

## DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF INTERCULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

*Stephanie M. Kusano*

*Amy J. Conger*

*Mary C. Wright*

*Students will travel to the U.S./Mexico border to witness, experience, record, and reflect on the repercussions of U.S. immigration and border enforcement policy. The objective of the course is to understand the nuances of this immigration and our responses by observing the day-to-day activities that constitute the minutiae of a policy's impact on both the people who migrate and the people who enforce the policy, and to use this understanding to help reshape immigration policies, social service agencies' rules, and humanitarian responses to current policies.<sup>1</sup>*

*The Food, Land, And Society Field Course will be an intensive course that immerses students in various aspects of the food system from farms to retail businesses (both locally and in Cuba). The interactions and collaborations with community members should make students more sensitive toward the needs and aspirations of those who put food on their tables and will instill in them a sense of responsibility toward their community.<sup>2</sup>*

*The Architecture mobile classroom proposes to teach the buildings of the world through local and regional exemplars found right in our midst. Students will draw from and add to a digital network of existing documents and new research findings, publicly accessible as a digital exhibition of interpenetrating global and local architecture. This digital repository will constitute a new kind of architectural text, one that uses local buildings as portals to global architectural knowledge.<sup>3</sup>*

These three examples represent Transforming Learning for the Third Century (TLTC) projects that seek to promote students' intercultural

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<sup>1</sup> Sherrie Kossoudji, "Contested Borders and Immigration Enforcement: Policy on the Ground." TLTC Quick Wins & Discovery Grant, funded 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Catherine Badgley and Ivette Perfecto, "Student Engagement with the Local and Global Food System." TLTC Quick Wins Grant, funded 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Anca Trandafirescu and Claire Zimmerman, "ON SITE: Teaching Architecture in the Mobile Classroom." TLTC Quick Wins & Discovery Grant, funded 2015.

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*Stephanie M. Kusano is a TLTC Post-Doctoral Research Associate at the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) at the University of Michigan. She has a Ph.D. in Engineering Education. Amy J. Conger is the Assistant Vice Provost for Global and Engaged Education. She has a Ph.D. from the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education. Mary C. Wright is Director of Assessment and an Associate Research Scientist at CRLT. She has a Ph.D. in Sociology.*



## Engaged Learning: Transforming Learning for a Third Century

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engagement. This engaged learning goal is focused on fostering students' understanding of the role of values and culture in driving decisions, and supporting students as they develop the flexibility to work with others who have different values. More so than any previous generation, it is important for the University of Michigan to offer students opportunities to practice communicating and working with others from many different cultures and background experiences in intelligent, productive, and respectful ways.

Aligned with previous TLTC Occasional Papers, this paper begins with a discussion of what intercultural engagement means and how it is conceptualized in the literature, followed by a discussion of the importance of this goal for student development. A summary of different approaches to promote intercultural engagement will then be offered. This paper concludes with an examination of how to assess these skills with an emphasis on choosing appropriate measures.

### **Defining Intercultural Engagement**

To better prepare U-M students before they enter an intercultural professional world, we must support and create environments where students can practice intercultural engagement. Simply stated, intercultural engagement is the ability and the insight to effectively and appropriately interact “with others who are linguistically and culturally different” (Deardorff, 2009, p. 458). However, this simple definition does not capture the deep complexities involved with understanding what it means to have intercultural competence, nor does it capture the challenge and

complexity in developing intercultural engagement. Additionally, there are a variety of terms used to refer to this capacity, often varying by discipline (Deardorff, 2011). For example, other synonymous terms used include:

- Cultural competence
- Global competence
- Multicultural/intercultural maturity

We prefer and use the term intercultural engagement because of its connotation of ongoing opportunities to develop the perspicacity to act wisely in cross-cultural situations (Peterson, 2004). The literature identifies three dimensions of intercultural engagement (Bennett, 1998; Bennett, 2004; Hunter, 2004; Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006; Sutton, 1998):

- *A Mindset: Knowledge*  
This includes cultural self-awareness, general cultural knowledge that can be applied to many cross-cultural situations, cultural knowledge that is applied to specific cross-cultural situations, awareness of major currents of global change and related issues, and awareness of global organizations.
- *A Skillset: Skills*  
This includes relationship-building skills, listening, problem solving, empathy, information gathering skills, ability to work effectively in different international settings, and ability to effectively communicate across cultural/linguistic boundaries.

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*Students need to develop a variety of critical thinking and interpersonal skills in order to contribute successfully to today's increasingly globalized world. The Office of the Provost at the University of Michigan has implemented a plan known as Transforming Learning for a Third Century (TLTC) as part of its broader Third Century Initiative. This plan aims to foster development of such skills, with special emphasis on five distinct learning goals: 1) Creativity; 2) Intercultural engagement; 3) Social/civic responsibility and ethical reasoning; 4) Communication, collaboration, and teamwork; and 5) Self-agency, and the ability to innovate and take risks. The TLTC program provided funding and assistance to faculty members who are executing novel programs and are gathering evidence of student learning around one or more of these learning goals. The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) has partnered with TLTC to provide assistance to faculty members in designing and implementing appropriate assessment and evaluation plans for their programs. One way in which this will be accomplished is through provision of Occasional Papers summarizing the definitions, previous research, and a variety of methods and measures for assessing outcomes associated with each learning goal that can be used as references for both early-stage planning and later-stage implementation of program assessment. Each Occasional Paper was also shaped by ideas generated by U-M faculty, staff and students during on-campus meetings and a series of 2015-16 lunch discussions convened by CRLT.*

- *A Heartset: Attitudes*

This includes curiosity, cognitive flexibility, motivation, open-mindedness, and personal adaptability to different cultures.

When thinking about ways to promote intercultural engagement, instructors may first think about having their students interact with people from other countries or socioeconomic statuses. However, it is important to note that intercultural engagement refers to developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively interact with those who are culturally different in whatever forms that might present itself, including those from a range of disciplinary domains.

Intercultural engagement requires a student to build “authentic relationships by observing, listening, and asking those who are from different backgrounds to teach, to share, to enter into dialogue together about relevant needs and issues” (Deardorff, 2009, p. xiii). One way to describe the process of acquiring these skills is to think in terms of developmental stages. The best known developmental model defines two major stages: ethnocentricity, or avoidance of difference, and ethnorelativity, or seeking of difference (Bennett, 1993; Bennett, 2002; Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Deardorff, 2006, 2009). Both stages are further divided into 6 sub-stages: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration. These sub-stages can be considered as points on a spectrum as students move from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism, as shown in Figure 1.

Brown (2008, p. 224) offers an example of developmentally sequenced learning goals to promote intercultural engagement while maintaining alignment with students’ current developmental stage, for example:

- Beginning developmental level: *Recognize and identify one’s beliefs and assumptions about interacting with diverse others*

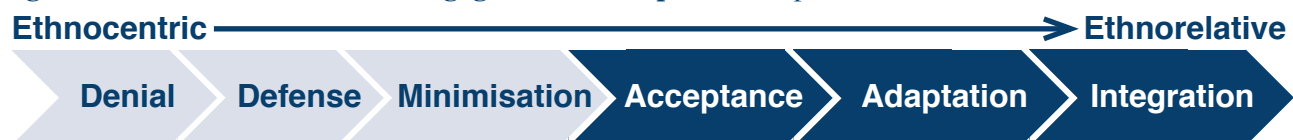
- Intermediate developmental level: *Articulate how and reasons for selection of values and beliefs*
- Advanced developmental level: *Recognize one’s own and others’ underlying assumptions and beliefs about diversity issues*

### Importance and Benefits of Developing Intercultural Engagement

There has been a growing need for students with intercultural awareness and competency, as U-M graduates are expected more than ever to be able to communicate and work with others from different cultural backgrounds and experiences in effective and respectful ways. University and business leaders overwhelmingly find college graduates to be underprepared in the area of global knowledge (AAC&U, 2006; Hovland, 2009; Killick, 2014). The United States, among many other nations, is becoming increasingly interconnected and diverse, meaning students need to be able to interact and collaborate with others from different backgrounds, cultures, and nations (ACE-CIGE, 2011). As the demand for students with intercultural engagement grows, so does the demand for U-M as an institution to promote opportunities to practice intercultural engagement.

One way to consider the importance of intercultural engagement is to view it from a global perspective. Students benefit from opportunities to practice interaction with and openness to other cultures. It is important for students to practice and begin developing the relationship capital essential for effective intercultural collaboration (Downey et al., 2006; Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006). For example, Kathleen Sienko from Mechanical & Biomedical Engineering has lead groups of interdisciplinary students to Ghana and Ethiopia to give students immersive clinical and cultural experiences with maternal health needs in low-/middle-income countries (LMICs) (Tucker,

**Figure 1. Model of Intercultural Engagement Development** (adapted from Bennett, 1993)



2014). Before going on-site, students complete reading assignments on obstetrics/gynecology, engineering design, and the cultural context of Ghana, which help prepare students to develop cultural and clinical literacy. During the immersion experience, U-M students work collaboratively with students from University of Ghana and Makerere University (Uganda), using design ethnography techniques including observations and interviews, needs statement formulation, and needs prioritization and selection. In terms of the learning outcomes of international academic or professional experiences, Downey et al. (2006) reported increased problem-solving skills in engineering students. Similarly, Kathleen Sienko's students have used their experiences to better inform their design practices when developing medical devices for LMICs (Sienko, Kaufmann, Musaaazi, Sarvestani & Obed, 2014).

The practice of intercultural engagement also has the potential to facilitate initiatives towards promoting interdisciplinarity, civic engagement (Hallman, 2016), and engagement with diversity and inclusion issues (Davis, 2013; Green, 2013; Hovland, 2009; Olson & Peacock, 2012). Additionally, the value of intercultural engagement is not limited to any one discipline or educational level (Hu & Kuh, 2003). The three examples of TLTC funded projects presented at the beginning of this paper are indicative of the cross-disciplinary relevance and benefits of promoting intercultural engagement.

### **Fostering Intercultural Engagement**

An important first step towards developing intercultural engagement is to promote students' self-awareness. This allows students to intelligently "explore social, cultural, and linguistic diversity and to develop a nonjudgmental and open attitude towards difference" (Hunter, 2006, p. 279). Intercultural engagement must stem from an understanding of the implicit foundation of cultural behaviors, starting with one's own (Ogan, Alevan, & Jones, 2009; see also Hunter, 2006). An example of how U-M faculty have promoted students' self-awareness is Intergroup Dialogue, offered by The Program on Intergroup Relations. One of the first assignments students are asked to complete is to think about themselves in terms of personal and social identity (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, 2013). Personal identity

refers to students' "hobbies, birth order, favorite book, family life, aspirations, among other things." Social identity, on the other hand, refers to "social group membership, [such as] race, ethnicity, gender, sex, class, age, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ability, and others" (p. 64-65). Students then discuss which identities are the most important to them, the most or least influential, or the most intriguing. Activities like this provide students the rare opportunity to examine their identities, specifically considering the context and implications surrounding their identities.

When designing an intercultural initiative it is important to have a clear understanding of students' prior experiences, perceived learning needs, and current level of intercultural engagement. Gregersen-Herman & Pusch (2012, p. 28) offer some examples of informative questions to ask students such as:

- What are current examples of intercultural misunderstanding or conflict?
- What do you expect to achieve in this class/program?
- What can you bring to the group?
- What are you looking forward to in this class/program?
- What makes you apprehensive?

These questions can be explored through group discussion, think-pair-share, minute papers, or visual tools such as [www.visualsspeaks.com](http://www.visualsspeaks.com), which can be used as a way for students to select pictures that represent their understanding of intercultural issues.

One approach with great potential for fostering intercultural engagement is education abroad, primarily because of the immersive experiences that force students to navigate unfamiliar cultural norms, cultural distance, and cultural dissonance (i.e., "culture shock") (Bennett, 1998, 2004; Hall, 1998; Taylor 1994). Students are physically removed from the comforts of a familiar culture and must function in educational or community settings within an unfamiliar cultural context. These experiences have been shown to improve cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills in students (Kiely, 2004; Root and Ngampornchai, 2012).

A unique U-M example of an education abroad program is a mini-course out of the School of Social Work titled *Contested Borders and Immigration Enforcement: Policy on the Ground*. In this course, eleven social work students have the opportunity to travel to the U.S./Mexico border during the week of Winter Break “to witness, experience, record, and reflect on the repercussions of U.S. immigration and border enforcement policy” (Kossoudji, TLTC proposal). During the trip, students observe and experience first-hand the lives of those impacted by U.S./Mexico border policies, as well as speak with border patrol agents, Mexicans on the Mexican side of the fence, U.S. citizens who live near the border, customs agents, and undocumented residents. Once back at U-M, students reflect on and evaluate what they witnessed, to prepare for an all-day public presentation called “Social Justice and the Contested Border,” reaching hundreds of other students who attend the event. This is an example of an opportunity to promote students’ intercultural engagement, by providing students an opportunity to engage first-hand with individuals with diverse cultures and backgrounds who are all impacted by a common situation, and by allowing students to reflect on their own observations of the situation.

While education abroad programs are one approach to promoting intercultural engagement, sending students abroad is not requisite. In fact, the literature has argued that simply going abroad, without opportunities for training or reflection, will likely have little to no influence on intercultural engagement (ACE-CEAI, 2014; see also Deardorff, 2006; Gregersen-Hermans & Pusch, 2012; Root & Ngampornchai, 2012; Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). Local initiatives that offer substantial opportunities for discussion and reflection are an appropriate alternate approach to fostering this competency (Gregersen-Hermans & Pusch). There is a growing trend in “study away” local programs that allow students to immerse and interact with people from other cultures within their own communities (Sobania & Braskamp, 2009).

An example at U-M of a domestic program with the learning goal of intercultural engagement is Innovation in Action. Since 2013, Innovation in Action (IIA) has engaged over 150 students across 17 of the 19 U-M

schools and colleges, with 37 cross-disciplinary teams completing a 6-month co-curricular experience with the goal of preparing students to be life-long innovators in the area of Public Health Challenges. Examples of student projects include a culturally tailored diabetes community group modeled after the traditional Native American talking circle for Native Americans with type-2 diabetes, an app for HIV patients to manage their medications, and an online patient registry to connect dental students with a steady community of patients who need the services they provide for free. As described by the current director of IIA, Dr. Ann Verhey-Henke, the program plays a unique role in promoting students’ intercultural engagement, by exposing students to experiences that encourage them to work, collaborate, and communicate with people from many different cultural backgrounds in order to successfully implement solutions.

Other examples of how intercultural engagement has been fostered through domestic experiences include technology-based multicultural collaborations, interactions with local immigrant populations, and global videoconferencing classrooms (Deardorff, 2011; Gregersen-Hermans & Pusch, 2012). The key to having substantial exposure for students to develop intercultural engagement is having a diverse set of curricular and co-curricular resources and opportunities on campus, including interaction with international students, scholars, and faculty, and service learning opportunities in the community (Deardorff, 2011; Nilsson, 2003).

A leading researcher on experiential learning, Kolb (1984) presents a model of experiential learning theory that is well aligned with many intercultural learning experiences. The model consists of four dimensions of learning that include abstract conceptualization and active experimentation (often found in classroom learning), but also concrete experience and reflective observation. Regardless of where students are developing intercultural engagement, whether it is abroad or domestically, the essential piece to fostering this competency is to offer students opportunities for authentic experience and reflection (Kolb, 1984). Guided reflection, whether written or verbal, is particularly important in helping students remain

engaged upon their return and making meaning of their experiences through the entire journey (Stebbleton, Soria, & Cherney, 2013; see also Engle & Engle, 2004). Examples of guided reflections include faculty prompts, group discussions (focusing on similarities/differences within group), or the use of readings that provide additional reference points beyond the students' own experiences which can then act as discussion topics (Gurin, Nagda, and Zuñiga, 2013). Additionally, digital tools have been effectively adopted, such as digital blogs from Stamps School of Art & Design ([stamps.umich.edu/international/blogs](http://stamps.umich.edu/international/blogs)). As students begin to experience intercultural challenges, and as these experiences evolve in complexity, students' are more likely to develop intercultural engagement if given opportunities to articulate, reflect, and share their experiences.

### Assessing Intercultural Engagement

Consistent with the literature, we recommend using a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures to assess students' development of intercultural engagement. For example, self-report surveys offer efficient evaluation and can help establish generalizability, whereas qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups, reflection exercises) can offer a deeper perspective on learning outcomes and student experiences. Whichever methods or measures are used, it is important to consider if it is possible to assess over time, rather than at just at one point, because intercultural competence is a developmental process (Deardorff, 2009, p. 259; see also Deardorff, 2011; Hunter, 2004; Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012).

Direct measures of intercultural engagement typically involve students' exhibition of intercultural behaviors or attitudes. Methods that allow students to express reflective thought, such as ePortfolios, have been successfully used to assess students' intercultural engagement development (see Deardorff, Pysarchik, & Yun, 2009, p. 28). Reflective exercises alone will not directly measure student performance of intercultural engagement, but rubrics such as AAC&U's Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Rubric (<http://tinyurl.com/j3d88ag>), and others listed in Table 1, can be used to guide direct assessment for intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are exhibited in students' reflective work. Although not an assessment instrument, King and Baxter Magolda (2005, p. 576) offer a developmental model for intercultural maturity that could appropriately be adapted into a rubric. Deardorff (2011) has also presented work on directly assessing student performance through observation or by collecting others' perspectives of students' behavior. For example, Deardorff suggests asking host families to write a reflection or complete a survey on a student homestay, as well as asking supervising teachers to complete observations of student-teacher interactions.

In addition to the rubrics listed in Table 1, Appendix A shows a rubric that was created out of a discussion among faculty and other scholars of intercultural engagement. The discussion was a part of a 2015 CRLT-Vice Provost's Office event on the topic of fostering and assessing intercultural engagement. After completing an exercise for identifying characteristics of students with low, middle, and high intercultural engagement, a

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*Direct measures* are associated with student output and represent actual student learning such as performance on the design of a creative product. In addition, measures within the scope of direct assessment can be further categorized into authentic or other direct measures. Authentic measures demonstrate classroom learning via performance on open-ended tasks, such as the public presentation that “Social Justice and the Contested Border” students make (see p. 6). Other types of direct measures demonstrate learning via performance on closed-ended and possibly standardized tasks, such as taking a quiz testing intercultural content knowledge. While authentic measures provide a richer understanding of student learning and its applicability to the real world, they can be more time intensive and costly to quantify for purposes of student comparisons. Conversely, other direct measures are usually standardized and easily quantifiable, but may fail to tap into the extent to which students are able to apply what they have learned, especially for the unscripted nature of engaged learning. *Indirect measures* are associated with students' attitudes, opinions, or reported learning, such as responding to a survey asking whether they agree with statements thought to tap into a sense of global perspectives. The use of both direct and indirect measures is recommended for the best understanding of student learning and experiences.

**Table 1. Rubrics to Guide Direct Assessment of Intercultural Engagement**

Measure	Description	Dimension
AAC&U Global Learning Rubric	AAC&U; see also Deardorff, 2011.	Defines global learning as the analysis of global systems and their implications for people’s lives and the earth’s sustainability. Measures include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global self-awareness</li> <li>• Perspective taking</li> <li>• Cultural diversity</li> <li>• Personal &amp; social responsibility</li> <li>• Understanding global systems</li> <li>• Applying knowledge to contemporary global contexts</li> </ul>
AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Rubric	AAC&U; see also Deardorff, 2011	Defines intercultural knowledge as the cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies that support cultural interactions. Measures include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural self-awareness</li> <li>• Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Verbal/nonverbal communication</li> <li>• Curiosity</li> <li>• Openness</li> </ul>
Steglitz Coding Scheme	Steglitz, 1993, p. 239, see also Ogan et al., 2009, p. 279	Steglitz coding scheme for discussion forum is divided in 3 levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 1 – No cultural explanation</li> <li>• Level 2 – Unspecific cultural explanation</li> <li>• Level 3 – Specific &amp; elaborated cultural explanation</li> </ul>

summary of those results were compiled to create the rubric shown in Appendix A.

Table 2 lists various instruments that can assess intercultural engagement directly or indirectly. One unique example of a direct assessment of intercultural engagement was developed by Ogan, Aleven, and Jones (2009), using an online tutor to assess students’ intercultural interactions. InterCultural Competence Attention-focusing Tutor (ICCAT) is an online tool that allows students to watch video clips representing cultural themes. The clips pause at specific moments to help students focus on what the film is representing, and students are prompted to answer questions measuring cultural knowledge (e.g., “Based on the clips you just saw, [clip 1] and [clip 2] are similar in everything but: ...”). Formative feedback is instantly provided based on students’ responses to the questions. ICCAT also includes an online forum for student discussion. These discussions also provide assessment data to gauge intercultural competence based on a validated coding scheme developed by Steglitz (1993).

Assessment strategies based on reflective exercises (e.g., ePortfolios, journals, blogs) capture rich data for direct assessment; however, it is important to keep in mind students’ ability and readiness to complete reflective exercises. To help prompt students and to capture the highest quality reflections, it is best to use a combination of guided, dialogic, and private reflection (Sturgill & Motley, 2014). Guided reflection means that students are prompted with specific open-ended questions, such as “What did you do today? What did this mean for the project/client?” (p. 88). Dialogic reflection means student reflections receive frequent feedback, specifically when student reflections are shared and discussed as a group. Private reflection maintains confidentiality for students.

A wonderful example of how journaling and ePortfolios are implemented in practice is the Global Intercultural Experience for Undergraduates (GIEU) program. Before traveling abroad (which GIEU carefully distinguishes as a “program experience” rather than a “trip abroad”), students participate in preparatory retreats, workshops,

**Table 2. Examples of Assessment Instruments Related to Intercultural Engagement**

Instrument	Dimensions	Notes	Measure Type
ePortfolios (Deardorff, 2011; Dietrich & Olson, 2010)	Knowledge Skills Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artifacts presented in ePortfolios can include reflection papers, term papers, photos, and other documentation of student learning.</li> <li>Rubrics such as the AAC&amp;U VALUE Rubric on Intercultural knowledge &amp; competence can help guide assessment.</li> </ul>	Direct
ICCAT (Intercultural Competence Attention-focusing Tutor) (Ogan, Alevan & Johnes, 2009, p. 268)	Knowledge Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Example focus question: After students watch a clip of an interaction between two individuals, the clip pauses and asks, “What do you think he will respond? Explain why you think this will happen? What do you think might be a likely response in your culture?”</li> <li>Use Steglitz (1993) coding scheme to evaluate student discussion for instances of intercultural engagement.</li> </ul>	Direct
Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003)	Knowledge Attitudes	<p>Validated 50-item self-report questionnaire. Measures development of a one’s attitude toward another culture along the six stages of ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Questions pertain to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-cultural goals</li> <li>Challenges navigating cultural differences</li> <li>Critical intercultural incidents</li> <li>Ways to navigate cultural differences</li> </ul> <p><i>Other notes: Expensive fees and requires extensive training (over \$1000 including training)</i></p>	Indirect
Intercultural Adjustment Potential Scale (ICAPS) (Matsumoto et al. 2001)	Knowledge Attitudes	<p>Validated 55-item self-report questionnaire. Measures one’s potential ability to adjust to a foreign culture. Measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotion regulation</li> <li>Openness</li> <li>Flexibility</li> <li>Critical thinking</li> </ul> <p><i>Other notes: Easy to use, and a small fee (\$15/booklet)</i></p>	Indirect
Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) (Van Dyne, Ang, & Koh, 2008)	Knowledge Attitudes	<p>Validated 20-item self-report &amp; observer report questionnaires. Measures one’s ability to effectively work and appropriately behave in a culturally diverse environment. Measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metacognitive strategy</li> <li>Cognitive knowledge</li> <li>Motivation</li> <li>Behavior</li> </ul> <p><i>Other notes: Free; <a href="http://www.linnvandyne.com/shortmeasure.html">http://www.linnvandyne.com/shortmeasure.html</a></i></p>	Indirect

and meetings. After students’ program experiences, they are expected to participate in half-day debriefing sessions, designed to unpack students’ field experiences. Throughout this program GIEU students are expected to maintain journals and ePortfolios, scaffolding their reflections through guided questions provided by GIEU facilitators. GIEU staff and instructors read through these journal/ePortfolio reflections as a way to

identify discussion topics for students during retreats, debriefings or other meetings, as well as a means to gauge individual students’ intercultural engagement development.

Indirect measures of intercultural engagement, as compared to direct measures, are more common and typically faster and easier to use. The Intercultural



Development Inventory is one of the most widely used and well-known instruments used to assess intercultural engagement. As such, IDI can offer various opportunities for comparative or generalizable assessment (Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). An example of how IDI can be used to compare programs is presented in Spenader & Retka (2015), where they compared five different study abroad programs, which varied in terms of language requirements, coursework, housing during travel, and pedagogical focus (service learning vs. excursions connected to courses). Using IDI, Spenader & Retka found that students in all five programs showed “impressive gains” in intercultural development. However, those programs with service-type experiential learning projects and frequent meetings with a cultural mentor had the greatest gains. IDI has also been used here at U-M. For example in addition to using journaling and ePortfolios to directly measure student development, GIEU administers the IDI to indirectly measure program-level influences on intercultural engagement.

An important thing to keep in mind when indirectly measuring intercultural engagement is that these instruments are limited to capturing self-reported perceptions at a single instant in time. Although validated for measuring an individual’s current state of intercultural engagement, these instruments, when used as a single mode of assessment, rarely capture a full picture of students’ developmental progress. When paired with other modes of assessment, such as focus groups or ePortfolios, results might offer a clearer picture of students’ experiences and development. Students’ self-perceived learning gains post-participation might be low (“I didn’t realize how little I knew about...”), however the actual learning gains due to participation are high (“Because of this experience I now know...”). If more time-intensive qualitative methods, such as focus groups or ePortfolios, are not possible due to a limited timeframe for assessment, open-ended responses to student surveys or CRLT’s Midterm Student Feedback (MSFs, requested through [crlt@umich.edu](mailto:crlt@umich.edu)) are alternative options. Additionally, retrospective pre-surveys could be employed. Retrospective pre-surveys are administered only at the end of an experience and include questions about perceived changes as a result of an experience. For example, CRLT collaborated with

the Stamps School of Art and Design on assessment of its Social Engagement requirement ([stamps.umich.edu/about/social\\_engagement](http://stamps.umich.edu/about/social_engagement)) and used University of Michigan Asks You (UMAY) survey data, which employs retrospective pre-test questions, as one piece of the study. This style of survey has been shown to be a valid measure of perceived changes in attitudes, behaviors, or skills (Finney, 1981; Wright & Howard, 2015). It is also important to recognize that low or negative results from these instruments, such as IDI, may suggest improvements needed by a program, such as intercultural mentoring and critical reflection (Vande Berg, 2009). Additionally, programs might need to be re-evaluated to ensure that learning goals and activities are aligned with students’ developmental level (Brown, 2008).

## **Conclusion**

As the examples in this paper make clear, there are several opportunities on campus for students to practice and develop intercultural engagement. As more opportunities are designed and implemented, it will be important to consider assessing how these interventions influence student development. In the process, we must keep in mind that this goal is not a static outcome to be achieved within the boundaries of the institution, but rather a lifelong learning process to be promoted and developed. Therefore, practices of assessing intercultural engagement will be most effective when they involve a mix of methods and measures over time, rather than a single method to capture a unitary experience.

## Appendix A. Summary of Discussion on Characteristics That Define Students With Low, Middle, and High Intercultural Engagement

	Low Intercultural Engagement	Typical Student	High Intercultural Engagement
<b>Experience &amp; Exposure</b>	Limited to no foreign experience or exposure.	Limited travel experience (primarily tourism); Doesn't seek out engagement	Experience traveling and living abroad (non-tourist environments); Socially and politically engaged; Can speak/communicate in different languages
<b>Attitude &amp; Behavior</b>	Uncomfortable in new, foreign situations; Doesn't seek opportunities; Resistant to challenges	Unsure about education abroad, but eager to get started; Aware of missteps, but unsure how to address them	Flexible and adaptable; Thrives/excels in diverse groups; Knows how to ask good questions; Empathetic and willing to learn
<b>Awareness &amp; Openness</b>	Unaware and disinterested in other cultures; Unaware of one's own biases and assumptions	Knows about cultural competence, but doesn't know how to live it; Acknowledges difference among cultures but doesn't have skills to navigate through differences; Self-absorbed	Aware of different contexts and cultures; Reflects on own experience/identity; Able to draw comparisons; Asks a lot of questions; Humble observer; Acknowledges own lens

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