, attitudes, and communication with and within other

cultures are equally informed by one's own culture (identity, beliefs, values, and

self-awareness). Scholarship on intercultural competence of the last decade has placed a

growing emphasis on both concrete experiences as well as reflection on those

experiences (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Leung, et al, 2014; Li, et al, 2013). The qualitative

instruments designed for this study accordingly employed self-reflection as

student-participants encountered others and other cultures through a series of events
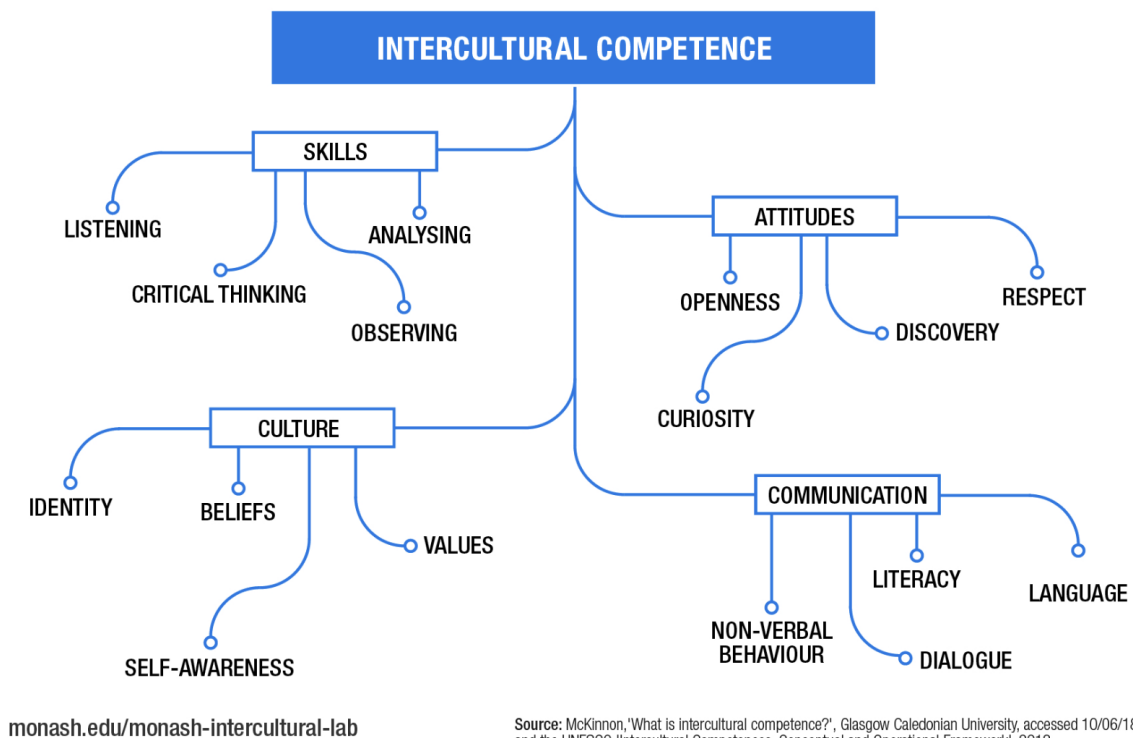
and activities in their first semester in college.

Figure 1.3 (McKinnon, 2018)

Intercultural Competence in Business

International business, free trade, outsourcing, and the nature of global markets at large implore nations to globalization. In the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic, understanding the dynamics which impact globalization, such as geopolitics as well as cultural and institutional specificities, is even more important. For these reasons, it is especially critical for students of business, such as those who participated in this study, to achieve a certain level of skill in global markets and intercultural competence.

Several papers have purported the importance of intercultural competence in the field of business and in business education (AACSB, 2011; Huang, et al, 2010; Freeman, et al, 2009; Morley & Cerdin, 2010; Muzychenko, 2008; Gowindasamy, 2017). The overarching message of these papers is that the development of cross-border business relationships necessitates "trust, co-operation, commitment, adaptation, satisfaction, and long-term orientation" of partners in such relationships (Huang, Rayner & Zhaung, 2010). These skills and orientations toward intercultural understanding are seen to significantly improve the identification and quality of business relationships over time through opportunity identification, as seen in Figure 1.4 from a European study completed on the topic of cross-cultural entrepreneurial competence (Muzychenko, 2008).
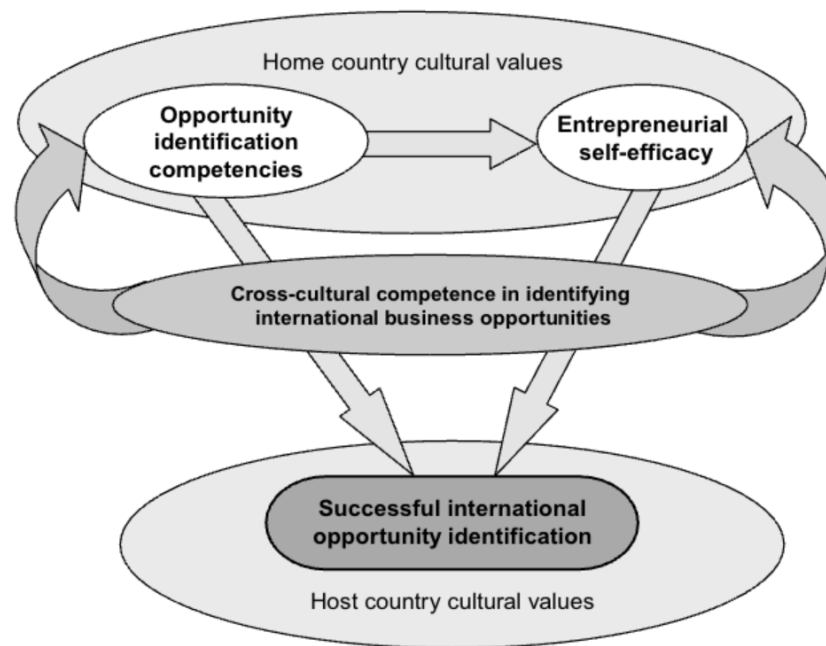
Figure 1.4: The role of cross-cultural competence in international opportunity identification. (Muzychenko, 2008)

These papers give credence to the value of studying intercultural competence within a business college context specifically. From a practical perspective, intercultural competence has been seen to improve individual achievement in careers in global business. It is no wonder then that Babson College's Mission Statement and Statement of Purpose allude to educating the College's students to enter the increasingly diverse and interconnected world business community:

> *Babson College prepares and empowers entrepreneurial leaders who create, grow, and steward sustainable economic and social value – everywhere…*
> *Empower learners everywhere to create lasting value for themselves, their communities, and the world (Babson, 2023).*

The question remains, however, *how* do colleges and universities teach and assess intercultural competence? This review will explore this question in the following section.

High-Impact Practices

Studies have shown that students achieve greater success when purposeful learning happens across disciplines and activities (Power & Handley, 2019; Stehr & Weingart, 2000). The global circumstances in which we live demand ever-evolving, interconnected approaches to more complex problems. This in turn demands that higher education become a platform where students can synthesize knowledge academically as well as socially, inter- as well as trans-disciplinarily. The more often a student is exposed to learning at all times, *everywhere* (Babson, 2023) in their college experience, the greater the chance they will integrate those lessons. A 2015 study noted that U.S. undergraduate students' overall intercultural competence was not significantly increased by simply being exposed to new cultures through overseas immersion (Cushner & Chang, 2015). By creating environments in which students can learn about themselves and others, both inside and outside of the classroom, both abroad and at home, students achieve a greater ability to embody their new-found competencies in the real world.

High-impact practices (HIPs) are effective educational pedagogies designed to promote deep learning and student engagement (AAC&U, 2022; Finley, 2019; Kilgo, et al, 2015; Kuh, 2008; Kuh, et al, 2006). A good deal of scholarship on the topic of intercultural competence and HIPs focuses primarily on the vehicle of study abroad, widely considered an important HIP in higher education. For example, the Georgetown Consortium study (Vande Berg, Connor-Lindton, & Paige, 2009), considered one of the most comprehensive research studies on intercultural competence in recent years, shared evidence that studying abroad does in fact impact student learning outcomes in intercultural competence, to varying degrees. The

Wesleyan Intercultural Competence Scale, a valid questionnaire used as a framework for scholarship in the study of intercultural development, specifically measures the impact of study abroad (Stemler, et al, 2014) instead of also considering alternative HIPs that affect intercultural competence.

And yet, during the COVID-19 pandemic, institutions around the world were forced to shut down many aspects of the student experience, including study abroad. While studying abroad is an important aspect of international education and developing intercultural competence, the toll of the last three years left serious and lasting upheaval in institutions' study abroad and global programs. In July 2020, NAFSA: the Association of International Educators submitted a critical study to urge the United States Congress "to ensure the survival of study abroad programs at U.S. colleges and universities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic" (NAFSA, 2020) after a nearly $1 billion impact on U.S. higher education overall due to shortened or canceled study abroad programs. Institutions have entered a critical juncture in which it is time to explore alternatives to the traditional study abroad model and further explore other HIPs which may equally or effectively influence students' intercultural competence.

For the purpose of this research, three categories of HIPs were further defined: *First-Year Seminars and Experiences, Diversity/Global Learning,* and *Learning Communities.* The first will be analyzed later on in the following section of this review. The AAC&U defines *Diversity/Global Learning* as "courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own" (2022). An important aspect of this type of HIP is confronting *difficult differences* that fundamentally challenge a student's global and personal perspectives. Prior literature has shown that student achievement varies among participants in

high-impact activities, such as in diversity and global learning courses and study abroad (Katsumoto & Bowman, 2021; Kilgo, et al, 2015). However, one theme that did emerge centers on the notion of *intent, integration*, and *impact*. If institutions are *intentional* in the *integrated* design, execution, and analysis of their diversity and global learning experiences, students in turn experience greater *impact* on their sense of personal growth, leadership skills, and intercultural competence (Bleicher, 2020; Kilgo, et al, 2015; Soria & Johnson, 2017; Watson, Kuh, et al, 2016).

Understanding the notion of *Learning Communities* proved to be critical to this research. *Learning Communities* often "encourage integration of learning across courses [and] involve students with 'big questions' that matter beyond the classroom" (AAC&U, 2022). More broadly, *learning communities* are shared spaces where students converge to discuss, explore, and learn together (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999). The cohorts addressed in this study bring diverse students together through intentional interactions, encouraging interdependence, shared knowledge and responsibility. Studies show that these types of learning environments can increase students' openness to diversity, personal and interpersonal development, greater affinity for peers, and engagement in the academic classroom (Cabrera, et al, 2002; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Lardner, 2003; Soria & Mitchell, 2015) as well as "positively impact academic performance, collaborative learning, and overall satisfaction with the college experience (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). This multiplicity of student personal and academic outcomes achieved in *learning communities* is similar to those seen in students with an intercultural mindset and leading orientation on the Intercultural Development Continuum. Students who have more frequent opportunities to

interact with diverse peers, i.e. within a *learning community*, will more likely develop a greater sense of intercultural competence.

Another idea that emerged in this literature, and is taking shape in more recent scholarship on higher education and student affairs more generally, is the concept of *HIPS at HOME*. There has been a resounding appeal across higher education for increased quality access and equity in all areas. This call to action extends to alternative global HIPs, particularly as student financing remains a significant barrier to study abroad opportunities. DeWit and Leask (2019) offered these thoughts:

> *For internationalization of higher education to benefit all, there is a need to re-conceptualize notions of internationalization "at home" and "for all" and practice ways of "being" international, ensure that opportunities are created for students to explore local-global interconnectivity, and to ensure that it advances equity of access and participation (DeWit & Leask, 2019).*

DeWit and Leask address the imperative many institutions are facing, for more appropriate and intentional pedagogy as colleges and universities recover from the impact of the 2019 pandemic on study abroad but also as these institutions look to address equity and access for their students. The Babson College learning communities and programming explored in this study respond to many of these same considerations around intentionality; an important aspect of the programs which is believed to have impacted student-participant intercultural competence.

Intercultural Competence in First-Year Students

Many colleges and universities incorporate freshman-year seminars, cohort or community learning, and extracurricular programming into the first-year experience. The idea behind these activities is to prime students' capacities for "critical inquiry, information literacy,

collaborative learning," and more (AAC&U, 2022). While there is significant research available

regarding academic and extracurricular programming designed to improve students'

intercultural competence throughout their college career, there are limitations in the literature

available assessing the impact of these activities within a student's first year of college. For

example, whereas many study abroad programs are reserved for junior and senior-level

students, intercultural competence is therefore often only assessed in those years of a student's

college experience. However, intercultural competence deserves exploration much earlier in a

student's development. Only a few notable studies have considered first-year students entering

this critical juncture in their personal and professional lives and the types of HIPs that may be

most effective at this stage of learning.

One study specifically examined precollege traits and intercultural knowledge.

Hightower explains that "by knowing some information about students, educators in higher

education can better challenge and support students' development of intercultural

competence…appropriately [meeting] the needs of a first-year student" (2016). Nearly 3,000

first-year students participated in a longitudinal study over three years, taking part in both the

CIRP Freshman Survey (Keup, 2004) and the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES)(Mendenhall,

et al, 2011). Key variables surveyed in the CIRP Freshman Survey include established behaviors

in high school, academic preparedness, admissions decisions, expectations of college,

interactions with peers and faculty, student values and goals, student demographics, and

financial concerns (Keup, 2004). The IES, similar to other tools used in measuring intercultural

competence, points to six dimensions of global leadership skills, those on both a personal or

small group level and those on a macro scale, such as skills that might be used in global business

exchanges. On the personal or small group level, participants are assessed on cross-cultural relationships, cognitive orientation, and traits and values. On the macro level, the assessment measures global business expertise, global organizing expertise, and visioning. The study found strong correlation between the variables identified in the CIRP Freshman Survey and the variables of the IES; in other words, the experiences, attitudes, values, and opinions that students bring with them to college were found to invariably impact the way they learn intercultural skills in college (Hightower, 2016).

However, demographic and other pre-college factors are difficult to predict. How then may institutions more strategically design intentional and effective curricular and co-curricular programming in intercultural competence to meet first-year students where they are while affecting the greatest impact on their intercultural competence and galvanizing first-year positive attitudes toward future learning? What types of high-impact practices are most effective? What barriers or pathways to intercultural competence are present for first-year students as opposed to students further along in their college experience?

A 2014 study provided some insight, examining international first-year students' perceptions of intercultural learning experiences within a U.S. institution. The study's goal was to enhance practitioners' understanding and delivery of intercultural competence development exercises, both inside and outside the classroom (Lee, et al, 2014) By gathering qualitative student data from multiple years of a first-year experience program, the paper discovered three themes significant to student intercultural development: that a broad range of contexts (both inside and outside the classroom) allowed students to gain new knowledge about themselves

and others, practice their own communication, and interpret and relate to different cultures and people (Lee, et al, 2014).

A more recent study commissioned by Ithaca College (Bleicher, 2020) over ten years sought to assess the institution's first-year seminar as a tool to cultivate intentional learning; a scalable feature for intercultural development. The study involved eighteen cohorts and over 300 students participating in similar exercises and activities in their first year of college. Through a combination of written assignments, reflections, and coursework, the study found that "students gain[ed] clarity in the understanding of their own values, opinions on issues, and sense of self as learners" (Bleicher, 2020). The study identified key moments of "success" including persistence to a second year of study, connection with the campus community, and a generally positive level of academic achievement and engagement, concluding that first-year seminars are an important pedagogical tool that may be scaled to serve various institutional and student purposes.

While the depth of research around intercultural development in first-year students is limited, these key studies provided a valuable foundation for this and future research.

Limitations In Previous Literature

Prior research has quantitatively analyzed student intercultural competence using frameworks like the Intercultural Development Inventory, and others. That data helps to illustrate gains in intercultural competence over time given intentional interventions. However, little qualitative data is available at this time to explain *how* those gains are achieved and to illuminate student attitudes toward this type of learning.

The scope of this research focused on qualitative analysis, contemplating how Babson

College's intentional interventions, i.e., the Glavin Global Fellows (GGF) and Global Scholars (GS)

learning communities, impact first-year student experiences, concepts, and attitudes around

intercultural competence. These narratives augmented quantitative data gathered through

pre-semester IDI assessments. These components form a framework to analyze which

interventions are most effective at priming first-year students for lifelong intercultural learning.

Additionally, research isolating the first-year experience as a basis of analysis is limited.

The project sought to illuminate that specific timeframe as it relates to intercultural competence

and attitudes toward intercultural learning both within that first-year undergraduate experience

and beyond, to understand if the timing of intercultural experiences in college matters.

- RESEARCH QUESTIONS & CONTEXT -

This study was conducted at Babson College, a private, four-year business university in

Wellesley, Massachusetts, known particularly for its entrepreneurial undergraduate and MBA

programs. Data collection took place during the fall semester (September to December 2022).

The university is comprised of 2,350 undergraduate students and 1,000 graduate students.

Students attend Babson College from over 80 countries, and there is a heavy emphasis on global

research across disciplines (Babson-1, 2022).

> Twenty-eight percent of its undergraduate students are international[1]. An
> additional 11 percent hold dual passports. All in all, students from 83 countries
> walk Babson's campus and together speak more than 60 languages.
>
> Because of this, and the true global experience Babson provides, Forbes has
> named Babson one of the top 10 colleges for international students nationwide.
> (Radicioni, 2019)

Participants in the study were students in their first semester of the first year of college who had self-selected and/or applied to one or both of two learning community cohorts, the Global Scholars and Glavin Global Fellows, specifically targeting the global experience. Students in both learning communities participate in intentional programming designed to imbue intercultural competence by promoting critical thinking, collective learning, and meaning-making on issues of diversity and global citizenship.

Contextually, both the Global Scholars and Glavin Global Fellows programs have undergone significant changes in recent years, in large part due to interruptions in education due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of a smaller matriculating class of international students, the entering class of Global Scholars in fall 2022 were not housed in a living-learning community as in past years, instead relying more heavily on academic and community-based extracurricular activities, those high-impact practices, to bring these students together to engage collectively. Glavin Global Fellows no longer participate in a first-year seminar. Instead, students enroll in a college-wide first-year course (*Foundations of Management and Entrepreneurship*) required of all students. Additionally, the Glavin Global Fellows staff has shifted with new roles including a dedicated resident assistant and student worker. This research came about at a time when program administrators are taking a more intentional approach to new curriculum development and programming at large. The primary research question helps to ideate around how administrators are rebuilding as well as how they will address new post-pandemic, in-person changes and challenges:

What is the impact of high-impact practices on first-year intercultural competence development?

The secondary research further probes the connection between these first-year high-impact practices and a student's future endeavors, an important objective of the learning communities observed which aim to engage students across all four years of their undergraduate education.

Can intentional interventions in the first year of college help to galvanize students' positive attitudes towards intercultural competence learning?

By qualitatively examining these two first-year intercultural learning communities at Babson College, the project will identify effective high-impact interventions that improve student intercultural competence and student attitudes toward intercultural competence learning. Moreover, this study aims to begin to provide evidence for the value added of early-prescribed high-impact practices, those experiences within a student's first year of college.

- METHODOLOGY -

Scope of Project

Although a mixed-methods practicum, the scope of this project relied heavily on qualitative analysis of two learning communities of first-year students at Babson College (Glavin Global Fellows and Globals Scholars), with an aim to understand how the college's intentional interventions in these learning communities impact first-year student understanding of and engagement with intercultural competence. First-person student narratives augmented quantitative data gathered through pre-semester Intercultural Development Inventory assessments. These components formed a framework to analyze which interventions are most effective, particularly in priming first-year students for lifelong intercultural learning.

A qualitative approach was most meaningful for this research as it helped to answer the

how of intercultural development - *how are the intentional interventions of Babson College's*

two learning communities galvanizing first-year students' understanding and attitudes toward

intercultural development? A qualitative approach allowed students to express their

perspectives in their own words throughout the data collection period, grappling with new

ideas and opinions as they achieved greater recognition and accessed a breadth of vocabulary

on the topic of intercultural competence (Creswell, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam,

2009). This approach also aided in supporting the hypothesis that the timing of intentional

interventions in intercultural development matters. In just the first semester, as students

worked through several journals and a focus group, they were able to begin to incorporate the

vocabulary of intercultural competence into their own reflections, leading to deeper, more

complete qualitative data from student to student.

This study employed the theory of constructivism to adapt the design of

researcher-student interaction according to dynamic student-participant variables (Mills, et al,

2006). The data collection tools for student reflections, in the form of journal entries and the

focus groups, followed this framework. As students participated in experiential learning

collectively and then reflected on those experiences, they naturally built upon their vocabulary

and pre-existing knowledge around intercultural competence. In other words, by talking about

intercultural competence, students began to approach the high-impact practices in which they

were participating differently. This required the research to shift to more appropriately meet

the student-participants within their new understanding of their experiences. Practically, this

meant that journal prompts were written for activities after having already reviewed data collected from previous programming.

Participants

This research was completed as a short-term case study, sampling two distinct cohorts of student-participants within one semester of the first year of college. The sample was intentionally small (19 students across both cohorts) so as to allow the researcher more time for meaningful interaction with the participants within the limited timeframe allotted for data collection.

The participants identified for this study attended Babson College, a private business school in Wellesley, Massachusetts, in the fall semester of 2022. Specifically, each participant was in their first semester of the first year of college and had self-selected into or applied to one or both of two community-oriented learning communities, the Glavin Global Fellows (GGF) and the Global Scholars (GS).

Babson's Global Scholars program is a need-based scholarship program for international students established in 2014 (Babson-2, n.d). Global Scholars must apply to receive four-year, full-tuition scholarships and additional funding as necessary, ensuring that financing is not a barrier to admission to Babson College for those high-achieving international students. In conjunction with financial support, Global Scholars participate as a learning community in various activities including orientation, first-year leadership retreats, mentoring, and social and cultural events on campus. The program aims to support and provide interventions designed to acclimate international students new to the United States. Although intercultural development

is secondary to personal development and exploring individual identities, students in this learning community experience similar effects of high-impact programming as Glavin Global Fellows by engaging with other international students, all from varying backgrounds, outside of the classroom.

The Glavin Global Fellows website describes the program as "a community of undergraduate students who are passionate about global issues, language study, and international experiences on campus and beyond" (Babson-3, n.d.) With a vision of students developing into global entrepreneurial leaders, the GGF program sponsors students for entry into international and language competitions, funds student research and internships abroad, provides networking opportunities, and allows students the opportunity to engage with each other and others through intentional activities on-campus and around the world. Should students opt into the program for all four years of their college career and achieve certain milestones, they may additionally earn a Digital Badge signifying a high level of competence and success in the intersection of globally focused curriculum, language, and multicultural experiences (Babson-3, n.d.).

The 16 GGF participants in the research study were both domestic and international students. 10 first-year Global Scholars participated in the study. Of the Global Scholars, 5 students participated in both cohorts. The scope of this study did not separate the cohorts nor did it separate international and domestic students, choosing rather to examine the Babson GGF and GS cohorts as a community of first-year students involved in similar intercultural learning experiences. Of course, pre-college differences, like a student's background or home country, will affect student perceptions of cross-cultural experiences (Hightower, 2016), one

variable of note for this research study. For example, international students new to studying in American institutions may face culture shock, "or a lack of knowledge regarding social cues of the host country" (Li, et al, 2010) unlike that of their American, domestic peers. However, by examining the cohorts as a whole, this study can spotlight the question of galvanizing first-year students' positive attitudes towards intercultural learning despite pre-college differences. Additionally, studies have proven that it is vital to intercultural competence development to bring domestic and international students together in meaningful interactions (Deardorff, 2012). To consider international students and domestic students as two separate categories would detract from the construct of these two cohorts interacting and learning as two communities of students within the shared context of their first semester at college. Within the combined sample, 20% of participants were domestic students from the United States, 75% were international students, and 5% did not answer.

Data Collection

All students participating in this research were provided with a video introduction to the project and the researcher and signed an informed consent form (Appendix A, 1 & 2).

Student-participants in both the Glavin Global Fellows (GGF) and Global Scholars (GS) cohorts were asked to take an Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment within the first few weeks of their arrival at Babson College for their first year of study. This IDI coincided with the students' official orientation into each learning community. While students in the GS and GGF cohorts have self-selected to participate in each program, and therefore exhibit an existing inclination towards intercultural learning, these IDI assessments provided a benchmark

for student-participants' prior knowledge and cultural awareness from previous experiences abroad, introductions to these types of topics in grade school and high school, etc. While the scope of this project afforded only one semester to gather data, future research including a post-first-year IDI assessment would more explicitly and quantitatively address the gains students achieve in intercultural competence through these learning communities.

As explained in a previous section, the scope of this project intentionally leaned heavily on qualitative research. Therefore, the IDI assessments were used only as benchmarks. Student self-reflection is the primary evidence used. Following each of a series of ala-carte activities hosted as part of the GGF and GS programs (e.g., an orientation dinner presentation, peer presentations on home countries and cultures, a walking tour of Boston, a networking evening), student-participants were asked to respond to a unique journal prompt designed to identify feelings and ideas that students experienced during these activities. Reflective journals are an established tool for learning and are cited among various descriptors of high-impact practices as enabling active learning and meaning-making (Kuh, 2008).

Nine journal prompts were provided throughout the students' fall semester on campus at Babson (Appendix B). These prompts were developed and written by the researcher having received information from program staff regarding upcoming activities in which students would participate. Each prompt asked student-participants to respond to the activity as well as to reflect on their experiences with intercultural competence through these encounters. Prompts were open-ended in nature to allow students to employ known and unique vocabulary to best meet each student in their place of understanding. Student-participants were allowed to

respond to prompts anonymously. These methods help to elicit more honest and candid reflections from student-participants.

Sample questions include:

- *Following a walking tour of Boston (Global Scholars)*: Did you notice anything different from your home country? Did you notice anything similar?

- *Following a kick-off event with fellow cohort participants (Glavin Global Fellows):* What have you discovered about the global community at Babson College?

- *Post-IDI (Global Scholars & Glavin Global Fellows):* Can you imagine opportunities in which you might continue to develop your intercultural competence both personally and professionally?

Students were asked to write or audio record brief (short paragraph or 5 to 10-minute) responses within 48 hours of the activities in which they participated, to provide a more accurate picture of their reaction to the experience.

In addition to these journal prompts, students in both learning communities were invited to participate in a mid-semester focus group (Appendix C). Two groups, of six and seven students each, met with the researcher on campus at Babson for 45 minutes each. These focus groups were structured yet adaptable conversations, the goal of which was to help student-participants identify program interventions and discuss experiences and attitudes communally with fellow cohort participants.

There is a good deal of variation in the number of students who responded to each of the nine journal prompts and, as noted above, not all Glavin Global Fellows and Global Scholars participated in the focus groups. This is due, in part, to the nature of the learning communities

programming in which no event is considered absolutely mandatory. Likewise, it was expected

that not all students would participate in all events, nor be able to respond to all journal

prompts given individually demanding fall semester academic and extracurricular schedules

which first-year students are only just learning to balance.

Limitations

The following limitations to this study should be noted when interpreting the results.

- **Student-participants had not completed a post-semester IDI at time of reporting.**

    At the time of reporting this research, student-participants had not completed a

post-semester IDI and were still actively engaging in intercultural development activities

on-campus. While a post-semester IDI would have provided additional quantitative data to

augment the qualitative data collected, it also captures only a small moment in time. An

end-of-year IDI assessment is recommended for all students in these two learning communities

as a way to further assess the value of the full course of new programming for both Glavin

Global Fellows and Global Scholars for the 2022-2023 academic year.

- **Related, this study was constrained by the duration of one fall semester of college (September to December 2022).**

    While some literature suggests that even short-term high-impact practices can be

meaningful to student intercultural sensitivity (Anderson, et al, 2006), a longitudinal look over a

student's four years of study and continued participation in these two learning communities

would be necessary to further understand the full effect these first-year programs had on

participant intercultural competence, both at a moment in time during the college experience and in future development throughout a participant's lifetime.

- **Limiting variables:**
  - **Pre-college demographics, knowledge and experiences, and self-selection.**

While understanding a student's pre-college demographics, knowledge, and experiences allows educators to more appropriately meet their needs, particularly in their first year of college (Hightower, 2016), these factors are difficult to predict within a matriculating class and, therefore, need not weigh heavily on learning community and programming design. This study intentionally grouped domestic and international students so as to understand the ramifications of certain interventions on students in their first year of college, broadly speaking, with the secondary goal of assessing if the timing of these programs affects intercultural competence over time.

Research shows that self-selection creates an inherent bias in learning communities (Zobac, et al, 2014). Both Glavin Global Fellows and Global Scholars self-select into the two learning communities, indicating a prior affinity for global learning and intercultural experiences. Student-participant reflections indicate that some students opt into the GGF community as a way to access study abroad opportunities, though these same students indicated a broader sense of understanding and interest beyond their initial singular impetus for applying to the program.

  - **Programming in both learning communities is ala carte.**

Because program activities for both Glavin Global Fellows and Global Scholars are a la carte, not all student-participants responded to all journal prompts and few participants shared

all experiences. While this variance limits the one-to-one comparisons within the participant sample, this is acceptable in a case study design. Future research involving a larger sample would afford a more sufficient and reliable mean in the number of students with like experiences.

Researcher Reflexivity

Within all research, but especially that of a qualitative nature, understanding the role of the researcher is paramount. My background, previous academic endeavors, and familiarity with the field of intercultural competence played a role in the design phase of this study and specifically in constructing journal prompts for student reflection. I am a 34-year-old, Caucasian female of primarily European descent, born and raised in New England. I currently work in higher education in the global programs department of a large, private university in Boston, Massachusetts, though I live and work full-time in Washington, D.C. I came to this research having previously completed ethnographic research in Maine while finishing my undergraduate degree in anthropology and performing arts. This capstone project culminates three years of study at Boston College's Lynch School of Education in International Higher Education, where I achieved a high level of knowledge around the topic of intercultural competence and the internationalization of higher education.

Prior to beginning data collection, I also took the IDI to better understand my own assumptions and benchmark my intercultural competence. While my perceived intercultural competence was nearing *Acceptance*, my development orientation was within the range of *Minimization* with a leading orientation. This was surprising, given my previous studies and

personal experiences traveling, studying, and singing abroad in various countries in Europe. By understanding my own IDI, I was able to acknowledge any individual biases or shortcomings, and thereby key into a greater breadth of language used in writing journal prompts, recording my video introduction to student-participants, and when analyzing student responses.
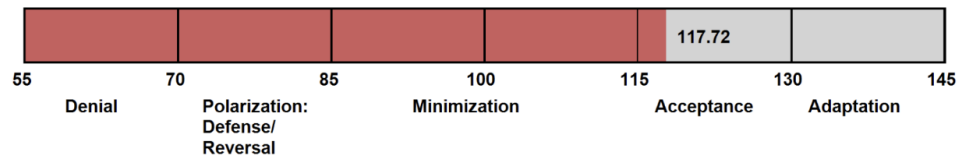
- FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS -

Quantitative Findings

Student-participants completed an Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment in the first weeks of their first semester on campus at Babson College. The quantitative data that follows provides a benchmark for the average intercultural competence of all students in both learning communities (Glavin Global Fellows and Global Scholars). The group profile showed significant discrepancy in students' *Perceived Orientation*, found to be in the *Acceptance* range, and students' *Development Orientation*, found on average to fall within *Polarization* (*Figure 2.1*). This result is consistent with prior research indicating students tend to overestimate their intercultural competence (Vande Berg, et al, 2009; Bennett, 2009), perhaps, in part, due to a lack of understanding of defining features of intercultural exchange. The gap of 34.78 points indicates a meaningful difference in *Perceived* and *Development Orientations*, therefore student-participant *surprise* at their score was not unanticipated.
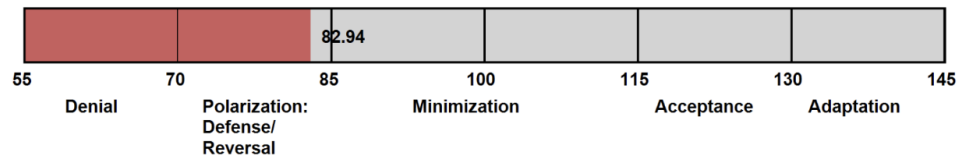
IDI Group Profile

Perceived Orientation (PO)

55	70	85	100	115	130	145
Denial	Polarization: Defense/ Reversal		Minimization		Acceptance	Adaptation

117.72

Developmental Orientation (DO)

55	70	85	100	115	130	145
Denial	Polarization: Defense/ Reversal		Minimization		Acceptance	Adaptation

82.94

More **Reversal**-like and less Defense.

Figure 2.1

The group results of the IDI did indicate a leading orientation towards an intercultural mindset (*Acceptance* and *Adaptation*), indicating an affinity for future learning, understanding, and meaning-making around intercultural competence (*Figure 2.2*)
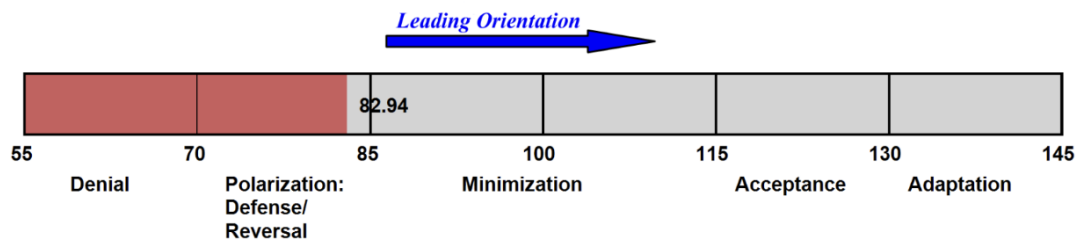
Leading Orientations

Leading Orientation →

82.94

55	70	85	100	115	130	145
Denial	Polarization: Defense/ Reversal		Minimization		Acceptance	Adaptation

Figure 2.2

Qualitative Findings

As a case study, the following findings intend to make meaning of student-participant experiences and subsequent reflections. Direct quotes and excerpts from participant responses to journal prompts and two collective on-site focus groups were analyzed for recurring language used and categorized to illuminate important themes on intercultural competence within student-participant reflections. To protect student anonymity, individual identifying features, such as a student-participant's home country, were replaced in direct quotes.

Five themes emerged as significant to the analysis of student-participants' reflections on intentional interventions related to intercultural competence experienced by the two learning communities. These include: 1) feelings of community, commonality, and safety among peers in the learning communities, 2) dismantling of prior beliefs or stereotypes about other cultures, 3) dismantling of prior beliefs and values held about one's own culture, 4) skills gained through practice within intentional interventions/interactions, and 5) positive attitudes toward future intercultural learning experiences. The included quotes and excerpts provide a summation of the student-participant reflections as a whole, rather than an exhaustive compilation of all prompt responses.

- **Feelings of community, commonality, and safety among peers**

Global Scholars and Glavin Global Fellows consistently commented on the sense of community they felt participating in the learning communities with other first-year students.

> *"I was really excited to [explore Boston] with people that I felt were very close to me and somehow related to my experience in the United States."*

> *"I felt myself as a part of a strong and friendly community."*

"By listening to others, I learn that everyone has their own set of problems and challenges. I can feel more connected to them in some form. I feel closer to everyone else. I also feel that I belong to a group, a community."

International students in the learning communities, in particular, expressed a strong interest in sharing their cultures and identities with others; to learn from others and have others learn from them. While some admitted nervousness in finding space to talk about their backgrounds and cultures, these same student-participants responded affirmatively that the intentional interactions with peers in their learning communities allowed them that space.

"I felt nervous to talk about myself and my experiences, but it was a great opportunity to introduce myself in a more cultural way. I was able to explore my identity, culture, and how my experiences led me to Babson where I'm having the opportunity to meet new people from all over the world and learn a portion of their experiences as well."

"You naturally get close with people through these opportunities, and you're more likely to share your experiences and your culture."

Student-participants in both learning communities commented on feeling safe to explore cultural differences. Safety - feeling physically, emotionally, and socially comfortable - is essential to enabling positive learning and discourse in high-impact practices; "feeling safe enough to explore cultural differences [is] a key dimension of intercultural learning" (King, et al, 2013). While high-impact learning often requires students to explore "difficult differences" (AAC&U, 2022), feeling heard and accepted by peers allows students to foster stronger relationships with each other and a more grounded understanding of the concepts they are learning.

"The group seemed genuinely interested in what I had to say and I felt understood."

"I enjoyed the company of a community where I can share my ideas safely and can communicate with them [with] a level of empathy from other participants."

"At first, I felt actually nervous when I started presenting because I was talking about a completely different culture for [my peers] and I wanted them to value things that I value as well (at least a little bit)... At the end, I was happy and very relaxed because I was able to communicate a difference that I have and felt full support/acceptance for/of it."

- **Dismantling of prior beliefs and stereotypes about other cultures**

An important step in building intercultural competence is dismantling preconceptions and stereotypes about other cultures. It is what Deardorff calls the *Desired Internal Outcome*, an "informed frame of reference shift" that enables individuals to respect and value other cultures withholding judgment (2006). At several points throughout this study, student-participants reflected on intervention activities through which they were able to see others and other cultures differently than they had previously.

"A person just stopped by and let us pet his dog and started telling us about his life and how his dog never wanted to go back home on time after the mini garden tours. I thought it was very genuine and nice, and it removed the stereotypes about how Americans can be mean in the streets."

"Hearing a firsthand experience of culture in [one student's home country] surprised me because it was very different from my previous perceptions. That made me want to learn more about the country beyond the general idea that most people have of it."

Students also noticed similarities between their own culture and another they had not previously noticed.

"Many things were different compared to my country and many things were the same…The weather and attitude of people were rather similar. I didn't feel like I was a complete stranger to the city."

- **Dismantling of prior beliefs and values about one's own culture**

Another key contributing factor in individual intercultural competence development is deep cultural self-awareness (Deardorff, 2006). Several student-participant journals included instances of becoming more aware of one's own culture by encountering differences among peers.

> *"One thing I notice, and I don't want to be mean, but Americans aren't always that nice. Like the guys don't even hold the door. I thought at first maybe it was me, that I wasn't tall and blonde and blue eyed. But also students in class don't say good morning to a professor. Where I'm from everyone says good morning, good afternoon. I hope I don't lose that part of me, being nice."*

> *"Even questions like 'where do you call home' is really isolating, like Babson is not our home, at least not now. So no, I don't feel like I've been my true self just yet. I'm still from somewhere else...I'm not from here, though, and I carry that proudly."*

> *"I felt a little bit pressured to represent my country to the best of my abilities… Sharing my stories about my culture, home, [and] past experiences made me think that I should have appreciated the people at home more and it sort of made me nostalgic."*

These same reflections led some students to feel disappointed in their home country or culture. Although these feelings can seem counterintuitive or may be seen as a negative consequence of these exercises, these opportunities primed student-participants to dig deeper into their own culture and values, to encourage future intercultural learning.

> *"Honestly, I always feel a little intimidated by my own cultures and politics coming from a third world country. However, being able to present about my country and [realizing] how much others can connect to me makes me feel relieved and less intimidated."*

> *"I learned many people in my group speak more than one language. I think this is very cool because I only speak English. I would like to learn another language and expand my horizons."*

- **Skills gained through practice within intentional interventions/interactions**

Intercultural competence requires a specific skill set including observing, listening, evaluating, interpreting, and relating to others from diverse backgrounds. Journals reflected student development of many of these skills.

> "I have been meeting people [from around the world] and hearing their stories about home. When I meet up with these international friends for lunch, I walk down the path of flags. I look at the flags of countries I have been to, and I am teleported back into those memories. As I get to [the dining hall], I am greeted by one of my new international friends from India, and I meet their friends. I love these windows into other cultures. I feel as if I can experience more of the world vicariously… It is experiences like this which is why I want[ed] to join the Glavin Global Fellows; to experience the world and its cultures."

> "I actually hadn't been abroad since I was born. And there was an extra anxiety that [came] with this. However, as we explored new places, that feeling went away slowly but steadily."

Students also recognized that learning these skills alongside others, within the learning communities, enhanced their understanding. This idea tracks with prior literature on the topic of learning communities as high-impact practices.

> "Some Globies asked interesting questions during the tour, which increased our understanding and critical thinking about each story, so we were able to gather more knowledge together as a group."

- **Positive attitudes toward future intercultural learning experiences**

An important focus of this research study was to examine if the high-impact practices in which students participated helped to prime positive attitudes toward future learning opportunities. As intercultural competence necessitates lifelong learning, it is critical to galvanize student attitudes early on to encourage continuous improvement. Nearly all

student-participant journals commented positively on future learning, several saying they were

"inspired to learn more".

> *"Some facts were completely new and it arose my interest to do some research and elaborate more on some things with other students after presentations."*

> *"After all the presentations and seeing the diversity of the Global Scholars community, I am very happy to be part of such a community and can't wait to learn from the experiences of so many different cultures."*

> *"I think the love to accommodate diversity is a great quality of the Glavin Global Fellows which makes me continue to be a part of it."*

> *"Cultural competence, your cultural awareness is related to how many people you interact with, and doing that consciously and reflecting on it…that experience is something you need. There's a lot to learn from others. Babson can provide you with the people, but it's up to you to take initiative to learn more about different cultures. You can read about it, but you have to interact with people or be there, live the culture within myself, experience the day-to-day interactions and understand and be aware of the differences. You have to go out of your comfort zone, out of your bubble."*

In an end-of-semester journal prompt, students were asked, "Will you continue

participating in the Glavin Global Fellows/Global Scholars community and programs in

the spring semester and in the future?" 100% of student-participants (8 total) responded

in the affirmative.

One final significant finding was revealed in the student-participant responses following

completion of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). Almost all student-participants

expressed surprise or even disagreed with their IDI orientations. Given the average group profile

gap in *Perceived* and *Development Orientations* (34.78 points), this was not unanticipated.

> *"My initial thoughts on the IDI assessment is that it is like a personality test and that sometimes it can be inaccurate in telling certain information about me."*

> *"I was initially surprised by my IDI result…I think that having a Denial orientation means that I see people as people rather than the culture they belong to or that I tend to assume that any character traits they display are due to their individual*

personality and not necessarily because they are of a certain culture. This could have both positive and negative impacts on my learning at Babson because, while I may not be inclined to make assumptions about someone based on their culture, I may overlook or be unaware of certain difference that impact how we work together."

Despite these feelings, however, student-participants were also self-aware and were able to identify a number of ways in which they may increase their intercultural mindset.

"[Babson College] has a high rate of international students from 85 countries, so I do have access to the global cultures that will help my global mindset. I can sign up for classes that help develop intercultural competence such as Global Studies, Radical Race, World Politics, etc."

Implications & Discussion

Analyzing first-year learning communities qualitatively allows researchers in higher education to begin to identify *how* high-impact practices, like the Global Scholars and Glavin Global Fellows learning communities, create frameworks and opportunities for students to make sense of the diverse global communities in which they live, work, and learn. The knowledge and skills that come from these experiences early in a student's education will ultimately affect attitudes toward lifelong intercultural learning (Deardorff, 2006).

This study adds to the body of knowledge and qualitative data available on the topic of intercultural competence among first-year students in higher education. As the internationalization of curriculum and campus programs continues to be of increasing importance to higher education institutions worldwide, this type of research will contribute to the understanding of value added by globally-minded, intentional high-impact practices on campuses. This research shows:

- Students do understand, fully engage in, and appreciate the impact the Glavin Global Fellows and Global Scholars learning communities have on their intercultural competence;

- The learning communities do buoy their sense of self and connection with peers from different cultural backgrounds through community learning in a safe, respectful environment;

- Student-participants reflections indicate the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills, and attitudes that lead to visible shifts in behavior and communication in intercultural interactions (Deardorff, 2006);

- And participation in this type of programming in students' first semester of college is a contributing factor in their positive attitudes toward continued learning.

An unintended but additive consequence of this study was the stimulation of student-participant consciousness around their individual intercultural competence through the self-reflection and focus group models. Through self-reflection following intentional interventions during the semester, student-participants shared a developing interest in and new vocabulary around their capacity to adapt and engage with other cultures and diverse peoples. Although this study was limited to a single semester within a college experience, the short-term effects were revealed (Anderson, et al, 2006). Small changes to student language and understanding of intercultural competence were seen over time. Without prompting, student-participants began to incorporate the vocabulary of intercultural competence into their reflections.

"Cultural competence isn't static. If you want to change, you have to ask yourself 'What can I do.' You have to reflect and think of new solutions."

"I see [intercultural competence] as a way to thrive within another culture. It doesn't mean that you've assimilated, that you still have your own culture, but that you're able to live and experience other cultures and thrive."

Additionally, both during and in end-of-semester prompts, students remarked that the focus groups were significant interventions in their understanding of intercultural competence:

> *"Personally, the most impactful experience in my understanding of intercultural communication was the focus group…This is because it made me aware of experiences that international students, like myself, have had and realized that in its majority we all struggle on the same level to adjust to a new culture, and also how within our culture we also may or may not feel completely ourselves."*

These value-additive research methods may provide a key to identify incomplete elements of new curriculum design and programming as both Global Scholars and Glavin Global Fellows reimagine intentional interventions in years to come.

- CONCLUSION -

"Intercultural competence development is emerging as a central focus - and outcome - of many internationalization efforts [in higher education]" (Deardorff & Jones, 2012). This mixed-method, primarily qualitative research study aimed to answer exactly *how* one business college might intentionally and strategically design its high-impact practices to effect the greatest impact on first-year students' intercultural competence. The findings showed that intentional interventions incorporated into the 2022-2023 fall semester for both the Glavin Global Fellows and Global Scholars learning communities did engage and support

student-participants' intercultural understanding and targeted knowledge development. It was also inferred that programming of this nature in a students' first year of college is a contributing factor in their positive attitudes toward continued learning. These findings support previous research on high-impact practices and intercultural competence in higher education and help to further insights into the future of intercultural competence development.

- APPENDIX A . 1 -

INTRODUCTORY VIDEO

Available at https://tinyurl.com/2smcmtn3

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Galvanizing Intercultural Competency: A Qualitative Analysis of High-Impact Practices on Intercultural Competency Development in First-Year College Students

RESEARCHER	Alexandra Elisabeth Desaulniers Washington, DC desaulal@bc.edu, aedesaul@gmail.com Master's Candidate, International Higher Education Boston College Lynch School of Education Chestnut Hill, MA
RESEARCH STUDY	Galvanizing Intercultural Competency: A Qualitative Analysis of High-Impact Practices on Intercultural Competency Development in First-Year College Students
TYPE OF STUDY	Mixed-methods, primarily qualitative practical project
DESCRIPTION OF STUDY & PARTICIPANTS ROLE	The purpose of this project is to help answer the following: What is the impact of high-impact practices on first-year intercultural competency (IC) development? Can intentional interventions in the first year of college help to galvanize students' positive attitudes towards IC learning? First-year students in both programs (Global Scholars and Glavin Global Fellows) will take an IDI assessment ahead of their arrival on-campus, at the start of their official orientation into the program. At the end of the first semester, students will be asked to retake the IDI to quantitatively assess what they have learned through each program's (the GGF and GS programs, respectively) intentional programming. Again, the scope of this project will focus on qualitative analysis. Therefore, the IDI assessments will merely be used as benchmarks. Student self-reflection will make up the bulk of data

collected. Following each IDI assessment, students will be asked to take a written survey. The survey following the pre-semester IDI will ask questions about students' prior experiences with cultural diversity, whereas the survey following the post-semester IDI will ask students to reflect on their experience in the past semester, their feelings about what they've learned or gained through specific programming, and their ideas on continuing with such intentional programming through their undergraduate Babson career.

Additionally, students will be asked to complete brief, written or audio/video recorded self-reflections (approximately 5 of free journaling) after each program-specific workshop, event, etc. These journals should be completed immediately following programming to provide a most accurate picture of students' reactions to the experience. Two- or three-question prompts will be provided to focus thinking on the subject of intercultural development, though students will be encouraged to provide any honest feedback beyond the scope of the prompt as well.

Finally, students will be invited to participate in one or two in-person focus groups during the course of the semester. These focus groups would be structured yet adaptable conversations, the goal of which is to help students identify program interventions and discuss experiences and attitudes collectively with fellow participants.

RISKS & BENEFITS   Risk to students participating in this project is low. Participants may find themselves or their ideas challenged by intercultural learning opportunities designed by Babson College or by reflection on these learning experiences both individually and collectively with fellow program participants.

Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on, share, and become more aware of their own individual learning outcomes.

This project may become part of the larger field of research on the topic of intercultural competence in higher education.

INFORMED CONSENT

By signing and printing my name below, I agree to participate in Global Scholars and/or Glavin Global Fellows first-year programming, pre- and post-semester IDI assessment, journal reflections, surveys, and focus groups during the semester as announced in advance.

In agreeing to participate in this project:

I confirm that I have read and understood the information about the project as provided above.

I understand that Alexandra Elisabeth Desaulniers (Researcher) will be leading this project and reflecting on my participation, including all written and recorded reflections, for her master's degree from the Lynch School of Education at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, MA.

I understand that Researcher will protect the anonymity and confidentiality of all participants in this study.

I understand that my participation in any part of the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

I understand that I may receive a copy of the project publication at the close of this study, should I wish to receive it.

_____   _____
Printed name   Signature   Date

Galvanizing Intercultural Competency: A Qualitative Analysis of High-Impact Practices on Intercultural Competency Development in First-Year College Students

RESEARCHER   Alexandra Elisabeth Desaulniers Washington, DC desaulal@bc.edu, aedesaul@gmail.com Master's Candidate, International Higher Education Boston College Lynch School of Education Chestnut Hill, MA

RESEARCH STUDY   Galvanizing Intercultural Competency: A Qualitative Analysis of High-Impact Practices on Intercultural Competency Development in First-Year College Students

JOURNAL PROMPTS:

Global Scholars - Walking Tour of Boston (September 2022)

Have you been to Boston before; was this your first time? What were your favorite parts of the walking tour? Did you notice anything that was different from your home country? Did you notice anything that was similar? Were you able to make connections to the culture of Boston; Babson; your fellow Globies?

Global Scholars - Cohort Presentations (September 2022)

How did you feel presenting to your fellow Globies? What was it like sharing your stories about your culture, home, past experiences with fellow students? What did you learn from others' presentations? Was there something that you learned from another presentation that makes you want to learn more about that country, culture? How did these presentations make you feel about being part of the Global Scholars community?

Glavin Global Fellows - 2022 Kick-Off Event (September 28, 2022)

Please reflect on your first two weeks on campus. What have you discovered about the global community at Babson College? What are you most excited for this fall semester? What are you most excited for within the Glavin Global Fellows program this year?

Glavin Global Fellows - Introductory Prompt (September)

Prompt for GGF students not attending the kick-off event on 28 September 2022.

Please reflect on your first two weeks on campus. What have you discovered about the global community at Babson College? What are you most excited for this fall semester? What are you most excited for within the Glavin Global Fellows program this year?

Glavin Global Fellows/Global Scholars - Post-IDI Prompt (October)

What are your initial thoughts on the IDI assessment? Were you surprised by the strengths or challenges you experience when you're engaging across cultures, as identified through the IDI? What impacts might your IDI orientation (denial, polarization, minimization, acceptance, adaptation) have on your learning at Babson on a day-to-day basis? Can you imagine opportunities through which you might continue to develop your intercultural competence both personally and professionally? As you experience a significant transitional experience (your first year in college), can you imagine ways in which your perception of other cultures is already changing?

Glavin Global Fellows - Community Networking & Dinner Prompt (October 5, 2022)

What was it like sharing your stories about your past educational or professional experiences?

In what ways did you speak about your culture or home with fellow students during this event?

What did you learn from others you met? Was there something that you learned from someone

you met that made you want to discover more about their country, culture, or experience? How

did this event make you feel about being part of the Glavin Global Fellows community?

Glavin Global Fellows/Global Scholars - International Education Week (November 14-18)

International Education Week is a time to recognize Babson's global community and engage in

international education and learning beyond the classroom. Please share which activities you

chose to participate in this week and why.

In what ways did you discover new ideas and new cultures by participating in International

Education Week activities? In what ways do you see continuing international education

important to your own intercultural competence? In what ways do these experiences help you

to cultivate a cultural community at Babson?

Glavin Global Fellows/Global Scholars - Final Fall Semester Prompt (December)

How have your ideas and attitudes about intercultural learning changed in the past semester?

How did you know you were learning? What does intercultural competence mean to you now?

What experiences in GGF and Global Scholars had the biggest impact on your understanding of

intercultural communication?

Glavin Global Fellows/Global Scholars - FINAL Student Prompt (January)

Will you continue participating in the Glavin Global Fellows/Global Scholars community and

programs in the spring semester and in the future?

Please tell us why or why not. What impacted your decision to continue to participate in this

community and programming (or not)?

RESEARCH FOCUS GROUP

INTRODUCTION

Like an iceberg, only a fraction of culture is visible, manifested through customs, language, and physical appearance. The majority of culture is hidden from view and expressed implicitly, through deep-held values and preferences. (Edward T. Hall, 1976)

Contribution
Confidentiality
Candour

Stress there is no way to perform poorly.
Cultural competence is a development process.
Your answers will not be used as a point of comparison.
Stress 'completeness'. Answer as fully as you can.
Focus groups are naturally a place of vulnerability. Stress respect for all.

GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Were you aware that one of the purposes of the Global Scholars and GGF programming is to have students understand and appreciate diverse cultures, values, and beliefs?
2. What does cultural competence mean to you?
3. Tell us about the traditions/rituals/languages your family shares.
4. Tell us about any larger communities with which you identify.

INDIVIDUAL POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

1. How has this semester helped you to include others in your worldview?
2. How has this semester helped you to value differences? Different perspectives?
3. How has this semester helped you to understand culturally appropriate interactions?
4. How has this semester helped you to build mutual understanding?
5. What do you see as opportunities to continue to explore cultural diversity and intercultural competence this semester/this year/during your time at Babson?

INDIVIDUAL NEUTRAL EXPERIENCE

1. Do you feel that you can disclose your whole identity here at Babson? In what ways?
2. Do you feel that your unique identity and culture are valued? Understood?
3. What opportunities have you had to interact with others in diverse, multicultural, and inclusive settings since arriving at Babson?
4. Have you had an experience when your cultural identity impacted how you approached a situation?

INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGING EXPERIENCE

1. Do you face challenges to your personal identity and culture? In what ways?
2. Can you recall a time when a person's cultural background or your own personal background affected how you approached that person or situation?
3. Describe a situation in which you encountered a conflict with someone from a different culture than yours. How did you handle/understand the situation?
   a. Describe a time you were on a team with which you did not see eye-to-eye.
4. What do you see as challenges to building cultural competence and intercultural understanding?

CLOSE

1. How has self-reflection impacted your experience in these programs?

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