

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE THROUGH BLENDED  
LEARNING:  
THE ROLE OF PEER INTERACTION

By

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To my mother and grandmother for all their support throughout my educational endeavors

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
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By

Mary E. Risner

December 2011

Chair: Catherine Cavanaugh  
Major: Curriculum and Instruction

The need to increase US competitiveness in the world economy is a driving factor in the recent push to internationalize university campuses across the country. Technical and subject area expertise are no longer sufficient to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century global workplace. Intercultural competence is becoming more valued as part of the desired professional skill set of students across disciplines, particularly in the business school.

This experimental design study explored the use of a course module that blends classroom and online experiences as a possible way to advance the teaching and learning of intercultural competence across the curriculum. The two-week China Retailing Module emphasized constructivist learning theory combined with web technologies and authentic learning principles. It was integrated into an undergraduate business course and designed to serve as a pilot model focused on a specific disciplinary context, world region, and culture.

Pre- and post-tests were administered to control and experimental groups to detect any effect of online peer interaction in student tasks completed during the module. While the quantitative results from the Chen and Starosta Intercultural

Sensitivity Scale and the China Retailing Quiz did not indicate a statistically significant difference between the two study groups, qualitative findings revealed positive student attitudes toward the value of intercultural awareness and satisfaction with the module. The results also suggest that the blended approach does broaden student experience and opens up new and active 21<sup>st</sup>-century andragogies while maintaining at least equivalent levels of learning.

This study offers practitioners insights that can be adapted and applied in the design of business or other professional school courses. Student feedback on the module also provides valuable input to be used in developing future modules focused on other world regions. Recommendations for future areas of research, such as the need to further examine online instructional design in terms of the role of different types of learner interaction and the use of constructivist and authentic tasks, arose from this study. A Faculty Reference Guide was created with resources and suggestions for instructors interested in implementing blended modules of this type to internationalize their courses.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### **Professional Niche and Project Relevance**

The design, implementation, and evaluation of a blended China Retailing Module in this study explores one approach to internationalizing business school courses through the teaching and learning of intercultural competence in the context of a specific world region with the ultimate goal of better preparing students to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century global workplace. This study seeks to examine how to develop student intercultural competence in a formal learning environment through the use of the web, online instructional design, and authentic learning. When study abroad and local cross-cultural encounters are not options, new technologies make it cost effective to find up-to-date content and resources from around the world and connect individuals across borders through synchronous and asynchronous formats. The ability to collaborate virtually and to manage knowledge through Web 2.0 tools are also increasingly valued skills in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workplace. Examining effective practices of online learning as an option for developing intercultural competence is a gap in research that needs to be explored.

This project brings together my work experience in K-16 education and culminates in the application of pedagogy, learning theories, and understanding of emerging technologies that I have acquired in the Educational Technology doctoral program. My formal education encompasses business, foreign language, and area studies. My work experience spans a variety of areas related to the promotion of international education through secondary and post-secondary teaching, research, program management, event planning, and professional development for K-12 and corporate audiences.

My doctoral studies in educational technology have provided me with the skills to integrate appropriate emerging technologies and pedagogy in my work delivering teacher professional development and managing curricular development projects. Figure 1 depicts the culmination of my education, interests, experience, and technology skills. These elements form my professional niche, which is promoting the development of intercultural competence in students by integrating the study of foreign language, culture, and area studies across the curriculum, and particularly in business education, through the use of technology where appropriate to facilitate learning.

### **The Need for Intercultural Competence in US Students**

Chen and Starosta (1996) listed five elements which increase the need for intercultural competence in our global society: 1) development of communication and transportation, 2) globalization of the economy, 3) migration of populations among nations, 4) diversification of the workforce, 5) regional alliances. These have become even more relevant over time and demonstrate the need for more research on effective ways to promote the development of intercultural competence, especially as universities throughout the United States seek to globalize their campuses. Acquisition of intercultural competence, which is the “capacity to change one’s knowledge, attitudes and behaviors so as to be open and flexible to other cultures has become a critical issue for individuals to survive in the globalized society of the 21st century” (Davis, 2005, p.4).

Intercultural competence is now a necessity rather than an option, regardless of whether one ever travels outside of the United States for work or study. According to Sonia Nieto (2010), to be competitive in an increasingly diverse workplace, students of all levels need to have an open mind toward different cultural perspectives and

must value the richness of cultures that the growing immigrant population brings to the US. She also argues that the growing diversity in the US school system should be viewed as a resource for promoting international understanding rather than as a problem to resolve (Nieto, 2010).

Demographics in the US have been changing rapidly in recent decades, creating more diversity in schools, the workplace, and society in general. According to a report from the Pew Hispanic Center (2006), in the mid to late 1960s the US population was 200 million. The racial and ethnic breakdown at the time (in millions) was 167.2 white, 22.3 black, 8.5 Hispanic, and 1.5 Asian. As of 2006, the US population increased by 100 million, marked by a notable increase in ethnic populations. Of the total 300 million, whites counted for 201 million, Hispanics 44.7, blacks 38.7, and Asian 14.3. These numbers reflect a 55% increase in immigrants and their US born children since the mid-1960s. In terms of US educational institutions, 31% of students enrolled in elementary and secondary schools are foreign born or have a parent who is (Shin, 2005). These figures show the new composition of US society and the increasing need to relate well with other cultures even within US borders.

Well-known blogger and author Daniel Pink discusses skills needed to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in his book *A Whole New Mind: Why right-brainers will rule the future*. Pink emphasizes the importance of the right-brain skills of empathy and intuition necessary to understand cultural nuances and complement more analytical and logical left-brain skills. This is a significant shift in perspective since “soft” skills have traditionally been undervalued, but now, according to Pink, they will play a greater role in promoting the importance of understanding cultural issues and valuing foreign language skills in the workplace.

Business councils and associations also voice their concerns about America's lack of a prepared international workforce prompting programs such as the National Security Education Program's (NSEP) Language Flagship and the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills to form partnerships with the business community. According to Loveland (2010):

The Council on Economic Development estimates that American businesses lose \$2 billion each year due to lost opportunities as a direct result of lacking cross-cultural skills. The military costs in Afghanistan total \$200 million each day. And \$200 million is nothing compared to the loss of human life should there be a serious national security breach due to lack of language capacity.

The shift in US demographics, greater interdependence among world markets, national security, and increased international mobility increase the need for students to develop intercultural and 'global' skills to help maintain US competitiveness in the world economy. The discussion of the need for US students to have some level of intercultural competence is not new but is appearing regularly in social media formats such as Twitter® (@htjitra, @pocketcultures, @culture shocks, @cindyking), traditional news sources, and reports described in this chapter produced by governmental and non-profit organizations.

Figure 1-2 depicts how we can meet the need for US competitiveness in the global economy by helping students develop intercultural competence and digital literacy by merging authentic learning, online instructional design strategies, and interdisciplinary connections in formal learning environments.

### **Initiatives Promoting Intercultural Competence**

The following paragraphs detail efforts by educational and non-profit organizations to infuse foreign language, area studies, and technology skills into the US curriculum to better prepare students to compete in the global workplace.

Several of the international education initiatives described use the term global

competence. Global competence is defined as “having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one’s environment” (Hunter, 2004, p. 130-131). Deardorff (2006) points out the variation in terminology throughout the literature and lack of consensus in the definition of intercultural competence for institutions of higher education as they attempt to internationalize their campuses. Some of the terms used interchangeably by scholars she surveyed were cross-cultural competence, intercultural competence, global competence, and global citizenship. Although there are slight differences in these terms and some consider intercultural competence as only one part of global competence, I will use intercultural competence throughout this study. Further discussion of the definition of intercultural competence is found in Chapter 2: Literature Review.

In 1998 the American Council on Education’s (ACE) Commission on International Education produced *Educating for Global Competence: America’s Passport to the Future*. The report states: “America’s future depends on our ability to develop a citizen base that is globally competent... The United States needs many more people who understand how other peoples think, how other cultures work, and how other societies are likely to respond to American action” (p. vii).

Other post-secondary examples of organizations addressing ways to improve the global workplace skills of US citizens are the National Security Education Program (NSEP) through its Language Flagship Program and its report *What Business Wants: Language Needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2009). The American Council on Education® maintains the website *Engaging the World: US Global Competence for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. The site features initiatives funded through the Higher



Education Act such as Title VI and Fulbright Hays programs (<http://www.usglobalcompetence.org/index.html> ). In a university-level study conducted with business language faculty, Grosse (2009) states that the accreditation standards of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) requiring internationalization of the curriculum have also helped stimulate growth in study abroad, internships, and interdisciplinary programs.

A few of the higher education funding entities that aim to increase US student intercultural competence for professional contexts are the USDOE Title VI Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBER), the USDOE Business and International Education grant program (BIE), and the USDOE Funds for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE).

At the elementary and secondary level, reports from organizations such as enGauge's *Literacy in the Digital Age* (2003) and Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills *P21 Framework Definitions* (2009) emphasize the importance of integrating intercultural competence and digital literacy into the curriculum. The Asia Society supports 27 public schools, which are part of the International Studies Schools Network whose goal is to prepare high school students to be globally competent and ready for college. The Asia Society also hosts conferences, cultural events, and a website with resources focused on developing US students' intercultural competence.

Similar to the Asia Society's K-12 efforts, NSEP's Flagship Program for strategic defense languages currently supports three pilot program models in Michigan, Ohio, and Oregon that prepare students to be 'global professionals' through advanced language and cultural training. The Flagship has also collaborated

with Texas, Ohio, Utah, and Oregon to conduct state language summits described in the *Roadmap to Language Excellence* report.

In spite of international program initiatives and reports affirming the need for intercultural competence to compete in the global economy, the US still appears to be falling short. The American Council on Education's 2006 survey of institutions of higher education reports findings that internationalization is not a high priority on most campuses and that many students leave college without any exposure to global issues or foreign language training (Green, 2008). Although there have been some improvements across campuses since the 2001 survey, Green concludes that internationalization is still not as deeply rooted or widespread as it should be to prepare students for the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century global workplace.

This slow growth in the internationalization of campuses is likely the result of insufficient resources and knowledge of program development. Due to costs, some of the grant entities cited above (CIBER, BIE, FIPSE, Language Flagship) can only support a small number of programs across the US. While each of these programs supports a valuable initiative, each can only reach a limited number of new grantee institutions in a grant cycle, and funded institutions must eventually find new revenue sources to continue their international initiatives.

In response to the need for mutual understanding across cultures in the global economy, the goal of the present study is to explore one approach for developing intercultural competence using cost-efficient and appropriate technology, interdisciplinary connections, and authentic learning in formal higher education learning environments.

## **Educational Technology**

The ongoing advancements in social media and technology allow affordable access to information and provide a platform for virtual encounters through synchronous and asynchronous interaction for personal, professional, and educational use. In the 2010 draft National Educational Technology Plan, the USDOE Office of Educational Technology promotes increased digital literacy training in the curriculum and a greater focus on articulation between K-12 and higher education. The plan states that learning with technology and digital content in the classroom prepares students for real-world application of the tools used regularly by professionals to achieve organizational goals. The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills also states that digital literacy in conjunction with the development of skills such as collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity will prepare US students to be successful in the global workforce. Developing intercultural competence in students while helping them acquire digital literacy should also be an integral and natural part of education policy.

Tynan (2006) cites examples of technology skills that are necessary to succeed in the global economy. One skill is being able to manage and relate to others at a distance through virtual teaming and communication. Another is creativity in design and conceptualization since simple technical expertise alone is no longer enough to compete. Knowledge management (KM) in corporations and institutions in government and non-profit sectors increasingly relies on the use of technology to create communities of practice, improve organizational efficiency, and retain institutional memory. Friedman (2008), in his report *Web 2.0 – The Inflection Point for Knowledge Management*, argues that Web 2.0 tools are more viable than some traditional KM applications and software tools though they will not totally replace

them. He describes traditional KM approaches as rigid and mandated by corporations, whereas new web tools allow employees freedom to locate and organize knowledge for themselves.

### **Interdisciplinary Connections/Authentic Learning**

Researchers cite a variety of ways students can develop intercultural competence such as study abroad, interdisciplinary courses, and international campus events. Grosse's (2009) survey of business language faculty and course offerings across the US found trends that move toward increased use of technology and interdisciplinary course design by combining business, foreign language, and culture content. She also noted that the number of study abroad and internship programs had increased greatly in an effort to provide students with more authentic and real-world learning experiences. According to Tuleja's 2008 MBA study, student interest in study abroad in non-traditional destinations such as emerging markets has increased due to what she found is their recognition of the importance of understanding relations among players in the global economy. Ortiz (2004) stresses the importance of learning through authentic approaches and helping students recognize how business and cross-cultural understanding intertwine. He affirms that an effective way to become functional in the global work environment is through a long-term experience abroad. A study by Penbek, Yurdakul & Cerit (2009) suggests that student respect for other cultures improves through active participation in international-themed cultural events.

### **Rationale for the Study**

The rationale behind the present exploratory study is that while participating in local international events and interning or studying abroad are ideal ways to develop intercultural competence, these options are not possible for every student due to

individual circumstances that are typically tied to available time or funding. Additionally, the fixed curriculum of business and other professional schools can preclude students' taking culture and foreign language courses. For those unable to spend time abroad, who have limited schedule flexibility, or who live in an area with minimal presence of international communities, using technology to integrate international authentic content and meaningful tasks in a course can fulfill a need and play a complementary role in developing intercultural competence. This study proposes integrating a two-week blended module with engaging and authentic online activities into a semester business course which aims to help students develop intercultural competence and learn about other world regions.

The research questions to be addressed in this study are the following:

- 1) Is there a change in the level of intercultural sensitivity between the control and experimental groups due to the type of online interaction experienced?
- 2) Is there a change in the acquisition of cultural facts and knowledge between the control and experimental groups due to the type of online interaction experienced?
- 3) Is intercultural awareness perceived as important for success in the Chinese retailing context by both study groups?

The China Retailing Module study can be broken down into three phases described below and listed in Table 1-1.

**Phase I - Effective online learning and intercultural awareness.** In this phase there were two goals: (1) to review the literature on intercultural competence and (2) to review the literature on research-based guidelines for effective online teaching and learning strategies to serve as a reference while designing the proposed blended module.

**Phase 2 - China and retailing content.** Phase 2 involved designing and creating the two online module portions for the course. The experimental version

emphasized activities that required peer interaction and collaboration while the control version had no collaborative tasks among students. The focus in this phase of design and development was on what introductory business and cultural issues were considered necessary to be successful working in or with the Chinese retailing industry.

**Phase 3 - Intercultural Awareness Evaluation.** The final phase involved implementing the control and experimental modules in the class and evaluation of pre- and post-student levels of intercultural sensitivity and factual knowledge of the Chinese retailing industry.

The module designed and implemented in this study was a blend of online and face-to-face components. It consisted of eight hours of face-to-face time with 16 hours of online time and formed part of an undergraduate business course called “Introduction to Retail Systems Management.” The 16 hours were calculated as two hours of outside class work for each two hours of contact hours. The module focused on developing intercultural sensitivity in the context of the China retailing industry. The face-to-face hours were the same in content and lecture format for both study groups. The online portion of the module for both groups covered the same content, but the control group submitted work only to me as the online facilitator using the Sakai Learning Management System. The experimental group submitted work through a wiki in teams of three. The control version emphasized student-to-content and student-to-instructor interaction. The experimental version was designed with these two forms of interaction in addition to student-to-student interaction. Hence, the “treatment” for the experimental group was the element of peer interaction as shown in Table 1-2.

## **Proposed Project Outputs**

The proposed outputs of this project were the online portions of the blended module created for the control and experimental groups designed through literature-based research and consultation with content experts. Analysis and evaluation of the modules was through data collected from a pre/post questionnaire assessing intercultural sensitivity (IS) and a pre/post content quiz to measure facts and knowledge of the Chinese retailing industry. The IS questionnaire sought to gather data that described any changes between study groups in terms of intercultural sensitivity level. The quiz measured Chinese cultural and business knowledge. To meet the capstone requirement of service and leadership, I also developed a short reference guide for faculty on integrating blended learning and global content into their courses.

### **Blended Module**

The design of the two versions of the online portions of the module was guided by constructivist and cognitive learning theory and authentic learning principles in addition to literature on peer interaction in online activities. Area studies and retailing experts provided input for the content of the modules. Research I conducted on intercultural sensitivity and awareness was also integrated. The online portion of the module was delivered through the Sakai® Learning Management System and Wikispaces®.

### **Evaluation**

Pre- and post-instruments were designed to supplement the established Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) created by Chen and Starosta (2000) consisting of 24 Likert questions. In consultation with the retailing faculty member, I developed the pre- and post- China Retailing Quiz instrument for testing student factual and

cultural knowledge of China retailing. The pre-module administration of the ISS and China Retailing Quiz was accompanied by questions I developed to gather information on demographics, prior international experience, and general attitudes toward intercultural awareness for workplace success. The post-module administration of the ISS and China Retailing Quiz was accompanied by questions addressing student reaction to the module and perceived student value of intercultural awareness.

### **Faculty Reference Guide**

The faculty guide was divided up by resources for technology, intercultural competence, and China business culture. The technology resource section is the largest and provides links on blended learning, instructional design, choosing technology tools, copyright issues, and other useful links for maintaining quality in blended learning. Table 1-3 displays the project outputs in relation to their respective capstone requirements.

### **Project Significance**

In addition to exploring how to help fulfill a national need for more resources and possible approaches to improving the teaching and learning of intercultural competence in US students for success in the global workplace, this project aims to make other contributions. As an exploratory study, the implementation of the China Retailing Module will serve as a pilot project to suggest effective practices for online instructional design strategies that facilitate development of intercultural competence in a specific disciplinary context, world region, and culture. The study also hopes to model the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration among the College of Education, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the College of Business. Additionally,



the study will provide immediate guidance for the design of a proposed series of blended modules on international retailing in emerging markets.

Much of the literature available on evaluating the development of intercultural competence examines study-abroad programs or overall campus internationalization initiatives. Other intercultural studies tend to focus on professional development to train teachers to empathize with their international students or for employees within an institution to better understand workplace diversity. Culture is taught in foreign language classes, but content at the beginner level typically consists of very basic facts that only allow students to notice superficial cultural differences.

More profound study of cultural issues, through which students are more likely to have a change in attitude toward others, happens at the intermediate to advanced levels of language study. Those upper-level enrollments, however, affect a much smaller population of students. In the case of business and other professional schools, students may not have the flexibility in their degree program to register for the large number of hours needed to thoroughly learn language and culture, so some acquisition of basic intercultural awareness and ability to interact effectively in the global workplace should be made available through other course delivery options.

Corporations, government, and non-profits also need to focus on the significance of developing intercultural awareness for work situations. More literature is needed on developing intercultural competence for adult learners to complement technical and industry expertise. Data on designing effective blended learning could be useful to improve training for executives and to broaden intercultural learning options for individuals without the time or means to go abroad.

The final significance of this project is to determine research priorities for future work in designing online modules on intercultural sensitivity and specific world

regions to complement subject area content across the professional schools. The effective use of emerging technologies and Internet resources to facilitate global connections among students, faculty, and institutions has potential to improve efforts of internationalizing education in the US at all levels. The need to understand other cultures across the globe and the growing immigrant population within US borders underscore the value of the topic addressed in this exploratory study. Defining the appropriate blend of educational technology and pedagogies, intercultural awareness, and subject expertise in formal learning environments will strengthen curricular efforts to prepare US students to compete and succeed in today's global society.

Table 1-1. Project phases

Task(s)	Phase1 Review of Literature	Phase 2 Design	Phase 3 Implement/Evaluate
Key Player(s)	Principal Investigator (PI)	PI in consultation with retailing and area studies experts	PI interacting with students online, data collection, analysis
Outcomes	Online design guidelines  Authentic learning guidelines  Intercultural awareness characteristics	Blended China Retailing Module (Control/ experimental versions)	Pre: Demographics/background, Intercultural Sensitivity Survey, China Retailing Quiz  Post: Course feedback, Intercultural Sensitivity Survey, China Retailing Quiz

Table 1-2. Experimental and control group descriptions

	Experimental Group	Control Group
F2F 8 hours	Same content Same tasks	Same content Same tasks
Online work 16 hours (Calculated as 2 hours study time per class hour)	Same content  Interaction: Student<>Student Student<>Content Student<>Instructor  Tasks: Collaborative Peer and instructor feedback	Same content  Interaction: Student<>Instructor Student<>Content  Tasks: Individual Instructor feedback

Table 1-3. Outputs of Ed.D. capstone components

Teaching	Scholarship	Leadership/Service
Outline instructional design guidelines for module	Analyze data	Create faculty reference guide
Design Blended China Retailing Module versions	Attitudes on inter-cultural awareness	China retailing/China business culture resources
8 hours Face-to-face 16 hours online	Knowledge of China retailing and culture	Use of online/blended Learning
Module	Study results and recommendations	Faculty reference guide

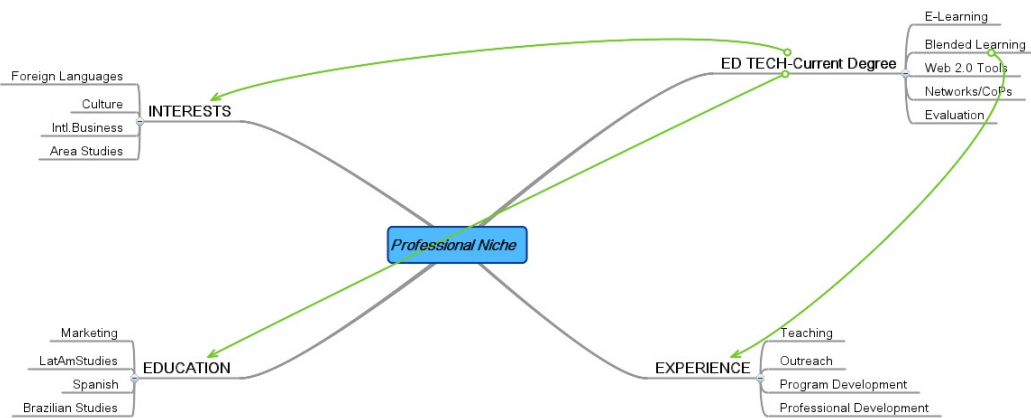


Figure 1-1. Professional niche

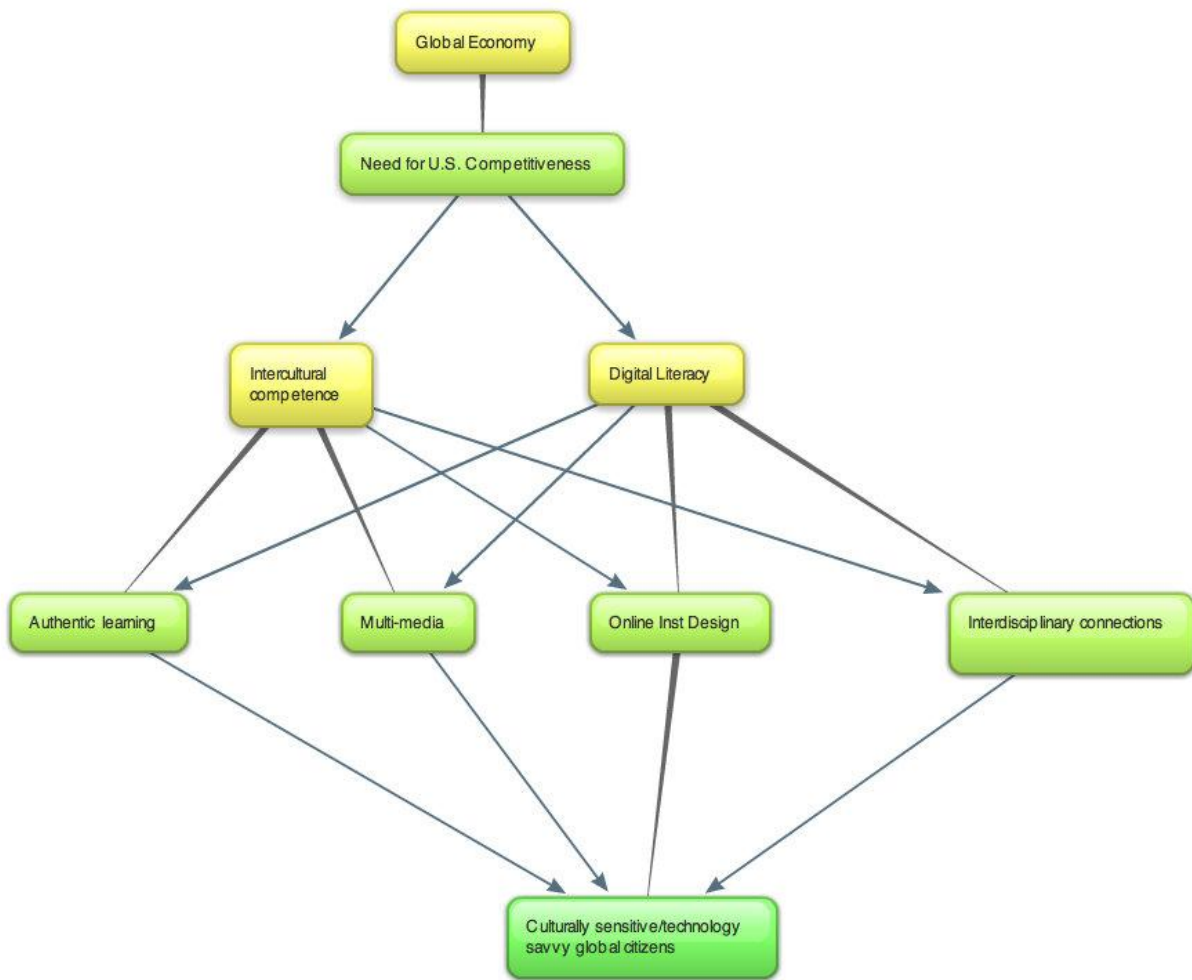


Figure 1-2. Preparing students for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century global economy

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Using the China retailing context, this study seeks to determine best practices for one approach to developing intercultural competence in adult learners in a formal learning environment. The study's conceptual framework integrates constructivist and cognitive learning theories and principles of authentic learning with online design and interdisciplinary content (Figure 2-1). This chapter will address all of these elements and their role in the study.

Some of the assumptions stated in the Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (1998) adult-learning model are that adults are more willing to learn if they feel that what they are studying is relevant to them personally. Jones (2010) affirms that an interdisciplinary approach is a technique that broadens perspectives of learners by synthesizing disciplines, which helps develop skills that are applicable in real-world problem solving. Adults use experience gained through life to create new knowledge, have a problem-centered learning orientation, and are intrinsically motivated. Combining adult-learning principles and interdisciplinary connections in the design of this module will hopefully motivate learners to master the material as they begin to see how intercultural competence can enhance personal and professional aspects of their lives.

The China Retailing Module integrated into the general retailing course is considered "blended" in that it is a combination of online and face-to-face instructional strategies. The value of blended learning in education is that it aims to improve student learning outcomes by finding a balance between face-to-face and online methods. The goal is to maximize the strengths of each format and minimize weaknesses, doing what

the web and technology do best and what class time does best (Oglethorpe & Graham, 2003). The proportion of online and face-to-face activities in a blended course does not have to be equal, but the two approaches should be integrated in way that is multiplicative and not additive. Blended learning can be implemented in numerous ways. A common blended model is one that ties online activities to content which decreases required face-to-face time (Moore, 2005). Another consists of supplementing a traditional course with online activities, which is the type of blended learning this study focuses on.

### **Types of Learner Interaction**

The specific research focus of this study is to observe whether peer interaction within small online teams has any effect on student intercultural sensitivity levels and learning outcomes compared to lack of peer interaction. The discussion of types of interaction in distance learning began on a panel held at the Divisions of Independent Study and Educational Telecommunications of the National University Continuing Education Association in 1989. It was at this meeting that Moore and colleagues discussed issues concerning the amount and quality of interaction in distance learning and where Moore proposed three primary types of online interaction: learner-to-content, learner-to-instructor, and learner-to-learner.

Moore describes learner-to-content interaction as the basis of education. By interacting with content, learners process information internally through cognitive processes. He explains that didactic texts are the oldest form of learner-to-content interaction, having existed since medieval times. Originally distance learning included study guides and instructional explanations. Later developments in content took place through broadcast video and audio as well as computer software. The most recent

forms of content for learners consist of multi-media materials and web tools available on the Internet.

Learner-to-instructor interaction has always played a significant role in traditional educational environments. Learner interaction with the instructor moves a step beyond learner interaction with content alone. Instructor feedback to learners through assessment of assignments is crucial to ascertain student mastery of content and is feasible through individual communications to learners. However, learner-to-learner interaction is what Moore proposed as having the most potential in the future of education. It moves beyond the traditional educational format consisting of large classes with instructor lectures, originally designed for cost-effectiveness and convenience. Interaction can take place in pairs or in larger groups and with or without the presence of an instructor. Learner-to-learner interaction allows for the benefits of peer feedback supplemented by input from the instructor. The ability to collaborate virtually among peer groups in addition to face-to-face collaboration is also an increasingly necessary skill in business environments and in the modern workplace. In this study, learner-to-learner interaction will be the control variable between the two study groups to determine whether this type of interaction has any effect on learning outcomes and intercultural sensitivity level.

### **Why Integrate Online Activities?**

Some of the advantages of online tasks are related to time, quality participation, availability of resources, and connectivity of individuals across distances. Well-designed discussion forums on key topics an instructor wants to address allow time for students to think about the topic at hand and time to formulate a quality response, which may not be feasible due to time constraints in a face-to-face class. Online discussion



also allows all students to participate and to comment on remarks that may be particularly interesting to them. In some cases an online forum can elicit more active participation from less vocal students in a regular class. As more and more content is available on the web, instructors can also provide students with up-to-date authentic resources with which to work or assign students to find the most current information needed to complete an assignment. While international community events and face-to-face class visits by local international experts brings the real world into the classroom, the topic to be addressed may not always have an expert nearby. In the case of bringing in international expertise, depending on the issue to be discussed, the local expert may not be current on trends in his or her home country. In these cases recorded talks or real-time online presentations or chats with content experts can be valuable to learners.

Online environments offer a multisensory quality using sound, image, and animation that allow learning to be active rather than passive (Neo, 2007). Other attributes of educational media for learning, as proposed by Huang (2005), are that they complement traditional learning approaches with the benefits of visual design, interactivity, and animation. As opposed to traditional print sources, media is dynamic, easy to customize and keep up to date, and allows for interdisciplinary collaboration. Huang advocates the use of media for its ability to help students visualize processes and grasp cause-and-effect relationships. She also adds that students enjoy innovative uses of technology for learning since technology forms an integral part of their daily lives. She argues that educational media should go beyond passive forms of digital media and include interactivity to motivate and challenge learners.

## **Instructional Design and Learning Theory**

### **Constructivist Learning Theory**

Emerging technologies and innovative applications of learning theory are changing the way individuals communicate around the world and how teaching and learning take place. Neo (2007) relates the use of technology and multimedia to the basic principles of constructivist learning theory developed by Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1952) with foundations in cognitive learning psychology (Jonassen, Peck, & Wilson, 1999). He highlights aspects of learner and teacher roles, problem solving, context, scaffolding, and collaboration. A key underlying element of constructivism suggested by Jonassen (1994) is that learners build new knowledge through personal interpretation and experience. A constructivist environment emphasizes student-centered learning in which instructors serve as facilitators rather than authoritative providers of knowledge and encourage learners to take more responsibility for their learning by seeking solutions to problems set within the context of an authentic experience and in collaboration with others (Hannafin, 1992).

Using the internet in assignments gives students flexibility to choose from a variety of innovative media they may learn best with and most readily have access to. It also permits students to adapt or create customized and up-to-date learning artifacts as they determine how to reach their own learning goals (Agnew, Kellerman, & Meyer, 1996). A constructivist approach supports project-based learning pertinent to real-world contexts and moves away from traditional methods of rote content learning. As students are assigned higher level tasks they have difficulty completing alone, they turn to collaboration with peers or instructor facilitators who provide “scaffolding” to support the learner until he or she reaches a certain level of competence (McLoughlin, 1999).

## **Cognitive Learning Theory**

Mayer (2002) makes the case for cognitive theory's contribution to educational media design. He believes a two-way relationship between cognition and instruction can bring together the views of psychologists and educators to benefit learning theory and teaching practice. Using the theory-based assumptions of dual channels, limited capacity, and active processing he explains how individuals learn from words and pictures. The dual-channel assumption states that the human cognitive system processes knowledge through visual-pictorial and auditory-verbal channels. Limited capacity states that each channel has a limit to what it can handle at any given time or it will experience overload. Active processing suggests that meaningful learning happens when learners mentally select and organize pertinent words and images and finally connect them with the student's existing knowledge.

Mayer reports the results of research on eight predictions derived from cognitive theory applied to multimedia learning and provides results for studies testing his predictions. The outcome of his research is that based on cognitive theory and his own empirical research findings he recommends eight principles to aid in effective multimedia design. These principles were one of several sources I used as a reference for the design of the proposed China Retailing Module. Table 2-1 lists Mayer's principles and possible ways to integrate them into the design of the China Retailing Module.

## **Authentic Learning**

Another component integral to the China Retailing Module design is authentic learning principles tied to situated learning theory as defined by Collins (1988): "the notion of learning knowledge and skills in contexts that reflect the way the knowledge

will be used in real life”(p. 2). An ongoing concern in education at all levels has been the lack of connection between knowledge and its application in real-world contexts for everyday problem solving. Efforts to address this issue through approaches like situated learning do not favor knowledge acquisition over skill acquisition, but rather combine them both in classroom strategies that foster authentic learning (Herrington & Oliver, 2000). One attempt to bring together formal instruction and real-world application was through Resnick’s (1987) idea of “bridging apprenticeships,” which integrates simulations, coaching, and case studies to make knowledge more relevant to the workplace. Shortly thereafter, Brown, Collins, & Duguid (1989) proposed a model of “cognitive apprenticeship,” which brings together learning and doing for classroom practice.

Although the situated learning model is widely accepted by most, it has also had its critics. Tripp (1993) argued that situated learning was no different from a traditional apprenticeship and that expertise had to come from experts and not from simulations. Hummel (1993) objected to situated learning being possible through computer-mediated instruction since in that context the courseware is the learning environment and not an authentic situation. Reeves (1993) counters these arguments, touting the benefits of a quality multimedia-learning environment that can provide “opportunities for simulated apprenticeships as well as a wealth of learning support activities” (p. 107).

Through further research, Reeves, Herrington, and Oliver (2002) have found that virtual situated learning environments (VSLE) can add an authenticity to face-to-face learning environments which enables learners to:

move freely around the resources provided rather than move in a linear fashion that may not reflect the complexities of real life. Problems presented

to students can use the full capacities of the technology to present situations and scenarios in video clips, texts, links and images to give meaning and purpose to the students' endeavors, and to provide motivation to complete the task (p.566).

Research conducted on role playing in virtual environments by Jones (2006) has also demonstrated the effectiveness of VSLEs as he affirms that advances in technology have allowed for more sophistication in virtual activities addressing real-world contexts and simultaneously helped learners discover the limitations and capabilities of online interactions.

In addition to key elements I reviewed in the literature above, the instructional design framework proposed by Herrington and Oliver (2000), which focuses on authentic learning, was also referred to as I was developing the China Retailing Module. Their research suggests that practical knowledge can be best acquired if the learning environment consists of nine key characteristics. The list is provided below in Table 2-2 with examples of how some characteristics were integrated into the current study module.

### **Learner-to-Learner Interaction in Online Course Design**

Several studies have addressed online interaction from perspectives such as student satisfaction and learning outcomes. In 2007, Arbaugh and Rau conducted a study using an MBA student population to determine the influence of subject area in a virtual environment and its impact on student learning outcomes. They also break down their analysis in terms of participant characteristics, course structure, and types of pedagogical interaction. Under participant characteristics, they examine the effect of the former computing experience of students, the students' age and gender, and the online teaching experience of the course instructor. Their analysis of course structure

includes online class size, variety of media used, and use of group or individual assessments to test for content mastery. Arbaugh and Rau studied learner-to-instructor, learner-to-learner, and learner-to-interface interaction. The researchers assessed perceived student learning and student satisfaction with the course delivery medium.

The overall findings of their research suggest that behavioral effects such as types of learner interaction seem to be most associated with perceived learning, while course subject area and course structure such as type of media use were associated with student satisfaction of the content delivery medium. Of the multiple findings from their research, those pertinent to the present study are a positive relationship between learner-to-learner interaction and perceived learning, with a contradictory negative relationship between learner-to-learner interaction and satisfaction with delivery medium. Another related finding indicates a negative relation between learner-to-learner interaction and large class size in terms of delivery medium. Confirming previous research, Arbaugh and Rau (2007) suggest breaking down a class into small groups for interaction on tasks instead of posting and collaborating with a large group (May & Short, 2003; Palloff & Pratt, 1999). Consequently, in the instructional design of the China Retailing Module, students in the experimental group were also divided into small teams for forum postings and task completion.

The framework presented in Table 2-2 was established as the first step in the Herrington and Oliver (2000) study designed to test its application in a multimedia-learning environment of undergraduate math teachers participating in a pre-service teaching program. The results of their study suggest that instructional design of multimedia models integrating situated learning are effective and that interaction

learner-to-facilitator and learner-to-learner may offer more authentic learning than just computer software providing pre-determined responses. Their findings show that interactivity with a software program through frequent navigation and clicking of links is not necessarily the best learning solution. The most effective approach of the study seemed to support learner reflection through collaborative creation of authentic artifacts that requires individual input from participants. These types of tasks where students reflect on intercultural awareness were part of the China Retailing Module design.

Fung (2004) conducted a study on peer interaction to determine how to promote participation and what barriers existed to online discussions in post-secondary courses. Her results indicate that low participation is primarily due to student lack of time, preference to use study time on assigned readings, and the perceived lack of value from comments and participation of peers. Recommendations from the Fung study to improve student interaction were to provide a “socialization” phase in the course to help the students feel comfortable interacting online and to design the course to facilitate participation. In the case of the China Retailing Module, students were meeting face-to-face before the start of the online portion of the module. Thus, the socialization issue was not considered a cause for concern for getting to know each other, but more for helping students feel comfortable exchanging ideas with peers. As this study only had 24 contact hours (eight face-to-face and 16 outside class), the online design consisted of a series of tasks that culminated in the creation of a small final project. The final project goal was to have interaction among peers in the experimental group and no peer interaction for individuals in the control group.

A different perspective for examining peer interaction was through an industry-based study by Collier and MacManus (2005), which attempts to see how employees can move tacit learning from training in pairs to explicit knowledge in the workplace. The overall results from this study indicate mostly positive views on peer learning, although some respondents had negative reactions. The issues reported by those dissatisfied with the peer learning approach were inappropriate partner and partner lack of commitment to learning tasks. Another issue that surfaced was the need for institutional support and the tradition of a collaborative environment, which was determined to be one of the major factors for success for peer learning in addition to the way learning partnerships are organized.

The Collier and MacManus (2005) study goals were to help participants become self-aware as learners, examine how participants can support each other, and observe the transfer of learning to the workplace. The application of these first two goals in the China Retailing Module was also relevant in terms of developing a sense of intercultural self-awareness in a business context and how participants could support each other to complete tasks similar to the way work is completed in team-oriented face-to-face and virtual corporate environments.

Another analysis of peer interaction and its effect on learning outcomes is through a study by LaPointe and Gunawardena (2004) in which they gather self-reported information from students at the post-secondary level. Using structural equation modeling the researchers considered five factors related to peer interaction to measure each of the following: learner characteristics, perceived teaching style (instructor presence), task design, course requirements, and prior computer experience. Overall,



their results showed that perceived teaching style and prior computer experience were related to and influenced peer interaction and learning outcomes as reported by students. Suggestions for further research were to try to assess learning outcomes through measures of cognition such as content analysis of student online contributions rather than only self-reporting. Another suggestion for future research was the measurement of a learner characteristic. Data collected in the pre-module questionnaire sought information on student learning preference in terms of group or individual work and experience with technology to determine how these elements may affect learning outcomes.

## **Intercultural Competence**

### **Defining Intercultural Competence**

The literature review thus far has examined the potential roles learning theories, course design, and levels of interaction can play in enhancing learning outcomes. Where applicable, these elements formed part of the instructional design strategy for the China Retailing Module. The remainder of this chapter will address the ongoing discussion of how to best define intercultural competence and how to teach it within formal learning environments.

One definition of the term intercultural competence is that of Byram (1997), which consists of five elements broken down into 'preconditions' and 'skills'. The first two 'preconditions' for successful intercultural interaction are attitudes toward and knowledge of one's own and others' behaviors, beliefs, and values. The 'skills' elements are classified as interpreting and relating based on existing knowledge and attitudes; discovering behaviors, beliefs, and values; and interacting. Taylor (1994)

defines intercultural competency as a transformative learning process that results in change of perspective.

According to Bennett (1993), the first step toward intercultural competence is intercultural sensitivity, i.e., knowing that differences exist between groups without making judgments on individuals. Intercultural awareness moves a step further by developing self-awareness and openness to understanding and accepting the differences in another culture. At the intercultural-awareness level, cultural knowledge in terms of facts, belief systems, and history is also considered necessary (Adams, 1995). Intercultural competence is considered a much more advanced level in that it brings together proper behaviors and attitudes that allow individuals to navigate effectively in a variety of personal and professional cross-cultural situations (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989). Figure 2-2 displays the progressive stages of intercultural acquisition that can be developed over time.

The confusion among intercultural competence, intercultural awareness, and intercultural sensitivity, according to Chen and Starosta (2000), is the result of their being closely related but separate concepts. The three terms fall under the umbrella of what Chen and Starosta (2000) define as 'intercultural communication competence' and can be broken down as affective, cognitive, and behavioral. The affective aspect is represented by intercultural sensitivity: accepting and appreciating other cultures. The cognitive aspect represents intercultural awareness: knowledge of cultural conventions. The behavioral aspect represents attainment of communication goals in intercultural interactions.

## **Developing Intercultural Competence**

Other key questions tied to the study of intercultural competence are how to describe it and how to develop it effectively over time within educational contexts. An overarching concern of researchers in this area is how educational programs or courses can demonstrate whether they are helping students achieve intercultural competence? Many have defined intercultural competence over recent decades, but Hunter (2006) points out that these definitions tend to have few points in common and originate from a US perspective. To help institutions with research-based evidence internationalize their curriculum, Hunter (2006) conducted a study with corporate executives, senior international educators, United Nations officials, intercultural experts, and foreign government officers. The goals of the study were to reach a consensus for a definition of intercultural competence and to determine the knowledge, attitudes, and experience needed to function effectively in diverse cultural contexts.

The consensus definition arrived at using the Delphi method was “having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one’s environment” (Hunter, 2006, p. 277). Specific study findings highlight the importance of individuals having a strong understanding of their own cultural norms and expectations made possible through self-reflective activities that help them discover their own cultural barriers. Upon establishing a sense of “self-awareness” one should develop an open attitude toward difference by participating in multicultural experiences and foreign language training abroad or at home. Another top recommendation from the study was the need to have a strong understanding of globalization and world history by recognizing how society, politics, economics, and geography connect.

Similar to Hunter's 2006 research on intercultural competence, Deardorff (2006) surveyed administrators and intercultural scholars to determine the best definition of intercultural competence to use for developing research-based strategies on internationalizing campuses. The top components across all definitions were being aware of one's own cultural biases, recognizing and respecting the cultural values of others, and experiencing other cultures with an open mind. Communication and behavior were also highly ranked factors.

It is important to note that development of intercultural competence takes place over time (Deardorff, 2006). Due to the limited number of contact hours for the China Retailing Module, it is not likely that study participants could arrive beyond the lowest levels of this long-term process. Hence, this study will look only at the affective and cognitive aspects of intercultural competence, intercultural sensitivity, and intercultural awareness respectively, as proposed by Chen and Starosta (1997).

As with anything related to human behavior, individuals will respond to new perspectives differently and have a different level of open mindedness depending on their upbringing, education, and personal international experiences. It is hoped that after participation in the module, students will show some growth in intercultural self-awareness while acquiring some factual knowledge of the China retail industry and will develop a desire to learn more about China and other world cultures.

Varner (2001) examines the teaching and learning of intercultural competence or 'intercultural communication,' the term commonly used in academic business communication courses. He discusses the challenges encountered when training students to become successful global managers and communicators and suggests

ways to overcome them. The first primary challenge he cites is that of connecting how students learn about culture directly to business contexts. Culture should not be an add-on and 'soft-skills' topic if students are to see the correlation between international business success and intercultural understanding. For successful business transactions, culture needs to be connected to specific business issues.

The disconnect between cultural issues and business principles can be caused by varied perspectives of instructor academic expertise. Humanities or language faculty may not understand the role of culture in business or may even have negative perceptions of business. Similarly, a business faculty member who values functional and strategic business principles may feel that culture is not necessary to business success (Weitzenbuerger, 2000).

Another challenge to the long process of developing intercultural competence is avoiding preconceived notions anchored in traditional views of culture that focus on stereotypical images and behaviors that tourism marketing tends to project. Exotic examples of a culture can be interesting and may initially get students' attention; they do not, however, go beneath the surface of culture to examine the deeper cultural norms and values necessary to function in a particular cultural context.

Finally, Varner points out the importance of each individual's self-reference criterion as a necessary step to understanding other perspectives. He also warns of what Osland and Bird (2000) labeled 'sophisticated stereotyping'. This happens when referring to descriptions of national characteristics established by respected researchers such as Hofstede (1980) and Trompenaars (1998) to generalize about specific cultures

when one cannot realistically extrapolate those cultural characteristics to all members of a national group.

To minimize these challenges, Varner proposes using case studies that exemplify the intricate relationship between business and culture and tying specific cultural examples to a business context so that students ponder the deeper “why” of the cultural context and behavior. An example of connecting culture and its effect on the business world is that of religion’s role in finance in Moslem societies due to rules on usury. Varner also suggests ways to avoid traditional stereotyping by providing examples of current events that can tie back to a cultural implication. He encourages the use of research-based intercultural scenarios and issues described in the variety of intercultural communications journals to lessen the chances of discussions ending in anecdotes as opposed to objective analysis. Discussions, reports, and guest panels are ways he suggests to start students reflecting on their own biases and perspectives in order for them to look at others objectively. I considered these challenges and proposed solutions during the creation of the tasks using technology for authentic learning throughout the design of the China Retailing Module.

Table 2-1. Principles from study of cognitive theory of multimedia learning

Principle	Explained	China Retail Module
1. Multimedia principle	Deeper learning from words and pictures than from words alone	Presentations with recent images Of China retail formats, layouts
2. Contiguity principle	Deeper learning from presenting words and pictures simultaneously rather than successively	Ted Talks, online Video clips
3. Coherence principle	Deeper learning when extraneous words, sounds, or pictures are excluded	Will avoid using irrelevant graphics
4. Modality principle	Deeper learning when words are presented as narration rather than as on-screen text	Ted Talks, videos
5. Redundancy principle	Deeper learning when words are presented as narration rather than as both narration and on-screen text	Use of video clips and podcasts
6. Personalization principle	Deeper learning when words are presented in conversational style rather than formal style	Video clips/podcasts using conversational language
7. Interactivity principle	Deeper learning when learners are able to control the presentation rate than not	Students can review video clips/presentations. Students can seek resources at their own pace
8. Signaling principle	Deeper learning when key steps in the narration are signaled rather than non-signaled	N/A

Note. Table source: Mayer 2002, p. 63.

Table 2-2. Authentic learning

Situated Learning	Characteristics	China Retail Module
1. Provide authentic contexts	How knowledge will be used in real world	Discuss recent cases on US firms entering market
2. Provide authentic activities	Real-world relevance, ill-defined tasks, tasks that can be integrated across subject areas	Tasks integrated area studies, retailing, and technology use
3. Provide access to expert performances ( modeling)	Access to expert thinking, opportunities to share ideas	Ted Talks and video clips Found by students
4. Provide multiple roles and perspectives	Student chance to express views	Experimental group posts to team, Control posts to facilitator
5. Support collaborative construction of knowledge	Small-group tasks or pair work	Experimental group posts/final project together
6. Promote reflection	Authentic reflection, student chance to compare with others	Both groups reflected, but control group did so without posting to others
7. Promote articulation (enable tacit knowledge to be made explicit)	Collaboration, public presentation	Control and experimental groups gave in-class presentations
8. Provide coaching and scaffolding (at critical times)	Chance for peer collaboration and available facilitator	Control and experimental groups had access to instructor, but only experimental group had peer collaboration
9. Provide authentic assessment of tasks	Multiple indicators of learning	Web search tasks, reflection responses, consulting presentation, content quiz

Note. Table source: Herrington and Oliver, 2000, p. 26.



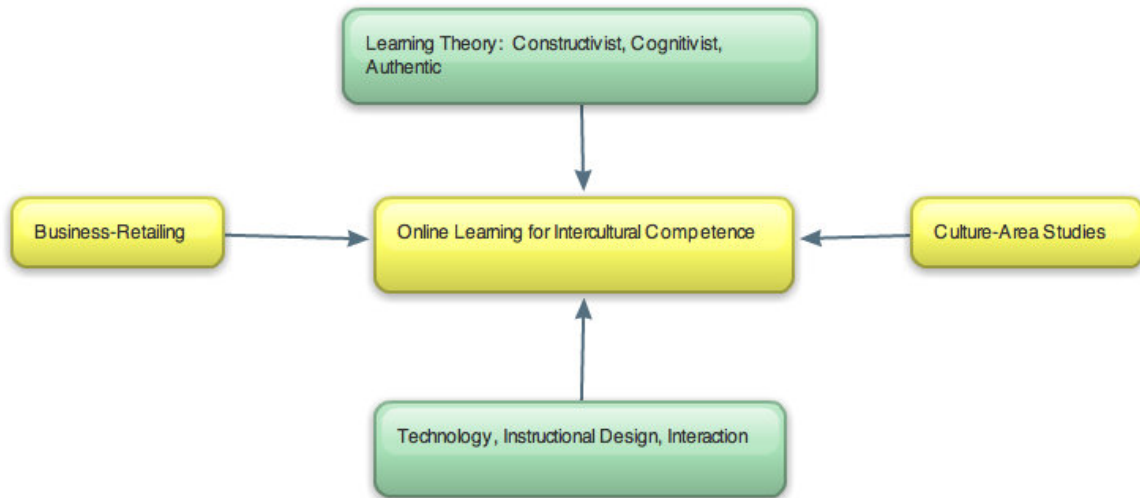


Figure 2-1. Conceptual framework for study

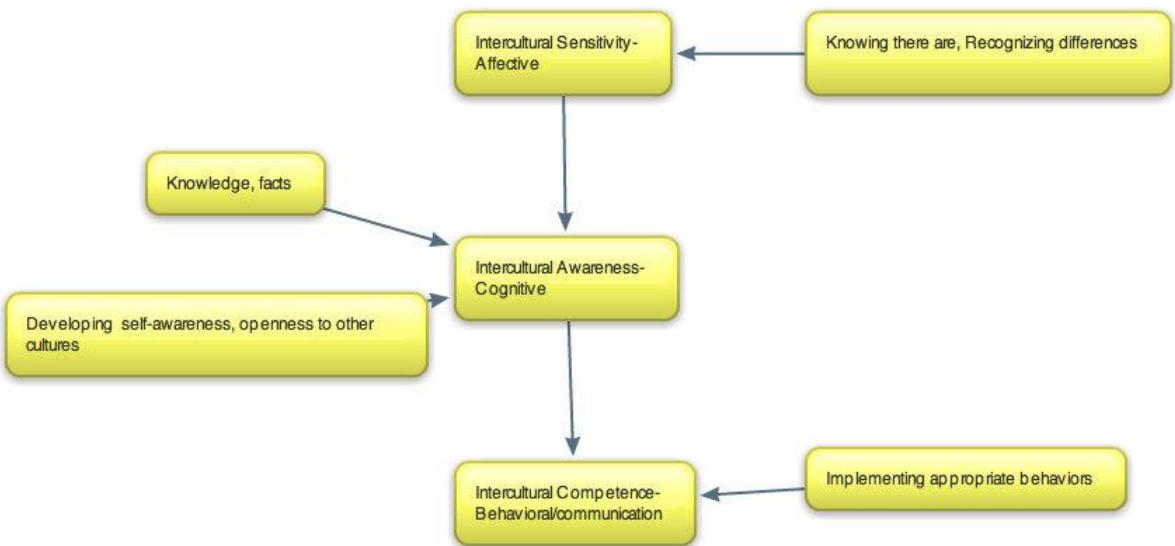


Figure 2-2. Intercultural acquisition stages

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore one way to develop intercultural competence in a formal learning environment. The approach consisted of integrating a pilot blended module into an undergraduate business course. The study sought to determine how the element of online peer interaction as the distinguishing characteristic between control and experimental groups might enhance the intercultural competence development process. This chapter describes the design and development of the China Retailing Module, the study instruments, and data collection.

### **Context of the Study**

The study was conducted at the Warrington College of Business at the University of Florida (UF) in cooperation with the Miller Center for Retailing. During the past several years the Miller Center has been developing international content specifically on China to integrate into retailing courses through funds awarded by the USDOE BIE program. As the Miller Center internationalizes its curriculum to include other emerging markets, it seeks ways to evaluate teaching and learning approaches as well as the content created.

An experimental design was chosen using a convenience sample of 42 undergraduate business students enrolled in an introductory retailing course. The four-credit course met twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays for two hours each session. All participants were between the ages of 20 to 24. Major areas of study listed by students were marketing, general business, telecommunications, and women's studies. Minor areas of study listed were international business, mass communication, information systems, leadership, management, finance, and education. Among the final

28 undergraduate student participants with complete data to be included in the study, seven were male and 21 female.

A UF doctoral student at the College of Business was the instructor teaching the retailing course. For the delivery of the blended China Retailing Module, I facilitated the online portion and the professor delivering the face-to-face portion of the China module was a former director of the Miller Retailing Center with more than 25 years experience in teaching and conducting research in the field.

### **The Blended China Retailing Module**

The China Retailing Module was integrated during the last two weeks of the four-credit spring semester section of the Introduction to Retailing Systems Management course. The standard content of this course covers the functions, institutions, and activities of retailing goods and services. This study aimed to serve as an example of how a blended learning module focusing on global content can be integrated into undergraduate professional school courses. Throughout the process of creating the module, the generic ADDIE instructional design model was applied, going through the following stages: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. Figure 3-1 summarizes key activities of the five ADDIE stages.

#### **Analysis**

In the analysis stage of the ADDIE process, the instructional designer identifies the learning problem, goals and objectives, target learner needs, and existing knowledge. The learning environment, delivery options, and timeline for the project also are considered in this stage. The instructional problem identified at the outset of this study was the need to improve US students' intercultural competence to better prepare them to compete in the global workplace. To address this problem, the pilot module

needed to achieve two goals. The first was to initiate the long-term process of developing intercultural competence by helping students develop intercultural sensitivity by reflecting on what culture is and on their cultural biases. The second goal was to enhance the students' ability to analyze retailing industry challenges and opportunities for international market entry and expansion strategies, specifically in China. If student interest in international content and intercultural awareness could be stimulated by this type of blended module, the students would hopefully consider participating in future international campus and community events, consider studying abroad, and ideally begin appreciating the value of cultural understanding in their personal and professional lives.

As young adult learners enrolled in a course at a reputable post-secondary institution it was assumed that the learners fit the assumptions of andragogy as proposed by Knowles et al. (1998) where adults are more motivated to learn when they can make direct connections between learning activities and their work environment. In the case of the young adults in this study, the motivation would be learning about global markets in order to acquire new skills to apply in their future work. The delivery option available for the module was Sakai, the Learning Management System (LMS) used by the UF College of Business and the retailing graduate student instructor. While Sakai is not an advanced format that allows embedding engaging graphics and media, the tasks assigned in the module had students use the Internet as a tool to research and reflect on a variety of topics by accessing multimedia materials provided in the assignment or media they found on their own to complete a specific task. Figure 3-2 provides a screenshot of a Sakai session page.

## Design

The design stage of ADDIE is the systematic process of aligning learning principles and objectives with tasks. The blended module combined online instructional design principles with research-based definitions of what elements are necessary to develop intercultural competencies in individuals. While designing the pilot online tasks, I consulted instructional design guidelines based on constructivist principles as applied to use of technology (Neo, 2007), cognitivism as applied to multimedia and how individuals learn through visual and auditory channels (Mayer, 2002), authentic learning (Herrington & Oliver, 2000), and multimedia design (Huang, 2005). I also included recommendations on developing intercultural sensitivity from Deardorff (2006), Hunter (2006), Varner (2001), and others for the online content.

As preparation for developing the China Retailing Module, in early spring semester I audited an eight-week graduate-level Retailing in China course offered at the business school to gain a student perspective on the retailing in China materials already created by the Miller Retailing Center. I also went to the National Retailing Federation's annual conference where I attended sessions on the internationalization of retailing and sessions focusing specifically on China.

During the initial stages of designing the module, faculty knowledgeable about educational technology provided feedback for the draft online portion of the module design and proposed activities. I met several times with the retailing professor to discuss learning objectives, content to be covered, and the development of the China Retailing Quiz. I had other meetings with the professor and doctoral teaching assistant to determine how to divide the China retailing material around the number of contact

hours available in the course and to coordinate the logistics of introducing the project to the class and administering the data-collection tools.

## **Development**

After I completed the first module draft, the retailing professor provided feedback on content accuracy and relevance as well as the sequencing of the material. A volunteer graduate student with online course experience also read through the module draft and gave feedback on the clarity of the module instructions from a student perspective. I implemented these suggestions and changes to obtain final approval of the module content before I uploaded it in Sakai. The China Retailing Module was broken down into a series of learning objectives listed briefly here and presented in more detail in Appendix F. Through the module students were expected to 1) reflect on what 'culture' is and how it might affect international business relations, 2) recognize their own perceptions of China and the east vs. west paradigm, 3) identify unique characteristics of regions of China, 4) understand the significance of networking and relationship-building in China, 5) define key characteristics of consumer behavior in China, and 6) consider the variety of international market entry and expansion strategies.

Materials used in the blended module included case studies, video clips, presentations in PowerPoint® format, web research, classroom lectures, and online readings. Samples of existing online resources were provided, but students were also encouraged to seek out other resources that could be shared with the class and to allow for learner autonomy and student choice of topics to explore.

## Implementation

During the ADDIE implementation stage materials and user guidelines are distributed to the target student group and course facilitators begin monitoring learner participation and submission of assignments. The retailing faculty member and I implemented the China Retailing Module after a class visit where we explained the study to students. The module then went live in Sakai for students to begin the initial online session to prepare for the first face-to-face class. The content and assignments were the same for both groups, but, upon first access to the Sakai system, experimental group students were directed to an assigned wiki on Wikispaces as shown in Figure 3-3. The experimental group members were randomly divided into teams of three and assigned to wikis bearing names of Chinese horoscope animals where they submitted assignments and could see each other's responses as well as feedback I, as the online facilitator, posted on the pages.

I chose wikis as the tool through which teams would submit assignments because the Sakai LMS did not offer a better alternative format for putting the students in teams to post their comments in a uniform space. Using wikis, students could complete assignments on a variety of pages but within one wiki, giving more of an impression of a collaborative project site for each group. The objective of using wikis for the experimental group to complete work was to give students more of a sense of team ownership of an artifact they developed. Even if Sakai had been used for both groups, experimental students still would have had to access numerous forums to keep track of or mix all the assignments together in one forum.

The control group, consisting of students working individually, submitted assignments directly to me by uploading documents through the Sakai homework

submission page. Students in this group did not see each other's responses and I provided them with feedback directly and privately as online facilitator using the Sakai assignment messaging system. Table 3-1 summarizes the differences between the control and experimental group work.

### **Description of module classes/online sessions**

The first three of the face-to-face classes consisted of lectures, discussion of case studies, and presentations by the retailing professor. The three classes covered topics such as internationalization and expansion strategies, overview of Chinese history and culture, Chinese consumer behavior, and the development of retailing in China over time. The fourth and final face-to-face class was used for student final consulting presentations and discussion. Students were not separated by control and experimental groups for work or discussions in the three classes, they were only divided into study groups for the online portion of the module.

The three online sessions associated with the face-to-face meetings were designed with readings and Internet activities guiding students as they gathered relevant information for the final mini-consulting assignment. The description of each online session consisted of goals and learning objectives, background information and links about the topic, instructions on what students needed to do, a summary of what should be completed and what students should know after completing the activities, and optional resources to which they could refer. The script of the online sessions can be found in Appendix G.

To introduce the rationale behind the blended module, in the first online session I explained why international retailing is growing in importance for the US and why the module focused on China. Session 1 was labeled "Culture/Impressions of China" and



students were asked to think about their own definition of “culture” and how they thought it might affect doing business internationally. Session 2 focused on Understanding the Chinese Consumer. In this session students researched tendencies in Chinese consumer behavior and shopping preferences according to regional demographics. Session 3 addressed types of Market Entry and Expansion Strategies and how they are also influenced by the diversity of regions in China.

### **Final consulting project**

The small but culminating consulting project was the final assignment for the students as an example of an authentic task they might do in a ‘real’ job. Students were asked to put themselves in the position of a consultancy group to give a preliminary assessment of taking a US retailer of their choice into China. Students had to give a 15-minute presentation providing advice to a client on the challenges and opportunities the client might face upon entering the Chinese market and what future expansion strategies might be relevant. In the presentation students had to mention chosen market entry mode, consumer preferences, national regulations, and cultural issues that might affect company strategy. The final consulting projects were assigned to be prepared and presented in teams for the experimental group and individually for the control group. Table 3-2 summarizes the sequence of module activities for students during the study implementation.

### **Evaluation**

The ADDIE evaluation stage aims to measure course effectiveness in terms of achieving learning objectives, behavior changes (where data collection is feasible), and learner satisfaction with the experience. Formative evaluation of the module was part of the initial consultation with retailing and educational technology experts and integrating

their feedback to improve the module during its design and development stages. E-mails from students also prompted revisions and changes where possible during the module. Data for the summative assessment of the module was collected through the post-module questionnaires measuring factual knowledge and intercultural sensitivity. Additional questions concerning student impressions were asked of students to determine their reaction to the course and how they thought it could be improved.

### **Data Collection**

All research procedures were approved by the University of Florida's Institutional Review Board before data collection (Appendix A). Before responding to the surveys, participants were informed of the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality and their option to have their data included or not. Those agreeing to fully participate were instructed to sign the informed-consent document before completing the survey questionnaires. While students had the right to opt out of having their data included in the study, they still were expected to complete the course assignments as part of their course grade.

Data were collected using the established Chen and Starosta Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and the China Retailing Quiz I developed with the retailing professor. The scale and the quiz were administered before and after the module and did not vary in content. Study participants also completed pre-module Demographic/ Background questions and post-module Course Feedback questions I developed from surveys used in previous studies on intercultural awareness and student attitudes toward online learning. The Demographic/Background questions sought basic information on participants, student global experiences, and attitudes toward technology and online

learning. The Course Feedback questions addressed satisfaction with the online content and activities and student perception of the value of intercultural awareness.

The blended module consisting of four face-to-face classes and three online sessions was implemented during the last two weeks of the retailing course. Material earlier in the semester covered introductory retailing principles without a focus on international markets. The timeframe of the China retailing module was listed on the course syllabus. The doctoral teaching assistant explained to the class in advance that this portion of the course would be taking place and that it formed part of a study piloting instructional materials. The week before the first face-to-face class and before making the online assignments go live, the retailing professor and I visited the class to explain what students could expect during the two weeks of the module. During this same class visit, I administered the ISS surveys, the China Retailing Quiz, and the Demographic/Background Questions. On the final day of class after student project presentations and discussion, students took the ISS and the China Retailing Quiz again and completed the Course Feedback Questions as post-module measurements. For all pre- and post-survey instruments, participants were encouraged to respond with their first thoughts on the ISS and China Retailing Quiz and to be as honest as possible in their comments on learning about international markets so that feedback could be used for future international retailing materials. Table 3-3 shows the breakdown and description of study measurement items, when they were administered, and in what format.

There was not perfect attendance on the day of the pre-module class visit so only 34 complete data packets were collected at that time. Two requests to gather missing

data and responses from absent students were sent by e-mail. Four additional students responded with completed and scanned data packets, bringing the total of complete pre-module data sets to 38.

At the final class session attendance was not perfect either, resulting in only 25 data packets collected. Two reminder e-mails asking students to submit surveys were sent out resulting in three more responses and a final number of 28 participants with complete data to be included in the study.

### **Study Instruments**

#### **Intercultural Sensitivity Scale: Pre- and Post-Module**

The valid and reliable Intercultural Sensitivity Scale established by Chen and Starosta (2000) was the selected measurement to respond to Research Question 1 to indicate any change in student intercultural sensitivity after participating in the China Retailing Module. Intercultural sensitivity is the affective dimension of intercultural communication competence as defined by Chen and Starosta (2000) and the first step in the development of intercultural competence (Bennett, 1993). The ISS was administered before and after the module to compare any change in control and experimental group intercultural sensitivity level scores.

The ISS created by Chen and Starosta in 2000 was designed and validated through a series of three studies. The first study established a factor structure of a 44-item intercultural sensitivity scale. The second study aimed to measure the concurrent validity of the ISS using the Interaction Attentiveness Scale (Cegala, 1981), the Impression Rewarding Scale (Wheeless & Duran, 1982), the Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), the Self-Monitoring Scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984), and the Perspective Taking Scale (Davis, 1996). The third study evaluated the predictive validity

using the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (Hammer & Gudykunst, 1978) and the Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale (Chen, 1993).

Chen and Starosta (2000) concluded that the moderate correlations found between the ISS inventory and other measures support the validity of the ISS. Their results also suggest that people who have high levels of intercultural sensitivity tend to be more attentive to others, are empathetic, have high self-esteem, are less likely to pass judgment, and self-monitor to adapt behaviors according to situational contexts. These factors were also considered in creating the ISS instrument. Although Chen and Starosta have results validating the ISS, they do suggest further research examining the application of the instrument in more diverse populations, the possibility of other factors causing variance (age, gender), and further study of the construct validity of the factor scores.

The ISS consists of 24 five-point Likert-type questions that are broken down into five subscales: (1) interaction engagement - individual's feeling of participation in intercultural communication, (2) respect for cultural differences - how individuals tolerate a counterpart's culture and opinion, (3) interaction confidence - how confident an individual is in a new intercultural setting, (4) interaction enjoyment - how positive or negative an individual's reaction is when communicating with people from different cultures, and (5) interaction attentiveness - individual's effort to understand and relate to others. Possible total intercultural sensitivity scores range from 24 to 120 with higher scores suggesting an advanced level of intercultural sensitivity. Appendix C lists the breakdown of subscales by question..

The Chen and Starosta ISS instrument (Appendix B) was selected over others for several reasons. First, the population used to design the ISS included US students in a primarily middle-class public university with a median age of 19.5, similar to the current UF study sample population. Fritz, Mollenberg, & Chen (2000) conducted a study specifically testing the validity of the ISS using a population of business students in a German university. Although they found some weaknesses in the factors of “interaction enjoyment” and “interaction attentiveness,” their confirmatory factor analysis indicated the usefulness and applicability of the instrument.

Many other measurements of intercultural competence are available, but most are testing advanced stages of intercultural competence such as levels expected after long-term experiences abroad that would not be applicable to this research context. The ISS measures intercultural sensitivity of individuals, the first level in the development of intercultural competence and this aligns with the learning objectives for the China Retailing Module. Finally, the ISS has been successfully used in a variety of intercultural competence studies.

### **Studies Using the Chen and Starosta ISS**

Almost a dozen studies examining some aspect of intercultural sensitivity level using the ISS as a measurement tool were identified in the literature since it was created in 2000. The studies were conducted in several countries and targeted primarily university students or corporate participants. Graf (2004) designed a study assessing culture-specific versus culture-general intercultural training designs in which the ISS was used to determine whether the level of intercultural competencies differs between university students in the US and Germany. Dong, Day, & Collaço (2008) implemented the ISS in their study to examine the role of intercultural sensitivity in

reducing ethnocentrism in US students. Another study conducted in China (Hou, 2010) used the ISS to assess the intercultural sensitivity of adult Chinese English language learners after completing intercultural training before an experience abroad. The results of intercultural sensitivity levels of participants were to be used to improve future training.

A study in Turkey using the ISS with a population of undergraduate business students examined the role that education (subject area of study) and previous international experience have on intercultural sensitivity (Penbek et al., 2009). Yuping Mao (2010) uses the ISS in conjunction with other instruments in a dissertation examining relationships among intercultural sensitivity, organizational communication and management, and the use of technology in multinational Chinese firms. Del Villar (2010) conducted a study determining Filipinos' intercultural sensitivity level and its possible association with various demographic variables. She suggested that intercultural sensitivity could be predicted by a model with coefficients such as length of stay in another country, number of foreign friends, sex, and college courses.

Peng (2006) conducted a study using the Chen and Starosta ISS instrument to measure intercultural sensitivity levels among three groups. The results did find a difference in some sub-categories of intercultural sensitivity levels when comparing Chinese English majors, non-English majors, and multinational employees.

The similar focus of the above research addressing primarily intercultural sensitivity levels between groups or factors affecting intercultural sensitivity suggests a need for expanded research to assess intercultural sensitivity after specific formal learning experiences. The only study found using the ISS scale to measure intercultural

sensitivity in relation to a formal learning environment and use of technology was the paper by Fishwick, Kamhawi, Coffey, & Henderson (2010). Unlike the present study that uses the ISS to observe change in intercultural sensitivity levels of a certain population after participation in a short blended module, the Fishwick et al. study looked at the effectiveness of a China-themed multi-user virtual environment (MUVE) training platform. The Fishwick et al. study was also the only example found using the ISS as a pre/post-testing approach after applying a study treatment. They also test beyond general intercultural sensitivity levels across cultures, since the research team supplemented the Chen and Starosta scale with the integration of China-specific culture items.

Their study was not complete at the time of publication of the Fishwick et al. paper, so all data had yet not been compiled. However, preliminary results of the first 50 participants using the immersed and interactive MUVE environment did indicate improved cultural learning. Results from the ISS measurement in the current study piloting the China Retailing Module can fill a gap in the literature examining another approach of developing student intercultural competence in a particular disciplinary context within a formal learning environment.

### **China Retailing Quiz: Pre- and Post-Module**

A pre and post measurement of factual and cultural content acquired by students was necessary to observe any changes in knowledge level, defined as the cognitive dimension of intercultural communication competence (Chen & Starosta, 2000). I developed the China Retailing Quiz questions in consultation with the retailing faculty member delivering the face-to-face portion of the blended module based on the module learning objectives. The quiz was composed of 20 True/False questions testing



introductory knowledge of Chinese shopping behavior, consumer preferences, and regulatory practices particular to the Chinese context (Appendix F). The China Retailing Quiz was developed to respond to Research Question 2 measuring any change between study groups in factual and cultural knowledge about the China retailing context.

### **Demographic/Background Questions: Pre-Module**

To gather demographic and international background information on the study participants, I developed pre-module items in the form of Likert, open-ended, and Yes/No questions. These questions served to obtain an overview of student international experience and attitudes toward intercultural awareness and online learning. Since the pre/post ISS and China Retailing Quiz were already lengthy, I chose to ask a minimal number of brief pre- and post-questions addressing specific factors identified in other studies as being related to levels of intercultural sensitivity. These questions were based on questionnaires from previous studies on developing intercultural awareness through an MBA study tour (Tuleja, 2008) and on student satisfaction with and attitudes toward online learning (Paechter & Maier, 2010).

These pre-module survey questions gathered data such as gender, age, major, and domestic or international student status. Other questions addressed participant experience in terms of international travel and number of languages spoken, general attitudes toward cultural knowledge, and what students hoped to learn from the module. Although there is still a limited amount of empirical evidence connecting the factors included in the pre-module questions, Peng (2006) does list most of these factors as possible influences on intercultural sensitivity levels and tests them in his study. The Penbek et al. (2009) research cited in Chapter 2 found that major area of study,

language training, and international experience in a variety of formats do influence the intercultural sensitivity of college students. While the study not specifically tied to the context of intercultural content, Schuh's (2003) research suggests that previous knowledge and experience play a role in how individuals acquire meaning during student-centered learning tasks such as those assigned in the China Retailing Module.

Prior experience with technology and attitudes toward online learning were considered necessary questions as well since studies by Song, Singleton, Hill, & Koh (2004) and Hill and Hannafin (1997) suggest that prior technology expertise is a significant factor in facilitating learning. Appendix D lists the pre-module Demographic/Background questions.

#### **Course Feedback Questions: Post-Module**

Students also responded to post-module Course Feedback questions soliciting their opinions on the value of intercultural competence while working with foreign markets, what comments and suggestions they had about the online portion of the module, and whether they would consider study abroad or taking another international retailing course

The post-module items consisted of four open-ended and two Yes/No questions which I created to gather student feedback specific to the online module work and topics of interest, the benefits of understanding international markets, and possible future student participation in similar courses or study tours abroad. The questions were formulated to observe student perception of the value of intercultural sensitivity after completing the module and are listed in Appendix E. Student responses to these questions were to be used to improve module design and enhance content students consider relevant.

## Data Analysis

I used Version 19 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data through analysis of covariance and descriptive statistics to answer the series of research questions posed at the outset of the study. To address the overarching research objective of measuring the effect of different forms of online interaction on learning outcomes in a blended module,, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was applied to the data. ANCOVA tests whether the adjusted group means vary significantly from each other by assessing whether the means of the dependent variable, adjusted for differences in the covariate, differ among the independent variables. An ANCOVA is typically included in an experimental design with randomly assigned groups, particularly with small sample sizes, to remove outside influences from the dependent variable, thus decreasing the within-group variance. I conducted a one-way ANCOVA to evaluate the effect of interaction mode (peer interaction or non-peer interaction) during the module's online treatment period. The independent variable was the status of working with peers online (team) or working alone (individual). The covariate was the pre-test score before participants worked on the module and the dependent variable was the post-test score after the module was completed.

ISS results were also analyzed to determine the mean, median, mode, and standard deviations of participant scores to answer Research Question 1, Is there a change in the level of intercultural sensitivity between the two study groups due to the type of online interaction experienced? Due to the reverse polarity of item wording in the ISS, some items were first reverse coded before calculating the statistics. The reverse coded items were numbers 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20, and 22. The descriptive statistics calculations were sorted in three ways to compare scores between all

participants as a whole and by control and experimental group. Since the ISS consists of five sub scales measuring distinct factors, I analyzed these scores using descriptive statistics for each scale by control and experimental group (Appendix C) to compare across all participants.

To answer Research Question 2, Is there a change in the acquisition of cultural facts and knowledge between the two study groups due to the type of online interaction experienced?, I sorted and calculated the descriptive statistics of the quiz scores as I did with the ISS scores comparing results between all participants, control and experimental group. I analyzed open-ended responses from the post-module Course Feedback questions to respond to Research Question 3, Is intercultural awareness perceived as important for success in the Chinese retailing context by both study groups?

Although the ANCOVA results did not reveal a statistically significant difference between mean scores of the control and experimental groups after the treatment, I examined responses to the pre- and post-questions on demographics, student international experience, and attitudes toward online learning with ISS and quiz scores to identify any qualitative indicators of effects on the control and experimental groups.

### **Limitations in Methodology**

As with all research designs, there are often constraints to conducting a study exactly as desired while avoiding unforeseen obstacles that arise during the actual research implementation. This exploratory study is no different and the final paragraphs of this chapter highlight issues encountered during my research. The first constraint in the research design was the limited availability of classes to use for the study. The one class available for the research had to be split into control and experimental groups,

leaving a very small sample size with which to work. The time allotted for the module within the retailing course was only two weeks, so it limited the number of tasks that could be assigned to be fair in terms of course workload. Hence, there may not have been enough tasks to register the effect of this instructional model (peer interaction or individual work without peer interaction) on student intercultural sensitivity change. The fact that the course was already organized using the Sakai system also limited options for the blended module delivery and for setting up the control and experimental groups online.

Even though the doctoral teaching assistant was using Sakai for the course, it was primarily a repository for the course syllabus, readings, lecture presentation files, and grade tracking. Students were not used to using the LMS or any type of technology for other tasks in the class. There was one writing assignment for students to individually visit and compare two local retailers, but most work in the course was associated with readings that did not require any type of regular submitted response or participation from students. Quizzes were the primary tasks motivating students to be prepared for class as opposed to preparing for in-depth class discussions or regular reflective types of assignments. The sudden implementation of the blended module using technology in a way that required more regular participation with two new individuals (retailing professor and the researcher) was a significant break in routine that caused problems for some students. Although the 'International Retailing' portion of the course was listed in the syllabus, not enough attention had been given to it during the first week of the course when discussing semester plans, so several students felt the China Retailing

Module was an “add-on” of work for the class and generated some negative student attitudes toward the blended module project.

Table 3-1. Breakdown of online work by study group

Control Group (Individual work)	Experimental Group (Teams of three)
Individual students do assignments	Individual students do assignments
Submit assignments in Sakai	Submit assignments in wiki
Feedback from online facilitator in Sakai	Public feedback from facilitator on wiki
No shared posts, only to facilitator	View/respond to each other's posts
Prepare presentation alone	Prepare presentation with team

Table 3-2. Summary of module implementation in retailing class

Date	Activity
March 31	Online work available  Online Session 1: <i>China Retailing Module Introduction, Impressions of China</i> , two online tasks
April 3	Message to all students re-confirming information about the project and online assignments
April 5	Face-to-face Session 1: <i>Introduction to China/Retail Internationalization</i>  Online Session 2: <i>Understanding the Chinese Consumer</i> , two online tasks
April 7	Face-to-face Session 2: <i>Rise of Chinese Consumerism</i>  Online Session 3: <i>Market Entry and Expansion Strategies</i> , two online tasks
April 12	Face-to-face Session 3: <i>Introduction to Retailing in China</i> , researcher class visit to clarify final project
April 14	Project due, in-class presentations

Table 3-3. Study instruments

Instrument	When Administered	Testing/Data Sought	Format
IRB Forms	Pre-module class visit		
Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) Chen & Starosta (2000)	Pre-module class visit	Intercultural sensitivity	24 Likert-scale questions
Demographic/ Background Questions	Pre-module class visit	Course expectations, Intl and technology experience	1 Open-ended question, 3 Likert, 9 Yes/No
Chinese Retailing Quiz (instructor/ Researcher created)	Pre-module class visit	Knowledge of China retailing context/culture	20 True/False
Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS)	Post-module Final class	Intercultural sensitivity	24 Likert-scale questions
Chinese Retailing Quiz (instructor/ Researcher created)	Post-module Final class	Knowledge of China retailing context/culture	20 True/ False
Course Feedback Questions	Post-module Final class	Student reaction to content, online activities, and perceived value of intercultural awareness	4 Open-ended questions, 2 Yes/No



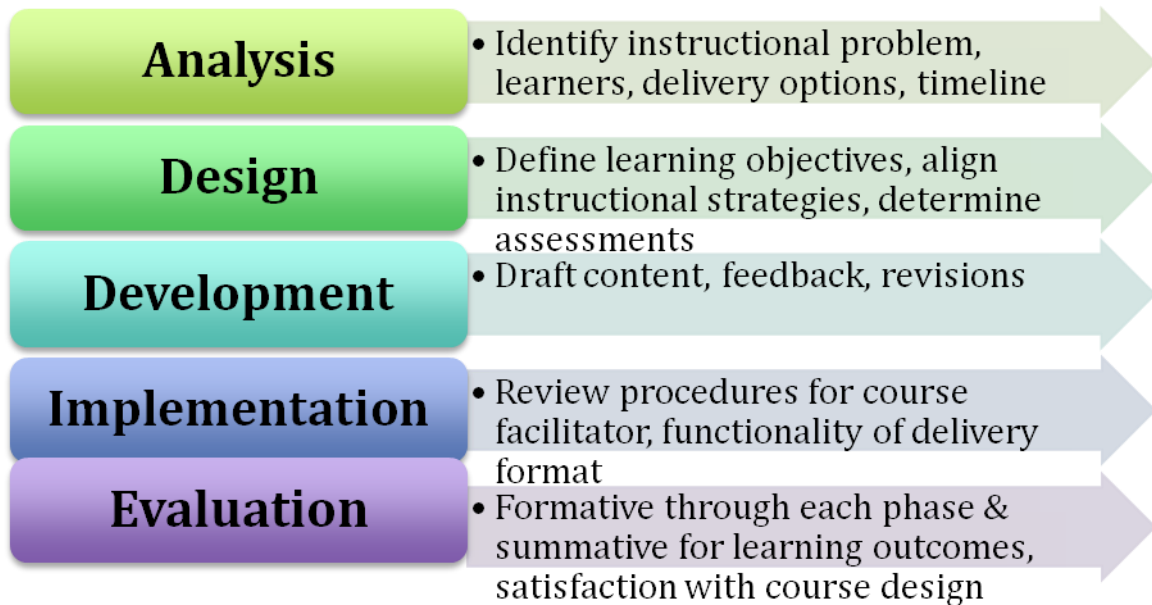


Figure 3-1. ADDIE Instructional design stages

**2. READ/PREPARE:**

*Carrefour vs. Wal-Mart Case* Be prepared to answer questions at the end of the case for class. The case reading is available for download on "Case Studies" page of the wiki.

**3. SEARCH/POST/TAKE NOTES:** Understanding Chinese Consumer Shopping Preferences

1. **Search** the web for resources about Chinese consumer characteristics and shopping patterns.

2. **Post** at least one resource you find on the team wiki. (<http://chinaretailhorse.wikispaces.com/Chinese+Consumer>) The resource can be an article, video clip, blog, report, website, etc.

3. Be sure to look at team member resources and agree on key concepts to include in your final presentation due April 13th. The resources your team shares should supplement consumer behavior patterns will learn about from the two class cases. Here is one example of a resource:

'Chinese Consumer Report 2010'

<http://www.rolandberger.com/news/2010-07-27-rbsc-news-ChineseConsumerReport2010.html>

**WHAT SHOULD BE COMPLETE AT THE END OF THIS SESSION:**

1. Comments posted about TedTalk video
2. Be prepared to discuss the *Carrefour vs. Wal-Mart* case in class on April
3. Chinese consumer behavior resource post
4. Team notes on Chinese consumer behavior

**After online session #2 you should...**

- Understand basic differences between Chinese and Western perspectives
- Be able to describe basic Chinese consumer preferences
- Be able to list some factors that determine Chinese consumer purchases

Figure 3-2. Sakai session screenshot

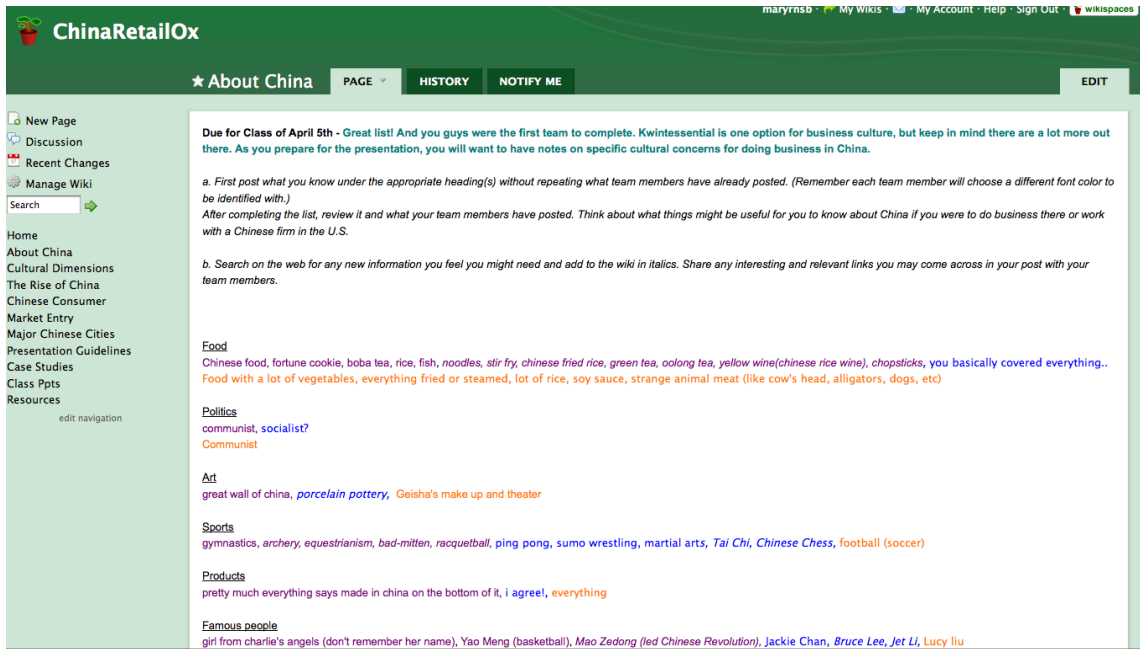


Figure 3-3. Wiki screenshot

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the data used to analyze and respond to the research questions of how online peer interaction within a blended module might enhance the development of intercultural competence and whether students perceived intercultural awareness as important for success in the Chinese retailing context. The independent variable in this study was type of online interaction in a learning environment and the dependent variables were intercultural sensitivity level measured by the Intercultural Sensitivity Survey and acquisition of knowledge measured by the China Retailing Quiz. The distinguishing element between groups was the inclusion of peer (learner-to-learner) interaction in the experimental group and the exclusion of peer interaction in the control group.

The discussion of results is organized by first presenting information on the study participants and comparing participation levels by study group. Results for each of the three research questions are provided followed by student feedback and their reactions to participation in the module.

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Participant Demographics**

Seven of the 28 participants eligible for final data analysis were male and 21 were female. Seven of the 28 were international students and of the 21 non-international students, five spoke more than one language. Twenty-four of the participants had vacationed, studied, or worked abroad. Eighteen students responded that they would like to study abroad in the future and two students said they were not interested. Seven students replied N/A, possibly because they were graduating, and one missed

responding to the question. Several pre-module questions addressed student experience with and attitudes toward online learning and technology use. All students had taken at least one or up to 15 online classes. Eight stated they did not like online courses, 19 said they did, and one was undecided (yes and no response). Only one student, who was studying for a minor in Education, had used wikis, word clouds, Voicethread®, and concept maps. Nineteen students had used wikis, but none of the other tools listed in the survey such as word clouds, Voicethread, and online concept maps. Table 4-1 breaks this information down by control and experimental group.

### **Study Participation**

Forty-two students were enrolled in the retailing course. Before starting the China Retailing Module, students were randomly divided into seven groups of three, forming the experimental group, and 21 individuals working on their own, forming the control group. Thirty-eight sets of surveys were collected pre-module and 29 survey packets were collected after completion of the module and during the final day of class. Due to incomplete data of a pre-questionnaire, only 28 participants could be included for analysis in the study. The final participation rate was 28 out of 42 students, or 66% with 13 students in the control group and 15 in the experimental.

Two online tasks were assigned for each of the three online sessions. These six tasks were building blocks designed to guide students in creating the final consulting project. Students made presentations on the last day of class and they were encouraged to be innovative in their use of technology for their projects.

All students except for one team chose to use a PowerPoint® format for their assignment, the one exception was the use of Prezi® by one team.

Students gave presentations on local and national firms representing a variety of beauty, apparel, food, and automotive industries. Figure 4-1 shows an example of a slide using a more visual approach with infographics throughout the presentation compared to the traditional bullet-point text seen in Figure 4-2. Students volunteering to give presentations during the class time available received extra credit and the best presentations won a bookstore gift card. The retailing professor led the closing discussion on international market entry strategy and students debated which companies and products presented by classmates would be most likely to succeed in China.

There is no way of knowing exactly how much time students spent on online assignments or if they may have read the material without submitting posts. However, tracking who submitted online assignments and the final presentation was one way to provide some information on student exposure to and interaction with content. Posting and submission of work varied between study groups and is presented in Table 4-2. In terms of participation on the final project 10 of the 13 control group students submitted and one volunteered to give a presentation. Although every team did not have active participation of all members, all seven of the experimental teams submitted a project and five of those seven teams volunteered to give a presentation in the final class. In contrast to this high participation and submission of final presentations by the experimental group teams, their number of submissions of the online assignments was lower than the control group where each of the control student participants submitted all six assignments.

## **Research Question 1-Intercultural Sensitivity ANCOVA Results**

While random assignment of students to control and experimental groups is key to an experimental design, it does not necessarily ensure a perfect balance of study groups. For this reason I used analysis of covariate (ANCOVA) in the data analysis of the ISS and China Retailing Quiz instruments to control for confounding variables such as personal and international background and experience of participants that might affect their intercultural sensitivity level before the treatment. Meeting the independence of observation assumption for ANCOVA should not have been a concern due to large class size and lecture format of the course, making it unlikely that students from the control and experimental groups discussed or conferred upon the content of the online activities to affect the results in any way.

ANCOVA was used to achieve a more concise measure of the treatment effect since ANCOVA adjusts the post-test means on the basis of the pre-test means and then compares the adjusted means to determine if there is any significant difference. Johnson (2001) states that experimental studies using ANCOVA can more readily infer causality if results are significant. Also, the use of the pre-test scores as a covariate tends to provide a more conservative statistical analysis. I used Version 19 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for analysis of ANCOVA and the descriptive statistics.

Research Question 1 sought to observe the effect of online peer interaction on intercultural sensitivity level. ANCOVA was performed to determine if there was any significant difference on the post-ISS scores with the covariate as pre-score, the dependent variable as the post-score, and the independent variable as group or individual status in the study. The first dependent variable is the ISS post-test score to

answer Research Question 1. A one-way analysis of covariance evaluating the effect of the peer interaction during the blended module was applied to the ISS scores. The effect of group status on the post-ISS scores was not significant with  $F(1, 25) = 1.171$ ,  $p=.290$ . The effect of pre-ISS scores on post-ISS scores was significant with  $F(1, 25)=67.988$ ,  $p=.000$ , but still not very important as a result since it only indicates that pre-test scores are significantly correlated with post-test scores.

### **Descriptive Statistics: Intercultural Sensitivity Level**

Del Villar (2010) arbitrarily classified intercultural sensitivity score levels for Chen and Starosta's (2000) ISS instrument into three groups: High = 89-120, Moderate = 57-88, low=24-56. Based on her score classification of 120 possible points, student mean scores of intercultural sensitivity for participants in this sample were all in the high range at the beginning of the course, with pre-test scores ranging between 93-97 before the students even completed the module. Looking at ISS results in Table 4-3, the descriptive ISS mean score of all participants were the same at 95.57 for pre and post. When the experimental group team scores were separated from the control group there was a very slight (.93) increase in the post scores. However, control ISS scores decreased by one point.

In addition to testing for an overall intercultural sensitivity score, the ISS instrument includes five subscales focusing on a variety of aspects considered significant in measuring intercultural sensitivity and broken down as follows: (1) interaction engagement - individual's feeling of participation in intercultural communication, (2) respect for cultural differences - how individuals tolerate a counterpart's culture and opinion, (3) interaction confidence - how confident an individual is in a new intercultural setting, (4) interaction enjoyment - how positive or negative an individual's reaction is

when communicating with people from different cultures, and (5) interaction attentiveness - individual's effort to understand and relate to others. While an ANCOVA analysis was not performed on the subscales, the descriptive statistics are included here. Table 4-4 shows three of the subscales where there were either no changes or decreases in the post-test scores calculated for all participants and broken down by experimental and control groups.

There were very slight increases across scores in two subscale categories. As shown in Table 4-5, Intercultural Confidence experimental scores increased by .93 (5%) and control scores by .38 (2%). In the Intercultural Attentiveness subscale, team scores increased by .20 (1%) and individual scores by .16 (1%).

### **Research Question 2-China Retailing Quiz ANCOVA Results**

Research Question 2 was posed to observe the effect of online peer interaction on the acquisition of China retailing and cultural knowledge. ANCOVA was performed to establish if there was any significant difference on the post-knowledge quiz scores with the covariate as pre-score, the dependent variable as the post-score, and the independent variable as group or individual status in the study. The second dependent variable is the China Retailing Quiz post-test score to answer Research Question 2. A one-way analysis of covariance evaluating the effect of the peer interaction during the blended module was applied to the quiz scores. Results of the ANCOVA revealed that the effect of group status on the post-quiz scores was not significant with  $F(1, 25) = .336, p = .567$ ; the effect of pre-quiz on post-quiz scores was not significant as well with  $F(1, 25) = 2.297, p = .142$ . Cronbach alpha tests were conducted on the pre- and post-quiz results to determine the internal consistency of each. The pre-quiz result was extremely low at .162 and the post-quiz indicated higher internal consistency at .553.



This discrepancy in results is difficult to explain. One possibility could be that students were less attentive and concerned about taking the quiz pre-module. They also most likely did not possess the knowledge tested and they may have taken the study less seriously, whereas when they took the post-module quiz they may have felt a little more interest in the content of the study and may have learned enough to respond with correct responses to more of the quiz items.

### **Descriptive Statistics - China Retailing Quiz**

Student acquisition of cultural facts and knowledge was measured through the China Retailing Quiz. The changes in the descriptive statistics of the quiz scores listed in Table 4-6 are very small, but show some increase and are slightly higher than the ISS score increases. There was a 1.89 (9%) point increase in mean scores of all participants, 2.33 (11%) for the teams in the experimental group, and 1.39 (7%) for individuals in the control group. Cohen's effect size was not considered necessary to calculate due to lack of statistical significance of the ANCOVA results.

### **Research Question 3 - Student Perception of Value of Intercultural Awareness**

Research Question 3 addressed whether students in both study groups perceived intercultural awareness as important for success in the Chinese retailing context. Considering the variety of interests and perspectives on the topic of intercultural concepts and the goal of developing more effective blended modules for the future, open-ended in addition to Likert and Yes/No type questions were asked pre- and post-module to gather more qualitative impressions and give students a chance to give their detailed opinions and suggestions.

Quantitative methods are valuable in that they obtain results that can be generalized to a population. The downside is that they can also limit what a study can

reveal since they do not allow for in-depth examination of issues (Dörnyei, 2003). Qualitative work, with a small 'q,' is defined by Kidder and Fine (1987) as structured open-ended questions in a survey that are designed to gather more information from respondents that may have been missed through quantitative tools. Questions are not altered by the researcher as the study reveals new avenues to explore as in field research and are designed to be deductive to answer a specific concern at the outset of the study. Lengthier and in-depth interviews with participants would have yielded more detailed qualitative data to interpret and analyze for coding with grounded theory, but time constraints involving access to students at the end of the spring semester did not permit a true mixed-methods study with one-on-one interviews.

Three Likert-scale questions included in the pre-module Demographic/Background Questions had participants rate three statements about language, culture, and international market knowledge, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree. Table 4-7 shows the means and standard deviations of the ratings for all participants separated by control and experimental groups. Across both groups and with group scores combined, the majority of participants agreed that English was not the only language needed for doing international business. The majority strongly agreed that cultural knowledge is important to succeed in today's workplace. Most strongly agreed that understanding international markets is an advantage in being competitive in the US retailing industry.

In the pre-module Demographic/Background Questions students were asked to list what they hoped to learn about China retailing. Sample responses are broken down by control and experimental groups in the tables below. Table 4-8 compares responses

between study groups. Both groups expressed that they would like to learn about cultural aspects of the China market and learn about successful international expansion strategies. The experimental group listed a few more responses on technical aspects than the control group did, stating that they would like to learn about more retail operations abroad.

Data gathered from students in the post-module Course Feedback Questions were not repetitions of the original Likert statements, but rather four open-ended and two Yes/No questions. One question asked students what other aspects about China (or any foreign market) would be beneficial to know for success in the international retailing industry. Responses in Table 4-9 demonstrate a deeper variety of topics mentioned by students after gaining some foundational knowledge of China retailing through the module. Compared to the pre-module responses in Table 4-8, students gave more detailed responses beyond using the general term 'culture' with specific reference to religion, behaviors, and local consumer perspectives. They replace the generic 'how to do business' with specific concerns such as negotiating contracts, trade barriers, zoning laws, and the role of government. In these post-module responses, it appears that the control group focuses more on technical issues of succeeding in international markets and less on culture, when it was the reverse in the pre-module question.

Another question asked students whether they thought that one gains a competitive advantage by learning about the cultural aspects of international markets. All but one student in the control group responded "yes," saying that cultural understanding is important, but that it does not necessarily guarantee a competitive advantage. Students were asked to justify their answer and sample responses given

from both groups on perceived value of cultural knowledge are listed in Table 4-10. The main themes listed by both groups as advantages to cultural understanding were reaching target consumers, creating business strategies, acquiring an open-mind to doing business in different ways, and identifying opportunities as the world becomes more globalized.

Another post-module question used to interpret attitude toward the importance of intercultural awareness asked students if the module 'piqued' their interest to continue learning more about international markets for retail expansion. Out of the 20 (71%) positive responses 11 were from the experimental team group and nine from the control. The remaining eight (29%) responses consisting of no, not really, maybe, and somewhat came from four respondents in each group. One "not really" response was because the student was Asian and aware of Chinese culture already.

Student interest in furthering their studies in international retailing was not measured through the pre-module survey, but students were asked two post-module questions to find out whether they would consider taking an eight-week retailing class focusing on a specific international market or region and if they would consider participating in a three-week study abroad tour in an emerging market for college credit. Responses were positive in that over half the students said that they were interested in both. Sixteen (57%) said yes to taking a course while 12 (43%) said no. Two of the negative responses were due to students graduating. The study tour abroad option was even higher with 19 (68%) responding yes and nine (32%) responding no. Table 4-11 shows the breakdown by control and experimental groups.

## **Student Feedback on the Online Activities**

While not a specific research question, another goal of this exploratory study was to apply its results and conclusions to the development of a series of blended modules focused on retailing in other emerging markets that could be integrated into business courses. Along with analysis of learning outcomes related to intercultural sensitivity and factual knowledge, feedback from students about the module is key to improving future design and implementation. Pre- and post-survey questions sought student reaction to the online tasks.

Song et al. (2004) found that college students who prefer online learning and are successful with it tend to have prior experience with Web tools and manage their time better than students preferring traditional learning formats. In a study with teachers researching online on a subject of their choice, Hill and Hannafin (1997) reported that those with prior Internet experience performed better and had more confidence in the task. Both studies suggest that prior technology expertise may be more important in facilitating learning than prior content knowledge. I considered student technology experience and how they felt about the online portion of the module important to understand student attitudes toward online learning, to find any possible influence on results, and to gather feedback on ways they felt a blended module could be more effective.

In the pre-module survey all 28 students responded that they had taken an online course, though the amount varied from one to up to 15 courses. Eleven of the 13 students in the control group had used a wiki while nine of the 15 in the experimental group had used one. Nineteen students (68%) stated they liked online courses with nine (32%) saying they didn't. The responses are broken down by control and experimental

group in Table 4-12. Although eight students said they did not like online learning, responses to the post-module survey question asking what students thought about the online activities, responses were primarily positive.

Table 4-13 lists critiques made by students in response to what they thought of the online activities. The comments are separated into four categories of type of response: positive, negative, mixed, and suggestions. The three negative or neutral responses came from students in the experimental group. One response was “n/a” and another stated the online portion was confusing. These two students said they liked online courses in the pre-module Demographic/Background Questions. The third most negative and lengthy response came from a student commenting that it was difficult to coordinate the final group project online and that instructions for the online assignments were incomplete. This particular student was one who responded pre-module that she did not like online courses.

Table 4-1. Participant information by study group

	Experimental <i>n</i> =15	Control <i>n</i> =13
Male	3	4
Female	12	9
International student	2	5
Non-International	13	8
Speaks >one language	5	7
Never abroad	2	2
Only speaks English	10	6
Wants to study abroad	10 <sup>a</sup>	8 <sup>b</sup>
No to study abroad	1	1
Likes online classes	11 <sup>c</sup>	8
Doesn't like online	3	5
Has used wikis	9	11
Has not used wikis	6	2

<sup>a</sup> 4 N/A responses

<sup>b</sup> 3 N/A responses, 1 lack of response

<sup>c</sup> One Yes and No response

Table 4-2. Assignment submission by study group

Student Submissions	Experimental <i>n</i> =15	Control <i>n</i> =13
Submitted all six assignments	8	13
Submitted fewer than three assignments	6	--
Submitted four assignments	1	--
Submitted final project	15	9
Presented final Project	10	1

Note. No submissions for the control group.

Table 4-3. Intercultural sensitivity scores

	Pre-Module	Post-Module
All Scores		
Mean	95.57	95.57
Median	94.50	94.00
Mode	94.00	91.00 <sup>a</sup>
SD	8.59	9.21
Experimental Scores		
Mean	96.20	97.13
Median	95.00	96.00
Mode	94.00 <sup>a</sup>	94.00 <sup>a</sup>
SD	8.76	9.37
Control Scores		
Mean	94.76	93.76
Median	94.00	93.00
Mode	92.00 <sup>a</sup>	91
SD	8.75	9.06

<sup>a</sup> More than one mode, lowest shown.



Table 4-4. Intercultural sensitivity survey subscale scores with no increase

Engagement (30 points)	Pre-ISS Subscales	Post-ISS Subscales
<b>All Scores</b>		
Mean	24.32	23.64
Median	24.5	23.5
Mode	26	22
SD	2.45	2.67
<b>Experimental Scores</b>		
Mean	24.6	23.8
Median	25	23
Mode	25.00 <sup>a</sup>	22
SD	2.61	2.65
<b>Control Scores</b>		
<i>Mean</i>	24	23.46
<i>Median</i>	24	24
<i>Mode</i>	24.00 <sup>a</sup>	24
<i>SD</i>	2.3	2.78
<b>Cultural Differences (30 points)</b>		
<b>All Scores</b>		
<i>Mean</i>	22.04	21.64
<i>Median</i>	14.04	14.71
<i>Mode</i>	21	20
<i>SD</i>	2	2.14
<b>Experimental Scores</b>		
<i>Mean</i>	21.86	21.86
<i>Median</i>	22	21
<i>Mode</i>	21.00 <sup>a</sup>	20
<i>SD</i>	1.76	1.99
<b>Control Scores</b>		
<i>Mean</i>	22.23	21.38
<i>Median</i>	23	21
<i>Mode</i>	19	20
<i>SD</i>	2.31	2.36
<b>Interaction Enjoyment (15 points)</b>		
<b>All Scores</b>		
<i>Mean</i>	12.68	12.61
<i>Median</i>	12	12.5
<i>Mode</i>	12	11 <sup>a</sup>
<i>SD</i>	1.7	1.54
<b>Experimental Scores</b>		
<i>Mean</i>	12.8	12.8
<i>Median</i>	13	13
<i>Mode</i>	12	11.00 <sup>a</sup>
<i>SD</i>	1.32	1.47
<b>Control Scores</b>		
<i>Mean</i>	12.53	12.38
<i>Median</i>	12	12
<i>Mode</i>	12	11.00 <sup>a</sup>
<i>SD</i>	2.1	1.66

<sup>a</sup> More than one mode, lowest shown.

Table 4-5. Intercultural sensitivity survey subscale scores with slight increases

	Pre-Module	Post-Module
<b>Intercultural Confidence (20 points)</b>		
All Scores		
Mean	14.04	14.71
Median	14	15
Mode	15	15
SD	2.68	2.05
<b>Experimental Scores</b>		
Mean	13.93	14.86
Median	14	15
Mode	14	15
SD	3.03	1.84
<b>Control Scores</b>		
Mean	14.15	14.53
Median	15	15
Mode	15	15
SD	2.33	2.33
<b>Intercultural Attentive (15 points)</b>		
All Scores	11.21	11.39
Mean	11	12
Median	10 <sup>a</sup>	12
Mode	1.93	1.79
SD		
<b>Experimental Scores</b>		
Mean	11.33	11.53
Median	11	12
Mode	10	11
SD	2.16	1.99
<b>Control Scores</b>		
Mean	11.07	11.23
Median	11	12
Mode	10.00 <sup>a</sup>	12
SD	1.7	1.58

<sup>a</sup> More than one mode, lowest shown.

Table 4-6. China retailing quiz scores

	Pre-Module	Post-Module
<b>All Participant Scores</b>		
Mean	12.21	14.10
Median	13.00	14.00
Mode	14.00	14.00
SD	2.51	2.29
<b>Experimental Scores</b>		
Mean	11.93	14.26
Median	14.00	14.26
Mode	14.00	14.00 <sup>a</sup>
SD	3.10	2.28
<b>Control Scores</b>		
<i>Mean</i>	12.53	13.92
<i>Median</i>	13.00	14.00
<i>Mode</i>	12.00	11.00
<i>SD</i>	1.66	2.39

Note. Out of 20 possible points.

Table 4-7. Pre-module: Likert statement ratings

	English only needed for international business	Cultural knowledge is important for workplace	Understanding international markets is advantage in US retailing
<b>All</b>			
Mean	1.71	4.67	4.39
Median	2	5	5
Mode	2	5	5
SD	.658	.818	.875
<b>Experimental</b>			
Mean	1.66	4.53	4.13
Median	2	5	4
Mode	2	5	4
SD	.487	1.06	1.06
<b>Control</b>			
Mean	1.76	4.84	4.69
Median	2	5	5
Mode	2	5	5
SD	.832	.375	.480

Note. 1= Strongly Disagree, 5= Strongly Agree.

Table 4-8. Pre-module: what do you hope to learn?

Experimental	Control
Benefits of international retailing	How to be competitive in foreign markets
Career paths to go abroad	How retailers succeed abroad
Current international opportunities	How business is done in China
How to expand and succeed	Similarities/differences between the US/China retail
How to apply international policies to business in other countries	Cultural differences in foreign markets
Technical application of retail in China (how affects operations, solve problems)	About China
Learn about Chinese market	Difficulties of doing business abroad
How China culture affects retail	Way other people think of retailing
How to handle culture/language barriers	Importance of understanding different ways of doing business
Retail in different countries	

Table 4-9. Post-module: beneficial to know for success in international retailing

Experimental	Control
The way people interact	Attitudes toward western products
Videos of local people talking about their preferences	Cultural aspects always most important
More about small cultures in China	Religion
Geographical differences, population size	Understanding lifestyle
Buying habits, trends	How Chinese feel about brands
Language	Consumer behavior
Acceptable behaviors	Government regulations/laws
Popular culture	Shopping habits
Why these countries are growing	Business traditions
Economic disparity, market structure, government involvement	Contract negotiations
Strategies to target regions	Economic aspects of country
	Trade barriers
	Zoning laws
	Purchasing habits
	Business law

Table 4-10. The study of culture as an advantage in international retailing

Experimental	Control
Need to understand culture for market entry	Understand target market
Increases success of expansion	Tailor store to region
Help market accurately to consumers	Helps introduce new product
Need understanding to create strategy	Key to understand consumer
Possibly learn a better way of doing something in a business	Have to understand market to apply strategy
Globalization requires cultural understanding	World is becoming global so need to understand other cultures
Different points of view helps you find good opportunities	Learning about other cultures helps identify opportunities
Skills you can take everywhere	Can learn from others

Table 4-11. Interest in future study of international retailing

	Study Tour Option	8-Week Course Option
Experimental		
Yes	8	8
No	7	7
Control		
Yes	11	8
No	2	5
Total		
Yes	19	16
No	9	12

Note. Experimental n=15, Control n=13

Table 4-12. Do you like online learning?

	Experimental	Control	Total
Yes	11	8	19
No	3	5	8
Total	14 <sup>a</sup>	13	27 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>One student responded Yes and No.

Table 4-13. Student feedback on online activities

Category	Experimental	Control
<i>Positive feedback</i>	Not difficult and easy to complete	Interesting, learned a lot
	Very interesting	Easy to do and required effort, time and research
	Very good, I like the wiki	Useful
	Assignments helped me learn about China through my own research	informative
	Useful to the international learning	Fun and interesting
		Like it, different way to discuss
<i>Negative Feedback</i>	Schedule too tight	Pretty straightforward work that helped me learn about China
	I did not like the online assignments, I like live lecture format	Enjoyed preparing presentation and learned some stuff
	Confusing	One article was too long
<i>Mixed Feedback</i>	Busy work, but I learned a little	Helpful supplements to lecture- but don't like two assignments due at once and in morning
	I do think they were helpful, but in-class presentations didn't relate much	Tedious, but very interesting
	Way too long, but related to the topic	
	I did learn from them, but they were time consuming	
	Interesting and innovative, but difficult to communicate with group members	
<i>Suggestions</i>	If they (the modules) were organized better, they would be more beneficial	Spread out workload
		Explore more on each topic

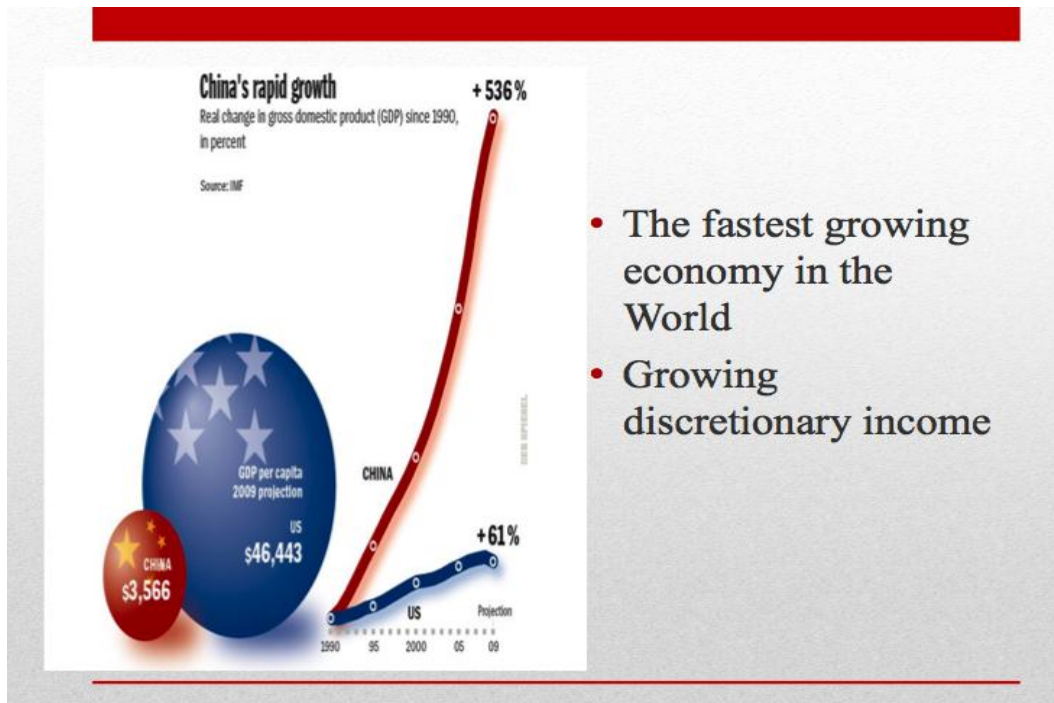


Figure 4-1. Use of infographic

## Compare and Contrast

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forever 21 in the US           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Common culture</li> <li>➢ Consumer preferences</li> <li>➢ Differences among regions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forever 21 in China           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Many cultures</li> <li>➢ Differing shopping habits</li> <li>➢ Consumption patterns</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=370&catid=9&subcatid=59>

**Forever 21 in the US**

The cultures within the US are pretty consistent. Granted there are differences, but most not significant in terms of shopping habits. Therefore, Forever 21 doesn't have to adapt its strategy across the US in a drastic manner.

Consumer preferences are pretty much homogenous throughout the US. Americans have high consumption power and generally have a decent amount of disposable income. Americans don't tend to save as much money as the Chinese do, so all Forever 21 has to do is set competitive prices and supply a youthful, fun shopping environment and they can succeed in most of the US.

There are factors that need to be considered when entering different parts of the US such as demographics, climate and purchasing power. Consider opening a store in Miami

Figure 4-2. Traditional bullet-style text use

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter includes a brief summary of the China retailing study followed by a discussion of possible explanations of study results as they apply to instructional design principles and learning theory. Problems encountered throughout the module implementation are discussed along with reflections on what could be improved in the design and implementation of future blended modules. Recommendations are made for further research and suggestions for faculty interested in integrating blended modules with international content are provided in a guide in the appendices. Finally, I propose a model of key 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills needed by students to succeed in the global workplace.

### **Summary**

The impetus for this study was the need for increased intercultural competence in US students to prepare them with skills to succeed in the dynamic 21<sup>st</sup>-century global workplace. The study examined one approach to how business schools at post-secondary institutions can use blended learning to integrate international material into courses to help meet this need. On a local and smaller scale, this study served as a pilot module to gather data on learning outcomes and student feedback for design of future blended modules on international retailing in the context of different emerging markets for business courses at UF. The study sought to determine the role of online peer interaction in a blended module and its possible effect on developing intercultural awareness, which consists of the affective aspect of intercultural sensitivity and cognitive aspect of cultural knowledge (Chen & Starosta, 2000; Adams, 1995).

The study's blended module was created by applying the ADDIE instructional design process and merging concepts from constructivism (Jonassen, 1994; Neo, 2007;



Hannafin, 1992), authentic learning strategies (Herrington & Oliver, 2000; Reeves, 1993), and educational media design (Mayer, 2002; Huang, 2005). Recommendations for developing intercultural competence in academic contexts were also consulted (Deardorff, 2006; Hunter, 2006; Varner, 2001). To observe any change in level of intercultural sensitivity from the module intervention, I administered the Chen and Starosta (2000) Intercultural Sensitivity Survey pre- and post-module. To assess change in the factual and cultural knowledge of the China retailing industry, students took the pre- and post-China Retailing Quiz I developed in consultation with the retailing professor teaching the face-to-face portion of the blended module. I used pre-module Demographic/Background and post-module Course Feedback questions to gather information on international experience, student attitudes toward technology, and the perceived value of intercultural competence to analyze along with the scores obtained through the ISS and quiz instruments. These questions were drawn from surveys administered in Tuleja's 2008 study assessing intercultural competence of MBA students and from surveys used in research on student learning achievements in and satisfaction with online courses by Paechter and Maier (2010).

The study was conducted with a convenience sample of 42 students in a required UF undergraduate retailing course. The final participation rate was 28 out of 42 students, or 66%, with 13 students in the control group (students working individually) and 15 in the experimental (students working in teams).

### **Findings**

Since only one ANCOVA result out of the four tests run was found to be significant, data were not enough to indicate an effect of online peer interaction experienced by the experimental group in the scope of a two-week blended experience.

However, results of the study still provide valuable information for programmatic and curricular development goals. The descriptive results presented in Chapter 4 do indicate some small increases in the ISS and China Retailing Quiz scores. In terms of overall responses to open-ended questions asked pre- and post-module, students had positive reactions to the materials and activities. They also were interested and engaged enough to offer constructive feedback on the module to be used in upcoming curriculum projects at the UF Miller Retailing Center. The level of detail for what students hoped to learn in pre-module responses also became more focused and specific in post-module questions, which could indicate some increased student learning and interest in the field of international retailing.

The study results demonstrate that the blended approach even for a short time broadens student experience and opens up new and active 21<sup>st</sup>-century andragogies without compromising learning. The study contributes to practice and is significant as suggestions for content and learning activities can be adapted and applied in the design of future research and in the development of future modules on international retailing.

In a study such as this one that aims to influence program and course materials development in the area of intercultural competence, statistical significance is not the most important interpretation of the data in order to guide practice. In the following paragraphs I discuss some of the possible factors that could have influenced the study outcomes and then make recommendations for possible changes in future modules.

## **Discussion**

### **Intercultural Sensitivity Development**

The ANCOVA result for Research Question 1 measuring the effect of online interaction on intercultural sensitivity was significant only in the effect of pre-ISS scores

on post-ISS scores. The descriptive data revealed a .93 increase in experimental ISS scores with a 1-point decrease in the control group. Such a minimal increase in the experimental scores may not necessarily indicate lack of effectiveness of the blended module considering the high ISS scores at pre-module administration and the time Deardoff (2006) and Hunter et al. (2006) indicate is needed for the ongoing and long-term process of developing intercultural competence. Another possible factor in the minimal increase in ISS scores could be because Florida is a very multicultural state and UF is a very diverse campus. The UF Admissions Office reports 12% international students enrolled in 2010 and 27% African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, and Native American students. It would be interesting to know if scores would have increased more or shown a difference between groups had student participants been from a less culturally savvy population sample in a less culturally diverse state and from a less-selective institution.

The slight increases in the two subscales of the ISS, 'intercultural attentiveness' and 'intercultural confidence,' were only evident in the descriptive statistics. However, they are two of the five subscales that are key to becoming interculturally sensitive and could be emphasized more in future modules. Deardoff (2006) includes cultural self-awareness, empathy, and an ethnorelative view in the internal elements of her intercultural competence model, which coincides with characteristics of the intercultural attentiveness subscale. This aspect could be developed through more reflection activities. Deardoff also includes effective communication and cultural behavior as external elements that develop over time, which are factors that could influence the

level of confidence of an individual in a new cultural environment. This aspect could be developed through situational role-playing or discussion of cultural scenarios.

### **Factual Knowledge Acquisition - Retailing Expertise in China**

The outcome of Research Question 2 measuring any effect of different forms of online interaction on acquisition of factual knowledge was not statistically significant according to ANCOVA results. The China retailing quiz resulted in a 2.33 (11%) increase in mean scores of the experimental group and 1.39 (7%) for the control. Chen and Starosta (2000) and Adams (1995) defined intercultural awareness as factual knowledge combined with intercultural sensitivity. Varner (2001) explains the importance of teaching culture in conjunction with business concepts and contexts instead of teaching about each in isolation. These factors were considered during the design of the module to keep a balanced connection between the “soft” cultural skills and the “hard” technical ones, as both are needed to function successfully in an international business environment. The larger increases in the descriptive data of quiz scores compared to the ISS scores are not surprising considering that Bloom and others posit that factual knowledge is of a lower cognitive demand and thus easier to acquire than are changes in intercultural attitudes (Bloom, 1956; Morrison, Ross, Kemp & Kalmon, 2007). While there could have been a possibility of students remembering items from the pre-quiz before taking the post that would influence scores, this was unlikely. Students did not know they would be taking the quiz again and they knew the quiz did not count for a grade, so there was not much reason to have consciously tried to memorize questions at the quiz pre-module administration.

Although the ANCOVA results were not significant, the increase in descriptive quiz scores is notable since they increased without students having studied specifically for a

test to be graded. The questions were also worded to be challenging as if for an exam and not necessarily straightforward. As I was reviewing the quiz during data analysis, it became apparent that there was some ambiguity in the questions. Considering these factors, the factual China retailing knowledge students gained even in a difficult situation in a short time seems noteworthy in terms of how it improved student knowledge of the retailing environment in China.

### **Perception of Value of Intercultural Awareness**

A qualitative indicator responding to Research Question 3 and demonstrating some effectiveness of the blended module for both groups was the change from broad pre-module responses on what students hoped to learn about China retailing to more detailed post-module responses students suggested would be beneficial in a future course. The growth in depth of comments might suggest that after learning through the module they could articulate better what would benefit someone working in international retailing. It might also reflect personal interests that were stimulated from material covered in the module. Positive responses from students interested in participating in future retail study tours abroad and enrolling in eight-week international retailing courses also give some indication of student appreciation and value of intercultural awareness.

Considering there was some confusion in the first class about explaining the logistics of the retailing blended module, the few negative post-module comments that students made may reflect a reaction to study implementation issues more than student dissatisfaction with the module content or online learning itself. All things considered, students were still very receptive to the idea of this type of module, had positive responses to it, and gave constructive feedback. This module began during the last

three weeks of the spring semester when many students are graduating, a stressful time for this age group and for high achievers in the business school. Students tend to start weighing where they need to put their time and effort at the end of a semester. The timing of the module most likely affected the participation and attitudes of some in terms of motivation for completing the work and responding to study survey instruments. Another issue to consider is whether there was too much specific retailing industry content covered along with intercultural concepts and facts about Chinese culture, which may have distracted students by giving them too much information to acquire at once.

### **Instructional Design and Constructivism**

The basic premise of this module was to learn by doing, reflecting, and interacting with others using technology as proposed by Jonassen, Howland, Moore, & Marra (2003) for meaningful learning. The goal was to encourage student reflection on intercultural perspectives through guided questions, online media and research as students expanded their retailing expertise according to the needs of their individual knowledge level, business concentration, and personal interests.

As I was setting up the course, I did have initial concerns with the capabilities of Sakai as the LMS to be used, but there was no other option since Sakai is the UF-selected LMS and the retailing instructor was using it. I was able to divide up the control and experimental groups easily in Sakai, but according to the Sakai UF Help Desk there was no way to further divide the experimental group to work in teams. Since each team and its members would have had to post on separate Sakai forums created for each online task, I decided it might be more motivating to have the students use wikis and feel as if it were their own domain, compared to using the Sakai forums where

it would not have been possible to gather all posts in one web space. In retrospect, the module was very short for them to get too creative on the wiki, especially since I did not think to provide examples of other student-created wiki projects. Use of the wiki did not seem to cause any negative effect since some team scores improved or stayed constant, but it would be interesting to know if using Sakai for both groups would have caused any difference in the results.

Along with these minor complications tied to the use of wikis in conjunction with the LMS, another factor to address in future studies is the goal of designing the module with a student-centered learning focus where more control and responsibility of the learning process is shifted to the student (Hannafin & Hannafin, 2008). Most undergraduate education in the US continues to follow the traditional class lecture format accompanied by reading assignments completed at home. Occasional group work may be assigned in more progressive settings, but the expectation is generally consumption of information from unguided readings and faculty lectures to be memorized and reproduced on a test, which counts for the bulk of the grade. Hence, the ill-defined process reflected in constructive learning is not always comfortable for the student, especially one who has customarily “engaged in learning activities because they are required, rather than through intrinsic interest” (Jonassen et al., 2003, p. 238).

While the business school has been ahead in some learning practices stressing team projects and using group discussion for case study work, the classroom format is still often similar to other departments at the undergraduate level for assigned readings, lecture, and standardized testing with multiple-choice and true/false options. Most undergraduate students are not used to a constructivist style of learning and the

educational system has conditioned them to focus more on achieving high test scores and repeating information given to them as opposed to synthesizing and expanding new knowledge through a more open style of learning. When the course grade breakdown is 50% quizzes, 30% final exam, 5% participation, and 15% retail paper on an international corporation, as for this course, it is difficult for students to risk learning creatively. As an example of the reaction students can have toward constructivist learning, one student in the study sent me a message copied to the entire class protesting “this sudden paradigm shift in class criteria” and that he hoped this segment of the course would not affect his grade as a busy graduating senior working on a double major. Ways to encourage students to take creative learning risks need to be explored for future modules.

The fact that many faculty members use an LMS as a document repository and that many institutions consider this online learning does not advance the potential benefits of applying constructivist learning and student-centered approaches using the web and technology resources. All students in the study responded that they had taken at least one online course, some up to 15 online courses. In future post-module surveys, more information on the characteristics of online courses taken by students should be requested to have a better idea of whether the online experience was a ‘copy and paste’ of the syllabus and readings to the LMS of a course or if there were actually web-based activities and guided assignments requiring interaction on forums and completion of engaging tasks.

It is difficult to measure and confirm, but the few negative comments about online learning in the post-module survey are most likely a reflection of the learning paradigm



shift mentioned by the graduating senior above and the learning curve experienced by some students in the use of wikis. Given that there was some confusion at the implementation point of the blended module into the course, the student reactions were still extremely positive and constructive considering the concerns that many of them may have had dealing with a completely different course format that they were not necessarily used to. The slight improvement in some areas of the ISS and in the China Retail Quiz scores is promising. I think the results could have been even higher had the module expectations been clearer at the beginning of the course and had it not been introduced in the final weeks of the semester.

### **Instructional Design and Online Interaction**

Suggestions from previous studies such as Herrington and Oliver's (2000) recommendation to include peer interaction in creating authentic artifacts and keeping team groups small for posting (Arbaugh & Rau, 2007) were elements I implemented in this pilot module. However, the quantitative data demonstrate minimal or even no changes in learning detected using descriptive statistics. A variety of factors may account for these negligible results. First, the amount of time each student dedicated to the online assignments during the treatment period varied and these data were not collected.

Additionally, the peer interaction in the experimental group was not as intense and constant during the two-week module as it might have been given different instructions and structures. Peer activity consisted of posting responses in specific wiki pages without required responses to team members. I can assume that students read other responses on their wiki when posting, but that cannot be verified and students could very well post without considering teammate responses. The collaborative project that

culminated in the presentation due at the end of the module resulted in a very basic presentation prepared with a minimal amount of time and may not have been enough to create a group-bonding effect that could have better enhanced learning. Fung (2004) suggested a 'socialization' phase for teams working online. In this study the assumption was made that students would know each other from the face-to-face class, but that was not the case. It appears that greater group cohesion would have benefited learning in the online portion of the module.

Not all teams had full participation, which, as suggested by Collier and MacManus (2005), can be de-motivating and discouraging for members who are interested in participating. One student did contact me about no one participating in her wiki and I assured her that grades would not be affected because of team members' lack of participation. Difficulty in communicating among team members was also mentioned by one student in the post-module survey and this could be a factor that limited creating more of an effect for collaborative learning. Students were directed to use the Discussion page on the wiki for team member interaction, but this process was not adopted by all teams as they chose their approach to the project.

The difference in participation and assignment submission between groups is something that I am not able to explain. The results from Chapter 4 show that the control group with students working individually had a 100% submission rate on online assignments, but the submission rate for the final project was much less. Conversely, the students in the experimental group showed higher submission rates for the final project than for the individual online tasks. It is difficult to determine, but perhaps this result was indicative of student personal preference for type of assignment.

Considering the slightly higher scores on the ISS and the China Retailing Quiz for the experimental group, another option might be that they did access assignments or do some of the activities but did not post their responses due to shyness in a group or because they were not comfortable with the wiki?

Although instructor support was not an aspect that was measured in this study, Paechter and Maier (2010) found that some instructor support and encouragement were rated as significant for students in terms of improving their learning. LaPointe and Gunawardena (2004) also found that instructor presence is related to and influences peer interaction. In the blended module design, the wikis were not set to notify students when members posted or when facilitator feedback was provided and this might have affected the motivation of the experimental group. Automatic feedback notification was sent to the control group through the learning management system, which could have encouraged them more in the submission of the session assignments compared to the experimental groups who got no notification of feedback I gave on the wiki.

### **Blended Module Design Recommendations**

The ultimate goal of this study and the pilot module was to guide development of a series of modules tied to international retailing in the context of different emerging markets. Ideally, each implementation and revision of modules will bring the blended module model closer to exemplary characteristics of “meaningful learning” as described by Jonassen, Howland, Moore, and Marra (2003) where the educational environment encourages knowledge construction, not reproduction; conversation, not reception; articulation, not repetition; collaboration, not competition; reflection, not prescription.

Based on the comments from the post-module Feedback Questions, it is definitely necessary to clarify expectations of a blended module at the beginning of a course and

alleviate fears that students' grades will not suffer from the approach. Student feedback and supporting literature illuminate the need for faculty and course designers to attend to standards of quality for online teaching such as those suggested in the Quality Matters™ (QM) program that emphasize clarity, detailed instructions, frequent communication, and other practices uncovered in this study as contributors to student success.

To guide my recommendations on which to base the instructional design of future blended modules, I make reference to applicable Quality Matters™ rubric standards (2011-2013), which are broken down into eight categories: course overview and introduction, learning objectives, assessment and measurement, instructional materials, learner interaction and engagement, course technology, learner support, and accessibility. I also include some suggestions from the Paechter, Maier, & Macher (2010) study of 2196 students at 29 Austrian universities across a broad variety of disciplines (including business). Their study found that students' achievement goals and supporting role of the instructor were the strongest factors to student learning achievements and course satisfaction. Students' motivation, opportunities for collaborative learning, and a well-organized course structure were other factors students listed as important.

### **Course Overview and Introduction**

The primary negative comment from students was about the module being "confusing." This issue can be avoided in the future by including more details of the online assignments for the international module in the original syllabus and discussing it on the first day of class when introducing the course so it is seen as an integral part of the course and not an add-on. Supporting the first QM standard about clarity of the

course overview and introduction to the course, Aycock, Garnham, & Karleta (2002) report that students in a blended course need some explanation of how the face-to-face sessions connect to the online sessions. One student did comment in the open-ended responses that he did not see a connection between the class lectures and online work. Students also need to be provided with clear instructions on how to get started and where all course components can be located. In this introductory stage, what students need to do or whom they need to contact for technical support should be made as clear as possible.

To get complete “buy-in” from students on the module, I would also suggest that the international module be counted as its own percentage of the course grade accompanied by a rubric students see in advance. Students might be more likely to take risks and explore resources to apply to activities and the final project if they are not worried about memorizing facts and figures for an exam, but rather filtering and applying relevant information to specific contexts of the China retailing industry. The QM standard for assessment suggests that the course grading policy should be clearly stated along with details on how coursework, online student interaction, and participation will be evaluated throughout the course.

If the course in which the module is being integrated is not an international content course, it would be beneficial for the instructor to dedicate some time early in the semester to discuss with students the importance of understanding issues tied to the global economy. This time taken should ideally improve the students’ motivation level if they see the practical application of international retailing knowledge and how it can help them in the job search and for their professional career. The discussion should

also give the instructor an idea of how students value international perspectives and what their initial knowledge level is in case any module content needs to be adapted accordingly.

### **Technology, Interaction, and Learner Support**

Learner interaction and engagement is another key standard in the QM rubric. As seen from a few comments in the post-module survey about difficulties in communicating with teammates, proper choice of the technology medium with which the groups will collaborate is important to facilitate convenient communication and not frustrate students in the groups. In the future, more explanation of how to use the wiki discussion board should be given.

Much of the work done in the current workplace, whether it is done domestically or across borders, is conducted through some collaborative and virtual means. Students need to improve their virtual collaboration skills regardless of distance or cross-cultural differences of colleagues. The more online communication strategies and web tool experience they have, the better they can apply their skills to knowledge management where they will work in the future (Friedman, 2008).

To allow more time for students to work together as a team and allow for deeper processing of the international retailing content, the blended module should be integrated earlier in the course with more time given to students to prepare a final project to present at the end of the semester. Earlier integration of the module will also allow for natural discussion of international topics related to other retailing material throughout the course or in the context of current international business news that could be brought up by the instructor.

According to Arbaugh and Rau (2007), there is a negative relation between peer interaction and large class size because of the number of online posts to read. The best working format would be to continue having students divided up into groups of three for posting. Dennen and Wieland (2007) pointed out that since “the mere act of posting messages does not inherently result in learning” (p. 282), instructors should include well-formulated and thought-provoking questions to encourage participation and more profound exchange of ideas. Fung (2004) confirms that one cause of low student participation in forums is perceived lack of value from comments of peers. With such a short module, time for an instructor to model and coach students to improve the quality of their postings is limited. An option may be having all students end their post with a question they are wondering about so classmates can share the knowledge or experience they have with others as more of a natural and interested response.

In spite of some of the issues experienced with wiki use for some students in this study, I still recommend using them as a collaborative class final product. Beldarrain (2006) studied social media software in terms of benefits for distance education and found that they “may be more effective at delivering instructional strategies that support knowledge construction...social software are emerging technologies that foster the sense of connectedness between members of a group” (p. 150).

However, due to the amount of work involved for an instructor to create and monitor a large number of team wikis, I would propose that student postings and instructor feedback for the module take place through the LMS with students in small teams. Instructors can provide feedback per team forum or through the individual student LMS feedback feature. According to a study by Waypoint Outcomes (2010) on

Education Portal.com, to engage students and for them to learn more effectively, instructor feedback needs to be given consistently and in a personalized and timely manner.

Possibilities for more student creativity would be streamlined in one class wiki where students would be required to submit a certain number of resource links, videos, and images they find useful on a wiki page for their respective team where they can also upload media, graphics, etc. These types of creative uploads are not possible in Sakai or other similar systems. Student final projects for the module could also be posted on the wiki so teams could see the work of the entire class on a public space to exchange comments among peers. Creating one class wiki for final projects and resources would maintain the advantage of reading fewer peer posts assigned through small teams in the LMS, but also provide the opportunity for each team to be exposed to resources other groups have found. The wiki would serve as a platform for a collaborative, goal-directed, and active task for students (Jonassen, 1999). It would also give cohesion to the class as a whole and a chance for students to publish their work for others to see and refer to in the future as a portfolio item.

Ertmer, Newby, Liu, Annette, Yu, & Lee (2011) suggest that students need to feel comfortable and understand the basics of working with a wiki to reduce student anxiety about the technology and not distract them from the objectives at hand. To reduce any student anxiety, links to sample student-created wikis and wiki tutorials should be provided in future modules to give students a frame of reference for what is possible with wikis. Ertmer et al. additionally suggest that students need confidence to post in a formal learning setting with individuals they do not know. Online social introductions



among team members in a “getting to know you” forum warm-up must be included since it cannot be assumed (as in this study) that students know each other from the face-to-face class sessions.

### **Materials and Learning Objectives**

The student pre- and post-survey questions were general and asked for impressions of and suggestions for future blended modules without specifying categories. No students made a negative comment indicating that the study of intercultural understanding was a not pertinent or useful. Rather, students made course content improvement suggestions, which included a mix of intercultural “soft” skills and technical industry expertise “hard” skills, seeming to suggest that even students feel these topics should be taught concurrently as Varner (2001) proposes. These responses could be interpreted that the overall feeling toward the mixed module content was positive.

Graf (2003) found culture-general training combined with experiential discovery preferable over culture-specific training through didactic expository. Babson College president, Leonard Schlesinger, argues that “concrete business skills tend to expire in five years or so, as technology and organizations change. History and philosophy, on the other hand, provide the kind of contextual knowledge and reasoning skills that are indispensable for business students (Glen, 2011). According to Schlesinger’s statement, business students can retain their intercultural liberal arts expertise longer over time, but as they move on as professionals will have to keep themselves current on government regulations, laws, and country characteristics that change regularly and cannot be guessed if one is to succeed in the markets of a region. For reasons of staying current on changes in technical aspects of business that may vary by country,

future module content should be interdisciplinary and include technical business and retailing topics, country-specific information, and general concepts for building intercultural competence.

When talking about culture there is a wide range of opinions, stereotypes, and exceptions to the rules, which allows greater room for reflection, debate, and discussion where there is not always a right or wrong answer. Intercultural concepts were addressed in this module by asking students to reflect on their own views and knowledge and then do research on the web for new information to supplement. In addition to student posts on their own attitudes, future modules will include more visual task options. For example, instead of having students only read about Hofstede's cultural dimensions, a task would be to use short media clips, photos, or advertisements from the US and China and have students comment on any similarities or differences that they see and why. This type of activity is suggested by Hunter et al. (2006) to emphasize the importance of understanding one's own 'cultural box.'

In the module the most factual China retailing knowledge content came from assigned articles, case studies, and the face-to-face class presentations. Questions on the quantity and quality of the in-class content were something I neglected to include in the surveys, though some indirect comments were in responses. One student commented that a reading was too long. Another said he was not originally interested in retailing in China until after the first class 'hooked' him on it. Specific assessment of cases, assigned reading materials, and the presentations will be used in future module implementations to make improvements on in-class materials and lectures where needed.

As another enhancement of the blended course design, Eveland et al. (2004) suggest using linear websites with students as resources or factual information. For understanding and learning about relationships they suggest using non-linear websites. A drawback with prescribing which sites students use is that this limits their autonomy in completing tasks. It does not encourage them to find information on their own and learn to filter and apply the resource to the objective of applying it to retailing success in China. Regardless of the type of websites or reading assigned, the reading should be accompanied by pre- and post-reading questions so students have some idea of the learning goal in addition to any insights they bring in on their own.

In addition to chances that students might miss key information as they research the web, another issue in studies on open web-based learning is controlling for incorrect assumptions and deductions from students working in ill-structured learning environments (Hannafin & Hannafin, 2008). Part of training students to be digitally literate is the need to develop skills for finding reliable websites from worthy sources and accurate information. Instructors should try to “spot check” as many links to sites and media that students post as possible to verify the quality and make follow-up suggestions to students. Although it is time consuming for the instructor to do this, it is a productive way to find new resources for future courses as students can find quite a selection of resources of which the instructor is unaware. This task can be supported by a college-embedded librarian (Edwards, Kumar, & Ochoa, 2010).

While web-based learning allows students to formulate their own learning goals and pursue their own interests, the students still need to have some general awareness of concepts across business disciplines. The requirement for peer feedback on the

class wiki for final projects in future modules will have students comment specifically on project topics unrelated to theirs so they can keep a perspective on all issues, whether in their preferred area or not.

### **General Recommendations**

All aspects of the module should revolve around the inclusion of authentic learning tasks as proposed by Herrington and Oliver (2000). One such example in this module was having students present a final mini-consulting project of a brand or product they would consider taking into China. An idea for a task in a future module would be to encourage students to use social media to connect with an international company or business person via a blog or Twitter to follow and monitor an area of interest to them and ideally initiate some kind of contact or interaction with a company or entrepreneur to include firsthand information related to their final project. More tasks using visual images and video clips depicting cultural themes and situations that students can comment on and interpret may also help them relate more to authentic experiences they will encounter in the future or that they have encountered and can share with peers in the course.

Another underlying feature of the modules should be reflective questions that provoke deeper thinking skills and serve as a guide for key points students should be noticing in readings or web searches. Hawkes (2006) found that asynchronous online interaction provided for deeper reflective learning. However, McClure (2006) reports that to achieve high level of reflections, students must feel that the online activities are 'meaningful.' Hence, tasks and forum postings should be connected as much as possible to authentic business contexts and scenarios.

Paechter and Maier (2010) found that student satisfaction and learning achievement increase when students can direct their learning through more autonomous tasks. On the subject of course contact hours, one student said they needed more time to explore the material, so it might be worth adding one more online session to make four online sessions and four class sessions. Key readings that are informative but as condensed as possible will maximize time that is available for students to seek out other sources for text, images, videos, etc. on the web. Eventual creation of a full-semester course option will allow coverage of more material and much more in-depth exploration of topics.

### **Faculty Reference Guide**

As part of the capstone requirement for Leadership and Service and to facilitate implementation of the China retailing blended module for instructors, I have prepared a faculty reference guide (Appendix J). For students to embrace the value of technology, intercultural skills, and international business expertise, faculty must also do so. This guide aims to provide links of reference for faculty that are less familiar with online instructional design and blended learning and who have minimal time to seek out supplemental international and intercultural content for their courses. The reference guide's goal is also to familiarize instructors with the concepts of student-centered learning environments and inquiry-based activities. The guide includes links on student-centered learning, instructional design for online learning, sample web tools and their possible uses in the classroom, and resources to consult to learn more about intercultural competence and China retailing.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

This final section of Chapter 5 discusses possible next steps and specific aspects of the blended module that need to be tested further to ensure learning outcomes that will effectively address the need for increased intercultural or 'global' competence of US students. The recommendations include implementing the blended module model in more business courses for further testing with faculty and students, improving authenticity and engagement of module tasks, proposing a 'blended learning' faculty development workshop, and exploring potential for adapting modules to other target learners. Including intercultural concepts and international content in business courses is necessary to better prepare students, but also an endeavor that will take time to evolve and become an integral element of coursework. Departments, programs, and faculty will require support and guidance to find feasible ways of adapting and modernizing the curriculum within existing institutional infrastructures.

### **Business School and Faculty Implementation/Dissemination**

For practice in blended education to advance, the module model needs to be implemented and tested with other business faculty willing to integrate it and evaluate how it functions with an instructor and graduate assistant not necessarily familiar with the international content or the technology. In some cases there may not be a graduate assistant to facilitate the online portion as in this study and the instructor may have to deliver both components. Qualitative and quantitative feedback from the instructor(s) integrating the module needs to be gathered to assess what went well, what was challenging, if the Faculty Reference Guide was helpful, how students reacted, and whether the instructor felt the module met the need to internationalize the business curriculum. In addition to testing the module for faculty reaction to the module, it would

also be useful to implement the module in courses on less-diverse campus settings using the ISS measurement and a knowledge quiz to confirm if there is a difference in learning outcomes with a less internationally diverse student sample compared to the high pre-module ISS level of the sample in this study. The feedback on all these aspects would be used to revise and adapt new module designs accordingly.

### **Faculty Professional Development**

Extending the idea of my first recommendation, I would suggest a blended short-term faculty workshop using some of the material from the Faculty Guide. Participants would engage in a student-centered experience themselves using web-based learning and practice using collaborative media such as a wiki. The principles of andragogy (Knowles et al., 1998) where learners are more motivated to learn when they see a direct connection to their work would apply here, as well as the principles of experiential learning (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2000) where instructors would integrate their own learning experiences into future courses having gone through the process themselves. Instructor teams would explore materials on the topic of their choice and begin to build a wiki as an educational site for other instructors to refer to and contribute to. Topics could include blended learning, web-based learning, the culture of a particular country or region, intercultural competence, etc. Forming teams of instructors to create materials while integrating technology also allows for the emergence of professionals with greater comfort and skill in applying new tools and is an example of 'a best way' to learn to use technology (MacKenzie, 2001). The benefits of the workshop would serve faculty in terms of increasing their international content knowledge while they experience student-centered learning for themselves and become comfortable with social media and emerging technology. If those participating in the

workshop included faculty in the humanities and business, I think the learning and exchange of ideas would be all the richer.

### **Improve Authenticity/Visual Elements of Activities**

In a future implementation, it would be interesting to work more on the alignment of the online and face-to-face activities as suggested by the QM rubric standards. Dalsgarrd and Godsk's (2007) study examined transforming traditional lectures into constructivist and problem-based activities online and had positive responses from graduate students. Connecting the class multi-media presentation material more with the online tasks and final project could improve retention of content and learner engagement, but this needs to be tested. Having the same instructor delivering the face-to-face and online portions would facilitate the connection between the two formats. More tasks where students engage and discuss making decisions for authentic business scenarios or mini-cases should be included in the module. Including more images or video clips tied to business and culture situations that students can analyze individually would add to the content knowledge they acquire from readings. Role-playing through scenarios and visual image analysis contrasting cultures should push students more to the other culture's viewpoint and help students broaden their own perspectives. With the goal of the module being more interactive, open, and flexible for student learning, I also have to question the approach to measuring ISS and knowledge post-module. Some quantitative instruments may still need to be administered, but other qualitative measures that are similar to the online tasks should be used to complement any quantitative results.

As a two-week module is limited in the amount of content that can be covered and the extent of tasks and projects that can be assigned, results from the module can be



applied to develop an expanded blended eight-week course to allow time for more material, as suggested by one student. With more time in the course, the possibility of pairing up virtual teams from the emerging market country class has its logistical issues, but would be worth experimenting with. Virtual teamwork would broaden the opportunity for longer-term in-depth learning and provide opportunity for truly authentic across-the-border collaboration.

### **Other Target Learners: K-12 Business Education/Private Industry**

Blended education is increasingly being practiced at the high school level (NACOL Report, 2008). International modules integrated into high school career academies focusing on a variety of business disciplines would help students begin to develop intercultural skills and international market knowledge at a younger age. An early exposure to more international content would give students a foundation to build on as they continue in post-secondary studies or serve as general global awareness for those who choose not to pursue a higher degree, but go directly into the workforce.

International business modules for the K-12 classroom would have to be aligned with state and national standards to be widely adopted by teachers. The obstacle most likely to be encountered at the K-12 level using web-based learning would be the restrictions most schools have on open use of the Internet and censoring of sites. At the corporate level, the modules would most likely have to become totally online and self-paced with formative self and peer assessments throughout to be used by companies.

### **A Model of 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Skills**

For students to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workplace, we must prepare them to be problem solvers looking from a variety of perspectives, to accept change in a positive way, to master technology, to make effective decisions, and to lead with

empathy. Figure 5-1 consists of the four Cs proposed by the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills plus other elements that I am proposing after the experience of this study and review of pertinent research. This revised model combines some of the elements I proposed in the study's conceptual framework (Figure 2-1), adds language skills and empathy, and expands the element of digital "literacy" to digital "competence" as an evolving definition by the European Union Commission. Ilomäki, Kantosalo, and Lakkala (2011) explain that competence implies more than just being literate in technology skills; it involves social and emotional aspects for using and understanding digital devices.

Educators must make an effort to encourage student-centered learning approaches using a balanced mix of web media, emerging technologies, and face-to-face interactions as appropriate to connect students with other perspectives of the world and with people across borders. In addition to area and technical expertise, students need a foundational knowledge of liberal arts disciplines to understand and connect the politics, history, and economics of nations and regions across the globe (Hunter et al., 2006). Students must develop empathy toward others by reflecting on their own cultural expectations and norms (Hunter et al., 2006) in order to become successful and global citizens of the world.

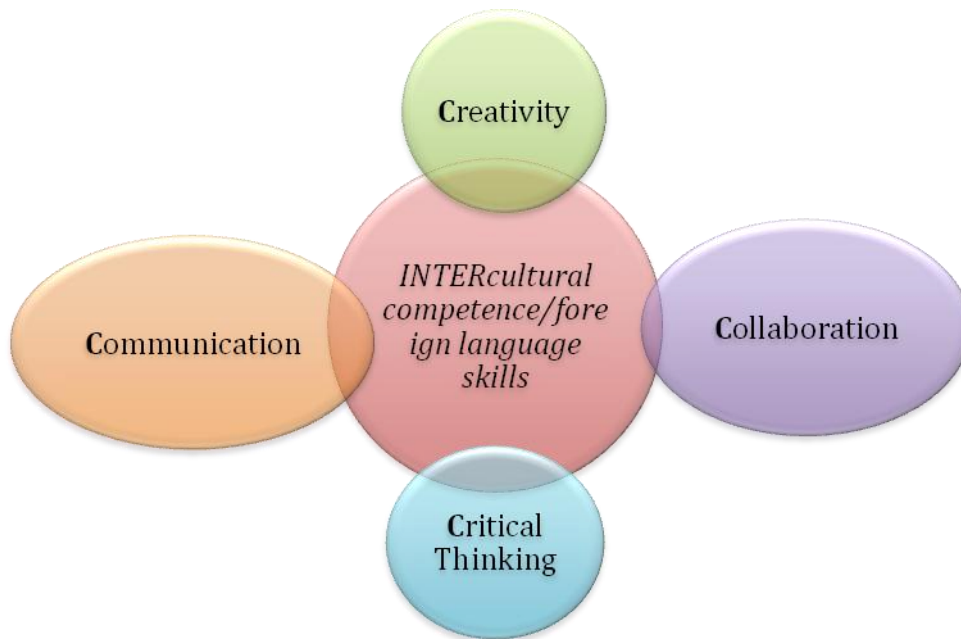
This two-week blended module is a starting point that offered a new and valuable student experience and provides an introduction to the concept of intercultural sensitivity and business practices in China. The blended China Retailing Module proposes a model that can be integrated into business or other professional school courses to implement and improve upon over time as progressive faculty find ways to

modernize and internationalize the curriculum. Use of the module model is a first step to preparing students with 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills as I represent them in Figure 5-1.

Integrating “starter” blended modules using web tools and social media to learn about international retailing appears from study results to encourage students to consider study-abroad opportunities, longer-term international business courses, or international community events, which in the long term should enhance student development of intercultural competence.

*Interdisciplinary connections*

*Empathy*



*Area/technical Expertise*

*Digital 'competence'*

Figure 5-1. Proposed model of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills

APPENDIX A  
IRB INFORMED CONSENT

***Protocol Title: Developing Intercultural Competence Through Blended Learning***

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

**Purpose of the research study:**

The purpose of this exploratory study is to determine best practices for developing intercultural competence in students within the context of a formal educational setting using blended learning.

**What you will be asked to do in the study:**

You will be asked to complete an online questionnaire addressing your thoughts on cultural issues before and after the China retailing module. Another questionnaire which consists of items addressing knowledge of Chinese retailing and business culture will be completed before and after the module.

**Time required:**

30 minutes total (including pre- and post-questionnaires)

**Risks and Benefits:**

There are no risks involved in this study. The benefits of this study will be results that provide insight into improving instructional design for online and blended learning.

**Compensation:**

There is no compensation for participation in this study.

**Confidentiality:**

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this number will be kept in a locked file in my office. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report.

**Voluntary participation:**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

**Right to withdraw from the study:**

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

**Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:**

Mary Risner, Doctoral Candidate 319 Grinter Hall, UF, Gainesville, FL 32611

**Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:**

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone 392-0433.

**Agreement:**

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator: Mary E. Risner

Date: March 31, 2011

APPENDIX B  
PRE- AND POST-INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY SCALE

**Please read the statement and put the number corresponding to your answer in the chart.**

	(1) Strongly disagree	(2) Disagree	(3) Uncertain	(4) Agree	(5) Strongly agree
1. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.					
2. I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded.					
3. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.					
4. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.					
5. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.					
6. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.					
7. I don't like to be with people from different cultures.					
8. I respect the values of people from different cultures.					
9. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.					
10. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.					
11. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.					
12. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.					

	(1) Strongly disagree	(2) Disagree	(3) Uncertain	(4) Agree	(5) Strongly agree
13. I am open-minded to people from different cultures.					
14. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.					
15. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.					
16. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.					
17. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.					
18. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.					
19. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.					
20. I think my culture is better than other cultures.					
21. I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction.					
22. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.					
23. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues.					
24. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.					



APPENDIX C  
ISS SUB-SCALE CATEGORIES

1. Interaction Engagement

- I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.
- I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues.
- I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.
- I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.
- I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.

2. Respect for Cultural Differences

- I don't like to be with people from different cultures
- I think my culture is better than other cultures
- I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded
- I respect the values of people from different cultures
- I respect the ways people from different cultures behave
- I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures

3. Interaction Confidence

- I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.
- I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.
- I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.
- I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.

4. Interaction Enjoyment

- I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.
- I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.
- I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.

5. Interaction Attentiveness

- I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.
- I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.
- I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.

APPENDIX D  
PRE-MODULE DEMOGRAPHIC/BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever vacationed in a foreign country?	___ <b>Yes</b>	___ <b>No</b>	___ <b># days</b>
2. Have you ever studied in a foreign country?	___ <b>Yes</b>	___ <b>No</b>	___ <b># wks.</b>
3. Have you ever worked in a foreign country?	___ <b>Yes</b>	___ <b>No</b>	___ <b># wks.</b>
4. Have you lived at least six months in a foreign country?	___ <b>Yes</b>	___ <b>No</b>	<b>n/a</b>
5. If you have not had the opportunity to study abroad, would you like to in the future?	___ <b>Yes</b>	___ <b>No</b>	<b>n/a</b>

*\*For international students, the US counts as a foreign country*

<b>Please read the statement and put the number to your answer in the chart</b>	<b>(1) Strongly disagree</b>	<b>(2) Disagree</b>	<b>(3) Uncertain</b>	<b>(4) Agree</b>	<b>(5) Strongly agree</b>
6. English is the only language needed to succeed in international business.					
7. An understanding of other cultures is important to succeed in today's workplace					
8. Understanding of international markets is an advantage in being competitive in the US retailing industry.					

9. What languages do you speak fluently? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you prefer to work alone?	___ <b>Yes</b>	___ <b>No</b>
11. Do you enjoy working on a team?	___ <b>Yes</b>	___ <b>No</b>

12. Have you ever taken an online course before?	___ <b>Yes</b> ___ <b>No</b>	___ <b># courses</b>
13. Do you like the idea of taking courses online?	___ <b>Yes</b>	___ <b>No</b>
14. Have you ever used any of the following web tools? (Check all the apply)	___ <b>Word</b> ___ <b>Cloud</b> ___ <b>Concept mapping</b>	___ <b>Voice thread</b> ___ <b>Wiki</b>

15. What do you hope to learn during this short module regarding international retailing?

Gender	_____ <b>Male</b> _____ <b>Female</b>
Age	
Major/Minor	
Are you an international student?	_____ <b>Yes</b> _____ <b>No</b>
Gatorlink Username (for pre/post-tracking)	_____ (i.e. _____ <b>@ufl.edu</b> )

APPENDIX E  
POST-MODULE COURSE FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

*Please respond to the following questions:*

1. Do you think one gains a competitive advantage by learning about the cultural aspects of international markets? Why or why not?
2. What other aspects about China (or any foreign market) do you think would be beneficial to know for success in the international retailing industry?
3. Has this China module piqued your interest in learning more about international markets for retail expansion? If yes, how?
4. What did you think of the online activities?
5. Would you consider taking an 8-week retailing class focusing on a specific international market or region? Yes_____ No _____
6. Would you consider participating in a 3-week study abroad tour in an emerging market for college credit? Yes___ No___
Comments:

APPENDIX F  
PRE- AND POST- CHINA RETAILING QUIZ

1. Bargaining in China is accepted in open-air markets, but not in department stores.  
T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_
2. American companies with a strong brand name have been successful in China without establishing local partner relationships. T\_\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
3. The Chinese tiered city system is defined by the mean income of a municipality.  
T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_
4. Foreign retailers should only consider entry the major coastal cities (Beijing, Shanghai). T\_\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
5. Market entry barriers for foreign firms entering China are high. T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_
6. Frozen foods are so convenient in the increasingly busy lives of the Chinese worker that they are becoming more popular than fresh food items in Chinese grocery stores. T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
7. Gathering friends to leverage a group discount is common in China. T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
8. Joint venture is the most common entry mode for investing in China. T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
9. Chinese consumers are very brand conscious. T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
10. The role of the Chinese government in regulating retailing is similar to that of the US. T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
11. Chinese consumers tend to shop less frequently and buy large quantities at one time. T\_\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
12. Keeping the original company name when entering China is a good idea since the Chinese prefer foreign brands over Chinese brands. T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
13. Customer preferences and shopping habits are similar across all of China. T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
14. The term for networking in China is \_\_\_\_\_ mianzi \_\_\_\_\_ keqi \_\_\_\_\_ guanxi .
15. Chinese culture is low one the power distance dimension meaning society accepts difference in power and wealth. T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
16. India is considered to be a more attractive market than China because the number of chain stores in India is greater than China. T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_

17. Convenience stores in China are similar to convenience stores in the U.S.  
T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
18. Most retail stores in China are owned and operated by the government. T\_\_\_  
F\_\_\_\_\_
19. Most of the retail chains in China operate in one geographic region. T\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_
20. Department stores in China and the U.S. have very similar operations. T\_\_\_F\_\_\_

APPENDIX G  
MODULE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**Introduction to Retailing Management Systems  
Pilot Online Retailing in China Module**

**Overview**

In today's globally connected markets the need for understanding cultures and systems of other countries is critical in business. This is especially true in the highly competitive retailing industry. As Western retail markets saturate, retailers are looking to emerging markets to maintain sales and profit growth. The number of unsuccessful cases of U.S. firms entering other markets continues to be large. To be competitive in this international expansion of the retailing industry, companies and their employees must learn to recognize and respond appropriately to diverse perspectives and cultural differences across markets.

The goal of this module is to provide an introduction to the Chinese retailing industry and some of the cultural aspects associated with it. Tasks are designed to help students see the value of intercultural sensitivity as a way to be personally and professionally effective in order to succeed in global markets. It is unique in that it provides introductory retailing content knowledge directly tied to significant cultural aspects necessary to succeed in China.

**Learning Goals**

- A.** Begin to appreciate the value of intercultural sensitivity to succeed in markets outside the U.S. (particularly in the China context)
- B.** Acquire basic knowledge of key cultural issues necessary for success while doing business in China (guanxi, regional differences)
- C.** Develop understanding of consumer behavior in China
- D.** Enhance ability to analyze challenges and opportunities for market entry and expansion strategies in China

**Audience**

*Retailing in China* is a pilot module designed for a post-secondary student population who plans to work in the retailing industry. The module aims to meet the needs of U.S. students to become more globally competent and competitive in rapidly expanding international markets.

The module consists of 12 hours of online work broken up into six tasks over a two-week period. The online activities will supplement the eight face-to-face hours that

will also cover content on the Chinese retailing industry. The online piece will be conducted in an asynchronous fashion but with an online facilitator to monitor student progress.

### **Face-to-Face Material**

Presentations: Globalization of Retailing, International Retail Strategy, Rise of Consumerism

Case Studies: Best Buy, Carrefour vs. Wal-Mart

### **Assessment**

Pre- and post-Intercultural Sensitivity Scale

Pre- and post-Retailing in China quiz

## **Retailing in China**

### **Task A Think About What “Culture” is**

- **Objective 1** Define culture
- **Objective 2** Reflect on the role of culture in daily life
- **Objective 3** Identify ways understanding of other cultures influence personal and professional situations

### **Task B Recognize One’s Perceptions of China**

- **Objective 1** Identify what you already know about China
- **Objective 2** Examine Chinese vs. U.S. perceptions of each other
- **Objective 3** Reflect on east vs. west ways of thinking
- **Objective 4** Decide what you would like to learn about China

### **\*Face 2 Face-1: Presentation- Globalization of Retailing**

### **Task C Understand the Importance of “guanxi”**

- **Objective 1** Recognize the role of networking in China
- **Objective 2** Identify business implications of networking in doing business



### **Task D Analyze Consumer Behavior**

- **Objective 1** Identify implications of Chinese consumer traits on shopping habits
- **Objective 2** Recognize how shopping habits influence retail strategy and store formatting

### **Read Case Study for In-Class Session 2: Carrefour vs. Wal-Mart**

\*Face 2 Face-2: Presentation- International Retail Strategy, discussion of “Carrefour vs. Wal-Mart” case

### **Task E Discover the Diversity Among Regions of China and How That Influences Business**

- **Objective 1** Acquire basic knowledge of Chinese geography
- **Objective 2** Identify key characteristics of major cities
- **Objective 3** Learn about regional differences
- **Objective 4** Understand the classification of “tiered” cities

### **Task F Assess Different Market Entry and Expansion Strategies**

- **Objective 1** Identify successful approaches to market entry and expansion
- **Objective 2** Identify obstacles to market entry and expansion
- **Objective 3** Understand the role of government policy and its effect on foreign firms in China

### **Read Case Study for In-Class Session 3: Best Buy**

\*Face 2 Face-3: Presentations Rise of Consumerism , discussion of “Best Buy” case

APPENDIX H  
MODULE SCRIPT FOR CONTROL GROUP

CHINA RETAILING MODULE INTRODUCTION

The China Retailing Module portion of MAR3231 consists of four lecture classes and three accompanying online homework sessions. As you start the online sessions, please keep in mind that a 15-minute presentation using PowerPoint® format, wikis, or Voicethread® will be due to submit in Sakai by midnight April 13th. Presentations will take place in class on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

Due to class size and schedule, not everyone in the class will be able to present. There will only be enough time for six to seven presentations during the April 14<sup>th</sup> class. Volunteers will have the first chance to present and then presenters will be chosen at random if there are not enough volunteers as there is class time.

For each online session you are expected to read assigned materials, make notes of pertinent information, and post your comments where indicated to do so. Individual posts should be no more than 75-100 words, about a paragraph. At the end of each online session will be a list of optional resources for those interested in learning more about Chinese business culture.

\*Please check the details of the presentation now in order to begin gathering information from readings and web resources that you will be able to include. You can also begin to consider in what format you will create your presentation. You could prepare it in [www.voicethread.com](http://www.voicethread.com) , [www.wikispaces.com](http://www.wikispaces.com), [www.prezi.com](http://www.prezi.com) if you would like to try something different from a traditional PowerPoint® format.

Should you have questions on assignments, the final presentation, or issues linking to resources, please contact Mary at [maryr@ufl.edu](mailto:maryr@ufl.edu).

### **Why International Retailing?**

In today's globally connected markets the need for understanding cultures and systems of other countries is critical in business. This is especially true in the highly competitive retailing industry. As Western retail markets saturate, retailers are looking to emerging markets to maintain sales and profit growth. The number of unsuccessful cases of U.S. firms entering other markets continues to be large. To be competitive in this international expansion of the retailing industry, one must learn to recognize and respond appropriately to diverse perspectives and cultural differences across borders.

The goal of this module is to provide an introduction to the Chinese retailing industry and some of the cultural aspects associated with it.

- Begin to appreciate the value of intercultural sensitivity to succeed in markets outside the U.S. (particularly in the China context)
- Acquire basic knowledge of key cultural issues necessary for success while doing business in China (guanxi, regional differences)
- Develop understanding of consumer behavior in China
- Enhance ability to analyze challenges and opportunities for market entry and expansion strategies in China

## Why China?

One of emerging BRIC markets (Brazil, Russia, India, China)  
 Second largest economy in the world  
 One of top three retail markets in the world  
 Population over a billion  
 Continued growth in consumer spending  
 Easier credit conditions  
 Increase in middle class consumers  
 Expanded awareness of global brands

*Retailing in the 21st Century: Current and Future Trends*  
 By Manfred Krafft, Murali K. Mantrala

## Optional Resources on International Retailing

Coca-Cola Retailing Research Council, *Retailing in Emergent Markets: Strategic Foundations & Best Practices* (Research project examining 6 international market cases)

[http://www.wpp.com/NR/rdonlyres/A6B7F233-9670-420E-A509-6E3E32E82F47/0/CCRRC\\_Retailing\\_in\\_Emergent\\_Markets\\_sep10.pdf](http://www.wpp.com/NR/rdonlyres/A6B7F233-9670-420E-A509-6E3E32E82F47/0/CCRRC_Retailing_in_Emergent_Markets_sep10.pdf)

Deloitte Report, *Leaving Home: Global Powers of Retailing 2011*

[http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-Global/Local%20Assets/Documents/Consumer%20Business/dtt\\_globalpowerofretailing2011.pdf](http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-Global/Local%20Assets/Documents/Consumer%20Business/dtt_globalpowerofretailing2011.pdf)

## I. Online Session # 1: Culture/Impressions of China

In this session you will think about how you define “culture” and how you think it might affect doing business internationally. How might “culture” affect markets and consumer behavior?

### Learning objectives:

- Think about what culture is and how it affects societies
- Identify what you already know about China
- Examine Chinese vs. U.S. cultures through Hofstede’s cultural dimensions
- Define “guanxi” and its significance in China

### What is “Culture”?

Merriam Webster defines culture as: the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; also : the characteristic features of everyday existence (as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time <popular culture> <southern culture>

Take a look at more definitions of culture as described by intercultural specialists:  
<http://www.carla.umn.edu/culture/definitions.html>

**To think about:** Is anything missing in these definitions? How might culture have an impact on business relationships? Having thought about what culture is, now think about how one filters the world through one’s own cultural reality.\*

<Ethnocentrism-----Ethnorelativism>

The view that one's own cultural assumptions are superior and should be used to judge others

An acquired ability to see many values and behaviors as cultural rather than universal

**To Think About:** Where do you think you fall on the scale?

### 1. THINK/SUBMIT:

Before beginning to learn about China, first think about what you already know.

What comes to mind when you think of China?

Without researching anything on the Internet, what you do know about China now?

- a. In a document **list** what you know considering some of these sample heading(s): food, politics, art, sports, products, famous people, cities, religion, key words/images you associate with China, language. Feel free to add categories if you think of others.
- b. **After reviewing your list** , think about what things *might* be useful for you to know about China if you were to do business there or work with a Chinese firm in the U.S.
- c. **Search on the web** for any new information you feel you might need and **add to your list in *italics***. Include any interesting and relevant links you may come across in your list. Upload this document through the Sakai assignment section.

**2. READ/SUBMIT:** You may have heard of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Gerard Hofstede is a Dutch sociologist who studied the interactions between national cultures and organizational cultures. The results of his study suggested that national cultural groupings affect the behavior of societies, and that these are persistent across time. Hofstede established six dimensions as a framework for examining culture from his research and findings: small vs. large power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, weak vs. strong uncertainty avoidance, long- vs. short-term orientation, indulgence vs. restraint.

While Hofstede's points are interesting, recent research is questioning the accuracy of his results and one must keep in mind that all cultural generalizations exist on a continuum and there are always exceptions to any country profile. One must consider context and realize that individuals will vary across cultures. That being said, browse the Hofstede dimensions for China and the US to compare and contrast the two cultures:

[http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede\\_united\\_states.shtml](http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_united_states.shtml)  
[http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede\\_china.shtml](http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_china.shtml)

In what areas does it seem the US and China differ most? Where do they seem similar? **Submit** a brief response (around 75-100 words) in the Sakai assignment box.

**3. SEARCH/TAKE NOTES:** As a closing activity for this session, search the internet for the definition of "guanxi" and any related resources talking about it such as blogs, articles, YouTube clips, etc.

**To think about:** What is it and how important is it in Chinese business culture? Do you think "guanxi" is similar to relations in the US? In what ways is it different or similar?

## **WHAT SHOULD BE COMPLETE AT THE END OF SESSION #1:**

1. Post on “What I Know About China”, “What I Think I Need to Know”
2. Post on China/US cultural dimensions
3. Notes on “guanxi” and its role in China

### **After Online Session #1 you should...**

- Have an understanding of what “culture” is
- Recognize the terms “ethnocentrism” and “ethnorelativism” and have an idea about where you fall between the two
- Begin to think about what you know about China and how it is culturally different/similar to the US
- Recognize the role of “guanxi” in China

### **Optional Resources to Browse**

Stereotypes (Kelm clips)

<http://www.laits.utexas.edu/orkelm/chinese/index.html>

TED Video: East vs, west: Myths that mystify

[http://www.ted.com/talks/devdutt\\_pattanaik.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/devdutt_pattanaik.html)

Check out China’s quality of life index

<http://www1.internationalliving.com/qofl2011/>

Go to <http://www.ifitweremyhome.com/compare/US/CN> and decide if you would want to live in China.

You Say Guanxi, I Say Schmoozing

How East is meeting West and building a lingua franca of business connections

[http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/07\\_47/b4059066.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/07_47/b4059066.htm)

## II. Online Session # 2: Understanding the Chinese Consumer

Learning objectives:

- Think about differences between China and the "West"
- Recognize tendencies in Chinese consumer behavior
- Identify factors that influence Chinese consumer purchases
- Describe consumer shopping preferences

**1. WATCH/SUBMIT:** Go to the following TED video and watch the 20-minute clip by Martin Jacques: "The Rise of China"

<http://vodpod.com/watch/5414671-tedtalks-martin-jacques-understanding-the-rise-of-china-martin-jacques-2010>

**In a document** provide your responses to the questions below after viewing the video. In this same document, please include your link from task #3 below.

- a. What is unique about China becoming the world's largest economy in the next decade?
- b. What are the three ways China is different from the "West"?
- c. What will be the consequences of China becoming the major economic power?
- d. Did anything Jaques said about China surprise you?
- e. Do you believe his overall comments/predictions?

### 2. READ/PREPARE:

*Carrefour vs. Wal-Mart Case* Be prepared to answer questions at the end of the case for class. Case is uploaded....

### 3. SEARCH/SUBMIT/TAKE NOTES: Understanding Chinese Consumer Shopping Preferences

**Search** the web for resources about Chinese consumer characteristics and shopping patterns. **Include the link(s) to** at least one resource you find in the document created above for the video responses. The resource (s) can be an article, video clip, blog, report, website, etc. Be sure to take notes on key concepts to include in your final presentation due after Online Session #3. This resource should supplement consumer behavior patterns you will learn about from the two class cases. Here is one example of a resource:

“Chinese Consumer Report 2010”

<http://www.rolandberger.com/news/2010-07-27-rbsc-news-ChineseConsumerReport2010.html>

**WHAT SHOULD BE COMPLETE AT THE END OF THIS SESSION:**

1. Questions answered about TedTalk video
2. Be prepared to discuss the *Carrefour vs. Wal-Mart* case in class
3. Chinese consumer behavior resource link submitted with questions
4. Readings and notes on Chinese consumer behavior for your presentation

After Online Session #2 you should...

- Understand basic differences between Chinese and Western perspectives
- Be able to describe basic Chinese consumer preferences
- Be able to list some factors that determine Chinese consumer purchases

**Optional Resources to Browse**

China: A Cultural Immersion

[http://cero11.cise.ufl.edu/~webmaster/Learning\\_Modules/CHN\\_main/content/index.html](http://cero11.cise.ufl.edu/~webmaster/Learning_Modules/CHN_main/content/index.html)

“Winning the wallet of today's Chinese consumer”

[http://www.deloitte.com/view/en\\_GX/global/640b7cfb701cb210VgnVCM3000001c56f00aRCRD.htm](http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_GX/global/640b7cfb701cb210VgnVCM3000001c56f00aRCRD.htm)



### III. Online Session # 3: Market Entry and Expansion Strategies

In Session #3 you will continue to discover the diversity of regions across China and begin considering how these regional differences influence market entry and expansion.

Learning objectives:

- Acquire introductory knowledge of Chinese geography
- Identify differences between various regions and tiered cities
- Identify opportunities and challenges for market entry into China
- Identify strategies for market expansion within China

**1. READ/TAKE NOTES :** Go to this link:

[www.starmass.com/china\\_review/businss\\_tips/chinese\\_tiered\\_cities.htm](http://www.starmass.com/china_review/businss_tips/chinese_tiered_cities.htm) and read “Chinese first tier cities, second tier cities and tiered cities”

**To think about:** Why “tiered” cities? What is their role in the growing Chinese retailing industry?

**2. READ/SUBMIT:** Read the following article: “Regional market segments of China: opportunities and barriers in a big emerging market”

From the reading and other resources you have, **respond** to these questions in a word document to upload with your city information from Task #3:

- a. What are some key factors for successful market entry according to the article or other sources you choose to use?
- b. What are some of the challenges to entering the Chinese market?
- c. How might one overcome these challenges?
- d. How do the regions tend to differ? Is there a common “China” thread throughout regions?

**3. SEARCH/SUBMIT:** After reading the assigned article on regional markets, choose a city from any region of China and do some web research on it. (See pg. 59 of article for map and list of cities) Describe and highlight main characteristics that should be taken in consideration before entering that particular area with a new US retail concept or product. **Submit with** the questions from Task #2 in a word document in the assignment section.

#### **4. READ:** *Best Buy case*

Be prepared to answer questions at end of the case for class discussion.

#### **WHAT SHOULD BE COMPLETE AT THE END OF THIS SESSION:**

1. Notes on tiered cities/regional differences
2. Post on regional differences/market entry strategies
3. Post on a major Chinese city characteristics
4. Be prepared to discuss *Best Buy* case in class

#### **After Online Session #3 you should...**

- Have an understanding of tiered cities
- Begin to see differences between regions in China
- Be thinking about different needs and strategies of regions in China
- Be finalizing your presentation

#### **Final assignment: DUE to UPLOAD BY APRIL 13, PRESENT ON THE 14th**

You have been hired as a consultant to give a preliminary assessment of taking any American company or product into China. You are allowed a 15-minute presentation to advise your client on the challenges and opportunities it might face upon entering the Chinese market and what future expansion strategies might be relevant. Be sure to mention consumer preferences, shopping habits, and cultural issues that might affect company strategy.

*Presentation guidelines are posted here and in the assignment submission section.*

#### **Format**

- 15-minute time limit
- Citation of all sources
- PowerPoint® format or Voicethread®, Prezi®, wiki, etc.

#### **Content**

- Information should be relevant to the China context
- Information should be factual and accurate
- Class cases, materials, and outside resources should be referred to where possible

## **Organization**

- Should include clear statement of the main points in the introduction
- Ideas organized in a logical way
- Easy to understand information and arguments
- Focused on topic
- Body of the presentation contains supportive details about main points
- Presentation has a strong conclusion

## **Visual Aids and Technology Use**

- Images improve the presentation or reinforce main points
- There is not too much text in slides
- Images and their placement are creative
- Presentation is appealing and professional looking
- Information contains no spelling or grammatical errors
  - Some free web tools you might want to experiment with are:  
[www.voicethread.com](http://www.voicethread.com)  
[www.prezi.com](http://www.prezi.com)  
[www.wikispaces.com](http://www.wikispaces.com)

**Outline suggestions:** What is your product/concept? Who are your competitors?  
Choice of entry mode, format, timing, location.

Are changes necessary to adapt to local market? Will the product attract the Chinese consumer? How will you build brand awareness? Cultural issues to deal with?  
Thoughts on future expansion

APPENDIX I  
LIST OF TERMS

Authentic learning	learning with materials and activities that are tied to “real-world” contexts and are more meaningful to learners
Blended learning	a well-planned and balanced mix of online and face-to-face learning which utilizes each format according to the learning objectives desired
Constructivism	learning theory that states that individuals actively build new ideas and concepts based on current and past knowledge and experience
Experiential learning	learning through active hands-on experiences of completing tasks as opposed to reading or hearing about how to do them, “learning by doing”. This approach requires higher order thinking
Intercultural awareness	understanding of other cultures in terms of attitudes and perceptions
Intercultural communication	a general term used for the academic field that studies how people from different cultures interact, communicate, and behave
Intercultural competence	application of intercultural understanding and attitudes to interact and behave appropriately in cross-cultural situations
Intercultural sensitivity	initial step in the development of intercultural competence where an individual recognizes that cultural differences exist
Multi-media	Integrated delivery of text, images, and sound from a computer.
Online learning	formal and informal delivery of education and training accessed via the internet using a computer or mobile device (can be considered synonymous with e-learning)
Situated learning	learning in context and applied to a real life situation
Social media	Internet and mobile-based tools that allow interaction and sharing among individuals

## APPENDIX J FACULTY REFERENCE GUIDE

*This guide provides introductory information for faculty as they begin to integrate international content and web technologies in their courses to prepare students for success in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century global workplace.*

### **Resources: Intercultural Competence**

*Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions*

[http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede\\_china.shtml](http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_china.shtml)

*Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner "Seven Dimensions of Culture"*

<http://www.provenmodels.com/580/seven-dimensions-of-culture/charles-hampden-turner--fons-trompenaars/>

*Definitions of culture as described by intercultural specialists*

<http://www.carla.umn.edu/culture/definitions.html>

*How Intercultural Competence Drives Success in Global Virtual Teams*

<http://gbr.pepperdine.edu/2010/08/how-intercultural-competence-drives-success-in-global-virtual-teams/>

### **Resources: Retailing/Doing Business in China**

*University of Florida Miller Retailing Center has created materials in Retailing in China in the following eight topics:*

1) Background (e.g., China's commercial history, regional differences, tier system, retail industry structure and format, government regulations); 2) Chinese Culture and Shopping Behaviors; 3) Retail Market Entry Strategy; 4) Retail Marketing Management; 5) Locations; 6) Retail Supply Chain Management; 7) Ethical Issues; and 8 ) Retail Human Resource Management.

<http://sites.warrington.ufl.edu/iret/>

*Business and Culture Profile of China*

<http://www.worldbusinessculture.com/Business-in-China.html>

*Cultural Stereotypes- Video Clips by Orlando Kelm*

<http://www.laits.utexas.edu/orkelm/chinese/index.html>

*When we are the foreigners-*

*What Chinese think about working with Americans*

Authored by Orlando R. Kelm, John N. Doggett, Haiping Tang

<https://www.createpace.com/3611853>

*China: A Cultural Immersion*

[http://cero11.cise.ufl.edu/~webmaster/Learning\\_Modules/CHN\\_main/content/index.html](http://cero11.cise.ufl.edu/~webmaster/Learning_Modules/CHN_main/content/index.html)

*TED TALKS: Martin Jacques presentation- "The Rise of China"*

<http://vodpod.com/watch/5414671-tedtalks-martin-jacques-understanding-the-rise-of-china-martin-jacques-2010>

*TED TALKS: East vs, west: Myths that Mystify*

[http://www.ted.com/talks/devdutt\\_pattanaik.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/devdutt_pattanaik.html)

For more China Retailing resources, please visit:

<http://internationalretailing.wikispaces.com/China>

## **Resources: Technology**

### **Introduction**

*Revolution or evolution? Social Technologies and Change in Higher Education Chronicle of Higher Education.*

[http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/revolution-or-evolution-social-technologies-and-change-in-highereducation/29304?sid=wc&utm\\_source=wc&utm\\_medium=en](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/revolution-or-evolution-social-technologies-and-change-in-highereducation/29304?sid=wc&utm_source=wc&utm_medium=en) on

*Instructional Best Practices Using Technology*

<http://teach.ucf.edu/pedagogy/best-practices/>

*Strategies for Managing the Online Workload*

<http://itunes.apple.com/itunes-u/strategies-for-managing-online/id429875405#ls=1>

### **Online Learning Terms**

*A Glossary to DEMYSTIFY the jargon of the online world*

<http://thedublogger.com/2010/08/10/a-glossary-to-demystify-the-jargon-of-the-online-world/>

*E-Learning Glossary*

<http://www.cybermediacreations.com/elearning/glossary.html>

## **Blended Learning**

*What is Blended Learning?*

<http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/blendedlearning.htm>

*Blended Learning 2010: Trends and Descriptions of Real-World Initiatives*

<http://www.brandon-hall.com/store/details/234/1/benchmark-report/document-type/blended-learning-2010--trends-and-descriptions-of-real-world-initiatives.html>

## **Engaging Learners: Toward A Student-Centered Learning Model**

*Ten Steps to Better Student Engagement*

<http://www.edutopia.org/project-learning-teaching-strategies>

*Leap into Student-Centered Learning* by the University of Adelaide, Australia

<http://tinyurl.com/4xxl6ue>

*Student-Centered Learning Examples with Technology*

<http://kelmcultural.wordpress.com/ciber-conference-2011-workshop/>

## **Designing Your Online or Blended Course**

### Using an LMS?

“Learning Management Systems (LMS) are often viewed as being the starting point (or critical component) of any e-learning or blended learning program. This perspective is valid from a management and control standpoint, but antithetical to the way in which most people learn today”. *George Siemens, Athabasca University*

*Learning Management Systems: The Wrong Place to Start Learning*

<http://www.elearnspace.org/Articles/lms.htm>

### Instructional Design/Quality Control

The Quality Matters™ Program promotes and improves the quality of online education and student learning through provision of faculty development training in the use of QM rubric(s).

<http://www.qmprogram.org/>

The QM rubric consists of eight general standards and 41 specific standards used to evaluate the design of online and blended courses.

<http://www.qmprogram.org/rubric>

## Choosing Technology to Use Within the Course

*Why Web 2.0 is Important to Higher Education*

<http://campustechnology.com/Articles/2009/04/15/Why-Web-2.0-is-Important-to-Higher-Education.aspx?Page=1>

*Tips for Teachers Using Social Media in the Classroom*

<http://mashable.com/2011/08/18/social-media-students/>

*Tools and Techniques Toolbox*

This list includes: What the tool or technique is, educational uses and benefits, an example, how to get started with it, where to learn more about it

<http://www.citt.ufl.edu/toolbox/index.php>

*Example of a Google Document organized by university business education students categorizing web tools by use.*

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1d3U3i689Sf8-bOFWkpK4E-fGogcZ1t8AJ8uTE14Mc0U/edit?authkey=CiKlucUH&hl=en&pli=1>

## **Online Copyright Concerns**

Fair Use of Media in Online Teaching by Justin Marquis

<http://www.onlineuniversities.com/blog/2011/09/fair-use-of-media-in-online-teaching/>

*More Copyright Resources*

<http://teach.ucf.edu/pedagogy/copyright/>

## **Online Learning Reports**

*Sloan-C Annual Report 2010: Survey of Online Education Shows Economy Still Driving Growth*

Eighth annual survey produced by the Babson Survey Research Group and the College Board.

[http://sloanconsortium.org/publications/survey/class\\_differences](http://sloanconsortium.org/publications/survey/class_differences)

*Digital Competence-European Union Report*

<http://ipts.jrc.ec.europa.eu/publications/pub.cfm?id=1820>



***Teaching and Learning with Technology Daily Newsletters***

Daily educational technology news from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

Sign up at: <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Wired-Campus/1629/>

*Faculty Focus- Focused on Today's Higher Education Professional*

Resources on teaching, learning, and educational technology

<http://www.facultyfocus.com/>

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