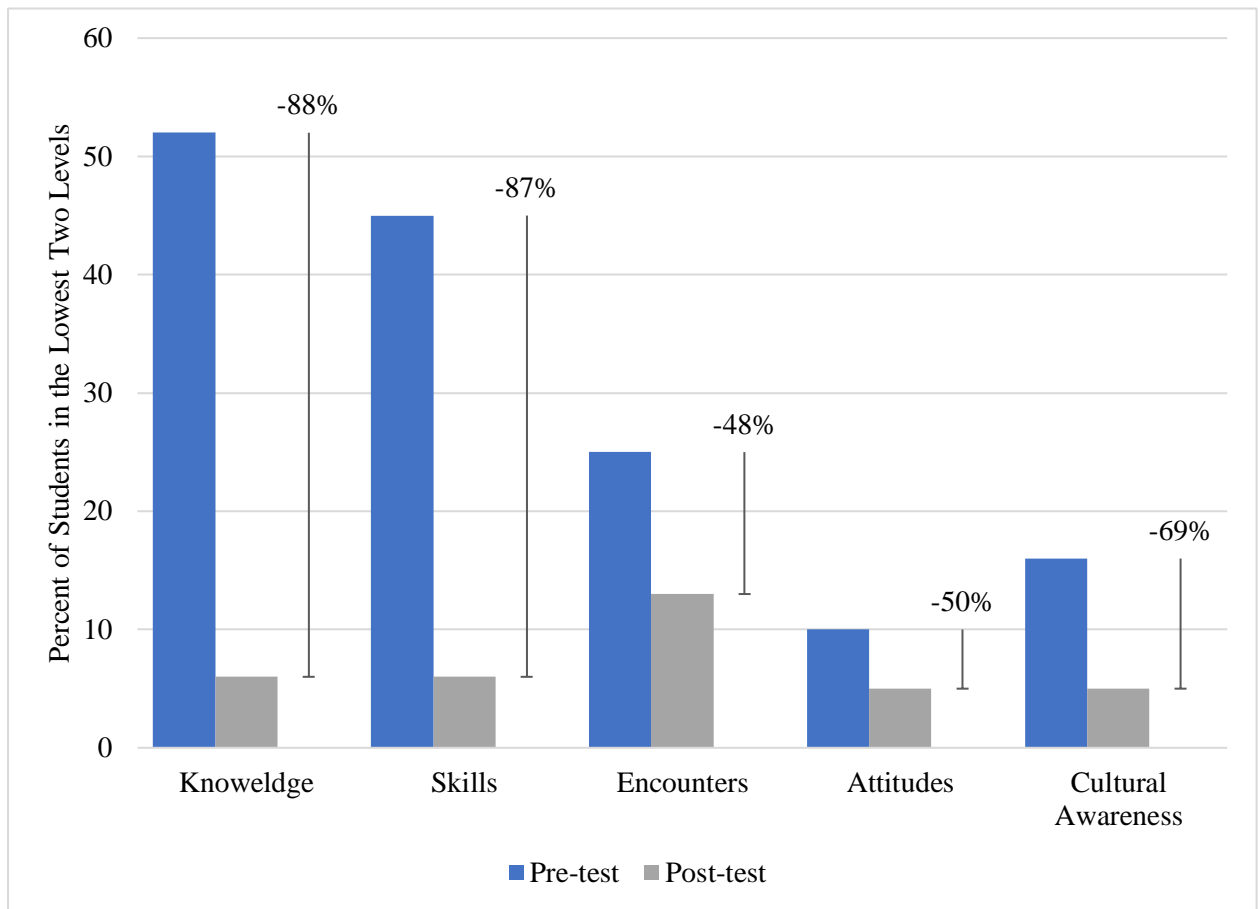


**Supplemental Figure 1:** Competence levels and percent change of students in lowest two levels of pre- and post-tests (n=107).



**Supplemental Table 1:** Major themes identified through student reflections

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**THEME 1: APPLICATION OF CLASSROOM LEARNING**

Student ideas or experiences which support enhanced learning and development of skills required to be a successful practicing dietician.

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<b>SUB-THEMES</b>	<b>QUOTES</b>
<b>Experience with Different Cultures:</b> Students learned firsthand from immigrants and refugees about cultures that differed from their own. They gained from first-hand experience of unfamiliar cultural customs and were able to make meaning from these experiences.	<i>“It is one thing to be told and read about cultural differences in a classroom and another to actually experience cultural differences.”</i>  <i>“I feel that I have learned a lot about the Muslim community, their religious beliefs and how that affects their lifestyle and food choices.”</i>
<b>Intercultural Communication:</b> Students identified that the Project LINK offered them an opportunity to practice communication skills with people from other cultures, whose first language may not be English.	<i>“I learned that smiles are universal...”</i>  <i>“I was challenged with rephrasing questions and tried to point to objects such as foods in the grocery store to be sure they understood.”</i>  <i>“The Project LINK also allowed for learning about other cultures and feeling more comfortable interacting with people from another culture and with people still learning English.”</i>
<b>Globalization:</b> Students observed the trend of globalization of food access. Partner families purchased cultural foods at grocery stores in the city or were able to import specific foods from their countries of origin.	<i>“The family I worked with could not find all the foods they cooked within South Korea and had to get several foods shipped from their home country.”</i>  <i>“... the family has located an Iranian food store in the city, [but] it does not provide all of the products they require, and they still order many traditional Iranian food products from back home.”</i>

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<p><b>Barriers to Food Security:</b> Students were able to recognize factors that affect food security (e.g., transportation, language, and knowledge/education) within their assigned families. Students formed subjective opinions about their partner family’s access to food and level of food security.</p>	<p><i>“I learned that many immigrants and refugees have problems accessing affordable and culturally appropriate foods. Transportation to a grocery store and language barriers are common causes.”</i></p> <p><i>“Upon arriving to Canada, our family did experience a few obstacles to food access. They were unsure how to buy food at the grocery store, were unfamiliar with many products, lacked transportation to the grocery store, and did not understand our food measurements.”</i></p>
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<p><b>Dietary Acculturation:</b> Students observed the process of dietary acculturation occurring within their partner families.</p>	<p><i>“... the process of acculturation is affecting the food choices my assigned family makes because they are choosing more deep-fried foods and also eating out at restaurants such as McDonald’s more often.”</i></p>
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**THEME 2: STUDENT PERCEPTIONS**

Students’ perceptions on the impact of culture in providing care to immigrants and refugees using Project LINK as a learning tool.

<b>SUB-THEMES</b>	<b>QUOTATIONS</b>
<p><b>Changes in Perspectives:</b> Students experienced positive changes in their perspectives about immigrants and refugees.</p>	<p><i>“Coming into this project I was very wary of other cultures because I did not know much about culture and I did not want to accidentally offend someone. By participating in this project, I am now less nervous around other cultures because I have now learned how accepting most cultures are. Culture is exciting and fascinating and should not be something to be timid about.”</i></p> <p><i>“I was also able to acknowledge and overcome some of the prejudices I may have had with regards to refugees and immigrants.”</i></p>
<p><b>Valuing Families Cultures:</b> The vast majority of students noted that partner families showed pride in their culture and were</p>	<p><i>“Our family enjoyed teaching us about their culture and were happy to answer any questions to the best of their ability.”</i></p>

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excited to share their food culture and other traditions.

*“They were extremely welcoming, and it was clear that they were very excited to cook a meal for us and teach us more about their culture.”*

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**Recognition of the Practical**

**Experience:** Students acknowledged the importance of cultural competence in healthcare and discussed the application of the Project LINK to their future careers as RDs.

*“This project has helped me to realize that there is a definite need for culturally competent health professionals to effectively serve the people of [our province].”*

*“...the interactive, practical experience has been invaluable. Rarely in our courses do we have the opportunity to get hands-on field experiences as dietitians on training; thus, this project is unique and highly relevant to our future careers.”*

*“Since I grew up on a farm, I feel as though I was somewhat isolated and never directly exposed to different cultural groups that are more commonly situated in urban areas.”*

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**THEME 3: BENEFITS TO IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE FAMILIES**

Students’ insights on the beneficial social and community impact of Project LINK to immigrant and refugee families.

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**SUB-THEMES**

**EXAMPLE(S)**

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**Opportunity to Practice**

**English:** Students felt that their partner family benefited from the Project LINK by having the chance to practice their spoken & written English and also by gaining confidence in their interactions with other Canadians.

*“For those just learning the language and the country, they would have benefitted with the interaction and points of views of Canadians, in terms of language and suggestions/ideas.”*

*“I feel that our immigrant family benefitted by participating in this project by getting a chance to practice their English. We communicated in person, over the phone and via email.”*

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**Connection & Interaction with**

**Canadians:** Students felt that their assigned family benefited from the

*“I feel the greatest benefit this project provided to my family was the interaction with Canadians. In particular, the daughter of the family was feeling isolated in Canada and wanted to connect with young Canadians.”*

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Project LINK by learning about Canadian food and culture.

*“I think the family benefited from this project simply by meeting Canadian citizens. It was nice for them to be able to ask questions about our culture.”*

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**Nutrition Knowledge:** Students felt that their assigned families benefited from the Project LINK by learning about basic nutrition principles.

*“Our family benefited mostly from the grocery store tour, where they learned to understand and interpret nutrition labels. They also began selecting healthier alternatives [...] than they normally do, like juice with folate instead of fruit beverages!”*

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#### **THEME 4: CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS**

Students’ perceived challenges in completion of Project LINK.

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##### **SUB-THEMES**

##### **QUOTATIONS**

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**Communication Barriers:**

Students found it difficult to communicate with their partner families – mostly due to language barriers.

*“... language was certainly a barrier – but we enjoyed the experience all the same.”*

*“The language barrier was the most difficult challenge we had to deal with ... the families didn’t have a clear understanding of the project and what it entailed.”*

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**Perceived Role in Giving**

**Nutritional Advice:** Students were uncomfortable responding to their partner families’ nutrition-related questions and were hesitant to give them nutritional advice.

*“I feel there is a disconnect with the expectations this course places on students and our current level of nutritional awareness and counseling competency.”*

*“... I did not offer any nutrition information voluntarily. I did not feel that, as a student, I was qualified to offer that information.”*

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**Level of Detail:** Students felt that Project LINK assignments required too much detailed information, which reduced time spent in unstructured interactions with their partner families.

*“The assignments asked for such specific information that I felt that I was continuously directing the conversations with my family so that I would be able to answer the questions for the assignments.”*

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