

Interculturalism in Varsity Athletics at the University of British Columbia: Creating Meaningful Connections

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1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this project is to provide insight on how domestic and international student-athletes experience interculturalism at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and to recommend a diagnostic tool for UBC Varsity Athletics to assess intercultural competence amongst its student-athletes. The direction of the paper was determined by reviewing previous year's projects, current literature, and brainstorming with community partners. We decided to interview fourteen student-athletes on how they experience interculturalism at UBC and within their team environments. Half of the student-athletes were international students and half were domestic. The participants answered eight questions. Of these eight questions, four were general and used for all student-athletes and four specific to their domestic/international standing. Our three main findings comprised: (1) International participants had an accurate understanding of interculturalism whereas domestic participants were either unaware of the concept or thought of it as synonymous to multiculturalism; (2) International participants found language barriers and sport culture practices to be the most significant cultural differences they have experienced within UBC Varsity Athletics; and (3) The majority of international participants felt that their team facilitated a cohesive environment in which cultural values and norms were co-created, while all but one of the domestic student-athletes agreed that UBC Varsity Athletics fosters this acceptance for social integration. To be used as a project deliverable, through the analysis of the interview responses and research on existing survey tools, we created a diagnostic tool. Using the questions from two questionnaires and modifying them to appropriately address the UBC student-athlete demographic, the diagnostic tool combines the ten questions from one survey, six questions from the other as well as another nine that we created to provide a twenty-five question survey. We recommend that with the use of survey results, UBC Varsity Athletics administers workshops at the student-athlete to help facilitate intercultural learning and also use the Thunderbird Athletes Council (TAC) as a mediator to provide check-ins with teams to monitor their progress. Our project was most limited by the timeline as we did not have the resources to conduct more extensive interviews. This research has helped us gain a better understanding of how UBC student-athletes experience interculturalism.

2. Introduction

Interculturalism refers to connections created across cultural difference to foster mutual learning, and to create something new that contributes to social change (Cureton, 2016, Glossary). Interculturalism proves to be relevant to UBC Varsity Athletics since student-athletes with different backgrounds and cultural practices combine to form a team. In order for success, varsity teams must create meaningful connections within and amongst one another and create a new unified team culture (Renfrew Collingwood INTERactive, 2016, p.1). Having a diverse group of individuals working together as a cohesive unit most commonly leads to success (Martín Rodríguez, Beaulieu, D'Armour, & Ferrada-Videla, 2009). Our project was motivated by the fact that our group members are involved with UBC Varsity Athletics on various levels and care deeply about the success of our fellow Thunderbirds. Jayne Blank and Joana Hunter began by expressing that any information regarding how student-athletes experience interculturalism would be beneficial to the department and that creating an intercultural competence diagnostic tool would greatly benefit the department's goal to promote sport participation and excellence in varsity athletics. By researching diagnostic tools and interviewing student-athletes from various sporting backgrounds, we have produced insight on the student-athlete intercultural experience and have recommended a diagnostic tool for UBC Varsity Athletics to use.

2.1 Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this project was to provide analysis of student-athlete intercultural experience and recommend a diagnostic tool for UBC Varsity Athletics to use. Our objectives were to critique and expand on the previous projects, interact effectively with our community partners, acquire insight on how domestic and international student-athletes experience interculturalism, and recommend a diagnostic tool for UBC Varsity Athletics to use to assess current and oncoming intercultural competence among student-athletes.

2.2 Partnerships

This project was completed for UBC Kinesiology 465: Interculturalism, Health, and Physical Activity, KIN 465, instructed by Katheryn Cureton, in partnership with UBC Varsity Athletics, the UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) program, and the Equity & Inclusion Office. UBC Varsity Athletics was represented by Joanna Hunter and Jayne Blank; who providing insight on how this project could benefit the department and

student-athletes. UBC Varsity Athletics aims to engage the UBC community to participate in sport and recreation experiences, promote excellence in athletics, and inspire school spirit and health through fundamental aspects: involvement, physical activity and fun. SEEDS was represented by David Gill, who assisted in facilitating group meetings, outlining expectations, and providing recommendations on project work. SEEDS looks to advance campus sustainability by creating partnerships among students, operational staff, and faculty through innovative and impactful research projects. The Equity and Inclusion Office was represented by Dr. Rachael Sullivan, who provided integral recommendations regarding the direction of our research project. The Equity and Inclusion Office aims to promote diversity, eliminate discrimination, and encourage the community at UBC to foster equality and human rights.

[2.3 Literature Review](#)

After conducting an in-depth review of current literature, it was evident that most studies and findings looked at inclusion in sport, through a multicultural narrative. Social inclusion programs that adopt a multicultural approach, look to protect and encourage differences (Renfrew Collingwood INTERactive, 2012, p. 1), in order to foster “equality for racially and ethno-culturally diverse students” (Ghosh & Galczynski, 2014, p. xiii). Some sociologists believe this particular sociological paradigm generates an environment for persons to thrive, within the ever changing and globalized landscape (Grant & Brueck, 2010, p.1; Kamberidou, 2014, p. 205); however, “others see it as, fostering social enclaves that do not mix” (Cureton, 2016, Glossary). As society continues to progress at an exponential rate, old ways of solving social issues (which are embedded within society) no-longer provide us with the suitable solutions. By utilizing an intercultural approach, which builds upon the narrow views of multiculturalism, society is able to celebrate diversity among individuals, render inequality across a variety of sociological constructs, and foster mutual understanding in hopes of creating something new –including social change (Bailey, 2005, p. 76; Cureton, 2016; Ghosh & Galczynski, 2014, p.xi, Landry, 2006, p.6). Based on these three points, it is also important to understand that interactions and discussions regarding interculturalism must be had because, as noted by Bailey (2005, p.78) basic participation does not synthesize cross culture relationships.

Suggestions to broaden the heterogeneity of the social group involved in sport, was another way in which society looks to minimize the influence of social exclusion. As defined by the Social Exclusion Unit (2001), social exclusion is believed to be:

A short-handed label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family behaviours (p. 1).

Similar to this quote, most studies seemed to suggest that implications of social exclusion, were attributed to spatial dimensions of a persons' self (Bailey, 2005, p.76; Donnelly, 1996; Freiler, 2001). Spatial dimension, first coined by Donnelly (1996), refers to the economic and social background inherently linked to an individual or group (Bailey, 2005, p.76). Therefore, these sociological theorists believed that the present onset of social exclusion was because of an individual's specific background. Meaning that constraints placed on social inclusion were the fault of the individual who does not possess the hegemonic ideals, which enables them to participate (without issue) in sport (Bailey, 2005, p. 78). This ideology, neglects the laws of oppression by 'power of privilege' (Cureton, 2016; Sun, 2013). Suggestions, which focus on the process of social inequality versus the possible causes, may lift the blame from the victim(s) and place it, more so, upon society as a whole. Likewise, this critical shift in blame (from the individual to society) forces people from different backgrounds to function as a cohesive unit, in order to create something new, such as social change (Bailey, 2005, p. 79; Cureton, 2016).

Based on our review of the literature, we were able to identify the existing gaps pertaining to several Social Development Programs (SDP)[\[1\]](#) and/or studies, which look at addressing inclusivity in sport (Wilson, 2016). By gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the current gaps, we were able to format our study/project more effectively to address these shortfalls and hopefully suggest a more appropriate diagnostic tool to UBC Varsity Athletics. Moreover, we chose to examine social inclusion through an intercultural lens, in order to decrease process exclusion and encourage meaningful connections across sociological backgrounds.

[\[1\]](#) A program that looks to improve the well-being of every individual in the society, by enabling them to reach their full potential through equitable opportunity.

2.4 Critique

First, we would like to acknowledge and appreciate the efforts made by the previous KIN 465 group. Interculturalism is very important, and it would prove challenging to be successful without using the insights made by the previous reports. With that being said, we offer some critiques that have informed our approach. For instance, questions were only asked to international students, student-athlete confidentiality was not maintained, and student-athletes from individual sports were not accounted for.

Last year's group did a great job interviewing international student-athletes and emphasized their opinions. We thought they did well with selecting student-athletes from around the world. It is important to note that there is a significant level of importance in asking domestic student-athletes some of the same questions as the international student-athletes. The personal opinions and feelings of international student-athletes, previously interviewed, provided leeway on our understanding of how they experience varsity sport culture at UBC. However, providing thoughtful analysis from team and individual sport domestic and international student-athletes could provide more accurate insight.

Student-athlete confidentiality was another area we chose to address. It was very important to provide the student-athletes with a comfortable level of security so they would feel safe giving their honest opinions to the questions asked. By creating a comfortable and trusting environment throughout the interview process, the student-athletes could answer with complete honesty. Increased confidentiality would also reduce the anxiety of anyone other than the interviewer knowing where their answer came from. We minimized any negative repercussions that may arise from providing personal information on a sensitive topic by anonymizing our interview results. In conjunction with safety and confidence in their answers, the confidentiality would also allow the students to minimize their personal bias when answering.

Last, the previous group only interviewed student-athletes from team sports while failing to account for individual sports. The opinions from the student-athletes that play individual sports are just as important as those that play team sports, and therefore should be taken into consideration. Individual sports, such as golf, cross-country running, track and field, and swimming are played all over the world. At the varsity level these student-athletes compete individually and as a team. Their responses would be beneficial to acquiring the most accurate depiction of how student-athletes experience interculturalism.

3. Methodology

This project was designed as a case study to investigate and compare the current level of interculturalism, which is experienced by domestic and international UBC student-athletes. We conducted our investigation by interviewing fourteen student-athletes about how they experience interculturalism at UBC. Findings from our interviews looked to inform UBC Varsity Athletics on how student-athletes experience interculturalism; likewise it gave us insight, with recommending a diagnostic tool, for future use and education.

As an initial step, a preliminary meeting was arranged, allowing us to meet our community partners. In this meeting we brainstormed ideas pertaining to project outcomes and deliverables, as well as determine deadlines. Additionally, we used this initial meeting to delegated group roles and acquire an understanding of the expectations, which our community partners had for the project. A mid-term progress meeting was arranged in order to refine the study and update our project deadlines. Communication between our group and the community partners was predominantly done through email. Email exchanges, back and forth, allowed us to update our community partners with changes or modifications, which were made to the consent form, invitation to participate, or work plan. Throughout this process we were provided integral feedback on our interview questions. Specifically, Rachael Sullivan improved the language to ensure the questions encompassed aspects of inclusion, and unbiased questioning (See appendix A). Moreover, four questions were directed to all student-athlete's, four questions were specifically designed for domestic student-athletes, and four designed specifically for international student-athletes. In addition to the eight interview questions, we also gathered personal information about the student-athletes hometown prior to attending UBC and their sport.

We conducted informal one-on-one interviews, with fourteen student-athletes at various locations around UBC. To gather student-athlete participants for our study, we asked Jayne and Joanna to email coaches with an invitation to participate. However, no immediate responses were made. And therefore, we chose to selectively contact student-athlete peers, to acquire participants from a diverse set of backgrounds. More specifically, each member of our group, recruited one international and one domestic student-athlete to interview. To reduce process bias, group members interviewed a different set of participants than they recruited.

Through the recruitment process, we were able to accumulate a diverse range of student-athlete participants. More specifically, there was seven domestic and seven international, eight male and six female, and ten team-sport and four individual-sport student-athletes. To protect the confidentiality of the student-athletes involved, participants were assigned numbers ranging from one to fourteen, to ensure their identity remained anonymous. This step catered to the well-being of the participants since it protected them and controlled for potentially negative implications, such as, external/internal team politics, conflict of opinion within the team setting, and coach selection biases based on information student-athletes provided.

One-on-one interviews were scheduled over different social-media or communicative platforms. Meeting time's were made convenient and accommodated both persons' schedules. At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked to read and sign a consent form; this form notified student-athletes about the purpose and objectives of the study, and how the information they provided would be used. While conducting the interview, group members were asked to record the conversation and hand-write notes, to ensure no information was lost and/or falsified. Additionally, the recording allowed other group members the chance to listen, interpret and reproduce interview answers at a later date and/or time. Concluding the interview process, two of our group members examined the interview responses in order to find overarching themes, commonalities, or differences from the responses. In turn, this in-depth analysis was used to inform our outcomes and findings as we looked to contrast the similarities and differences between international and domestic student-athletes.

4. Outcomes and Findings

4.1 Interview analysis

Upon analyzing the interviews, we generated collective statements summarizing any trends and shared thoughts between answers from each question. In doing so, we identify the following three main findings:

1. International participants had an accurate understanding of interculturalism; whereas, domestic participants were either unaware of the concept or thought of it as synonymous to multiculturalism.
2. International participants found language barriers and sport culture practices to be the most significant cultural differences they have experienced within UBC Varsity Athletics.

3. The majority of international participants felt that their team facilitated a cohesive environment in which cultural values and norms were co-created; and additionally, all but one of the domestic student-athletes agreed that UBC Varsity Athletics fosters a similar level of acceptance for social integration.

Expanding on the first finding, it was noted that international participants had an accurate understanding of interculturalism, whereas their domestic counterparts had either never heard of the concept, or could vaguely define it. All seven international student-athletes shared similar views when regarding interculturalism: linking various cultures together as they look to create a new group identity. This trend may be attributed to the fact that international student-athletes are more likely to experience intersectionality (Pierce, Popp, & Meadows, 2012). However, on the other hand, most domestic student-athletes regarded or presumed interculturalism as multiculturalism. Two of the domestic student-athletes were able to correctly identify interculturalism; yet lacked the fundamental understanding that interactions between individuals are meant to foster cohesion and mutual learning across sociological differences. As Canada is known to as a 'cultural mosaic' domestic student-athletes are likely to have interacted with other socio-cultures. Nonetheless, since the term interculturalism is only now starting to reach the public realm of society, many individuals have dismissed the creation of meaningful connections. The expectations for domestic student-athletes to be more open, when understanding intercultural relationships, is evidently higher than those placed on international student-athletes. Simply because, based on the findings domestic student-athletes were less knowledgeable about interculturalism. In turn, this lack in understanding contributed to the creation of social barriers felt by international student-athletes: differences in slang and/or communication styles. To reiterate, this issue was not mutually shared as it was only experienced by international student-athletes. An example of fostering interculturalism could be domestic student-athletes being more conscious of the slang they use, and understanding the terms used by international newcomers, in hopes of incorporate them into team vocabulary.

Elaborating on our second finding, all seven international participants identified the difference in language and sporting culture to pose as the most significant cultural barrier within UBC Varsity Athletics. In terms of language, one participant highlighted how their accent and sentence structuring provided unnecessary obstacles when communicating with teammates, coaches, and trainers. However, other international participants only found temporary difficulties

in adjusting to different slang and terminology. International participants also highlighted that norms and practices, differed from that of their previous or hometown sport culture. One participant identified how the handshake ritual in Canada was completely new, as they kissing their opponents on the cheek, after a match. The remaining participants identified differences in warm up styles, funding and popularity of their sport, and disciplinary and reinforcement tactics.

Lastly, expanding on our third finding, the majority of our international and domestic participants found UBC Varsity Athletics was able to facilitate a cohesive environment and fostered acceptance and social integration. Of the seven international participants, all but one found that they did not need to actively shift their norms or personal beliefs to integrate into the team, but rather co-created values and norms. The one international participant that felt otherwise highlighted how they had to monitor their speech because of the “more reserved nature here.” Of the seven domestic participants, six agreed that UBC Varsity Athletics fostered acceptance for social integration through the Student-Athlete Orientation; by giving out respect wristbands; through the Ubysey five-on-five interviews; varsity teams traveling internationally; and through posters and catalogues displaying individuals with different ages, gender, races and cultures. The remaining individual believed that integration between students and student-athletes was inadequate, and more could be done to address this gap.

[4.2 Research](#)

To aid in the creation of and recommendation for a diagnostic tool, the Intercultural Sensitivity Survey (ISS) (See Appendix D) and the Cultural Awareness Self-Assessment Form (CASAF) (See Appendix E) were chosen from the Assessment Tools of Intercultural Communicative Competence which lists eighty-seven assessment platforms addressing, in different ways, intercultural understanding and application. Though they lack an ability to address the specificity and dynamic nature of high performance athletics, the questionnaires boast an ability to make easy an assessment of intercultural experience and cultural awareness respectively. The ISS and CASAF are easily accessible and completed quickly. The questionnaires are administered on-line, providing analysis via six and ten questions respectively.

Specific to a varsity sports scenario when teams undergo roster change annually, a series of additional questions addressing the abovementioned findings would benefit the assessment of intercultural understanding (See Appendix F). Additional questions address the ability to

differentiate multi- and interculturalism, the prevalence of language barriers as well as cultural barriers acting as inhibitor to social integration and sport performance.

4.3 Limitations

A more comprehensive analysis of student-athletes would have lent itself to a better understanding and thus, more in-depth recommendations for the different parties interacting with the student-athletes. Due to the confounded timeline, only fourteen interviews were administered. Had we interviewed more student-athletes, a better representation of how student-athlete experience interculturalism could have been made. Albeit, if we had interviewed more student-athletes, the small percentage of international student-athletes that make up the entire student-athlete body could have skewed the results of interviews.

Additionally, the specific set of questions, which were used for interviewing international and domestic student-athlete bodies, may have been too vague or complicated. Though the vagueness of certain questions may provide an opportunity for student-athletes to engage in further reflection, those questions in future projects can be further developed and refined in order to entice more thoughtful responses from the student-athlete body. It might also be the case that the questions were too complicated or the concepts questioned were unknown. With many of the study participants, it was noted that there might not have been complete competency in understanding of the terms used. Refining these questions might provide greater opportunity for universal understanding.

Similar to the specificity of the questions, it is important to acknowledge the continuously changing student-athlete population when considering the dynamic nature required of the diagnostic survey. Student-athletes who have received teaching on interculturalism are, year after year, being mixed with new international and domestic student-athletes who have not received the same testing and instruction. Those new student-athletes enter their teams sport culture bringing with them different levels of knowledge. Therefore, a diagnostic tool that may be appropriate for one year's student-athlete population may not appropriately address the pro- or preceding year's demographic. The changing nature of the student-athlete population may require adjustment to the survey's question bank, either adding or subtracting questions on the survey to maintain relevancy.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Diagnostic Tool

Pulling from the ISS and CASAF, while modifying questions to appropriately address the UBC Varsity Athletics demographic, the diagnostic tool combines the ten questions from the Self-Assessment and the six questions from the sensitivity survey and then adds on to those nine more to culminate a twenty-five-question survey (See Appendix G). The survey would be conducted over the Internet and administered to all student-athletes at the end of each school year in April. Ultimately, it is our hope that the project deliverable provide the diagnostic abilities to support and work with the current and oncoming understanding of interculturalism. The survey would allow for an easily completed, accessible analysis providing UBC Varsity Athletics, SEEDS, and the Equity and Inclusion office with the information to move forward in the creation of an intercultural sport environment. As was done with our interview results, UBC Varsity Athletics, UBC Varsity teams, and the TAC would use the survey results to identify gaps in understanding and in the application of interculturalism.

5.2 University of British Columbia Varsity Athletics

UBC Varsity Athletics would administer the assignment and completion of the proposed survey by all student-athletes at the end of each school year. Prior to the beginning of the following school year, those survey results would be compiled and analyzed to find gaps in the understanding and application, in the fostering of intercultural sport environment. Because of the quantitative nature of the questions, analysis can be made through a comparison and variation of answers inter- and intrateam. This timeline would allow for thorough analysis of results to appropriately formulate requirements and initiatives.

Then, we recommend that UBC Varsity Athletics facilitate an intercultural workshop at the Student-Athlete Orientation. In this workshop, representatives would highlight the gaps identified from the survey results, identify specific team requirements, and propose initiatives. Teams understanding and application of interculturalism will vary in the fostering of an intercultural sporting culture. Therefore, the goal would be to have each team, using the gaps identified at the Student-Athlete Orientation, draw on the support of UBC Varsity Athletics to engage in learning of interculturalism.

UBC Varsity Athletics can facilitate intercultural learning. This facilitation process could occur through check-ins and coach education. Check-ins would happen through informal

communication with TAC, coaching staff, and team representatives. The check-ins would provide an opportunity to explore the observations from those two parties. Coach education would take place through direct correspondence with UBC Varsity Athletics; team specific results would be compiled, where serious gaps would be identified and would potentially extrinsically motivate coaches to place importance on the understanding and application of interculturalism on their team.

[5.3 Thunderbird Athletic Council](#)

The TAC would move forward through a collaborative relationship with student-athletes, team representatives, UBC Varsity Athletics representatives, and TAC executive members. It is the responsibility of the council to produce a culturally inclusive environment. Barker, Frederiks, and Farrelly (N.D.) suggest four courses of action to produce culturally inclusive environments: positively interacting with students, actively discouraging inappropriate behaviour and dialect, encouraging open, honest, and respectful means of discussion, and the use of language in combination with appropriate methods of conflict resolution. With these courses of actions, TAC could work with team representatives who would then voice these concepts to their teams in order to aid in their learning. Also, TAC could mediate the learning process and communication of team representatives, coaches, student-athletes, and UBC Varsity Athletics.

In the first formal TAC meeting of the year, we propose that an hour be dedicated to the discussion of the gaps identified. In addition to the initiatives given by UBC Varsity Athletics, team representatives with the help of TAC executive members would identify strategies for team representatives to present to their team. Throughout the school year, TAC would assign one hour to addressing the learning with team representatives monthly.

[5.4 Varsity Teams](#)

Varsity sports teams would take ownership of their learning, participate in proposed initiatives, and report to Varsity Athletics, team representatives, and coaches. With accountability and autonomy in their learning, it is the responsibility of each team to not only participate in the initiatives proposed at the Student-Athlete Orientation, but to be innovative and forward their learning, take leadership and produce own initiatives. In order to function properly, it is each team's responsibility to report on their progression. That way, check-ins and reporting can operate synonymously.

6. Conclusion

This project built off of last year's findings by providing a greater insight on the intercultural experience of domestic and international student-athletes. Through the interview process we identified three findings that were consistent among interview participants. First we found that international participants had an accurate understanding of interculturalism, whereas domestic participants were either unaware of the concept or thought of it as synonymous to multiculturalism. Our findings also suggest that international participants found language barriers and sport culture practices to be the most significant barriers. Furthermore, the majority of international participants felt that their team facilitated a cohesive environment in which cultural values and norms were co-created, while all but one of the domestic student-athletes agreed that their varsity sports team fosters acceptance and provides social integration. To facilitate the future assessment of intercultural understanding and application, we recommend the use of our twenty-five question diagnostic survey. The resultant responses, following review, would highlight the gaps needing to be addressed. UBC Varsity Athletics can use the identified gaps to create workshops for the student-athlete orientation and further, host check-ins with team representatives, coaches and student-athletes to monitor their progress to further their learning and knowledge. In order for student-athletes to perform and for teams to thrive, an integration of all student-athletes cultural practices need to be accepted and incorporated into a unified team culture.

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8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Questions for Athletes

General questions

- *What is your understanding of interculturalism?*
- *How does your team actively create a safe environment that fosters interculturalism?*
- *How does “intercultural dialogue” or “interculturalism” reach the realm of your sporting experience, here at UBC?*
- *Give us an example of how culture is different at UBC than where you are from?*

International student specific questions

- *How have pressures surrounding selection supported or hindered your socio-cultural connections with your team/teammates?*
- *Have your norms or beliefs shifted in order to integrate into the team, or has the team shifted their values and norms to embrace you, or both?*
- *What cultural barriers have you experienced while being involved with UBC Varsity & Recreation?*
- *In terms of ‘sport culture’, what are some differences you have noticed between playing in your hometown versus playing here at UBC? How does it compare to the sporting culture back home?*

Domestic student specific questions

- *Does UBC Varsity & Recreation foster acceptance for social integration? In what ways (specific examples)?*
- *How would you react, if a teammate became the victim of oppression and racism?*
- *What sociocultural aspects of Western culture (such as beliefs, norms and language) have your international teammates struggled with the most? For example, slang, coaching-style, primary focus (academic or performance-based), etc.*
- *Have you considered how it would be playing a varsity sport in another country? How would you expect or hope domestic athletes to react to your cultural preferences, norms and beliefs?*

Questions from previous project

- *Did you feel you were able to contribute in a meaningful way to the team culture?*

- *Did you feel you had to abandon any of your traditional identities and culture in order to fit in and adapt to the team?*
- *In what ways was diversity or inclusiveness celebrated on the team?*
- *What do you think could be done to help athletes feel more included in teams?*
- *Do you feel like varsity athletics promotes intercultural values, diversity and inclusiveness?*
- *Have you noticed any cultural differences, pertaining to the dynamics of a team setting, between any of your previous experiences (ie: high school, club team, national team) and your UBC varsity team?*
- *What were your expectations of experiencing different cultures when travelling with the team? And how did these expectations match with your actual experience?*

8.2 Appendix B: Athlete Interview Responses Review

General questions - International student responses

What is your understanding of interculturalism?

All participants had a good idea of what interculturalism is the combining of varying cultures to create a sense of togetherness

How does your team actively create a welcoming environment that fosters interculturalism?

All participants found that their teams created a welcoming environment by hosting informal get social events. Several participants found that the language barrier was the largest gap between them and their teammates, but found that their team mates were patient and open to integrating them in the team culture. Some participants made comments about their coaches not being receptive to differences.

How does intercultural dialogue or discussion reach your Varsity sports team, here at UBC?

Discussions about dialogue are sparked from learning and exchange of new mannerisms and expressions. Intercultural dialogue is also promoted through sharing stories about upbringing and different cultural customs. Certain participants found that the conversations did not come up enough, and were in too informal of a setting.

Give us an example of how culture is different at UBC than where you are from?

All participants found that Canada/UBC is the most diverse place they have lived. The main differences were found in certain sport level practices where cultural practices differed, for example: kissing on the cheek after a match vs handshake, different warm up styles, and funding/popularity of their sport.

General questions - Domestic student responses

What is your understanding of interculturalism?

Two participants had not heard of it, others had an inaccurate or vague understanding. They understood it as how different cultures interact but lacked the understanding of how it fosters cohesion and mutual learning between cultures. Understood interculturalism as multiculturalism, they understood that different cultures interact but failed to highlight the cohesive nature of interculturalism.

How does your team actively create a welcoming environment that fosters interculturalism?

Participant's teams promoted a welcoming environment through informal bonding events and mentorship situations where domestic/senior student athletes help international/junior

student athletes to integrate to their new environment. They all claimed that their teams foster an inclusive and respectful atmosphere for everyone.

How does intercultural dialogue or discussion reach your Varsity sports team, here at UBC?

Most of the participants claimed that intercultural dialogue reached them through informal and formal channels. Whether it is in class discussions about different cultures or conversations at practices about various cultural practices or events. Two of the participants thought that intercultural dialogue and discussions did not reach them.

Give us an example of how culture is different at UBC than where you are from?

Several participants spoke about the increased diversity of cultures at UBC and on their teams. Several participants also spoke about the lack of focus on sports at UBC, compared to where they are from. They found that the focus at UBC is more on academics than on sports. Two of the participants also found that the racial and ethnic makeup of UBC makes it a safer place compared to their homes where gun violence and safety are major concerns.

International student specific questions

How have pressures surrounding selection supported or hindered your socio-cultural connections with your team/teammates?

Everyone felt that there was higher pressure on them to perform because they were international and their teammates had expectations about them, which caused pressure to perform. All but one said that this didn't have a negative effect on their relationships with their teammates.

How have you needed to shift your norms or beliefs, in order to integrate into the team; and how has the team shifted their values and norms to embrace you?

All participants except one found that they did not need to change their norms or beliefs to integrate into their team. They found that since their teams are so diverse, it is very easy to fit in. They also found that their team did not have to actively shift their values and norms to welcome them. It appeared to be a more cohesive co-creating of values and norms than integration. The one participant found that they had to be a bit more reserved because in their culture anything goes, whereas here you have to watch what you say.

What cultural barriers have you experienced while being involved with UBC Varsity & Recreation?

Language posed to be the biggest barrier to our participants. Whether it was slang or understanding other people's accents, it was the hardest barrier to work past. Other than that, a few participants made comments about missing holidays due to travel for sport but that they didn't mind it so much. One participant made comments about the expectations to play through injuries, and to return to play as soon as possible rather than healing properly.

In terms of 'sport culture', what are some differences, you have noticed, between playing in your hometown versus playing here at UBC? Also how do these differences compare to the sporting culture from your previous team?

An interesting contrast appeared where some participants found their teams here to be more strict and serious than their previous teams while others found their teams to be more relaxed. This came forward in disciplinary tactics, the professionalism of their sport, their previous countries perceptions of the sport, and media coverage.

Domestic student specific questions

From your experience, does UBC Varsity & Recreation foster acceptance for social integration?

All participants except for one found that UBC varsity and recreation fosters acceptance for social integration through the varsity athletics orientation/ giving out respect wristbands, having several recreation/ club competition/ varsity sports, the Ubysey 5 on 5 interviews, varsity teams traveling internationally, posters and catalogues displaying different ages, genders, races, and cultures. The stand out participant found that their lacks integration between non-varsity students and varsity athletes, and that this could be developed more.

How would you react if a teammate experienced oppression and racism?

All participants said they would intervene, and/or support the individual. They would entice a team discussion through the team leadership. Even though they weren't personally being victimized they felt offended or upset that this would happen to someone they knew.

Have you considered how it would be playing a varsity sport in another country? How would you expect or hope domestic athletes to react to your cultural preferences, norms and beliefs?

All participants have thought about playing internationally or have actually played internationally. The ones who have thought about it hope that they would be accepted into the new culture and would be interested in learning about the new culture around them. The ones who had played internationally found that they had a fear of not being accepted and this fear

caused them to internalize certain cultural norms and abide by their differing cultures practices to gain respect.

Can you name some socio-cultural beliefs, norms and values that link to being a Varsity athlete in Canada? How might these beliefs, norms and values support or inhibit team members from outside of Canada?

Several participants spoke to the work ethic of being a student athlete in Canada- you have to be effective in school and in sport in order to be a varsity athlete. For example, in the United States, athletics often overshadow the importance of academics. They also found that there is an expectation to be a good citizen and role model to younger individuals. Participants also found that we focus on Canadian holidays and our breaks are around them, which might inhibit others from being able to take time off during their holidays

[8.3 Appendix C: Work Plan](#)

KIN 465 CBEL Projects Work Plan

Name of Project: Discovering Varsity Athletics: Creating an Inclusive Community

Purpose(s) of Project:

The fundamental purpose of this project is to analyze the current level of interculturalism and interculturalist activity engaged in by the UBC varsity community. Compounding research, conducted through informal interviews of both international and domestic athletes, and data produced through interviews with athletes, we will outline recommendations to further promote a mutually beneficial inclusive environment, in which people of various cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities, and belief systems feel accepted and celebrated. Our objectives are to enhance the experiences of all varsity athletes and to propose a diagnostic tool to facilitate it.

Deliverables:

Qualitative and quantitative data that displays deficits in intercultural understanding and knowledge

Suggestion for a diagnostic tool to evaluate incoming and current varsity athletes, their knowledge and understanding of interculturalism as well as how to foster an intercultural environment

Methods:

One-on-one interviews conducted by group members with varsity athletes

Research existing diagnostic tools that address knowledgeable understanding of interculturalism or other similar social phenomena. From this research, we will pull valuable aspects from the pre-existing tools and add onto those aspects questions relevant to interculturalism

Project Members	Skills/Interests	Role(s) in the project	Availability
Patryk Zuk	UBC Varsity Rugby player, TAC member, Varsity Athletics event staff team lead	Contact Person Liaison – responsible to make initial contact, set up meetings and maintain contact, and gather feedback on deliverables.	M: 8-12 am T: 11am-4pm W: 8-12 am Th: 2-4 pm F: 8am-4pm Sa: Not available Su: 5-9pm

Daisy Parti	UBC Varsity Athletic Trainer (WHKY & WVB)	Responsible for conducting in-depth interviews with two varsity athletes. I am also responsible for editing the references, contributing to the research, writing, and critiquing of both the report and presentation, and whatever else is allocated to me.	M: 10:00 - 12:30 T: 11:00 - 1:30 W: 10:00 -12:30 Th: 11:00 - 4:00 F: 10:00 - 12:30, 2:00 - 5:00 Sa: Not available Su: Not available
Conor Morgan	Varsity Basketball player	Responsible for conducting two in depth interviews. I am contributing to the report by editing and writing what is needed at the time by my groupmates.	M: - 2:00 T: Not available W: Not available Th: 3:00 - 7:00 F: 2:00 - 5:00 Sa: Not available Su: Not available
Rachel Donohoe	UBC Varsity Field Hockey player, TAC representative for WFH	Responsible for conducting in-depth interviews with two varsity athletes. I will also review current literature pertaining to our topic: summarize and critique. As well as, explain and expand upon the methodology of our project.	M: All day T: 12:30 - 4:00 W: - 4:00 Th: 12:30 - 3:30, 5:30 - F: All day (unless travelling) Sa: Not available Su: Not available
Andrew Kanerva	UBC Varsity Field Hockey player, Varsity Athletics Event staff	Responsible for conducting in-depth interviews with two varsity athletes. Additionally, I am responsible to hold all group members opinions valid and to strengthen the group work environment.	M: 8:00 - 11:30 T: 11:00 - 12:30, 2:00 - W: 8:00 - 11:30 Th: 11:00 - 12:30, 2:00 - 5:00 F: 3:00 - Sa: Not available Su: Not available
Will Watson	UBC Varsity Football player	Responsible for conducting in-depth interviews with two varsity athletes. Critiquing the previous two projects	M: 11:00 - 4:30 T: 1:00 - 3:00 W: 10:00 - 3:00 Th: 1:00 - 3:00 (not Oct. 10,17) F: 10:00 - 3:00 (not Oct. 10,17) Sa: Not available

			Su: Not available
Harpreet Randhawa	UBC Varsity Basketball Player	Responsible for conducting two in depth interviews with two varsity athletes. Additionally, I will perform research and any written parts needed for the success of my group and community partners.	M: 2:00 - 7:00 T: Not available W: 2:00 - 7:00 Th: 3:00 - 7:00 F: 2:00 - 5:00 Sa: Not available Su: Not available

Project Component	Specific Task	What do you need in order to get this done?	Who is responsible?	When is this due?
First meeting with Contact Person	Email contact person to introduce your group and ask for a meeting	Obtain group members availability	Patryk	Sept 20
	Meet with the contact person and discuss project goals and details	Read the background information listed on the course blog before meeting. Begin filling out workplan	All group members	Sept 23
class requirements	Workplans due via email to Kat/Nadine and community partner	Complete work plan with detailed timeline and organization of work	Andrew	Oct 4
	Midterm Progress report due via email to Kat/Nadine and community partner	Create a peer evaluation form that we all agree with. Update our workplan	Andrew	Oct 22
	Report or equivalent	See instruction on blog	All group members	Nov 24
	Presentation	See instruction on blog	All group	Nov 17

			members	
	Peer Evaluation	Reflect on your group members' contribution to the project	All group members	Dec 1
Project requirements	Interviews	Conduct two one-on-one interviews per group member with varsity athletes coming from varying backgrounds	All group members	Oct 31
	Research	Research pre-existing diagnostic tools used to evaluate knowledge and understanding of interculturalism or similar phenomena	All group members	Oct 31
	Report writing	As part of the project deliverables, the group is responsible to deliver a report summarizing the relevant information and literature, discussing the interviews, and proposing a diagnostic tool based off of research and interviews analyzing	All group members	Nov 14
Report writing	Formatting	Formatting of the report document so that it is aesthetically pleasing and presentable	All group members	Nov 20
	Introduction/Conclusion/Executive summary	Introduce the scope of our project and conclude our findings and recommendations	Harp	Nov 14
	Purpose and Objectives	To analyze the current level of interculturalism and interculturalist activity engaged in by the UBC varsity community	Patryk	Nov 14
	Literature review	Review the current literature that speaks to intercultural understanding and how to foster an intercultural environment	Rachel	Nov 14
	Critique	Provide a critical analyses of the previous year project. Identify where there exists deficits	Will	Nov 14
	Methodology	Explain the ways in which we will conduct the interviews with varsity athletes and	Conor	Nov 14

		how we will interpret their qualitative data		
	Interview review	Summarize trends and findings pertaining to the incoming and current understanding of interculturalism and how to foster an intercultural environments	Daisy	Nov 14
	Research	Summarize the research performed and the present diagnostic tools found, their strengths and weaknesses	Rachel	Nov 14
	Recommendation	Pulling from the interviews conducted and the research performed to compile and create a diagnostic tool to be used	Andrew	Nov 14
	Limitations	What are the limitations of using the diagnostic tool? What does it not address?	Andrew	Nov 14
	References	Citation in proper formatting at the end of the document as well as in-text	Daisy	Nov 14
Final meeting with Contact Person	Prepare project to present to contact person	Print report and prepare oral presentation	All group members	Nov 20
	Meet with Contact Person and get their feedback on final project	Schedule meeting	All group members	Nov 20
	Give final amended project to Contact Person	Amend project according to feedback from contact person	All group members	Nov 24
Final Edits	Edit report	Each group member rereads and makes appropriate changes	Not yet allocated	Nov 14 - 20
	Edit presentation	Collaboratively edit presentation style so that the presentation is professional and appealing	Not yet allocated	Nov 10 - 17

8.4 Appendix D: Intercultural Sensitivity Survey

What, if any, intercultural experiences (interacting with people of different cultures) have you had? (Kroeger, 2001).

- A. Community neighbourhood
- B. Home life
- C. Work environment/study environment

On a scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (extremely anxious), how anxious are you when you meet someone from a different culture to yours?

Did you ever experience prejudice or stereotyping from a person of a different cultural background?

- A. Agree
- B. Neutral
- C. Disagree

Which one of these phenomena below do you believe is the greatest barrier to you understanding people from another cultural background?

- A. Anxiety
- B. Ethnocentrism
- C. Media interpretations
- D. Stereotyping and prejudice

Evaluate the following statements. (on a scale with the score of 1 as the lowest score)

- A. I feel most comfortable living and working in a community where people look and act like me.
- B. I sometimes find myself thinking derogatory things about people who look or act differently from me.
- C. I believe that certain groups of people are very troublesome and do not deserve to be treated well
- D. I feel my culture is better than cultures of other people I have met in my lifetime

Did you ever experience prejudice or stereotyping from a person of a different cultural background?

- A. Looks
- B. Way of talking
- C. Nonverbal communication
- D. Other

8.5 Appendix E: Cultural Awareness Self-Assessment Form

Rate the following statement on a scale from 1-7 where 7 = outstanding (superb); 6 = excellent; 5 = very good; 4 = average (good); 3 = fair; 2 = poor; 1 = very minimal; 0 = no ability at all

I listen to people from other cultures when they tell me how my culture affects them.

I realize that people from other cultures have fresh ideas and different points of view to bring to my life and to the workplace.

I give people from other cultures advice on how to succeed in my culture.

I give people my support even when other members of my culture reject them.

I realize that people outside of my culture could be offended by my behavior. I've asked people if I have offended them by things I have done or said and have apologized whenever necessary.

I realize that when I am stressed out I am likely to make myself and my culture right and another culture wrong.

I respect my superiors (boss, teacher, supervisor, group leader, etc) regardless of where he or she is from. I do not go over his or her head to talk to someone from my culture in order to try and get my way.

When I am in mixed company, I mix with everyone. I do not just stay with people from my culture, or only with people from the dominant culture.

I go out of my way to work with, recruit, select, train, and/or promote people from outside the dominant culture.

When people in my culture make jokes about or talk negatively about other cultural groups, I let them know that I don't like it

8.6 Appendix F: Additional Questions

How often, per week, do language barriers inhibit your integration or sports performance?

- A. Not at all
- B. Once or twice
- C. More than twice
- D. Every day

How often, per week, either mediated by a coach or initiated by teammates are there discussions of cultural differences?

- A. Not at all
- B. Once or twice
- C. More than twice
- D. Every day

What type of new athlete integration practices has your team observed? (circle of that apply)

- A. Team parties
- B. Team socials
- C. Team meetings
- D. Buddy systems
- E. Hazing
- F. Other

Do you understand and believe that you have the competency to articulate the definitional difference between multi- and interculturalism?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Do you feel as though cultural beliefs and values have been broken by the sports practices on your team?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Have you experienced a requirement to assimilate and adopt the sport culture and sport practices of your team?

- A. Yes

B. No

Are you comfortable raising concern to your coach or teammates you're your values and beliefs have been broken?

A. Some times

B. Not to my coach

C. Not to my teammates

D. Only to some teammates

What cultural barriers have you experienced at UBC and on your sports team? (circle all that apply)

A. Language

B. Religion

C. Body language

D. Gender roles

Has a teammate or you experienced oppression?

A. Never

B. Once

C. More than once

D. The majority of the time

E. All the time

[8.7 Appendix G: Recommended Diagnostic Survey](#)

How apprehensive are you when you meet someone from a different culture?

- A. Never
- B. Very rarely
- C. Sometimes
- D. Most of the time
- E. All of the time

I listen to people from other cultures when they tell me how my culture affects them.

- A. Never
- B. Sometimes
- C. Most of the time
- D. All the time

I realize that people from other cultures have fresh ideas and different points of view to bring to my life and to the workplace.

- A. Never
- B. Sometimes
- C. Most of the time
- D. All the time

I give people from other cultures advice on how to succeed in my culture.

- A. Never
- B. Sometimes
- C. Most of the time
- D. All the time

I give people my support even when other members of my culture reject them.

- A. Never
- B. Sometimes
- C. Most of the time
- D. All the time

I realize that people outside of my culture could be offended by my behaviour. I've asked people if I have offended them by things I have done or said and have apologized whenever necessary.

- A. Never

- B. Sometimes
- C. Most of the time
- D. All the time

I realize that when I am stressed out I am likely to make myself and my culture right and another culture wrong.

- A. Never
- B. Sometimes
- C. Most of the time
- D. All the time

I respect my superiors (boss, teacher, supervisor, group leader, etc) regardless of where he or she is from. I do not go over his or her head to talk to someone from my culture in order to try and get my way.

- A. Never
- B. Sometimes
- C. Most of the time
- D. All the time

When I am in mixed company, I mix with everyone. I do not just stay with people from my culture, or only with people from the dominant culture.

- A. Never
- B. Sometimes
- C. Most of the time
- D. All the time

I go out of my way to work with, recruit, select, train, and/or promote people from outside the dominant culture.

- A. Never
- B. Sometimes
- C. Most of the time
- D. All the time

When people in my culture make jokes about or talk negatively about other cultural groups, I let them know that I don't like it.

- A. Never

- B. Sometimes
- C. Most of the time
- D. All the time

Do you understand and believe that you have the competency to articulate the definitional difference between multi- and interculturalism?

- A. Yes
- B. No

What, if any, intercultural experiences have you had? Circle all that apply

- A. With classmates
- B. With other students
- C. With teammates
- D. With opponents
- E. With coworkers
- F. With customers
- G. With roommates

Which of the following below do you believe is the greatest barrier to you understanding people from other cultural backgrounds? Circle all that apply

- A. Ethnicity
- B. Stereotyping and prejudice
- C. Media interpretations
- D. Language
- E. Religion

What cultural barriers have you experienced at UBC and on your sports team? Circle all that apply

- A. Language
- B. Religion
- C. Body language
- D. Gender roles

How often, per week, do language barriers inhibit your integration or sports performance?

- A. Not at all
- B. Once or twice

- C. More than twice
- D. Every day

Evaluate the following statements on a scale of 1-5 with 1 representing strong disagreement, 2 representing disagreement, 3 representing neutrality, 4 representing agreement, and 5 representing strong agreement

- A. I feel most comfortable living, working, studying, and playing in a community where people look and act like me.
- B. I sometimes find myself thinking derogatory things about people who look or act differently from me.
- C. I believe that certain groups of people are very troublesome and do not deserve to be treated well
- D. I feel my culture is better than cultures of other people I have met in my lifetime

How often, per week, either mediated by a coach or initiated by teammates are there discussions of cultural differences?

- A. Not at all
- B. Once or twice
- C. More than twice
- D. Every day

Have you experienced a requirement to assimilate and adopt the sport culture and sport practices of your team?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Do you feel as though cultural beliefs and values have been broken by the sports practices on your team?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Did you ever experience prejudice or stereotyping from a person of a different cultural background?

- A. Once
- B. More than once
- C. The majority of the time

D. All the time

Has a teammate or you experienced oppression?

A. Once

B. More than once

C. The majority of the time

D. All the time

Are you comfortable raising concern to your coach or teammates you're your values and beliefs have been broken?

A. Some times

B. Not to my coach

C. Not to my teammates

D. Only to some teammates

What type of new athlete integration practices has your team observed? Circle of that apply

A. Team parties

B. Team socials

C. Team meetings

D. Buddy systems

E. Hazing

F. Other