CULTIVATING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS AT A GENERAL UNIVERSITY IN CHINA BY USING TRIAD-LAYERS ICC MODEL

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Zheng Yang

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Author	Zheng Yang
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ABSTRACT

In today's globalized world, the ability to communicate effectively across cultures is an essential skill for language learners. However, in China, significant disparities persist between ranked universities (RUs) and general universities (GUs) in terms of access to structured intercultural communicative competence (ICC) instruction and international exposure. This research addresses this gap by first exploring Chinese undergraduates perceived challenges and needs in developing ICC and subsequently designing and evaluating the Triad-Layers ICC instruction model (TLICCM) to support ICC development in resource-constrained university settings.

The initial needs analysis employed a mixed-methods design involving an ICC self-rating scale (n=87) and needs analysis semi-structured interviews (n=12) with English as a foreign language (EFL) students at a GU in Yunnan Province. Findings revealed four main challenges: limited active engagement despite positive attitudes towards other cultures; strong knowledge of the source culture but gaps in international cultural knowledge; openness to changing views yet limited communicative flexibility; and competence in identifying misunderstandings but lower adaptability in resolving conflicts. Additionally, non-verbal communication and knowledge of cultural taboos were underdeveloped.

Based on these findings, the TLICCM was developed grounded in Vygotsky's social constructivism, with each component of the model intentionally designed to address the specific gaps and challenges identified in the needs analysis. The three-layer structure—comprising MOOCs for pre-class preparation, interactive in-class

activities, and post-class reflective tasks—was tailored to foster active engagement, expand international cultural knowledge, enhance communicative flexibility, and strengthen both non-verbal communication skills and awareness of cultural taboos. By leveraging social constructivist principles, the model emphasizes experiential learning that enable students to progressively build intercultural awareness and practical skills through guided interaction and reflection, thereby directly responding to the deficits uncovered in the NA phase. Forty students out of eighty-seven from the needs analysis (NA) research participated in an instructional intervention comprising MOOCs for pre-class preparation, interactive in-class activities, and post-class reflective tasks. The model was then validated through the students' pre- and post-test, scores on ICC, model validation interview, class observation and reflective writing. The results of both quantitative and qualitative analysis indicate notable improvements, including active engagement, international cultural knowledge, communicative flexibility, conflict resolution adaptability, non-verbal communication, and knowledge of cultural taboos. Specifically, quantitative results showed significant improvements in ICC, particularly in source cultural knowledge and skills. Qualitative data further indicated enhanced student engagement, improved conflict navigation abilities, and a reconceptualization of intercultural communication as opportunity rather than barrier. The model also helped mitigate Chinese Cultural Aphasia (CCA) by reinforcing cultural self-awareness.

This study contributes meaningfully to the pedagogy of ICC in under-resourced educational settings and to the promotion of internationalization at home. Based on the findings, several practical implications are proposed. First, source and international cultural content should be integrated in a balanced and contextually appropriate manner effectively fostern students' cultural identity and ICC. Second, students' preparedness for MOOCs-based pre-class learning should be assessed at the outset to ensure meaningful engagement during in-class activities. Finally, experiential, student-centred instruction should be emphasized throughout the learning process, including when introducing theoretical frameworks, to enhance both understanding and application of ICC.

Keywords: Intercultural Communicative Competence, Source Culture, Triad-Layers ICC Model, International Culture, Chinese Culture Aphasia, Non-verbal Communication, Needs Analysis, Internationalization at Home, Communicative Flexibility

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the Study

Over the past two decades, internationalization has become a defining feature of higher education policy and practice across the globe. De Wit and Altbach (2021) defined internationalization in higher education as a deliberate process of incorporating an international, intercultural, or global aspect into the objectives, operations, and provision of post-secondary education, aimed at improving the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and making a significant contribution to society.

Within this global context, China has actively embraced internationalization as a strategic pathway to enhance its educational quality and global influence. The internationalization of Chinese higher education accelerated following the 1978 economic reform and opening-up policy. Guided by Deng Xiaoping's call to learn from Western educational models while preserving China's ideological foundations, the country's approach evolved from "catching up" in the 1980s to the "walking on two legs" strategy—bringing in global expertise while promoting Chinese culture abroad (Tang, 2022). This dual strategy involved attracting international scholars and sending Chinese students overseas to expand cultural and academic exchange.

As China's higher education policies developed, the focus shifted from sporadic exchanges to systematic national initiatives aimed at institutional excellence and global competitiveness. Building on this foundation, China's higher education system has aligned closely with this goal trend, advancing large-scale initiatives—including *Project 985*, *Project 211*, and the more recent *Double First-Class* program, which collectively comprise China's tier of ranked universities (RUs)—to cultivate world-class higher education institutions (Tang, 2022; Xinhua News, 2024). These reforms have been supported by significant government investment—over 40.4 billion yuan ($ 5.58 billion) allocated in 2023 to support Double First-Class universities, particularly in China's central and eastern areas, and continued funding in 2024 to enhance

institutional competitiveness and global engagement (Xinhua News, 2024). Beyond these institutional reforms, China's Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) has further positioned higher education as a bridge for global understanding and cooperation, requiring graduates who possess strong intercultural communication (IC) and negotiation skills.

Consequently, language education has emerged as a central pillar supporting these broader internationalization goals, serving as both a tool for access and a medium for intercultural understanding. As these internationalization efforts expand, language education has become an essential means of fostering global engagement. English, as the world's lingua franca, functions as a bridge language across nations and disciplines (Wang et al., 2025). In China, English is not merely a foreign language but a strategic tool for international engagement, innovation, and global dialogue. The Ministry of Education (MOE) recognized this in its English Language Teaching Guidelines (2020), identifying the development of students' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) as a core educational objective. Through English learning, students are expected to gain not only linguistic accuracy but also cultural insight, empathy, and adaptability—attributes of what the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) terms global competence: the ability to examine global issues, appreciate cultural diversity, and communicate effectively across cultures.

While these policy initiatives highlight the national vision for cultivating global competence through language education, their success ultimately depends on how intercultural competence is understood, valued, and implemented at the individual and institutional levels. From a personal perspective, in an increasingly interconnected global society, education in intercultural competence plays a crucial role in a wider effort to promote the appreciation of diverse values, uphold the dignity of every individual, encourage fairness, and facilitate the development of identity through international exchange. Additionally, a student with a higher ICC may tend to possess a significant competitive advantage in both the realm of academia (Yang & Pan, 2019) and professional settings (Dai & Feng, 2025; Gui, 2024). The growing emphasis on internationalization within higher education institutions necessitates that university students develop ICC to effectively engage with varied peers and teachers, so enhancing their overall collegiate experience. Besides, the ability to effectively communicate across different cultures has been recognized as a valuable skill by numerous

organizations with internationalization objectives. As evidenced by a survey where 78% of employers emphasized the importance of students acquiring intercultural competencies (Hart Research Associates, 2015; Lázár et al., 2023). Thus, it is not unexpected that the development of ICC has been recognized as a crucial learning outcome for students in higher education. Consequently, there is a growing emphasis among higher education institutions on equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the global economy. To enhance their ICC, higher education institutions must assume responsibility for their internationalization efforts and cultivate graduates who possess the skills and abilities necessary to succeed in the global professional landscape (Fellows et al., 2014; Mitchell, 2023).

However, the rapid pace of internationalization has revealed structural inequalities within China's higher education system. The benefits—abundant financial resources, global partnerships, and international programs—are heavily concentrated in a minority of RUs. In contrast, most institutions, general universities (GUs), lag significantly behind, operating with limited resources and minimal exposure to foreign faculty or programs (Feng et al., 2025; Huang, 2006). This institutional disparity has direct and profound consequences for students. Those at GUs, often from economically disadvantaged or ethnically diverse backgrounds, are largely excluded from transformative opportunities like overseas study. This deprivation exacerbates a critical outcome: the development of ICC remains profoundly uneven. While RUs students benefit from immersive global exposure, GUs students frequently face a crippling lack of confidence in international dialogues. This imbalance often culminates in "Chinese cultural aphasia" (CCA), a phenomenon where students, overexposed to international cultures yet under-equipped to articulate their own, struggle to express the nuances of Chinese culture and may perceive it as subordinate to others (Chen & Liu, 2023; Zheng & Gao, 2019). Thus, the systemic inequality between RUs and GUs not only limits educational access but also actively hinders the formation of a balanced, confident cultural identity necessary for global engagement.

Within this context, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have become the front line of China’s internationalization efforts. Yet, in many GUs, English education remains dominated by grammar-translation and exam-oriented instruction (Meng et al., 2021), with limited emphasis on intercultural instructions. This creates a critical gap

between national policy goals and educational practice, training students to pass tests but not to navigate intercultural encounters

It is this gap between policy expectations and classroom realities that highlights the inadequacy of current ICC pedagogy in GUs. Although national guidelines stress the importance of intercultural competence, teaching practices have yet to translate these objectives into meaningful classroom experiences. Current ICC pedagogy in GUs remains inadequate. Classroom instruction continues to focus predominantly on English language skills without explicitly integrating ICC, emphasizing grammar, reading, and exam preparation rather than real-life communication and intercultural understanding (CPC Consulting, 2024). Pedagogical practices seldom include experiential learning, case studies, or simulations that foster practical intercultural skills, leaving students linguistically competent but culturally unprepared to interpret, evaluate, and respond appropriately in intercultural contexts. Furthermore, ICC instruction is rarely embedded across curricula and is often treated as an optional or isolated component, while assessments remain largely unidimensional, measuring only language accuracy rather than attitudes, cultural knowledge, or adaptive skills. Consequently, the existing classroom model fails to capture the holistic nature of ICC or promote its sustainable development, underscoring the need for a more integrative and experiential approach to English education in GUs.

While these pedagogical shortcomings reflect structural issues in curriculum design, they are also deeply rooted in broader educational and cultural contexts that shape classroom practices in China. To understand why ICC instruction remains limited in scope and impact, it is essential to examine the systemic factors that influence teaching methods, learner behaviours, and institutional priorities. ICC development in GUs faces multiple intertwined challenges. High-stakes testing and a culture of exams in GUs put more value on specific language skills like grammar and reading than on reflective, communicative tasks that promote ICC (Mu & Yu, 2021). This exam-oriented culture discourages risk-taking, think critically, and genuine intercultural interaction. Traditional teacher-centred methods, rooted in hierarchical classroom practices, further constrain learners' autonomy and classroom interaction (Zhu et al., 2022), limiting experiential activities like role-plays, simulations, and debates essential for ICC development. In addition, opportunities for authentic intercultural contact (Mu

& Yu, 2021), including student exchanges, joint projects, or virtual collaborations, remain limited for GUs. Beyond pedagogical factors, institutional constraints such as inadequate funding, limited teaching materials, and insufficient international partnerships also hinder curriculum innovation and sustained global engagement. Moreover, students' anxiety, risk aversion, and preference for familiar tasks, influenced by cultural norms surrounding "losing face," tend to reduce participation in uncertain intercultural practices (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2022), thereby restricting the development of adaptive attitudes, pragmatic language use, and intercultural skills. Thus, the barriers at this level largely structural and psychological, reflecting the practical realities that constrain ICC-oriented teaching in GUs.

While these institutional and psychological barriers explain many of the practical constraints, they also stem from a deeper conceptual issue in language education—the disconnection between language learning and cultural understanding. These structural and cultural barriers are compounded by a long-standing conceptual gap in language education itself—the tendency to treat language and culture as separate entities rather than as mutually constitutive dimensions of communication. To fully grasp the roots of limited ICC development in Chinese GUs, it is therefore crucial to revisit how the relationship between language and culture is understood and practiced in the English classroom. This limitation is closely tied to the tradition of language and culture in English classroom across China. Understanding the relationship between language and culture is crucial in understanding the intercultural communicative process. Xiao and Eleni (2007) acknowledged that a failure in language use can arise from a lack of cultural competence, rather than a lack of language knowledge. Understanding diverse cultures affords language learners the chance to acquire various languages interwoven with distinct cultural contexts, so strengthening their intercultural proficiency is vital (Council of Europe, 2001). From the relationship between culture and language to culture teaching in language classes, Reid (2015) postulated that cultural teaching in language classes is essential. Without a cultural context, language teaching would be like teaching pupils the interpretation of random symbols, leading to the attribution of erroneous meanings (Gedik Bal & Savas, 2022). Scholars advocating for the advancement of language education to cultivate intercultural citizenship (Byram, 2008; Starkey, 2007); Osler and Starkey (2015) have observed that the aim of

language instruction and acquisition goes beyond simply improving vocabulary and fluency. The current state of English language education suggests enhancing the ICC of individuals who are acquiring a new language has emerged as a primary objective to equip them with the necessary skills for effective international communication and to cultivate their proficiency as language learners (Hismanoglu, 2011; Oberste-Berghaus, 2024; Sercu & Bandura, 2005).

Building on this understanding, it becomes evident that addressing ICC challenges requires not only pedagogical reform but also a shift in the conceptualization of language education itself. As globalization continues to redefine communication and collaboration across borders, Chinese higher education must orient its goals toward equipping students with competencies that extend beyond linguistic accuracy to intercultural adaptability and global awareness. Given these systemic limitations, language education in GUs may want to evolve alongside the broader process of internationalization. For language learners, the ability to communicate effectively across cultures is no longer a choice but an essential skill in today's interconnected world (Sarwari et al., 2024).The rapid pace of globalization, fueled by technological advances and the movement of people, ideas, and goods, has created environments where individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds must collaborate more frequently than ever before (Knap-Stefaniuk et al., 2025). In this global landscape, ICC has become a central educational goal in higher education, equipping learners with the ability to navigate and adapt to cultural diversity in both academic and professional contexts.

Notwithstanding, the realization of these goals within Chinese GUs is not without obstacles. The implementation of ICC-oriented pedagogy operates within deeply ingrained cultural and educational traditions that shape how teaching and learning are perceived and practiced. Understanding these contextual influences is essential to explaining why, despite policy emphasis on internationalization, ICC development remains limited in scope and impact. Despite national efforts to internationalize higher education, the cultivation of ICC in China—especially among students in GUs—remains challenging. One underlying reason is the enduring influence of Confucian educational traditions, which emphasize respect for authority, social harmony, and collective conformity (Bahtilla & Xu, 2021). These values foster

discipline and diligence but can inadvertently limit intercultural engagement. Students socializing under these norms may hesitate to express personal opinions, question ideas, or engage in open debate—behaviors that are fundamental to intercultural communication. The avoidance of confrontation, while valued in traditional pedagogy, reduces students' willingness to negotiate meaning or address culturally sensitive issues. Consequently, even when encouraged to engage with international perspectives, GU students tend to adopt a passive learning stance, focusing on internalizing information rather than co-constructing understanding. This pedagogical mismatch between traditional values and global learning expectations necessitates instructional innovation that harmonizes respect and harmony with openness, reflection, and dialogue—core elements of ICC.

Beyond cultural traditions, the challenge of ICC cultivation in GUs also lies in the limited range and uneven distribution of instructional approaches available to students. While the national discourse emphasizes ICC as an educational goal, the practical avenues through which it is fostered vary considerably across institutions. There are two main approaches to ICC development: classroom-based instruction and studying abroad. ICC-integrated classroom instruction has proven effective when it combines linguistic learning with intercultural tasks such as simulations, case studies, and reflective discussions. For example, Liu and Zhang (2021) found that students exposed to such pedagogy reported significant improvements in both cognitive and behavioural aspects of ICC. However, these initiatives are mostly implemented in RUs, while GUs students often lack comparable access to such structured programs.

Study abroad programs are another proven means of fostering ICC by immersing students in authentic intercultural contexts (Smith et al., 2020). Yet, for most GU students, this opportunity remains unattainable due to financial limitations, limited institutional resources, and lack of preparatory training. Consequently, GU students often report lower confidence and less exposure to intercultural experiences compared with their peers in ranked institutions (Mu & Yu, 2021). This inequity highlights a structural divide in access to global learning opportunities and underscores the urgent need to identify alternative, more inclusive pathways for ICC development. In this regard, attention has increasingly turned toward domestic solutions that can replicate the intercultural benefits of study abroad without requiring physical mobility.

In response to these disparities, internationalization at home (IaH) has emerged as a promising approach to developing ICC within domestic educational environments (Sercu, 2023). IaH is defined as the "intentional incorporation of international and intercultural dimensions into both the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic contexts" (Beelen & Jones, 2015). It aims to ensure equitable access to intercultural learning regardless of students' socioeconomic background or mobility opportunities. This direction aligns with China's 14th Five-Year Plan for National Informatization, which promotes digital transformation and equitable access to quality education (DigiChina, 2021; Xinhua News, 2023) Within this framework, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), as one of the digital competencies, have become a powerful tool to realize IaH. MOOCs offer scalable, borderless platforms that connect GU students with authentic intercultural content and perspectives. Empirical studies indicate that well-designed intercultural MOOCs—those combining theory, case studies, and reflective exercises—can significantly enhance students' cultural awareness, empathy, and critical reflection (Rai et al., 2023).

However, despite the potential of MOOCs, their pedagogical integration in GU classrooms remains limited. Many teachers lack frameworks for blending MOOCs with in-person learning, resulting in fragmented implementation. The flipped classroom model—where students engage with intercultural materials online before applying and reflecting in class—has not been widely explored in China. Moreover, existing ICC instruction often overemphasizes global perspectives while neglecting local cultural understanding, leading to a superficial grasp of Chinese culture (Jiang & Hou, 2022; Zhou, 2024) or even CCA. This imbalance between global awareness and local rootedness reveals the pedagogical gaps that hinder the formation of authentic intercultural competence among GU students.

To overcome these limitations, a new pedagogically grounded, blended model is urgently needed to develop ICC among GU students. This model should integrate MOOCs and classroom instruction into a coherent framework that leverages the strengths of both online and face-to-face learning. Specifically, a flipped learning approach can be adopted, where students preview intercultural content via MOOCs and later engage in guided reflection, group discussion, and simulation during class. Such a

model must also balance international and local cultural learning to foster intercultural openness while strengthening students' cultural self-awareness.

Ultimately, this study seeks to address the lack of a contextualized ICC model suited for China's GU context. By aligning internationalization at home with social constructivist principles, the new model tries to empower GU students to co-construct intercultural knowledge through interaction, reflection, and authentic engagement, thereby promoting more inclusive and equitable ICC development across GUs student.

1.2 Statement of Problems

Considering the aforementioned systemic, pedagogical, and conceptual differences, GUs in China lack robust and systematic instruction in ICC. Compared with RUs, which often benefit from specialized resources and international partnerships, GUs typically rely on limited IC education. Their scarcity of resources, such as access to international faculty and teaching materials, constrains the ability to provide comprehensive ICC instruction (Mu & Yu, 2021). Moreover, ICC initiatives in many GUs tend to be fragmented and lack coordination, with no consistent pedagogical framework or cooperative programs to guide curriculum design and implementation. As a result, students in these institutions often receive insufficient exposure to structured intercultural learning experiences, which hinders their ability to understand, appreciate, and adapt to diverse cultural perspectives. This deficiency not only limits their intercultural awareness but also impedes personal growth and identity formation through intercultural interaction (Gan, 2024).

To address these challenges, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive and well-defined ICC instructional model that is specifically adapted to the context of Chinese GUs. Existing frameworks often fail to account for institutional disparities and the unique learning needs of GU students, leading to uneven instructional outcomes. Therefore, a unified yet flexible ICC model is required—one that reflects local realities while aligning with international standards. Since opportunities for studying abroad remain financially inaccessible for many GU students, strengthening ICC by IaH

approach becomes a practical and equitable pathway to foster their intercultural competence.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To design a model to cultivate Chinese students' ICC in General universities in China.

2. To evaluate the effectiveness of the ICC instruction model.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How can an ICC model be designed to cultivate Chinese students' ICC in general university?

2. To what extent does the ICC instruction model help Chinese students improve ICC?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study's findings offer significant theoretical, pedagogical, and institutional insights for enhancing ICC education, especially at China's GUs. It promotes students' grasp of the importance of ICC and deepens their perception of both source and international cultures, consequently, boosts their ICC. The study provides instructors with realistic recommendations on efficient instructional methods that facilitate comprehensive ICC development possibilities. It also allows educators to analyse the fundamental elements of ICC, the ideal order of educational activities, and the efficacy of the suggested ICC instructional model. The research highlights the strategic significance of ICC for stakeholders, including institutions and policymakers, in the realm of higher education internationalization, hence facilitating initiatives aimed at fostering inclusive and sustainable intercultural engagement in GUs.

The proposed model provides a theoretically sound and practically effective framework for educators aiming to enhance students' intercultural communication competency in domestic environments. Moreover, this study theoretically integrates Vygotsky's social constructivism (1978), Kolb's experiential learning, with Byram's (1997) and Deardorff's (2006) ICC frameworks into a cyclical, tri-layered structure, demonstrating the interaction of pre-class digital input, in-class scaffolding, and post-class reflection in promoting affective, cognitive, and behavioural development.

The methodology offers a readily adoptable instructional design for GU instructors, incorporating handpicked ICC MOOCs for fundamental knowledge, practical assignments for skill practice, and guided reflection for internalization. It additionally suggests pragmatic monitoring tools, like brief readiness assessments for MOOCs, to ensure participation and reinforce the connection between theory and application. The paradigm enhances IaH by offering a scalable framework that addresses disparities between GUs and RUs without excessive dependence on overseas movement. The evidence obtained from its validation can inform curricular standards, direct resource allocation, and improve quality assurance systems for ICC development in GUs

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 In this research, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) could be defined as the ability of students to effectively interact with people in diverse cultures with sufficient intercultural knowledge of both Chinese and international cultures, with a positive attitude, and efficient communicative skills for better comprehensibility and intelligibility in interaction.

1.6.2 General university (GU) refers to universities that are neither affiliated with Project 985, Project 211, nor Double-First Class universities in China. GUs (non-985 or non-211) are inferior to 985 universities and 211 universities in cultivating students' ICC, either in opportunities or funding support. As opposed to GUs, Ranked University (RU) refers to universities affiliated with both/either the Project 985 and/or Project 211 and/or Double-First class universities in China.

1.6.3 Triad-Layers ICC model (TLICCM) refers to an instructional model of intercultural courses consisting of key elements of ICC organized into layers in which the bottom layer provides the experiential and contextual grounding for ICC by cultivating both the source and global cultures, middle layer serves as a mediation and transformative stage, integrating other vital competencies, and the top layer represents intercultural components (attitude, knowledge and skills) as well as the cultivation strategies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of a literature review that initially explores the definition, types, and evaluation of educational models, followed by the ICC definition, components, and evaluation. After that, the review proceeds to trace the definitions of the ICC model, ICC model types, and ICC models' effectiveness evaluation by reviewing existing ICC models. Subsequently, this section provides a comprehensive overview of the existing literature about ICC in English teaching and ICC instruction insufficiency in China, ranging from differences between language and cultures, disparities among RUs and GUs, CCA, inadequate teachers' cognition toward ICC, to Chinese student's moderate ICC level. Moreover, the theoretical framework has been established, social constructivism and experiential learning were employed to analyse why various instructional activities have been applied. The last review focuses on model development after demonstrating why and how it has been developed.

2.1 Educational and Learning Models

2.1.1 Theoretical Foundations of Learning

According to social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), knowledge is constructed through social interaction within a cultural framework. Learning takes place as students collaborate, negotiate meaning, and internalize shared language and tools. Similarly, Kolb's (2014) experiential learning theory views learning as a continuous process in which knowledge is created through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Both theories emphasize active and contextualized learning that engages learners meaningfully through participation and reflection. Comparatively, experiential learning focuses more on the learner's individual cycle of doing and reflecting—often through authentic tasks—while social constructivism highlights the social and cultural dimensions of

learning, where interaction and shared tools serve as the primary engines of development.

2.1.2 Types of Education Models Relevant to ICC, Experiential Learning and Constructivism

Drawing from psychological, sociological, and pedagogical theories to improve educational outcomes, educational models are theoretical constructs that outline how learning occurs, how teachers should facilitate that learning, and how educational goals are achieved. These models typically focus on various aspects such as curriculum design, student engagement, classroom management, behaviors, motivation, feedback, professional development, technology integration, collaborative and social learning.

Among these aspects, curriculum design plays a central role in shaping how learning experiences are structured to achieve intended outcomes. In terms of curriculum design, four main types of curriculum models have been identified: subject-centered model, learner-centered models, integrated curriculum models, and backward design models (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993). The learner-centered and experiential learning approaches are particularly relevant to ICC development, as they emphasize learners' active participation, reflection, and construction of meaning through experience. Rooted in social constructivism, these approaches position learners as co-constructors of intercultural understanding through interaction, collaboration, and reflection. The learner-centred model focuses on students' needs, interests, and learning processes. An illustrative example is the Montessori model (Mavrič, 2020), which allows students to explore topics of interest at their own pace. In ICC education, this perspective supports activities such as cultural simulations, story circles, and cross-cultural dialogues that encourage students to construct intercultural meanings through guided experience. Thus, this research adopts a learner-centered and experiential orientation not merely as a pedagogical preference but as a theoretically justified means of fostering intercultural attitude, critical reflection, and adaptive behavior—all essential components of ICC development.

Building on these pedagogical orientations, it is necessary to integrate theoretical models that specifically conceptualize intercultural competence to provide a more focused framework for instruction and assessment. Direct ICC models provide a theoretical foundation for this integration. Byram's (1997) intercultural competence

model—comprising *savoirs* (knowledge), *savoir-être* (attitudes), *savoir-comprendre* (skills of interpreting and relating), *savoir-apprendre/faire* (skills of discovery and interaction), and *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness)—offers a comprehensive framework for assessing and developing ICC in educational contexts. Deardorff's process model of intercultural competence consists of attitude, knowledge, and skills, forming a dynamic process that leads to both internal (adaptability, empathy) and external (effective communication and behavior) outcomes. Together, these models bridge theoretical and pedagogical dimensions by linking intercultural learning objectives with observable developmental processes.

Importantly, both models resonate with experiential learning principles by situating competence development within iterative cycles of experience, reflection, and application. In this study, Byram's and Deardorff's models are adopted not as static taxonomies but as process-oriented frameworks that guide the design of learning activities and assessment strategies focused on attitudes, knowledge, and skills. However, while these models conceptualize ICC comprehensively, they lack explicit epistemological grounding in how intercultural learning is socially constructed—necessitating the integration of social constructivist theory to explain how intercultural meanings emerge through interaction, collaboration, and reflection.

At this point, social constructivism provides the necessary underpinning to connect theory with pedagogical practice. Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism serves as the epistemological anchor for the intended ICC model, conceptualizing learning as socially mediated, collaborative, and situated within authentic contexts where meaning is co-constructed through interactions. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the notion of scaffolding inform ICC pedagogy by emphasizing the importance of peer interaction, guided support, and reflection in fostering deeper intercultural understanding. Pedagogical approaches influenced by social constructivism—such as collaborative inquiry, problem-based learning, discourse-driven reflection, and peer scaffolding—operationalize these principles by enabling students to co-create meaning and negotiate cultural perspectives through structured intercultural experiences (Saefudin et al., 2021). Such approaches are particularly valuable in GU contexts, where learners may have limited intercultural

exposure; collaborative engagement compensates for this limitation by allowing intercultural insight to develop through simulated or mediated experiences.

To translate these constructivist principles into actionable learning processes, experiential learning theory offers a practical framework for implementation. Kolb (2014) Experiential Learning Cycle—comprising concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation—offers a dynamic process for ICC development. Through real intercultural encounters, students tend to move from experiencing cultural differences to reflecting on meaning, forming conceptual understanding, and applying new insights in further interactions.

While social constructivism and experiential learning form the theoretical backbone of this study, complementary frameworks enhance their pedagogical applicability. Other models, such as backward design (Wiggins, 2005), self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2002), and technological frameworks like TPACK (Koehler, 2006) or SAMR (Pfaffe, 2017), provide useful supporting insights, they are referenced here only briefly. Backward design ensures that ICC learning outcomes—such as openness, empathy, and perspective-taking—are clearly articulated and aligned with activities and assessments, while motivational theories highlight the importance of autonomy and relatedness in intercultural engagement. Technological frameworks, meanwhile, enable integration of digital tools and MOOCs to extend intercultural interaction beyond classroom boundaries, reinforcing the social constructivist emphasis on authentic, networked learning environments. Integrating these complementary models enhances both the scalability and sustainability of ICC instruction within digitally supported learning ecosystems.

In addition to these theoretical underpinnings, cooperative and participatory learning models further operationalize social constructivist principles by emphasizing collaboration and shared meaning-making. Cooperative Learning promote structured group activities such as jigsaw and think-pair-share, which encourage students to learn from and with each other (Nastasi & Clements, 1991; Sharma & Saarsar, 2018). In ICC learning, such cooperative structures create opportunities for intercultural dialogue and negotiation of meaning. Similarly, the Communities of Practice framework, originally developed by Lave (1991), underscores the importance of learning through social participation and shared experience within a community. By embedding ICC

development within communities of practice, learners move from peripheral participation toward more competent intercultural engagement, mirroring Vygotsky's principle of guided internalization.

To determine whether these theoretical and pedagogical integrations effectively promote intercultural competence, systematic evaluation is essential. Evaluating the effectiveness of educational models requires a variety of approaches, each related to assessing specific outcomes such as student learning outcomes assessment, classroom observation, surveys and questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews. Firstly, the student learning outcomes assessment, which is comprised of standardized tests as well as pre- and post-testing, is to assess knowledge or skills based on specific content standards, or the difference between the previous and the latter (Cooksey & Jonsson, 2022). Secondly, classroom observation, tools like the Classroom Assessment Scoring System or Danielson's Framework for Teaching (Alvarez & Anderson-Ketchmark, 2011 provide criteria to assess instructional quality and effectiveness (Evertsen et al., 2023; Wikman et al., 2024). Apart from this, classroom observation's frequency and engagement analysis can reveal how well a model supports active learning or classroom management. Thirdly, surveys and questionnaires. Surveys of students can assess perceptions of engagement, understanding, and satisfaction, while surveys of teachers may capture their perspectives on ease of implementation, effectiveness, and potential areas for improvement. Finally, interviews provide detailed feedback on their experiences with the model, including what works, what does not, and suggested improvements.

Overall, these evaluative approaches not only validate the theoretical soundness of the proposed ICC model but also demonstrate how theory translates into practice by examining learners' actual development of intercultural competence in authentic contexts. The preceding discussion on evaluation thus links conceptual design with pedagogical implementation, providing an evidence-based foundation for further theoretical exploration. To deepen this understanding, it is necessary to examine the relevance of learning theories and models for ICC Development

2.1.3 Relevance of Learning Theories and Models for ICC Development

These theories highlight that ICC is not a static attribute, but a dynamic, developmental process shaped by authentic learning experiences. By linking social

constructivism, experiential learning, and established ICC models, this framework underscores that intercultural competence develops through iterative cycles of experience, reflection, and social negotiation. Educational models informed by such theories translate abstract concepts into structured pedagogical and evaluative practices, ensuring that intercultural learning integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Thus, the theoretical alignment between learning theories and educational models forms the conceptual foundation for designing an ICC framework tailored to the realities of GUs in China, where intercultural exposure and digital resources are often limited. This alignment ensures that ICC instruction is both theoretically grounded and pedagogically actionable.

2.2 Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Having established that ICC is best developed through experiential and socially mediated learning processes, it is now essential to delineate precisely what constitutes this complex competence. The following section, therefore, examines the multifaceted nature of ICC by synthesizing its various definitions and core components. This conceptual clarification is a necessary precursor to designing the instructional interventions informed by the theoretical foundations outlined previously.

2.2.1 Definition of ICC

Various researchers gave different definitions for ICC from different perspectives. Byram (1997) asserted that the individuals' understanding of sociolinguistic rules and the sociocultural contexts in which they interact leads to cultural competence (CC). Intercultural competence refers to individuals’ capacity to interact with people from another social group in another language (Byram, 1997). Combining CC with intercultural competence is ICC, which describes the speaker's ability to interact with people from another social group in another language. Other researchers have depicted ICC as an umbrella term that includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of individuals during intercultural exchanges (Chen & Starosta, 1996; Sercu, 2004). Whereas scholars express the concept of ICC in different ways, they have hardly reached a consensus on the ICC definition and components. To clarify this conceptual

diversity, the following discussion unpacks the key terms that form the foundation of ICC.

To acquire an understanding of ICC, it is important to familiarize oneself with the precise meanings of the component terms of this compound phrase. In other words, the establishment of a comprehensive understanding of ICC necessitates an examination of the definitions of culture, intercultural, intercultural competence, and communicative competence.

The first foundational element, “culture,” has been conceptualized in diverse ways yet shares common ground across perspectives. Definition of culture proposed by Newmark (1988), Vermeer (2021) and UNESCO (2001, as cited in Bernier, 2003) share common ground, emphasizing the interconnection between society, language, and shared values. Newmark views culture as a community’s distinctive way of life expressed through language, while Vermeer highlights the knowledge and norms required for acceptable social behavior. UNESCO broadens the scope by encompassing the spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional dimensions of human existence. Synthesizing these perspectives, culture can be understood as the collective way of life of a social group, manifested through language and behaviour, and reflected in the community’s shared beliefs, values, and creative expressions.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) classified cultures into three types—source, target, and international—within the context of language education. The "source culture" refers to the learner's own culture that underpins their identity and communicative framework; the "target culture" as the culture of the language being acquired, typically linked to native speakers; and the "international culture" as the collective global context in which English functions as a lingua franca among speakers from various cultural backgrounds. In the current study, only the concepts of “source culture” and “international culture” are maintained, as the native-speaker-centric notion of “target culture” has diminished in significance in the context of World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca (Heinzmann et al., 2024; Jenkins, 2012). This emphasis more accurately represents the communicative reality of Chinese university students, who predominantly interact with international partners, for example, Asian countries, especially ASEAN countries who geographic bordering or close to China, rather than native speakers, prioritizing intercultural comprehension over the emulation of native norms.

Intercultural and cross-cultural communication, though often used interchangeably, differ in focus and purpose. IC emphasizes reciprocal interaction and mutual understanding among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, fostering shared learning, adaptation, and transformation through meaningful dialogue (Fang et al., 2024). In contrast, intercultural communication involves a comparative examination of cultural similarities and differences distinct cultural groups, with an analytical and contrastive lens (Cummings, 2014). In essence, intercultural communication is relational and dynamic—it centers on interaction, mutual exchange, adaptation and meaning-making between individuals of differing cultural backgrounds, while cross-cultural communication is analytical and contrastive. This clarification underscores that the focus of ICC is interactive and transformative, rather than merely descriptive or contrastive.

Having defined "intercultural communication," the next step is to conceptualize "intercultural competence." Intercultural competence generally refers to an individual's ability to interact effectively and appropriately across cultural contexts. It has been explored both as a set of personal attributes—encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills—and as a dynamic process shaped by context and interaction. Despite variations in definition, there is a shared understanding that intercultural competence involves continuous learning and perspective shifting. Spitzberg and Gabrielle (2009) define it as the effective and appropriate management of communication between individuals with differing worldviews, while Hammer et al., (2003) emphasize the capacity to adapt one's perspective and behavior across cultural differences and similarities. Ultimately, intercultural competence entails ongoing reflection and engagement with both one's own and others' cultural values, beliefs, and practices. This process-oriented view of competence directly connects to communicative competence, which provides the linguistic and pragmatic basis for intercultural interaction.

In this regard, the concept of communicative competence further complements the intercultural dimension. Savignon (1976) proposed communicative competence as an extension of linguistic competence, describing it as the knowledge and ability that enables speakers to use language appropriately in social contexts. A competent communicator not only knows how to form correct sentences but also understands what to say, to whom, and when. With the growing recognition of World English and English

as a Lingua Franca, the native-speaker model has become less central, shifting focus toward comprehensibility and intelligibility as key indicators of effective communication (Heinzmann et al., 2024; Jenkins, 2011; Jung, 2010; Pickering, 2006). Thus, communicative competence provides the linguistic and pragmatic foundation upon which intercultural competence can operate effectively.

Synthesizing the preceding discussions, it becomes clear that ICC represents the integration of both communicative and intercultural competences. Drawing on the definitions given by these researchers and the fundamental building blocks of ICC derived from the concepts of individual component words and phrases, i.e., culture, intercultural, communicative competence, and intercultural competence, the notion of ICC is underpinned by two major types of competence, namely, communicative competence and intercultural competence (Byram, 1997; Hoff, 2020). ICC in the current research could be defined as the ability to interact with people in diverse cultures with sufficient intercultural knowledge of both source and international cultures, with a positive attitude, and efficient communicative skills for better comprehensibility and intelligibility in interaction. Having clarified the overall definition of ICC, it is necessary to further unpack its internal composition to understand how these abilities are manifested in practice.

2.2.2 ICC Components

A literature analysis of the fundamental elements of ICC indicates that this complex capacity includes linguistic proficiency, sociolinguistic proficiency, discourse competence, strategic proficiency, cultural competence and intercultural competence necessary for successful intercultural communication.

Linguistic competence underpins ICC, encompassing expertise in the target language, which includes grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Proficiency in language structures is essential for enabling clear and precise communication, empowering individuals to articulate themselves successfully in multicultural contexts. The literature emphasizes that other parts of ICC may be challenging to achieve in the absence of linguistic competence, as language serves as the principal medium for expressing meaning and intent (Fantini, 2009). The current research is conducted using the English language as a medium among participants who have had English learning

experiences, and ensuring comparable English proficiency among participants enabled a more coherent arrangement of the teaching schedule.

Sociolinguistic competence refers to the capacity to employ language suitably in diverse social and cultural contexts, encompassing an awareness of norms, politeness methods, and formalities (Deardorff, 2006). This component is essential for ICC as it guarantees that language usage conforms to cultural norms, hence minimizing misunderstandings stemming from variations in communication style and tone. By adjusting their language to suit the circumstances, individuals exhibit respect and cultural knowledge, which are crucial for fostering effective intercultural relationships (Fantini,2009). While the present research did not emphasize sociolinguistics, the interactive activities, such as story circles, cross-cultural dialogues, simulations, and role-playing, require students to develop these skills during the instructional process.

Discourse competence denotes the capacity to generate coherent and cohesive spoken and written discourse. In intercultural circumstances, individuals must frame their speech and writing to be understandable to people from varied backgrounds. Research highlights that discourse competence facilitates meaning making through logically interconnected ideas and information, enhancing comprehension and minimizing ambiguity (Pan, 2021; Wang & Xie, 2022). Although the current research does not emphasize the phrase "discourse competence", students' discourse competence would be evident in intercultural interaction and reflective writing.

Strategic proficiency entails employing communication methods to mitigate potential disruptions in intercultural communication, including misunderstandings or linguistic constraints (Deardorff,2006). This allows individuals to utilize clarification requests, paraphrases, and non-verbal signals to sustain conversation flow despite obstacles. Research indicates that strategic competence improves resilience in communication, enabling individuals to adapt and devise solutions in unfamiliar cultural circumstances (Byram, 2021). In the current research, clarification requests, paraphrases, and non-verbal signals are comprised in activities such as role-playing and story circle.

Intercultural competence is an essential element of intercultural competence, encompassing a grasp of one's own culture and an appreciation for cultural diversity. This awareness promotes self-reflection and understanding of how individual cultural

norms shape perceptions and behaviors, which is crucial for identifying cultural biases (Byram,1997). As individuals gain awareness of cultural differences, they can engage in intercultural encounters with a more educated and courteous outlook, hence diminishing possible problems (Deardorff, 2009). The current research emphasizes the acquisition of both the source and international cultures to enhance cultural competence.

Intercultural competencies encompass the capacity to interpret and connect cultural information, alongside the ability to explore and communicate with many cultures (Deardorff, 2006). These enable individuals to objectively examine cultural knowledge, connect it to their own experiences, and cultivate a profound grasp of cultural nuances. Enhancing intercultural skills enables individuals to proficiently navigate intricate cultural environments and react suitably to unknown circumstances (Fantini, 2009). In addition, intercultural knowledge involves comprehending cultural norms, beliefs, and behaviors within both one's own culture and the international culture (Byram,1997). This information equips individuals to engage in intercultural encounters with a well-informed perspective, facilitating appropriate anticipation and interpretation of cultural behaviors. Understanding cultural frameworks facilitates more significant and respectful relationships, increasing the probability of favourable outcomes in intercultural communication (Deardorff, 2006).

Understanding the multifaceted components of ICC establishes the conceptual foundation for determining what aspects of intercultural competence should be evaluated in educational settings. However, identifying these components alone is insufficient without reliable and valid assessment mechanisms capable of capturing learners' development across linguistic, cognitive, and affective dimensions. The translation of theoretical constructs—such as linguistic proficiency, sociolinguistic awareness, and intercultural knowledge—into measurable indicators remains a persistent challenge in ICC research (Deardorff, 2009; Fantini, 2009). Therefore, a systematic examination of available evaluation tools is necessary to ensure that assessment practices accurately reflect the complexity and contextual variability of ICC. Building on the delineation of ICC components, the following section critically reviews major instruments and methodological approaches employed to assess ICC in higher education, highlighting both their theoretical assumptions and their contextual

suitability for GU students in China, where linguistic, cultural, and institutional conditions differ markedly from Western settings in which most existing frameworks were developed.

2.2.3 Evaluation and Assessment of ICC

Concerning ICC assessment, there are many different assessment tools available currently from various perspectives. Among them, five commonly used instruments in higher education institutions include the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) by Hammer et al. (2003) which is measured with the following scales: DD (Daniel/ Defense) scale, R (Reversal) scale; M (Minimization) scale, AA (Acceptance/ Adaptation) scale; and EM (Encapsulated Marginality) scale. Overall, three ethnocentric orientations where one's culture is experienced as central to reality (Denial, Defense, Minimization) and three ethnorelative orientations where one's culture is experienced in the context of other cultures (Acceptance, Adaptation, Integration) are identified. Nevertheless, as a linear progress of intercultural sensitivity development, it is inappropriate for the three-fold composition model in the current research. Moreover, since the IDI relies heavily on self-reported perceptions, its results may be affected by participants' social desirability bias or limited self-awareness. This dependence on self-assessment raises concerns about the validity and contextual applicability of the instrument, particularly when used with GU students in non-Western educational contexts, where cultural expression and reflection differ from Western assumptions embedded in the tool.

The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) is designed for multinational corporations, pre-departure instruction, and diversity programs. Participants identify their strengths and weaknesses in four skill-areas fundamental to effective intercultural communication and interaction: Emotional Resilience, Flexibility/Openness, Perceptual Acuity, and Personal Autonomy (Kelley & Meyers, 1995). However, because the instrument does not explicitly address acquisition of source cultures and international cultures, it is less applicable to Chinese students in our context. In addition, the CCAI's emphasis on corporate adaptability rather than educational learning outcomes makes it less aligned with ICC development within the GU classroom, where the focus is on cognitive, affective, and behavioural integration rather than workplace readiness.

The Cross-Cultural World-Mindedness Scale (CCWMS) evaluates attitudes toward race, religion, immigration, patriotism, economics, war, world-government, and global education, and is commonly used in study-abroad pre-departure programmes (Sampson & Smith, 1957). Given that the current study does not include domains such as race and immigration, the CCWMS will not be employed as an assessment instrument. Furthermore, the dated sociopolitical assumptions underlying CCWMS limit its capacity to capture contemporary intercultural dynamics in digitally mediated and educationally diverse settings.

The Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ISI) assesses individuals' and groups' mindsets toward cultural differences and similarities and presents results in easy-to-understand reports that support intercultural development (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). Although ISI has been cross-culturally validated in a large sample, the lack of a Chinese translation presents a practical constraint for use with Chinese respondents (Matveev & Yamazaki Merz, 2014). Similarly, the Assessment of Intercultural Competence (AIC) examines how intercultural sojourners change over time (Fantini, 2009). Because the respondents in the current study are Chinese college students with minimal sojourner experience, the AIC is less appropriate for this context. These limitations collectively point to a broader methodological issue in ICC assessment research—most existing instruments are imported, self-report based and insufficiently localized for GU students. They often generalize intercultural competence as a universal construct without accounting for contextual, linguistic, or pedagogical differences across educational systems.

In general, the assessment of ICC typically involves a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches (Luo & Chan, 2022; Matveev & Yamazaki Merz, 2014). Quantitative instruments, including self-rating scales and standardized tests—are used to evaluate individuals perceived abilities or attitudes, while qualitative methods—such as interviews and reflective writing—offer richer insights into learners' developmental processes, lived experiences, and contextual understanding. Integrating these complementary methods provides a more comprehensive and balanced evaluation of intercultural growth. However, the predominance of self-report measures in previous studies limits both the depth and accuracy of ICC assessment, as such instruments often overlook how competence manifests behaviorally and contextually in classroom

interactions. To address these limitations, researchers increasingly advocate for mixed-methods designs and the creation of contextualized rubrics capable of capturing the dynamic and situated nature of ICC development, particularly within GU contexts.

Accordingly, the present study adopts a mixed-methods approach, employing the Intercultural Communicative Competence Self-Rating Scale (ICCSRS) and the test adapted from the Centre for Intercultural Competence Assessment (CICA) as quantitative measures, complemented by reflective writing and semi-structured interviews as qualitative tools. This triangulation of data sources and perspectives mitigates the biases and generalization issues found in prior research and ensures that ICC development is examined in relation to learners' cultural, educational, and institutional realities. To understand what is being measured—and to inform the design of subsequent instructional interventions—it is therefore essential to examine the models that conceptualize the structure and progression of ICC development.

2.3 ICC Models

2.3.1 Definition and Typologies of ICC Models

The ICC Model is a theoretical framework that outlines the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and awareness necessary for effective communication across cultural boundaries (Byram,1997). At its core, ICC involves both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding, emphasizing not only the capacity to speak a foreign language but also the ability to engage empathetically and ethically with individuals from diverse backgrounds. The ICC model aims to develop individuals who are not just linguistically proficient but also culturally competent, fostering openness, tolerance, and mutual respect in intercultural interactions (Deardorff, 2006).

Building on this general definition, several prominent models have been developed to operationalize ICC into distinct, measurable components. Byram's (1997) model is one of the most recognized frameworks for ICC. While his model includes certain skills, it lacks practical guidance on how to develop these skills through active engagement. In modern intercultural communication settings, there is a need for more emphasis on the actual practice in cross-cultures. Deardorff's (2006) process model of

intercultural competence develops a process-oriented model that emphasizes both internal and external outcomes. While the model provides a valuable structure for understanding ICC, one gap has been identified. That is the limited attention to intercultural learning environments. Her model is primarily designed for individual development and does not fully address how educational institutions can create environments that foster ICC. Elements like curriculum design, and pedagogical approaches are not explicitly in the model. The next is the multicultural competence model of Howard-Hamilton et al., (1998) rooted in identity development, systemic awareness, and social justice. Their framework consists of three core domains, attitudes, knowledge, and skills, each of which is developed through awareness, understanding, and appreciation. However, the model lacks measurable behavioural indicators, underplays intersectionality, and offers limited adaptability to globalized, digital contexts.

A comparative examination of these models reveals both their shared theoretical foundations and their divergent emphases in conceptualizing intercultural competence. While each framework identifies attitudes, knowledge, and skills as central elements, they differ in how these dimensions are defined, operationalized, and linked to intercultural outcomes. Byram's (1997) model prioritizes communicative skills and critical cultural awareness, whereas Deardorff's (2006) process model underscores the dynamic interaction between internal dispositions and external behaviors. Similarly, Howard-Hamilton et al.'s (1998) multicultural competence model broadens the scope by integrating social justice and identity development, extending ICC beyond linguistic and cultural domains. To clarify the conceptual overlap and distinctions among these influential frameworks, the following section systematically maps the core components across major ICC models, thereby providing a synthesized view of how intercultural competence is structured and theorized within contemporary scholarship.

2.3.2 Mapping ICC Components Across Major ICC Models

Through a comparative review of existing ICC frameworks (Table 2.1), the analysis narrows from broad conceptual orientations to the core components most relevant to intercultural competence in educational contexts. Although models such as Byram's (1997) ICC model, Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence, and Howard-Hamilton et al.'s (1998) multicultural competence framework

differ in emphasis and scope, they converge on three interdependent dimensions—attitude, knowledge, and skills—as the foundation of intercultural development. Attitude encompasses curiosity, openness, empathy, and a willingness to decenter one's own perspective in intercultural encounters, serving as the affective foundation that motivates engagement. Knowledge refers to both surface-level awareness of cultural norms and deeper interpretive understanding of values, communicative practices, and social contexts, enabling learners to analyze cultural phenomena critically. Skills involve the ability to interpret, relate, evaluate, and mediate across cultures through observation, active listening, interaction, and reflection, translating attitude and knowledge into effective communicative behavior. Together, these components form a dynamic system in which attitude initiates openness, knowledge provides interpretive grounding, and skills operationalize intercultural performance. This refined triadic structure provides the conceptual basis for the proposed ICC model in this study, integrating theoretical coherence with pedagogical applicability.

Table 2.1 Mapping ICC Components across Models

ICC components	**Byram's model**	**Deardorff's model**	**Howard Hamilton et al., model**
Language proficiency	Implied under *savoirs* (linguistic knowledge)	Supports external outcomes	*Skills* (communication ability)
Sociolinguistic proficiency	*Savoirs* (knowledge of social/cultural norms)	Knowledge & comprehension	*Knowledge* (cultural/historical context)
Discourse competence	*Savoir comprendre* (interpreting/relating)	*Skills* (interpreting, evaluating)	(verbal/nonverbal fluency)
Strategic competence	Savoir apprendre/faire (interaction)	Skills and internal outcomes	*Skills* (conflict resolution, interaction)

Table 2.1 (continued)

ICC components	Byram's model	Deardorff's model	Howard Hamilton et al., model
Cultural competence	Savoirs, savoir comprendre, s'engager	Knowledge, internal outcomes	*Knowledge* (self/other, systemic issues)
Intercultural competence	Represents the integrated whole	Represents the integrated whole	Integrated competence across dimensions

In summary, the comparative mapping of ICC models highlights a shared conceptual core that centres on the interrelationship among attitude, knowledge, and skills, despite variations in terminology and theoretical orientation. This synthesis not only clarifies how intercultural competence is theoretically constructed but also provides a foundation for understanding how it may be empirically examined and pedagogically developed. Building upon this conceptual alignment, it becomes essential to evaluate how effectively these models capture and measure the dynamic process of intercultural competence in practice. The following section therefore examines the evaluation approaches associated with major ICC models, with a focus on their methodological implications, validity, and applicability in diverse educational and intercultural contexts.

2.3.3 Evaluation of ICC Model Effectiveness

The efficacy of ICC models can be assessed by many approaches, contingent upon the objectives and elements prioritized in each model. For instance, self-evaluation and introspection, behavioural observation and performance assessment, peer and expert evaluation, as well as pre- and post-assessment in organized programs. Examining how these models are evaluated provides critical insight into their validity and applicability across diverse educational and intercultural contexts.

Firstly, self-assessment tools such as questionnaires and reflective journals enable individuals to evaluate their intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

Deardorff's model (2009), with its emphasis on internal outcomes and self-reflection, aligns well with this approach, allowing learners to monitor their developmental progress over time. However, self-report data are inherently limited by subjective bias, as individuals may misjudge their actual competence.

Second, behavioral observation in authentic or simulated intercultural situations offers evidence of applied ICC skills, including adaptability, empathy, and interactional competence. Byram's model (1997), which highlights observable skills such as interpreting, relating, and interacting, lends itself to this method. Classroom simulations, role plays, and case studies often serve as effective tools for such assessments. Nevertheless, this approach requires trained evaluators and may be difficult to implement consistently in natural intercultural settings.

Third, peer and instructor evaluations provide complementary perspectives on a learner's intercultural communication performance. Chen and Starosta (2000) model, which integrates affective and behavioral dimensions such as empathy, respect, and adaptability, benefits from this feedback-based evaluation. Yet, the objectivity of such assessments may be compromised by interpersonal dynamics or evaluators' familiarity with the individual being assessed.

Finally, in formal educational contexts, ICC development is frequently measured through pre- and post-assessments to capture growth over the duration of a course or training program. Fantini's (2009) model, particularly relevant in language-learning contexts, is often operationalized through standardized tests and practical evaluations of linguistic and intercultural improvement. However, structured testing may not fully reflect the fluid and context-dependent nature of intercultural communication.

Taken together, these diverse assessment methods demonstrate that no single approach can comprehensively capture the multidimensional and dynamic nature of ICC. The methodological choices made in assessing ICC are not isolated from context; they are deeply influenced by the cultural, institutional, and pedagogical environments in which competence is developed. In China's higher education context, these global challenges intersect with local realities, where the cultivation and evaluation of ICC are shaped by national policy orientations, institutional priorities, and learners limited intercultural exposure. Recognizing these contextual influences on ICC assessment

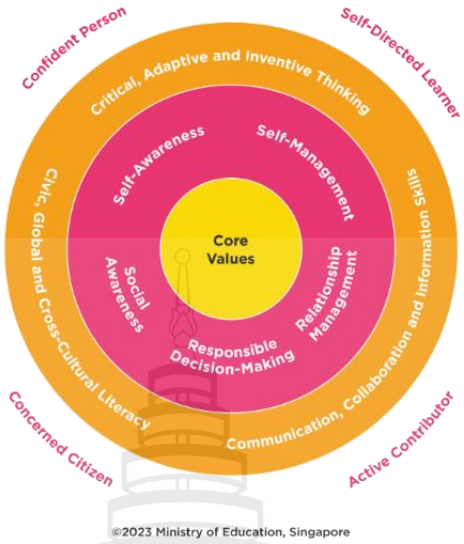
naturally leads to a deeper exploration of the broader forces that shape ICC development itself. Understanding how China's educational landscape, policy directions, and global trends interact provides essential background for situating ICC within its real-world instructional context.

2.4 Challenges and Contextual Factors Affecting ICC Development in Chinese Higher Education

2.4.1 Integrating ICC with Global, 21st-Century, soft skills and digital literacy

ICC development in Chinese higher education is situated within a multifaceted educational landscape shaped by national reform agendas, global trends, and institutional practices. These forces collectively serve as contextual foundations, defining the objectives and scope of ICC instruction, while simultaneously posing practical challenges to its realization. Accordingly, this section examines the dual nature of such influences, those that establish the structural and ideological context for ICC enhancement and those that generate constraints within policy, pedagogy, and curriculum implementation.

Within this broader framework, the integration of ICC with global, 21st-century, soft and digital competencies mark a significant shift in how Chinese higher education conceptualizes intercultural learning—not as an isolated communicative skill, but as a central element of holistic human and professional development. As a contextual factor, this alignment reflects China's strategic orientation toward harmonizing higher education outcomes with international frameworks that promote global citizenship, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving.



Source Tan et al. (2017)

Figure 2.1 Complete Guide of 21st Century Competencies

The framework (Figure 2.1), adapted from Singapore's Ministry of Education (Tan et al., 2017), conceptualizes ICC as an integrated construct encompassing values, social-emotional, and emerging 21st-century competencies. At its core, values—including respect, responsibility, resilience, integrity, care, and harmony—form the ethical and affective foundation of intercultural learning by shaping students' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours toward self and others. Surrounding these are social-emotional competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship management, which cultivate empathy, adaptability, and interpersonal sensitivity essential for intercultural engagement. Building upon this moral and emotional foundation, the emerging 21st-century competencies—critical, adaptive, and inventive thinking; communication, collaboration, and information skills; and civic, global, and cross-cultural literacy—extend ICC into cognitive and behavioral domains. Collectively, these interlinked competencies transcend linguistic proficiency, fostering learners who are confident, self-directed, and socially responsible individuals capable of effective participation in diverse, multicultural, and global contexts.

Building upon this orientation, Figure 2.2 situates ICC within the OECD's Global Competence framework (Tan et al., 2017), which conceptualizes intercultural

learning as comprising three interrelated dimensions: engaging in open, appropriate, and effective intercultural interactions (behavioral ICC); understanding and appreciating diverse perspectives (cognitive and emotional ICC); and acting for collective well-being and sustainable development (ethical and civic ICC). Grounded in values and knowledge, this framework reframes ICC not as a static goal but as a dynamic process contributing to ethical and sustainable global engagement.

Source Zembylas (2023)

Figure 2.2 Global Competence

While global competence frameworks highlight the ethical and civic dimensions of interculturality, contemporary higher education also faces increasing pressure to explicitly link ICC with employability and workplace readiness. Extending this conceptual alignment to the professional domain, Figure 2.3 illustrates the convergence of ICC with essential soft skills (Mellett, 2025) such as communication, collaboration, adaptability, and problem-solving. Communication remains foundational; however, complementary abilities—including negotiation, conflict resolution, self-motivation, and accountability—collectively enhance individual's effectiveness in navigating culturally diverse professional contexts. Thus, when operationalized together with cultural awareness, these soft skills function as an integrated and practical expression of ICC, thereby bridging intercultural understanding with concrete employability outcomes.

Source Mellett (2025)

Figure 2.3 The Top 10 Soft Skills

Furthermore, in an increasingly digitized and globally networked learning environment, however, the professionalization of ICC must also encompass digital literacy as an essential enabler of intercultural interaction. The framework for developing and understanding digital competence in Europe (Ferrari et al., 2013), identifies five key domains—information, communication, content creation, safety, and problem-solving—among which the communicative dimension is particularly salient for intercultural engagement. This communicative dimension extends ICC into virtual spaces, where meaning-making, relationship-building, and cultural exchange occur through multimodal and asynchronous interaction. Digital communication thus becomes not merely a technical skill but a sociocultural practice that shapes how identities, values, and perspectives are negotiated in online environments.

This shift toward digital ccompetence necessitates a reconceptualization of communication competence—one that fuses technological fluency with intercultural sensitivity. Learners today may navigate diverse digital platforms and adapt their communication styles to varied audiences and cultural contexts (interacting through technologies). They are also expected to share information responsibly, integrate knowledge ethically, and contribute constructively to digital communities (sharing information and engaging in online citizenship). Collaboration through digital channels further supports co-construction of meaning and intercultural dialogue, while adherence

to netiquette and digital identity management ensures respectful and trustworthy engagement. Taken together, these digital competencies reframe ICC as a multidimensional construct—encompassing global, professional, and technological literacies essential for effective participation in 21st-century higher education and beyond.

The integration of ICC with global competencies, soft skills, and digital literacy underscores its evolving role as a multidimensional capability essential for success in both academic and professional arenas. However, while such frameworks offer an aspirational vision of holistic intercultural education, their effective realization depends on contextual adaptation within national and institutional settings. In China, where English language education serves as a primary vehicle for intercultural learning, the challenge lies in translating these global paradigms into pedagogical practices aligned with local educational goals, cultural orientations, and student needs. Therefore, to situate ICC within the Chinese higher education landscape, the following section traces the historical trajectory of ICC integration in English language teaching, highlighting its developmental stages, shifting paradigms, and persisting challenges in operationalizing intercultural competence for diverse student populations.

2.4.2 ICC in English Language Teaching in China

Over the past three decades, the field of English language teaching in China has witnessed the progression of integrating English language instruction with ICC, which could be categorized into three distinct stages. The first stage, emerging in the late 1980s and early 1990s, emphasized the native-speaker model. During this period, ICC was introduced primarily through works on English-speaking cultures (Deng & Liu, 1989; Hu, 1990) and early academic publications on intercultural communication (Hu, 1999; Hu & Gao, 1997; Jia, 1997; Lin, 1996). The establishment of the China Association for Intercultural Communication (CAFIC) in 1995 marked the formal beginning of ICC research and teaching. However, instruction largely focused on imitating linguistic and cultural patterns of the United Kingdom and the United States, with the goal of approximating native English norms rather than fostering mutual intercultural understanding.

The second stage, beginning in the early 21st century, marked an expansion toward humanistic and Chinese cultural awareness. During this period, the focus shifted

from imitating native English speakers as linguistic and cultural models to cultivating humanistic values that transcend specific languages and cultures (Gao, 2002). ICC became a central concept in English language teaching research and practice (Zhang, 2007), reflecting a broader, multidisciplinary understanding of international English education. Scholarly attention also turned to the issue of "Chinese Culture Aphasia (CCA)" (Xiao et al., 2010), leading to efforts to integrate Chinese cultural content into English instruction to strengthen learners' cultural confidence and intercultural awareness.

The third stage, emerging over the past decade, is characterized by institutionalization and globalization. ICC has been increasingly embedded in national curriculum standards, teaching guidelines, and university courses. English language education has been repositioned within the broader context of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and global competence (Wen, 2016; Xu & Sun, 2013). Learners are now expected not only to communicate across cultures but also to represent Chinese culture effectively in international contexts, aligning language learning with China's goals of internationalization and global engagement.

Despite this progress, a significant gap remains. Existing research and practice lack an operational ICC model tailored for GUs, where students often have limited exposure to authentic intercultural experiences. Moreover, the integration of digital platforms for developing digital ICC has yet to be systematically explored. Addressing these gaps is essential for advancing ICC education in a more inclusive and technology-enhanced direction. To understand how these gaps have emerged, it is important to first review how ICC model design and research have evolved in the Chinese higher education context.

2.4.3 Previous ICC Model Design and ICC Research in China

Research on ICC in China has evolved from policy-driven initiatives toward increasingly theory-informed and empirically grounded inquiries. While earlier efforts primarily emphasized policy reforms and general educational objectives, recent scholarship has shifted attention to the development, adaptation, and validation of ICC models suited to China's higher education context. This transition reflects the growing recognition that ICC must be conceptualized and operationalized not merely as a national mandate but as a pedagogical and research framework tailored to diverse

institutional realities. To illustrate how this recognition has been translated into concrete frameworks, the following discussion examines two representative models developed by Chinese scholars, highlighting both their contributions and ongoing limitations. Within this trajectory, two representative models developed by Chinese scholars illustrate both the progress made and the persistent theoretical and practical shortcomings in the field.

In the field of model development, several Chinese scholars have drawn upon seminal Western frameworks, notably those of Byram and Deardorff, while seeking to contextualize them within local sociocultural conditions. Wu et al. (2013) stratified model conceptualizes intercultural competence through three layers: a foundational platform of foreign language courses, pedagogical forms of experience, critical thinking, and interaction, and a core competency layer integrating knowledge, skills, and attitude. The core cultivates specific intercultural cognitive and communication skills, culminating in advanced cultural awareness. However, critical gaps limit its contemporary applicability. Primarily, it lacks a defined assessment framework, offering no metrics for evaluating the developed skills or awareness. Furthermore, the model exhibits a significant technology gap, omitting digital literacy and virtual exchange as essential components in modern global communication. Its reliance on the traditional foreign language classroom as the sole platform restricts its scope for interdisciplinary. The progression from core competencies to ultimate awareness remains descriptively vague without operationalized mechanisms. Consequently, while the model effectively visualizes the ecosystem of competence, it falls short as a practical guide for curriculum design or measurement in an era demanding technologically mediated and assessable global skills. Building on this attempt, subsequent scholars sought to enhance the pedagogical coherence and assessment validity of ICC instruction.

Peng et al. (2020) model outlines a practical framework for intercultural foreign language teaching, beginning with pedagogical phases of cultural discovery and knowledge construction. It establishes dual teaching principles targeting both intercultural competence and foreign language ability. The model employs diverse teaching strategies like case studies and role-plays to facilitate interactive learning. It concludes with an assessment system integrating formative and summative evaluations,

aiming to create a closed-loop process from instruction to feedback. Despite its structured approach, the model exhibits significant gaps. Firstly, it completely lacks integration of technology, omitting digital literacy or virtual exchange. Secondly, it provides no concrete assessment criteria or rubrics to objectively measure its core objective: intercultural competence. Finally, the logical connections between components are weak, presenting a list of elements rather than a coherent workflow with clear cause-effect relationships, which limits its practical utility for curriculum design. While these models illustrate important progress in conceptualizing ICC, empirical research examining their classroom application and effectiveness remains scarce.

Empirical investigations into ICC development have expanded significantly in recent years, focusing on curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and assessment innovation. Studies such as Yang et al. (2025) illustrate how interactive and globally networked learning environments foster stronger intercultural outcomes than traditional lecture-based or exam-oriented methods. Other comparative studies reveal that cross-border collaboration and reflective learning activities (Lopes et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2025)—such as simulations, online exchanges, and role-play—promote students' ability to negotiate meaning and adapt to intercultur al contexts. Yet, research remains fragmented, with limited empirical data on how ICC develops among students in GUs, who often lack international exposure and institutional resources.

Parallel to pedagogical advances, efforts have been made to design and validate ICC assessment instruments that reflect China's educational and cultural context. Examples include the Assessment of Intercultural Competence–Chinese College Students (AIC-CCS) and the English Test for International Communication (ETIC). While these instruments draw inspiration from Byram's and Deardorff's models, their psychometric reliability and contextual applicability require further validation. Most available tools still struggle to capture the reflective, developmental, and context-sensitive nature of ICC learning, particularly within GUs settings. Recognizing these challenges, recent scholarships have turned toward exploring technology-mediated and blended approaches to enhance ICC development.

Recent research has also begun to examine technology-mediated learning to enhance ICC. With the increasing emphasis on blended and digital education, scholars

have proposed pedagogical strategies integrating Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), virtual exchange, and IaH practices to access to intercultural learning (Cheng, 2025; Cho et al., 2023; Iswandari & Ardi, 2022; Muszyńska et al., 2023). These studies highlight the potential of digital platforms to facilitate intercultural dialogue and reflection, particularly for students unable to participate in study-abroad programs. However, the lack of a comprehensive instructional model that systematically links constructivist theory and blended pedagogy continues to constrain both teaching innovation and research coherence. Taking together, these findings point to a crucial need for an integrative model that connects theory and pedagogy through technology-enhanced and constructivist-based approaches.

In summary, existing ICC research and model design in China demonstrate valuable theoretical progress but insufficient integration across policy and pedagogy. Current models tend to be either overly conceptual or uncontextualized, leaving a gap in practical application—especially in GUs where intercultural resources remain limited. Hence, there is a pressing need for a new, context-sensitive ICC instructional model that builds upon existing theoretical foundations while incorporating experiential, reflective, and technology-enhanced learning pathways suitable for China's higher education landscape. This conceptual and empirical gap directly informs the next section, which explores the underlying obstacles impeding ICC development, beginning with the fundamental challenges of language and cultural differences.

2.4.4 Empirical Findings and Challenges in ICC Development

2.4.4.1 Language and cultural differences

During the process of internationalizing higher education in China, the major challenges are language, cultural, and personality differences (Lin, 2019). A variety of language and cultural obstacles pose significant challenges to the process of intercultural communication. In addition, intercultural competence is closely associated with the language matter. Considering the rapid progression of internationalization, the acquisition of intercultural competence has emerged as an indispensable quality for university students in the 21st century, alongside language skills. Therefore, language classes must incorporate courses or seminars on intercultural competency and cultural awareness.

Concerning language differences, a good example is the difference between Chinese and English. Chinese characters are mostly ideographic, implying they are based on meaning rather than sound, whereas English words are primarily phonetic, meaning they are based on sounds rather than meaning. For example, the Chinese writing system, which is based on characters, establishes a connection between written symbols and the associated meanings. Consequently, it is possible to infer the meaning of a character even without knowledge of its pronunciation. Figure 2.4 is an illustration of how the Chinese character 口（mouth） was created. Individuals proficient in various Chinese dialects can engage in written communication despite lacking sharing pronunciation, while people who cannot speak Chinese may infer meanings from Chinese characters. In the context of the English language, the conveyance of meaning is achieved through oral communication. As an illustration, the English term "table" is phonetically represented as /teibl/. The orthographic representation of the word provides insight into its pronunciation, whereas the knowledge of its pronunciation as /teibl/ does not convey any information about its semantic meaning.

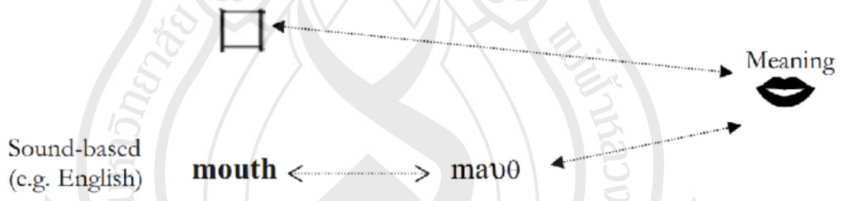


Figure 2.4 The Creation of Chinese Character 口(mouth)

The cognitive process of thinking serves as a crucial link connecting culture and language. The existence of significant disparities in thinking patterns between Eastern and Western cultures leads to variations in linguistic expressions during cross-cultural contact. There is a prevailing belief that individuals from Western cultures tend to exhibit a linear mode of thinking. Individuals tend to exhibit a greater level of directness when articulating their desires. In Eastern cultures, individuals tend to prioritize their actions and verbal expressions by assigning them a hierarchical order based on their perceived significance, ensuring that tasks of greater importance are given precedence over others. A good example of this is the Chinese language, cognitive framework exhibits a spiral pattern of thought according to (Kaplan, 1996)

diagram of five cultural rhetorical patterns (Figure 2.5). The linguistic expression employed is characterized by implicitness and euphemism, with a notable emphasis on the cultivation of comprehension. Individuals frequently engage in various preparatory measures before articulating their intentions.

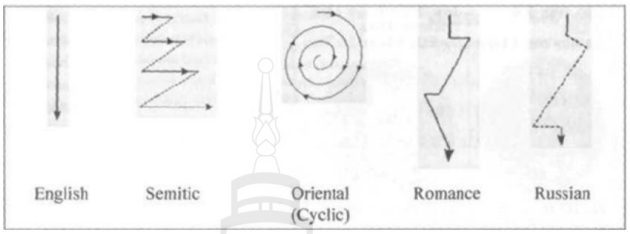


Figure 2.5 Kaplan's (1966) Diagram of Five Cultural Rhetorical Patterns

This difference in language and culture is reflected in many other aspects. Chinese students face difficulties when endeavouring to modify specific essential cognitive frameworks. It is indisputable that these cognitive frameworks are naturally influenced by conventional concepts. During the process of creating an English article, it is evident that variances in sentence form have emerged within the piece. One crucial differentiation to contemplate is the juxtaposition between hypotaxis and parataxis. Through a comparative analysis of Chinese and English languages, it becomes apparent that Chinese exhibits a notable inclination towards parataxis, while English tends to favour hypotaxis as a predominant syntactic structure. Based on The World Book Dictionary, parataxis is the arrangement of sentences one after the other without any words or phrases that show how they relate to each other. For example, sentences like 下雨了，涨水了，房屋被冲走了（it poured down rain, the river grew full, and the house washed away), while hypotaxis refers to when a sentence depends on or is below a connective. For example, a sentence written as “I shall despair if you don't come”. The application of the fundamental cognitive framework can greatly enhance the efficacy of one's written compositions.

The second aspect concerns the discrepancy in the expression of recurring patterns of conduct. The manifestation of habitual behaviours exhibits substantial diversity because of the enormous discrepancies observed among various cultural contexts. Western society necessitates individuals to possess a watchful awareness of their acts and behaviours, emphasizing the value of individualism. Engaging in the act

of contemplation enables individuals to enhance their cognitive flexibility and expand the scope of their mental processes, granting them increased autonomy and liberation in their thinking. Chinese traditional cultures have a profound impact on individuals' cognitive processes, leading them to adhere rigorously to established norms and laws in their participation in many activities. This adherence is reflective of the collectivist nature of Chinese society.

The differences between languages and cultures require ICC instruction not just to explain theoretical knowledge, but to create opportunities for students to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. After all, students can talk about the ideas of ICC, its components, attitudes, and skills. However, until they interact with people from different cultures, they cannot experience the true meaning of these conceptions. Given this, this study will conduct theoretical content that inspires and encourages students to interact with people from various cultural backgrounds.

2.4.4.2 Trends and gaps of ICC research in Asia

Research on ICC in Asia has become more complex and contextually sensitive. Researchers are shifting their focus from individual characteristics to investigating educational frameworks, organizational behaviours, and policy structures that influence ICC results. Attention is broadened to encompass multilingual situations, regional particularities, and the structural elements affecting intercultural competency, mirroring the region's cultural richness and swift globalization (Hussain et al., 2025; Jing et al., 2025; Xu et al., 2025; Xu & Shapii, 2025).

Notwithstanding these advancements, some critical gaps persist. First, many evaluation instruments are adapted directly from Western frameworks and often lack culturally relevant validation, limiting their accuracy and applicability in Asian contexts. Second, longitudinal studies that track ICC development over time and cross-national comparative research remain scarce, restricting understanding of developmental trajectories and regional differences. Third, research frequently overlooks marginalized populations, including underprivileged students, multilingual learners, and rural communities, resulting in an incomplete picture of ICC across socio-economic and linguistic contexts. Fourth, there is limited integration of empirical findings into scalable policy recommendations or educational initiatives, leaving a disconnect between research and practical application. Finally, emerging domains such

as technology-mediated interculturality, MOOCs, and virtual exchanges remain insufficiently explored, highlighting the need for studies that address contemporary and future learning environments.

The principal strengths and motivators of contemporary ICC research encompass an emphasis on higher education curriculum and pedagogy, regional collaboration, and governmental measures that foster intercultural learning. Economic globalization, urbanization, migration, and the enhanced capabilities of local scholars facilitate the expansion of discipline. Researchers and practitioners may prioritize culturally grounded, mixed-methods evaluations and link ICC interventions with policy and practice to enhance both knowledge and real-world effect.

The identified trends and gaps in ICC research across Asia bear significant implications for the present study. The prevalent reliance on Western-derived ICC frameworks without adequate cultural validation highlights the need for contextually grounded models that reflect Asian and specifically Chinese higher education realities. Responding to this gap, the current study develops and validates the Triad-Layers ICC model, a culturally sensitive framework tailored to the learning conditions and communicative experiences of students at a general university in China. By situating ICC cultivation within a localized constructivist pedagogy, the study contributes to the indigenization of ICC research and offers an empirically supported model that resonates with the sociocultural and institutional contexts of Chinese higher education.

Moreover, the persistent underrepresentation of general universities and marginalized learner groups in ICC research underscores the importance of expanding inquiry beyond elite academic settings. This study addresses that omission by focusing explicitly on general university students—an often-overlooked population whose intercultural learning opportunities and resources remain limited.

Finally, the study directly engages with the emerging and underexplored field of technology-mediated interculturality by employing MOOCs as an integral component of ICC cultivation. This digital dimension expands the learning environment beyond the classroom and fosters students' intercultural attitudes and knowledge through self-directed, interactive exposure to global perspectives. Furthermore, by adopting a mixed-method pre–post design, the study captures developmental changes in students' intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills,

thereby contributing to the limited body of research on ICC progression in Asian contexts. Collectively, these implications position the study as a timely and contextually relevant response to regional research priorities, offering insights that can inform curriculum innovation, teacher development, and policy implementation in the broader landscape of intercultural education in China.

2.4.4.3 ICC development disparities between RUs and GUs in China

Numerous obstacles stemming from resource disparities, prestigious or geographic constraints, and economic or social factors remain impeding GUs from ICC development. In contrast, students at RUs found internationalization activities more accessible, and their ICC was much improved by participation in these events than their counterparts at GUs. This difference was brought to light by a study conducted by Ma and Yue (2015), which involved 1,264 students from 39 different universities and verified that RU students were more accessible to ICC through student mobility, international cooperation, and research collaboration by hosting international debates, forums, and workshops (Zhuang et al., 2024).

Likewise, several disparities limit students' IC exposure. One major gap lies in faculty composition. RUs tend to attract significantly more faculty members with international experience. A survey of 1,200 Chinese universities conducted in 2020 revealed that faculty holding international degrees or with more than two years of overseas learning accounts for 25–40% in RUs, whereas the figure for GUs remains below 5% (Ministry of Education, 2020). Regarding attracting international students, GUs may lack attraction, either for prestigious reasons or for geographical convenience. For example, Beijing and Shanghai usually attract the largest number of international students, while remote areas (e.g., Guizhou, Yunnan) may only receive fewer than 500 annually (Lu et al., 2023).

There is also a notable absence of a comprehensive and well-defined instructional model for developing ICC that specifically addresses the needs of students in GUs. Existing frameworks often fail to consider educational disparities in China, thereby limiting their applicability in under-resourced contexts. Although Byram's and Deardorff's models provide valuable conceptual foundations for ICC, they offer limited practical guidance for designing instructional strategies tailored to institutions with minimal international exposure. These models tend to focus on defining learning

outcomes but provide insufficient direction on how to implement ICC instruction effectively in resource-constrained settings.

West Yunnan University of Applied Sciences (WYUAS), College of Tea (Pu'er) is a university not in the ranked. It seems the first three international dimensions (the flow of students, the flow of staff, and institution collaboration) are not available since most of the students are not economically sufficient to go abroad, and the university has neither exchange programs nor collaboration among institutions. Thus, how to facilitate the fourth dimension—the flow of ideas—is a question that deserves to be answered.

2.4.4.4 Cultural Foundations of China

Confucianism has profoundly shaped Chinese thought, social behavior, and communicative practice. Its core values—Ren (benevolence), Li (ritual propriety), Yi (righteousness), and Xiao (filial piety)—orient communication toward harmony, respect, and relational balance. These values guide individuals to maintain politeness, avoid confrontation, and prioritize group cohesion over individual expression. In discourse, this leads to courteous address, deference to authority, and indirect speech patterns that protect both self and others' faces. Confucian communication traditions also emphasize indirectness and contextual sensitivity. Meaning is often conveyed through implication, tone, or nonverbal cues rather than explicit articulation. While this high-context style supports social harmony within Chinese communities, it can lead to challenges in intercultural communication, where directness and self-assertion are valued. Misunderstandings often arise when interlocutors from low-context cultures interpret such implicitness as ambiguity or lack of confidence (Levitt, 2022). Social hierarchy and relational orientation further shape communicative behavior. Individuals are expected to observe their proper roles and speak in ways consistent with age, rank, or professional position. The self is viewed as a relationally defined by one's duties and relationships rather than independent agency. Consequently, individuals often avoid open disagreement with authority or public self-promotion, preferring humility and group consensus.

Collectivism and face-consciousness reinforce these orientations. Upholding harmony and maintaining mianzi (face) are essential to sustaining interpersonal and organizational relationships. Feedback and criticism are commonly

delivered indirectly, while disagreements are managed through compromise, mediation, or silence. Trust and cooperation develop through guanxi (personal networks) built on reciprocity and long-term relational commitment rather than short-term, transactional interaction.

When these Confucian-derived communication patterns are extended into intercultural contexts, they can influence how Chinese individuals express their own culture through English. Indirectness, hierarchy, collectivism, and face-saving often constrain explicit discussion or representation of Chinese culture (Merkin, 2017). Learners may hesitate to articulate cultural viewpoints, fearing misinterpretation or potential loss of face. Over time, this communicative restraint can result in limited confidence and linguistic readiness to express Chinese cultural meanings in English.

Therefore, CCA can be understood as a manifestation of Confucian communicative orientations, reflecting values such as harmony, deference, collectivism, and face-consciousness. These cultural dispositions often inhibit Chinese learners from explicitly expressing their cultural perspectives in intercultural contexts, favoring indirectness, consensus-seeking, and relational sensitivity. While such tendencies promote interpersonal harmony and attentiveness, they can lead to reduced confidence, limited assertiveness, and underrepresentation of Chinese cultural meanings, particularly when interacting in low-context, Western-dominated environments. From an ICC perspective, addressing CCA requires pedagogical strategies that respect these cultural norms while providing scaffolded opportunities for learners to articulate their viewpoints, engage in perspective-taking, and practice intercultural negotiation skills. Through reflective activities, role-plays, and structured dialogue, learners can transform culturally rooted communicative restraint into adaptive intercultural competence. In sum, understanding CCA as rooted in Confucian culture highlights both the constraints and latent strengths in Chinese learners' intercultural communication, informing targeted instructional and assessment strategies to foster confident, effective engagement in global contexts.

Beyond its cultural roots, CCA represents a broader pedagogical challenge in developing ICC among Chinese learners. The phenomenon of culture aphasia can be ascribed to several factors, including the lack of incorporation of Chinese culture in English classrooms, the inadequate awareness of local culture teaching among English

teachers, and students' language learning goals (Song & Bai, 2018). Regarding Chinese culture's absence in the English curriculum, English education at Chinese colleges has predominantly focused on the introduction and integration of Western culture, while neglecting the incorporation of Chinese cultural elements (Wu, 2020; Zhang, 2011). Consequently, there has been a noticeable deficiency in the representation and understanding of Chinese culture within the curriculum. For example, in college English class, textbooks often include pieces that introduce celebrities and beautiful sites while these articles tend to focus on non-Chinese celebrities and scenic spots, which poses a challenge for students who intend to communicate Chinese traits or engage in discussions related to them using English. As a result, a considerable number of college students have a high level of familiarity with the customs, culture, festivals, celebrities, and cuisine of the nation associated with the language they are studying (Gu, 2017) while having limited knowledge of Chinese traditional manners.

The occurrence of CCA could also be attributed to the inadequate emphasis placed on Chinese culture by educators (Gong et al., 2022; Li & Han, 2011) . EFL teachers have a clear understanding of the differences between the intercultural and communicative approaches to instruction, but their understanding of ICC seems more ambiguous (Gu, 2016; Li & Han, 2011). Only a small number of educators have made efforts to evaluate their students' ICC because of the complex and abstract characteristics associated with its components (Gu et al., 2012).

In addition to the given ones, CCA is also associated with language learners' pursuit of a particular goal, namely, attaining native-like fluency. The conventional approaches to foreign language education have placed significant emphasis on the practice of language structures, pronunciation, and vocabulary, aiming to cultivate individuals who can speak the language with a high level of proficiency like that of native speakers. These approaches necessitate students remove themselves from their own cultural background and acknowledge the inherent power dynamics favouring native speakers in any given engagement. The incorporation of such a viewpoint into an individual's sense of self could hinder the development of ICC. This obstacle arises not only from the learner's limited ability to incorporate their personal experience into conversations but also from the marginalization of such background within this context. Alternatively, it is possible to direct students towards employing language that fosters

the exploration of new ideas regarding both self and other people. Instead of prioritizing achieving a level of native-like fluency and error-free communication, individuals can adopt an approach centred around open communication to foster and develop ICC. Recent studies in China show evidence of this phenomenon. A survey of Chinese university English programs in the year of 2021 reported that cultural content related to Chinese identity was often marginalized in instruction, and many students struggled to express Chinese cultural concepts in English even at high proficiency levels (Wang, 2021).

When engaging in the pedagogical practice, Chinese English instructors must assist pupils in cultivating a cognizance that the mastery of English language proficiencies needs to encompass more than just the acquisition of the international culture. A thorough comprehension of the local culture is also essential, as it may successfully facilitate students in conveying Chinese culture to overseas learners using the English language. The ICC serves as the fundamental basis for establishing linkages between the culture associated with one's native language and the culture associated with the target language. Otherwise, it is highly likely to hinder effective communication, let alone facilitate successful intercultural dialogue.

2.4.4.5 Inadequate teachers' cognition toward ICC

The exploration of educators' cognition toward ICC and learners' ICC level could answer the questions of why ICC instructions is necessary in China and why Chinese students' ICC level is moderate. The concept of teacher cognition, according to (Borg, 2019) encompasses the knowledge, beliefs, and thoughts held by educators. Brog also mentioned that language teacher cognition refers to the complex, practically oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs that language teachers draw on his work.

Most of the research on ICC cognition on teachers instead of students as what teachers know, believe, and think about ICC may contribute to intercultural communication content taught in the classroom (Huang, 2014; Li & Han, 2011; Mede & Gunes, 2019; Megawati et al., 2020). Teachers' perceptions of ICC are shaped by the coexistence of multiple language and cultures (Zhang et al., 2024). To enhance students' acquisition of ICC, programs in China may benefit from implementing strategies that promote works for both students and teachers Wang and Guo (2017).

Research indicates that Chinese university English teachers' conceptualization of ICC and its relevance to English Language Teaching (ELT) is vague despite their perceived goal and a strong desire to develop students' ICC (Gu, 2016; S. Li & Han, 2011). From a quantitative perspective, Lei (2020) acknowledged that Chinese pre-service English teachers' ICC is only moderate with an average score of 3.20 (the score range is 1-5). The lack of understanding towards ICC could be derived from educators' insufficiency in a robust episodic system and relational system, adding to the lack of proficiency among English teachers in effectively carrying out various duties related to intercultural communication within the context of intercultural education (Zhang, 2017). The current work is not intended to enhance teachers' ICC level but analysed the reason why the Chinese students' ICC level is only moderate and encourage educators to step forward and make more efforts.

2.4.4.6 Chinese students' moderate ICC level

Students' ICC levels are both the result of preliminary ICC development and the challenge to further facilitate ICC. Chinese students encompass both domestic and international college students originating from China. However, given that the focus of this study is on college first-year students in China, the assessment of ICC primarily pertains to college students in China who have neither any ICC instruction experience, nor the application of MOOCS for ICC development.

One study indicated that Chinese students' ICC level is moderate (Li & Deocampo, 2025; Moradi & Ghabanchi, 2019). Additionally, Gao's (2016) research focuses on examining the ICC of Chinese college students by evaluating ICC through six dimensions, namely awareness, attitude, skills, strategies, critical thinking, and knowledge. His findings indicate that the ICC level of Chinese studies varies depending on the type of school, gender, and subject classification. The score obtained in the knowledge module suggests that third-grade students exhibit a higher level of academic achievement compared to those in the first and second grades. However, the scores of the remaining five modules (awareness, attitude, skills, strategies, critical thinking) of the second-grade students surpass those of the first and third grades. Additionally, students pursuing liberal arts education demonstrate superior performance compared to their counterparts in the field of science. Furthermore, in the two modules of knowledge and critical thinking that are significantly different, 985 universities, 211 universities,

and GUs (non-985-211) show a decreasing trend. However, it is worth noting that Gao's work is a survey not an experimental study to facilitate students' ICC.

This study seeks to address this gap by focusing on first-year science students enrolled in a GU, who are expected to demonstrate comparatively lower ICC levels based on Gao's findings. This sampling strategy may increase the instructional challenge, yet it also provides a rigorous test of the intervention's effectiveness. If successful, the study will not only demonstrate the efficacy of the ICC instruction model but also provide evidence for the reliability and validity of the instructional approach in the context of Chinese GUs. To support this pedagogical design and guide the structure of the intervention, it is essential to ground the study in a robust theoretical framework that explains how ICC can be effectively developed among learners with limited intercultural exposure.

2.5 Theoretical Framework for the ICC Model Design

This study is underpinned by social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and experiential learning theory (Kolb et al., 2000), which together explain how learners construct ICC through interaction and reflection. These theories collectively provide the philosophical foundation (Figure2.6) for understanding the how of ICC development, emphasizing that learning is both socially situated and experientially grounded. Building upon these foundations, the subsequent theoretical sections elaborate on the main ICC components and their connection to broader educational competencies, forming an integrated framework for ICC development.

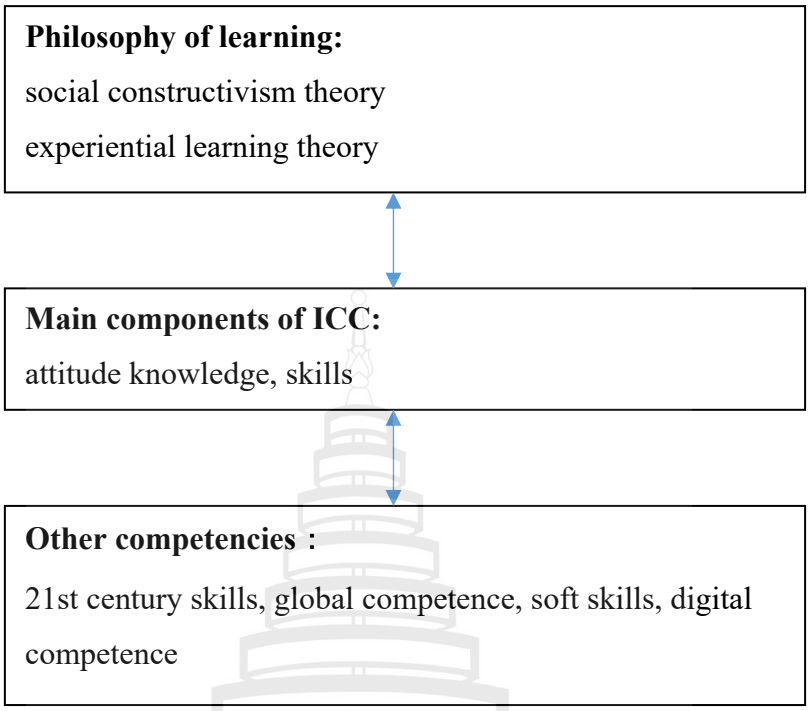


Figure 2.6 The Theoretical Framework of the Study

At the core of this framework are the main components of ICC—attitude, knowledge, and skills (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006)—which define what of this study. Together, these elements form the central construction guiding the design of pedagogical interventions, assessment rubrics, and reflective tasks that aim to foster intercultural growth among university students. Moreover, the development of ICC further contributes to broader educational outcomes that represent the why of this framework, including 21st-century skills, global competence, soft skills, and digital competence. Cultivating ICC not only enhances students' intercultural understanding but also strengthens their ability to think critically, collaborate effectively, and engage responsibly in a digitally connected world. In this sense, the theoretical framework establishes a coherent linkage among learning theories, ICC components, and broader competencies, ensuring that the pursuit of intercultural learning is pedagogically grounded, outcome-oriented, and aligned with the demands of global and internationalization development.

2.6 The Proposed ICC Model for GUs in China

This study's instructional model is grounded in a synthesis of two foundational frameworks of ICC: the compositional model of Byram and the process-oriented model of Deardorff. Byram's (1997) (Figure 2.7) conceptualized the "intercultural speaker" as a mediator who negotiates meaning in the space between culture, rather than as a "bicultural" individual. For Byram, biculturalism involves deep proficiency in two distinct cultures, which can sometimes lead to identity conflicts due to competing cultural allegiance. In contrast, the intercultural speaker maintains a more fluid identity, integrating elements from multiple cultures to mediate communication effectively.

Deardorff's (2006) model (Figure 2.8) outlines a casual pathway for developing ICC. It posits that specific attitudes (e.g., respect, openness, curiosity) foster the acquisition of knowledge and skills, which in turn lead to internal shifts in perspectives (e.g., empathy, adaptation). These internal outcomes ultimately enable externally observable behaviour that is both appropriate and effective in intercultural interactions. The model is dynamic, depicting a recursive process where outcomes reinforce initial attitudes.

After synthesizing these frameworks and the literature review of ICC development as well as the significance of ICC for students, the present study proposes a novel ICC model. Byram's model provides the core target competencies (attitude, knowledge, skills), while Deardorff's offers a developmental process of achieving them. The model includes three layers, so it has been named Triad-Layers ICC model (Figure 2.9) by contending that ICC is not the product of isolated knowledge acquisition but is constructed through active participation, reflection, and contextual engagement. Its three layers represent progressive phases of learning, from foundational awareness to higher-declarative enactment.

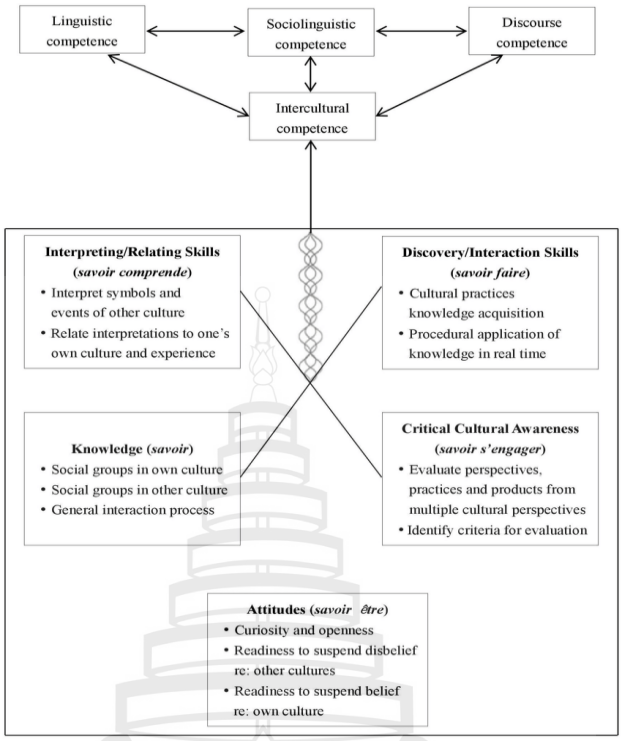


Figure 2.7 Bram's ICC Model (1997)

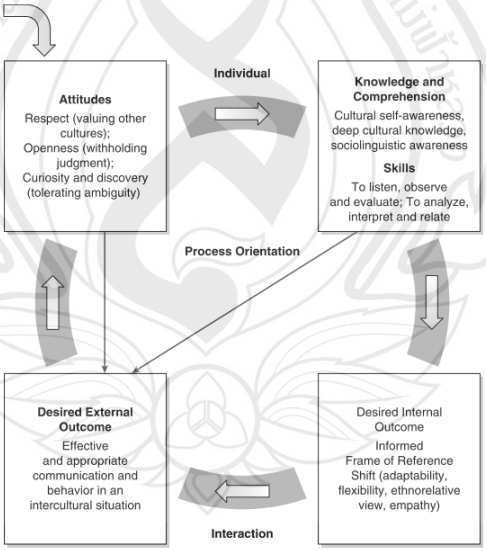


Figure 2.8 Deardorff's ICC Model (2006)

The bottom layer establishes the experiential and contextual groundwork for ICC, comprising awareness of both the source culture and international cultures. From a social constructivist perspective, this layer emphasized that knowledge is situate;

learners interpret intercultural meaning through their pre0exsiting cultural framework and lived experiences. Furthermore, aligned with Kolb et al.'s (2000) stage of concrete experiences, this layer involves learners encountering cultural practices, values, and norms in authentic or simulated contexts. This exposure allows learners identify cultural similarities, contrasts, and underlying assumptions, fostering the critical realization that communication is never culturally neutral but deeply embedded in cultural contexts.

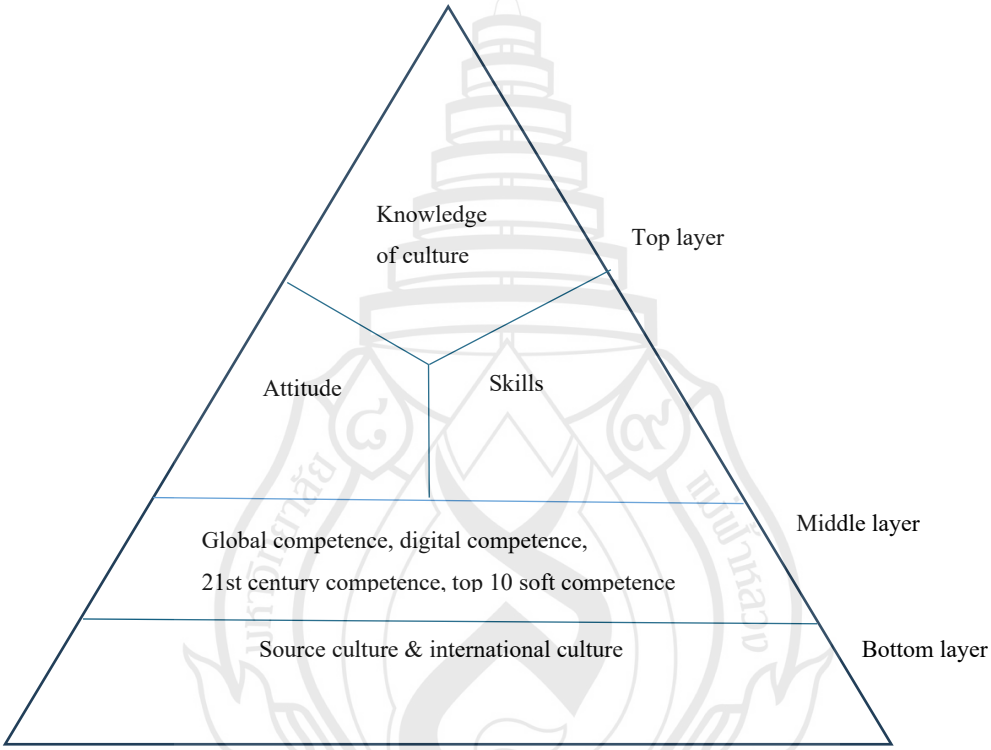


Figure 2.9 Triad-Layers ICC Model (1st version)

The middle layer is the mediation and transformation layer. This layer bridges foundational awareness and behavioural by integrating 21st century competence, global competence, digital literacy, and essential soft skills. Aligned with social constructivism, these competencies are developed through collaborative social practice, such as intercultural teamwork and digitally mediated communication, where learners negotiate meaning and co-construct understanding. From an experiential learning perspective, this layer encompasses the stages of reflective observation and abstract conceptualization. Here, learners analyse their intercultural experiences, draw

conceptual insights, and apply theoretical frameworks to complex social interactions, thereby transforming concrete experiences into personalized knowledge.

The top layer is the intercultural enactment layer. The apex of the model is the synthesis of ICC into demonstrable performance, structured around the triad of attitude, knowledge and skill (Byram, 1997). Attitude encompasses the affective disposition of openness, curiosity, empathy, which are shaped and reinforced through ongoing dialogue with diverse others. Knowledge extends beyond source culture to include international culture. Skills represent the behavioural capacity to interpret, relate, and interact appropriately and effectively across cultures. This layer corresponds to Kolb's active experimentation stage, where learners demonstrate their competence through practical applications, negotiations and adaptation.

2.7 Instructional Design Principles and DDR

DDR is a systematic methodology aimed at designing and studying educational interventions, tools, or instructional models while simultaneously contributing to theoretical understanding (Richey & Klein, 2014). It is particularly well-suited for applying educational contexts where innovation and iterative refinement are required to address complex learning needs.

DDR focuses on solving real-world educational problems through the iterative design, development, implementation, and evaluation of learning interventions. Unlike traditional research that tests hypotheses in isolation, DDR integrates design processes and empirical research to generate both practical products (e.g., instructional models, materials) and theoretical insights (Reeves, 2000). DDR is typically structured in three main phases, namely analysis and exploration in which needs analysis is included, design and construction, and evaluation and reflection. Each phase involves iterative cycles of design, testing, and refinement, guided by both empirical evidence and a theoretical framework.

Phase 1: Needs Analysis

The first phase centres on the identification of an educational problem and the contextual factors shaping it. Researchers conduct a comprehensive needs analysis

using qualitative and/or quantitative methods such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups to better understand the target learners and instructional setting. A critical review of relevant theoretical frameworks, such as constructivism or social constructivism in the case of ICC, informs the investigation of current practice and learner challenges.

Although numerous ICC instructions offer significant theoretical insights, their efficacy in practical educational environments relies on a comprehensive understanding of learners' distinct needs. This underscores the significance of performing a needs analysis (NA) to customize ICC instruction according to students' needs and contextual obstacles. Procedures used to collect information about learners' needs are known as a needs analysis (Richards, 2013). From the 1960s, the demand for specialized language programs grew, and applied linguistics and sociolinguistics increasingly began to employ NA procedures in language teaching. The initial stage in conducting NA is to determine exactly what its purposes are as the purpose of NA varies from context to context, from finding out what language skills a learner needs to perform a particular role, to helping determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students to determine the ICC of English as a Specific Purpose (ESP) students. Although the NA approaches could be classified into two groups, i.e., language-centred approaches and comprehensive task-based approaches, both learners' learning and the international situation should be involved (Ratminingsih et al., 2018).

Regarding methodologies used for NA, including literature review, interviews, and questionnaires (Guo & Modehiran, 2023; Sari et al., 2020; Trang & Phuong, 2023). Recent studies regarding NA about ICC among undergraduate students have been revealed through various research. For example, particularly for tourism majoring students in the Vietnamese context (Trang & Phuong, 2023), the findings indicated that the participants had significant demands for various ICC attitudes and routine duties in tourism workplaces. Specifically, participants had favourable attitudes towards IC and demonstrated greater task-oriented demands for enhancing speech and behavioural competencies compared to other dimensions of ICC. The research starts with semi-structured interviews and then follows with designing questionnaires based on the results of the interviews. However, this sequence presents potential limitations, as interview responses may be influenced by interviewer bias or social desirability bias.

Incorporating self-assessment scales could help mitigate these biases by allowing participants to evaluate their own ICC competence more objectively. Sari et al., (2020) developed the intercultural communication learning materials based on NA in the Indonesian context, with 20 alumni of the German Language Study Program who live in Germany as participants. Four themes have been elicited as learning materials, namely family, neighbouring life, educational system, and job application writing. But these may not fully encompass the broader aspects of intercultural communications; Topics such as conflict resolution, non-verbal communication, and taboos are critical but appear to be missing. Guo and Modehiran (2023) at the Chinese university context, verified that learners need to improve cultural understanding. Besides that, interpretation and relational skills need to be enhanced, especially cultural sensitivity and language proficiency. Furthermore, according to their findings, students are good at discovery, participation, and critical cultural knowledge, but they struggle to suspend personal ideas during international exchanges. Overall, cultural disconnections and limited authentic intercultural experiences have been a hindrance of ICC development. Howbeit, the study primarily examines students' understanding of English-speaking countries' history, etiquette, and lifestyle, but did not explore the awareness of other international cultures. This narrow focus may not fully reflect the broader intercultural communication challenges students face in a globalized world.

While NA helps uncover students' existing ICC deficits, it is also critical to assess how these skills match with future job demands. Understanding ICC demands in professional contexts is critical for curriculum creation, as the global job marketplaces higher importance on intercultural competencies. The future job market increasingly demands graduates with strong ICC skills. According to the recommendation of the World Economic Forum (Simões et al., 2023), intercultural competence is one of the top skills required for the 21st-century workforce. The tourism industry is an outstanding instance of a field that heavily relies on ICC. ICC is essential for providing quality services to international visitors. Vietnamese tourism students emphasize the need for behavioural competence, such as handling guest complaints and meeting diverse cultural needs (Trang & Phuong, 2023). Similarly, hotel employees in China require training in intercultural communication strategies to improve service quality and adapt to cultural diversity (Wang et al., 2024). These findings underscore the

importance of aligning ICC courses with industry requirements to ensure graduates are job ready. Although the participants are not tourism majors, they may travel, work in tourism institutions after graduating, or engage with international clients in various settings. This underscores the need for higher education institutions to integrate ICC training into their curricula, ensuring that students are equipped with the competencies necessary to navigate diverse environments successfully.

Phase 2: Design and Construction

Informed by findings from phase 1, the second phase involves the development of targeted instructional interventions. This includes the conceptualization and prototyping of instructional materials, learning activities, and curricula grounded in both empirical data and theoretical principles. Emphasis is placed on learner-centred approaches and scaffolding to support the progressive development of competencies. Formative feedback from instructors, learners, and other stakeholders is essential to iteratively refine the design.

Phase 3: Evaluation and Reflection

The final phase focuses on assessing the effectiveness of the instructional intervention through both formative and summative evaluation. A mixed-methods approach, employing tools such as pre- and post-tests, classroom observation, and semi-structured interviews, enables a comprehensive analysis of learning outcomes, including cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions of ICC. Participants and researchers also reflect on how the intervention contributes to broader theoretical insights and propose refinements for future iterations.

Key considerations in DDR practice require attention to several core principles. The first is of an interactive nature, with the process is inherently cyclical. Designs are revisited and revised through multiple interactions based on evaluation data (McKenney & Reeves, 2014). Secondly, DDR is a theory-driven design. Instructional decisions must be grounded in educational theory. For example, the use of collaborative learning or reflective journaling in ICC modules may draw directly from social constructivist principles. Thirdly, DDR is context sensitive. It must be tailored to the specific sociocultural and institutional context of implementation. For GUs in China, this includes addressing limited international exposure. Lastly, DDR is for dual

contributions. It aims to generate both practical outputs (e.g., instructional materials, courses) and theoretical contributions that extend existing knowledge in the field.

2.8 ICC Cultivation Approaches

With diversified approaches, ICC promotion and practices in and outside of the classroom have been conducted. After the pre-class preparation, the next is classroom-based instructions. Including cultural studies in foreign language instruction is advantageous due to its impact on language acquisition and communication. Additionally, there are supplementary advantages associated with this approach, such as heightened interest and motivation toward the study of foreign languages, enhanced comprehension of one's cultural background, and a higher appreciation and affinity for individuals belonging to the international culture (Kitao, 1991).

In an analysis of methods for intercultural instruction, Landis and Bhawuk (2020) proposed desired outcomes, instruction methods, and evaluation activities in answering the questions of what participants will be able to do at the end of the ICC instruction as a specific result of having participated in the instruction. If knowledge, both source and in international cultures, is the intended outcome, then reading, music, lectures, instruction, and discussion, could be applied as techniques and activities, supported by written tests, and oral exams as evaluation activities. When aiming to develop skills such as the ability to consider multiple perspectives, adapt to complex situations, and effectively communicate in specific settings, interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, then various instructional approaches can be employed. These may include role-playing, drills, games, coaching, case studies, worksheets, and simulations. In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of these instruction approaches, observation checklists, newsletters, and theatre-based activities can be utilized. Lastly, if the desired objective is attitudes (respect, openness, curiosity), then conversation, role-playing, role modelling, films and videos, case studies, and simulation could be choices of instruction techniques and activities, followed by interpersonal contacts as evaluation activities. Attitudes have been identified as a significant factor in the development of intercultural competence, as evidenced by

several research. However, it is worth noting that attitudes can be particularly resistant to change and pose a considerable challenge for trainers seeking to address them. Attitude shifts frequently occur beyond the borders of the instruction room, allowing participants an opportunity for introspection and assimilation.

Moreover, learning styles for each method, adaptability, accessibility, whether it is suitable for group activities have been considered since each of them was selected to support specific educational goals, notably in the domains of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Methods such as MOOCs, simulations, cross-cultural dialogue, and story circles are particularly well-suited for fostering all three dimensions of ICC. These approaches emphasize active experimentation, a learning style that supports experiential and participatory learning, essential for real-life intercultural engagement.

Conversely, lectures primarily target knowledge acquisition and are aligned with abstract conceptualization, catering to learners who benefit from structured input and theoretical grounding. Art-based instruction, including films and paintings, encourages reflective observation, enabling learners to process cultural phenomena at an emotional and cognitive distance. Case studies foster knowledge and skill development through concrete experience, immersing learners in realistic scenarios that require analysis and problem-solving. Culture contrast activities uniquely address attitudinal outcomes and are inclusive of all learning styles, reinforcing their versatility in addressing affective dimensions of intercultural learning.

All listed instructional methods are rated high in adaptability, indicating their potential to be customized for various classroom contexts, learner needs, and intercultural scenarios. Accessibility, however, varies. While MOOCs, lectures, simulations, cross-cultural dialogues, and story circles are considered highly accessible, methods like case studies, and role-playing show lower accessibility, likely due to the need for specialized materials, facilitation skills, or learner readiness. Art-based methods are rated medium, reflecting occasional resource constraints or cultural familiarity issues.

All instructional methods reviewed are suitable for group-based learning, emphasizing the importance of collaborative engagement in developing intercultural competence. Group interactions not only enhance communication skills but also foster

perspective-taking, empathy, and co-construction of meaning, core tenets of constructivist and social constructivist learning theories.

Overall, the selection of instruction approaches was based on comprehensive consideration of outcomes expectations, learning styles, adaptability, accessibility, and whether it is appropriate for group work (Landis & Bhawuk, 2020) since the classroom is always big because of the large population in China. Among these approaches, MOOCs and story circles are newly added based on Landis and Bhawuk's work. MOOCs are popular in China, online based, and they provide interactive courses with user forums or social media discussions to support community interactions among students, professors, and teaching assistants, as well as immediate feedback to quick, thus, adaptability and accessibility are high and suitable for groups. Concerning story circles, UNESCO has conducted pilot programs worldwide, demonstrating the efficacy of the methodology across many contexts and addressing various concerns. So, its adaptability and accessibility are high, and participants are recommended to sit in a circle, it is group work naturally.

Table 2.2 Quick Reference to Instruction Methods and Consideration for Use

Methods	instruction outcomes	Learning styles	Adaptability	Accessibility	Groups
MOOCs	knowledge, skills, attitudes	active experimentation	high	high	yes
lecture	knowledge	abstract conceptualization	high	high	yes
art (films,paintings)	knowledge, skills, attitudes	Reflective observation	high	medium	yes
case studies	knowledge, skills	concrete experience	high	low	yes
culture contrast	attitudes	all	high	high	yes
simulations	knowledge, skills, attitudes	active experimentation	high	high	yes
role-playing	skills, attitudes	active experimentation	high	low	yes
cross-culture dialogue	knowledge, skills, attitudes	active experimentation	high	high	yes
story circle	knowledge, skills, attitudes	active experimentation	high	high	yes

Source Adapted from Landis and Bhawuk (2020)

2.8.1 MOOCs

Some researchers explore the interconnection between MOOCs and ICC from a global perspective. For example, most language-teaching MOOCs are found under the keyword “culture,” indicating a strong connection between language education and intercultural communication (Rai et al., 2023); In addition, English, Chinese, and Spanish are the major languages widely taught in the context of intercultural competence; Meanwhile, China, the US, and Ireland offer the most MOOCs in this regard; Accordingly, language differences lead to cultural differences. Research experience from MOOCs indicates that there are notable disparities between Eastern and Western cultures in terms of power distance, individuality versus collectivism, and masculinity versus femininity (Zhang et al., 2020).

Using MOOCs to improve ICC, particularly its focus on attitude in the preview step. MOOCs have shown significant potential in improving university students' English proficiency and ICC, with studies and newly developed systems demonstrating effective results in these areas (Li, 2023; Shi, 2022). Shen (2021) verifies that MOOCs can be employed as a teaching resource to help prepare students for developing ICC. Concerning the relationship between MOOCs and attitude, Zhu et al. (2021) have provided strategies and practices for MOOC designers and instructors to address learner cultural diversity, such as the use of crowdsourcing to improve cultural representation and attitudes. Besides, the study by Jalil et al. (2019) investigated the attitude and behavioural intention of academics to develop and use MOOCs, highlighting the need to consider different contexts in which MOOCs are utilized.

MOOCs offer several key advantages that make it a valuable tool for ICC enhancement, especially for intercultural communicative attitudes. First, their openness ensures that users can access the content, which is available online. This online format not only provides flexibility by allowing students to engage with both synchronous and asynchronous resources but also supports autonomous learning, enabling users to manage their own learning process. Additionally, MOOCs are highly scalable, as the cost of adding each additional participant is low-cost (Mellati & Khademi, 2020). Given the above advantages of MOOCs, the current research applies MOOCs as a learning tool whereby students may learn the designated ICC course content in advance through MOOCs.

2.8.2 Lectures

Interactive and dialogue centred. In social constructivism, lectures are not merely information delivery sessions but are enhanced with interactive discussions that allow students to question, debate, and connect the material to their experiences. Incorporating peer discussions and questioning within lectures encourages students to collaboratively build knowledge. For example, discussion prompts during lectures can allow students to exchange ideas and deepen their understanding through interaction.

Lectures play a crucial role in introducing new subjects and imparting essential knowledge about ICC. They effectively elucidate key ICC concepts and offer participants exposure to experts or peers with similar experiences, which can enhance their understanding (Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020). Additionally, lectures serve as valuable tools for connecting theoretical concepts with practical applications, while also ensuring that content is logically organized and presented. To address potential limitations of lectures, visual aids such as maps, slides, PowerPoint presentations, and diagrams can be incorporated during the sessions. Providing written materials afterward further reinforces the content and mitigates these constraints.

The effectiveness of lectures in fostering ICC is well-supported by research, including studies on co-teaching between native and non-native English speakers (Su, 2022), delivering lectures from a productive bilingual perspective (Zheng & Gao, 2019), and their application in English education (Liao & Li, 2023). Given these advantages, lectures will serve as the primary instructional method in this research. They offer comprehensive coverage, allowing instructors to provide an in-depth overview of ICC's theoretical foundations and significance, which is vital for developing a strong conceptual understanding (Deardorff, 2006). Moreover, lectures create a structured learning environment where content is logically sequenced, guiding students through key aspects of ICC development in a coherent and organized manner (Spitzberg & Gabrielle, 2009). Finally, the scalability of lectures makes them an efficient way for higher education institutions to deliver ICC instruction to a wide audience (Lilya A. Arasaratham-Smith et al., 2017).

2.8.3 Art (films and paintings)

Constructivism asserts that learning is an active process in which individuals develop new understanding through their experiences, prior knowledge, and reflection.

Art serves as a medium for cultural representation, offering substantial, contextually significant material for developing intercultural competence.

Art for ICC refers to painting, and movies in the current study. The study of art involves developing the ability to observe and analyse artistic expressions to acquire a deeper understanding of their cultural significance across many societies globally. The focus of this discipline lies not in the realm of art history, but rather on utilizing the fine arts to enhance one's abilities in intercultural awareness (Nuamthanom-Kimura & Kanprachar, 2015). This pertains to engaging in artistic communication, developing an awareness of subtleties, and perceiving beyond superficiality. Art has the potential to be utilized throughout many age groups to enhance comprehension of one's own culture as well as diverse cultures.

Film is a kind of art (Arnheim, 2007). It is commonly employed during instruction to serve many purposes such as motivation, information dissemination, demonstration, and analysis of scenarios. According to Fowler and Yamaguchi (2020), films offer a unique form of content that is challenging to replicate inside a classroom environment, specifically in terms of portraying cultural disputes in authentic settings, specifically, films are used in developing ICC which are not easy to obtain in a non-English speaking environment. Movies offer “real-life” settings and cultural contexts that are authentic and useful for ICC enhancement. Movie-based mobile is proven to develop Thai university students' ICC level (Huttayavilaiphan, 2021). The film The Proposal is a great intercultural language teaching in EFL classrooms in China (Liu, 2020). Zhou and Li (2021) used contemporary English language films to enhance the acquisition of intercultural nonverbal competence for EFL learners, and Damnet (2008) acknowledged that watching English films and TV series can have a positive impact on non-English college students' intercultural competence. By exploring films, students will be able to move along an intercultural awareness continuum from a basic level to a more challenging stage. Given the function of movies, ICC-related movies will be selected as teaching content in this research.

Paintings, on the other hand, serve as an indicator of differences in various cultures. By comparing paintings from several cultures, students can engage in reflection on how they have developed conceptual frameworks about the cultural

dimension. This dimension encompasses the interconnected perspectives that aid students in comprehending the beliefs, values, and actions of a particular society.

2.8.4 Case Studies

Case studies offer students the chance to explore real-world intercultural scenarios in groups, allowing them to bring their diverse perspectives into the discussion. In a social constructivist approach, students work together to analyse the case, discuss possible solutions, and reflect on different cultural interpretations. This collaborative problem-solving process leads to the co-construction of knowledge, as students learn from each other's insights and challenge each other's assumptions.

A case study is a comprehensive analysis of a particular scenario, providing sufficient information to evaluate the challenges encountered and provide potential resolutions (Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020). Case studies present learners with the opportunity to critically assess many elements such as character, context, behaviours, and potential results. Case studies have been employed for over a century in the education and development of legal professionals and corporate leaders. For several decades, anthropologists have employed case studies as pedagogical tools to impart knowledge about diverse cultures. Case studies have been employed by interculturalists since the inception of the Peace Corps, an autonomous agency and initiative established by the United States government, which is responsible for the instruction and deployment of volunteers to deliver worldwide development aid. Case studies allow students to analyse real-world intercultural interactions and develop their ability to interpret cultural differences and communicate effectively across cultures (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini,2009). Case studies that present complex, ambiguous intercultural scenarios encourage students to practice perspective-taking, empathy, and negotiation of meaning—key components of ICC (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). Discussing intercultural case studies in the classroom provides opportunities for students to reflect on their own cultural biases and assumptions, and to learn from their peers' diverse perspectives (Deardorff, 2009; Fantini,2007).

2.8.5 Culture Contrast

Culture contrast exercises invite students to compare cultural norms and values, often in pairs or small groups. Social constructivism supports the idea that these discussions help students construct deeper intercultural awareness as they learn from

one another’s cultural perspectives. By facilitating guided discussions where students challenge stereotypes and reflect on cultural differences, these exercises promote critical thinking and collective learning.

The culture contrast method is a research-driven approach that employs a skilled actor to assume the role of a foreign counterpart in a simulated scenario. This method aims to introduce, educate, and reinforce the concept of cultural disparities, while also fostering cultural self-awareness. Furthermore, trainees are provided with instruction in analytical and interpretative abilities that might enhance their comprehension of intercultural interactions. Typically, a trainee assumes the role of certain people and engages in an interaction with an actor in another culture. The purpose of this interaction is to facilitate a cultural difference and facilitate a controlled discourse that prompts the exploration of beliefs, values, and cognitive frameworks. Contrast entails the clarification of distinctions and connections. The incorporation of contextual information relating to other systems or cultures serves to enrich comprehension and facilitate the interpretation of various communication arrangements that are diverse (Esser & Vliegenthart, 2017). The comparison may foster inquisitiveness regarding both the international culture and their own, facilitating cross-cultural comparisons. Culture contrast activities help students develop a "responsible citizen" mindset, which is crucial for the ICC (Byram, 2020).

2.8.6 Simulation

Simulations provide immersive experiences where students actively engage in intercultural scenarios, requiring them to apply communication strategies and cultural knowledge in real-time. Social constructivism emphasizes that students learn through these experiences by interacting with others and reflecting on their roles. Debriefing sessions following the simulations, where students collectively reflect on what worked and what didn’t, further enhance the learning process by allowing students to jointly construct insights from the activity.

A simulation game can be defined as an instructional exercise that integrates features reminiscent of games, such as objectives, rewards, and outcomes determined by players' choices, with the emulation, to a certain extent, of a real-world system, process, or operational framework. Simulation games have been employed as icebreaking in intercultural communicative activities, facilitating opportunities for

trainees to interact and familiarize themselves with one another. When employed as an introductory device, they can also engender a sense of intercultural curiosity and the desire to acquire further knowledge (Fowler & Yamaguchi, 2020). Simulations provide students with opportunities to practice intercultural communication skills in realistic, immersive scenarios, allowing them to develop adaptability and flexibility in cross-cultural interactions (Deardorff, 2009; Fantini, 2007). Moreover, simulations that incorporate diverse cultural elements, such as language, nonverbal communication, and decision-making processes, can enhance students' understanding of cultural diversity and their ability to communicate effectively across cultures (Hofstede, 2001; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

2.8.7 Role-playing

Role-playing aligns well with social constructivism by allowing students to step into the shoes of others and engage in intercultural dialogues from different perspectives. In this context, students negotiate meanings, respond to cultural misunderstandings, and explore diverse viewpoints together. The collective reflection and feedback following role-playing exercises encourage students to discuss their experiences and co-create an understanding of effective intercultural communication strategies.

Role-playing involves spontaneous and unscripted actions within a genuine real-life context. The participants assume the identities of either themselves or others within a novel context. Engaging in role-playing activities offers individuals the chance to experiment with various problem-solving strategies in interaction and observe the corresponding responses. One potential application of this approach is in assisting respondents who encounter challenging circumstances involving their peers from another cultural background. The technique can be employed as a preparatory exercise for an upcoming event that the participants will experience. Role-playing serves to prepare second language (L2) learners for effective communication in a distinct social and cultural environment. Sysoyev (2001) conducted a study that offers empirical support for the notion that sociocultural techniques can be considered effective in developing learners' sociocultural competence as part of their second language communicative competence. This, in turn, helps to prepare learners for intercultural communication. The incorporation of L2 culture in the role-playing will significantly

influence the outcome. Role-playing is a highly successful method for facilitating the experience of cultural principles and promoting cultural awareness. Research conducted by Li (2024) has validated that role-playing activities improve the development of students' comprehension of cultural differences and their ability to traverse them proficiently. Furthermore, Denok (2014) confirmed that role-playing enhances communication skills by enabling students to apply their language abilities in authentic multicultural situations, therefore enhancing their overall communicative competence.

2.8.8 Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Cross-cultural dialogues are central to social constructivism, where meaning is co-constructed through dialogue. In ICC instruction, these dialogues enable students from diverse cultural backgrounds to share experiences, challenge assumptions, and collaboratively develop solutions to intercultural issues. Facilitating structured conversations that encourage active listening, and empathy can result in richer, shared learning experiences and deeper intercultural competence.

Cross-cultural dialogues refer to conversational interactions involving individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. These dialogues serve the purpose of enhancing cultural attitudes and knowledge and highlighting nuanced distinctions between other cultures. Within each discussion, the interlocutors manifest distinct beliefs, attitudes, or worldviews. Cross-cultural dialogue creates opportunities for students to engage in meaningful interactions and exchange perspectives with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds (Kratzke, 2013; Lehtomäki et al., 2016). This helps students develop a deeper understanding of different cultures and improves their ability to communicate effectively in intercultural settings. The current study will encourage students to create cross-cultural dialogues with interlocutors from different cultures after class, either online or offline, to help students enhance ICC.

2.8.9 Story Circles

Story circles are an effective social constructivist tool, where participants share personal narratives in a safe space. In ICC instruction, students exchange stories of their intercultural experiences, learning from each other’s perspectives. The process of sharing and reflecting together creates a collective learning environment where

knowledge is co-constructed through mutual storytelling and feedback, allowing students to build empathy and cultural understanding.

Deardorff's story cycle offers a methodical yet adaptable approach to cultivating intercultural competency across many settings, encompassing both formal and informal contexts. Hence, the utilization of the story circle can be regarded as a significant tool for individuals who are interested in proficiently overseeing the escalating cultural heterogeneity within communities, to foster comprehensive and enduring progress of developing ICC. It will be the main instruction method in the current research. The story circle method has been shown to be effective in developing intercultural competencies (Claponea, 2021; Eulalia et al., 2016; Imamyartha et al., 2020; Kahanurak et al., 2023).

In practical terms, story circles adhere to a well-defined protocol. There is a total of three rounds, and it has been determined that a group consisting of 4-6 individuals is the most effective. The more the diversity of the participants, the higher the quality of the work. The category could be given based on diverse factors such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, and so on. The technique in the small groups within each circle typically requires approximately 45 minutes to complete. The first round serves as an introductory round, during which a specific prompt is utilized. As an illustration, participants will be asked to introduce themselves by stating their name and three words or phrases that characterize their history and explain why these words and phrases hold significance for them. Everyone in the group will be given a maximum of two minutes to share their thoughts on this topic. During the sharing, it is expected that there will be no inquiries, remarks, or disruptions. Once one individual concludes their speech, the subsequent individual commences, while all others are actively involved in the process of listening to comprehend.

The second round consists of multicultural prompts. The participants will be given a maximum of three minutes to provide a response to one of these prompts related to intercultural topics. The frequently employed prompt is as follows: "In a duration of three minutes or less, kindly recount a distinct and impactful encounter you had with an individual who possesses dissimilar characteristics or backgrounds from your own. Reflect upon the lessons you gleaned from this experience, both in terms of self-discovery and understanding of others. It is important to note that each participant is

allotted three minutes or less to share their story, without any interruptions." During the third round, the participants return to the first round and address those who presented their second tale. Each person in the circle will then express to that individual: "The aspect of your story that stood out the most to me was..." Every individual move in a circular manner. Following the conclusion of the 3 rounds, there is a chance for the group to further participate in conversation. Participants can engage in discussions on the stories shared. They can inquire more by asking questions such as "I thoroughly enjoyed the story you shared. Could you provide additional details?" or "The particular part of your story resonated with me because I had a similar encounter." Subsequently, the participants reconvene as a cohesive unit, and the facilitator leads a discussion on the collective experiences and the overarching insights gained. It is inappropriate to discuss the individual tales shared, as confidentiality dictates that these stories remain within the group. However, the knowledge gained can be distributed among others

2.8.10 Reflective Writing

Reflective writing is central to constructivist learning, as it encourages students to actively process and make sense of their experiences. In the context of an ICC course, reflective writing tasks can guide students to critically analyse their intercultural interactions, identify areas for growth, and connect theoretical concepts to their real-life experiences. This reflective process supports the construction of personal meaning and the development of more nuanced intercultural competence. Reflective writing can enhance students' ICC and foster positive acceptance and involvement in intercultural communication courses (Barr & Chinwonno, 2016). Their study provide evidence for why reflective writing should be a vital element in a proper ICC teaching model for GU students. Their work strengthens the model by validating reflection to foster personal meaning-making, deeper engagement, and measurable growth in ICC—but the model itself must be built more broadly, with reflective writing integrated as a key component.

This chapter has established the theoretical foundation for the study by synthesizing educational models, defining ICC, and identifying a critical gap in the literature: a lack of specific ICC instructional models for GUs, which often feature limited integration of experiential learning, underutilization of digital tools, and a shortage of localized assessment instruments. In direct response to these identified shortcomings, this research proposes a novel Triad-Layers ICC Model designed to

address these specific challenges. In response to the identified gaps, it has proposed a novel Triad-Layers ICC Model. The subsequent chapter, research methodology, will outline the research methodology used to develop and evaluate the Triad-Layers ICC model. Guided by the DDR framework, it follows a systematic, it is an iterative process to design and test an instructional model for cultivating ICC.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter delineates the research methodology employed to design, develop, and validate an instructional model for cultivating ICC among undergraduate students in a GU. Grounded in the systematic and iterative framework of DDR, the study is structured in three distinct phases to address its dual research objectives. Phase I entailed a comprehensive NA instrument to diagnose students' ICC levels and needs so that to inform the model's design. Building on these critical findings, Phase II involved the theoretical construction and development of the Triad-Layers model (since no specific instruments, the model design result will be in Chapter 4). Finally, phase III implemented and evaluated the model's effectiveness through mixed-methods approach, utilizing pre/post-test assessments, self-rating scales, classroom observations, reflective writing, and semi-structured interviews. The chapter elaborates on the participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and analytical methods for each phase, providing a rigorous and transparent account of the research progress.

DDR provided the methodological foundation for this study. As defined by Richey et al. (2003), DDR is "a systematic study of design, development, and evaluation processes aimed at establishing an empirical basis for the creation of instructional products, tools, and new or enhanced models that guide their development." By applying DDR, this study was able to innovate a novel instructional model specifically tailored to enhance students' ICC, ensuring that both the design and implementation were empirically grounded and theoretically informed.

There is a rationale for employing DDR for ICC as it is a systematic and iterative approach to intervention design. Enhancing ICC involves cognitive, affective, and behavioural changes, which require carefully designed interventions. DDR's systematic process of NA, intervention design, development, implementation, and evaluation ensure that the intervention is grounded in research and addresses the specific needs of students in a culturally relevant manner. Additionally, ICC is a multi-dimensional competence, and there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. DDR's iterative nature allows

researchers to pilot interventions, gather data, and continuously refine the program based on students' feedback and assessment outcomes.

The figure 3.1 was depicted to demonstrate how the research design has been made. Overall, Phase I and II in the figure are established to tackle research question one, while Phase III is specifically defined to address research question two. Specifically, in the preliminary study in Phase I, by using the ICC self-rating scale and semi-structured interview, NA data will be gathered. The findings indicate whether they have a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward ICC, whether they possess the necessary source and international cultural knowledge for cross-cultural interaction, and whether they possess the necessary skills for successful cross-cultural communication.

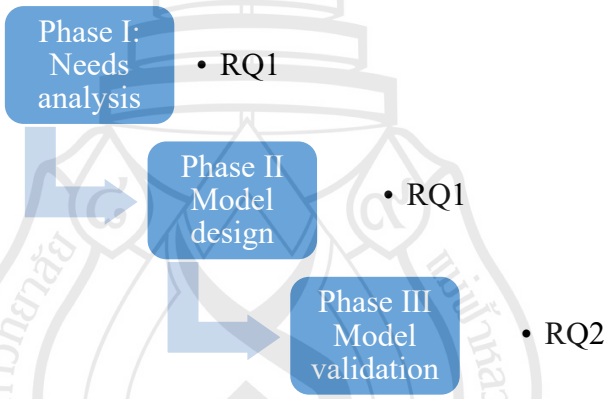


Figure 3.1 Design and Development Research (DDR) Procedure

In Phase II, through a review and analysis of prior models by other researchers, it is necessary to form a theoretical framework and ICC models. The theory of social constructivism inspired the design and development of the instructional model as participants construct ICC based on experience and interactions, which is in line with the approach of using MOOCs and interactive methods like role-playing, simulation, etc. Applied social constructivism, reviewed and analysed ICC instruction models. Subsequently, the essential components of the instruction model were established, and then the model was developed. Following the model design phase is the instruction model validation step. In Phase III, in the model validation stage, a test by class instruction has been conducted, and then the qualitative and quantitative data were utilized to prove the effectiveness of the innovative model.

3.1 Phase I: Needs Analysis (NA)

3.1.1 Participants of NA

The participants were EFL, non-English major undergraduate students from a GU in Yunnan province of China, where there are 25 kinds of ethical minorities. Participants were with an English proficiency of A2 to B2 in the CEFR standard after at least six years of English learning, following a minimum of six years of formal English instruction (Table 3.1), and the calibration of entrance scores onto the CEFR was based on China's Standards of English Language Ability in 2018. By the convenience sampling method, the study was conducted from February to March 2025, a total of 87 (out of 196 population in this university) students (females: 41.38%, males: 28.74%, prefer not to say gender: 29.89%) participated in the study, 87 students responded to the statements in self-rating scale questionnaires (quantitative), and 12 of them accepted semi-structured interviews (qualitative). Table 3.2 demonstrates the overview of the NA instruments.

Table 3.1 The English Proficiency of Participants in NA

Entrance exam for college	Levels of CEFR	No.	Percent (%)
80-99	A2	15	17%
100-119	B1	68	78%
120-134	B2	4	4%
	Total	**87**	**100.00**

Table 3.2 Overview of Needs Analysis Instruments and Number of Participants

Instruments	Quan.	Qual.	No.
Pre-ICC self-rating scale	✓		87
NA semi-structured interview		✓	12

3.1.2 Research Instruments for NA

The NA self-rating scale has two sections (Table 3.3). Part A was originally constructed by the researcher, gathered demographic information, gender, age, major, English test score, overseas experience, and ICC experience, while Part B consisted of

the various aspects of ICC, including attitude toward other cultures, knowledge, and skill. Each statement in the survey has a 5-point Likert scale, which spans from strongly disagree to strongly agree (score 1 to 5).

Table 3.3 Summary of the Self-rating Scale

Section	Questions No.	Types of questions	content
Part A: General information	1-5	Close-ended	Gender, major, overseas experience, IC communication experience, English proficiency
Part B: Attitudes	1-5	Close-ended	Open, curiosity, respect
Source culture knowledge	6-15	Close-ended	Lifestyle, history, literature, taboos, non-verbal, customs, etc.
International culture knowledge	16-25	Close-ended	Lifestyle, history, literature, taboos, non-verbal, customs, etc.
skills	26-30	Close-ended	Listening, observing, evaluating, analysing, relating, interpreting, flexibility, conflicts coping.

The research has adapted Part B from Zhong et. al's ICCSRS (2013, as adapted in Lei, 2020, p.46-47). His rating scale comprises eight aspects: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, knowledge, attitudes, awareness, and skills. Since the current study focuses on attitude, knowledge (especially knowledge of Chinese culture and the international culture), and skills, some of the items are incompatible, and some items have been deleted. For example, linguistic competence, which includes listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation in his scale, is deleted as these five basic aspects are included in the English

level introduced previously in the introduction part. In the current research, students' English proficiency is A2 to B2, and linguistic competence is not a key factor affecting ICC instructions. Given that Zhong et. al's knowledge part only focuses on knowledge of the international culture, to make up for the aspect of knowledge of Chinese culture, the researcher added ten more items based on Byram (1997) and Deardorff's (2009) ICC emphasis on both the source and the international culture understanding, for instance, the original is "when communicating with people from different cultures, I don't know the lifestyle of the other culture", then a new one has been added like " when interacting with people from different cultures, I don't know the lifestyle of the Chinese culture"; furthermore, to ensure the consistency, the negative sentence has been changed to affirmative sentence, e.g. the revised version is "when communicating with people from different cultures, I know the lifestyle of the other culture (for international cultural knowledge) ", and "I know the lifestyle of the Chinses culture (for the source cultural knowledge)".

Semi-structured interview questions are set based on the findings of the self-rating scale and explore a more approach with open questions in the end, "What kind of training do you think you need to improve your ICC? The questions comprised of participants attitude toward the source and the international cultures, their IC engagement, openness to changing views as well as flexibility in the interaction, the perception of adapting and conflict coping, their preferred recommendation of learning ICC which is accessible and flexible in time and learning pace, and their reflective action for ICC. Considering language for the interview, participants preferred to be interviewed in Chinese (mother tongue) rather than English for clear expression.

3.1.3 Validity and Reliability of NA Instruments

Regarding content validity of self-rating scale, despite the IOC value (0.92) being acceptable, experts gave two main recommendations for better content refinement to broaden the scope and increase the clarity. An example of revision was presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Example of Revised Statement to Broaden Scope and Increase Clarity

Original statement	Revised statement
Item 8 I know the literature and important writers of the Chinese source culture.	I understand key aspects of the Chinese source culture, including its important writers, literature, folklore, modern media, and cultural traditions.
Item 22 I understand the current important events and hot events in Chinese source culture.	I have a broad understanding of key cultural trends, historical influences, and current events in the Chinese source culture.

After being revised, the self-rating scale was piloted with a group of 24 students who had similar characteristics to the main study's participants. Based on the informal discussion with the three volunteers from the pilot study, no problems nor unclear statements were found. The reliability of the questionnaire was obtained using Cronbach's Alpha (α) is 0.85, falling within the "good" range, suggesting that the research instrument has a high level of internal consistency. The data supported the 5-factor structure, namely attitude (openness to ICC), source cultural knowledge, international cultural knowledge, skills, and non-verbal communication. Statistically, the total variance explained is strong (69.1%), which supports the acceptable construct validity of the scale.

Considering NA semi-structured interview, there were two main revisions based on experts' suggestions: (1) related questions were grouped and restructured to improve logical sequencing and depth, and (2) expansion of prompts to elicit deeper reflection. For example, the two questions concerning openness to changing perspectives (original Q7 and Q8) were adjusted to include a reflective prompt: "Can you describe a time when you changed your perspective after interacting with someone from a different culture?" This narrative structure encouraged participants to share lived experiences and not just opinions. Similarly, the three questions targeting conflict management were streamlined and sequenced logically, starting from emotional responses (e.g., "What emotions do you experience when someone misunderstands you due to cultural

differences?") to behavioural coping strategies (e.g., "Can you adapt your behaviour to avoid or resolve conflict in intercultural situations?"). Regarding expansion of prompts, for instance, the original question was retained but revised as to prompt elaboration (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 Example of Revised Statement to Prompt Elaboration

Original statement	Revised statement
How do you think Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) could help you overcome challenges in developing intercultural competence?	In what ways do you think MOOCs can help you overcome challenges in developing intercultural competence?

After revision, the interview was administered in the pilot study before the main study. Besides, 15 of the 24 participants in the pilot phase were asked to clarify their confusion about the interview questions, and they addressed no confusion arising while responding to the questions. The overall content aligns with the objectives of the interview. The IOC values were higher than or equal to 0.67, and the average score of IOC value was 0.95 which could denote good content validity. For the inter-coder reliability, Cohen's Kappa (κ) was assessed to measure the agreement of the coders through which a second rater examined a random sample of 20% of the participants' responses. There are 22 coding segments and 15 of them were given the same code by the two raters, therefore, the percentage of agreement was 0.68 (15/22), which means the strengths of agreement is substantial according to Landis and Koch (1977) in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6 Cohen's Kappa (κ) Interpretation Thresholds

Kappa Value (κ)	Strength of Agreement
< 0.00	Poor
0.00 – 0.20	Slight
0.21 – 0.40	Fair
0.41 – 0.60	Moderate
0.61 – 0.80	Substantial
0.81 – 1.00	Almost Perfect (or Excellent)

Considering the ethical consideration, before starting the survey, all the instruments used in this study, including the subject information document and the informed consent document, were approved by the University's Ethics Committee on Human Research. The survey has been made through Google Forms and distributed by WeChat. The semi-structured interview was conducted in a blended way, online and face-to-face, each lasting around 30 minutes. The time was not long because all of them prefer to be asked and answered in Chinese.

3.1.4 Data Analysis for NA

Analysing the self-rating scale

Measures of central tendency were employed to analyse the data from the self-rating scale. Mean scores (M) and standard deviation (SD) were employed as descriptive statistics calculated by SPSS (version 25). The mean score and the ICC needs were interpreted in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 ICC Score Range and Interpretation of ICC Level and ICC Needs

Score range	Interpretation of the ICC level	ICC needs Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Very high	No need
3.41-4.20	High	Partial need
2.61-3.40	Moderate	Moderate Need
1.81-2.60	Low	High need
1.00-1.80	Very low	Very high need

Analysing the semi-structured interview

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was conducted to analyse the data from model validation semi-structured interviews. Both inductive coding and deductive coding were employed. They were managed while doing the process. According to Miles et al. (2014), in deductive coding, the list of codes is created from "*the conceptual framework of research questions, hypotheses, problem areas, and/or key variable*" of the study. For the inductive coding method, other codes emerge during the data collection, and these emerging codes, or data-driven codes, are based on the participants' experiences, which might not be built into the framework. Two raters (one is the teacher researcher, and the other is a lecturer with at least two

years of ICC teaching) coded separately based on the coding scheme and then discussed again and decided whether or to keep or leave them. The insights obtained from this coding process served as a critical reference point for refining the structure and content of the proposed ICC instructional model. In particular, the themes identified through RTA provided empirical support for the conceptual alignment between learners' needs and the theoretical foundation of the model.

3.2 Phase II: The Design and Development of an ICC Model: A DDR Approach

The research design of this study is grounded in the systematic methodology of DDR, as demonstrated in Chapter 2, which is operationalized through the first and second phase, namely NA, and model design and development. The model design phase involves the construction of a preliminary model derived from established theoretical frameworks (Phase II). Subsequently, the model development phase entails refining this draft by integrating empirical findings from a NA (Phase I), proposing an updated model, and validating its effectiveness through targeted research instruments (Phase III) after implementation via course content, syllabi, and teaching activities. The NA central to this process is defined as an investigation into the self-rated ICC proficiency levels and the conceptual perceptions of ICC held by students at GU. This data serves as a critical empirical foundation for informing the model's refinement.

The model development initiation involved defining specific learning outcomes, which are clear, measurable statements of what students must know, understand, and do in intercultural contexts. Students are expected to achieve competencies in ICC by synthesizing Confucian features with attributes of internationalization, thereby demonstrating awareness, motivation or even initiative in communication. Specifically, learning objectives target growth across three domains: the affective (e.g., increased openness and respect), the cognitive (e.g., knowledge of both source and international cultures), and the behavioral (related skills to betterment for IC).

To ensure robust validation, a mixed-methods research instruments was adopted. This approach mitigates the inherent biases of relying solely on either qualitative (interview) or quantitative data (pre- and post-test, rating scale), strengthening the findings through methodological triangulation. The model's core components are informed by the multicultural framework of Cortazzi and Jin (1999). Consequently, the proposed instructional model advocates for the integrated learning of source and international cultures, with the NA data providing empirical evidence to tailor this integration effectively. Except for these two baseline cultural competencies, other competencies are also called for to for helping students to become global citizen in internationalized world, for example, digital literacy, 21st century skills and so on.

Finally, to translate theory into practice, the refined ICC model would be operationalized for classroom instruction. This would be achieved through the development and implementation of a semester-long teaching plan, a detailed course syllabus, and a weekly schedule of activities, all designed to systematically underpin the delivery of the ICC curriculum. Chen Lan's (2019) intercultural communication book and the ICC test from Centre for Intercultural Competence Assessment (CICA) could shed light on the current research for course content design, teaching plan, weekly schedule of teaching activities as well as course syllabus making.

The model design process ensures that each component directly addresses the research gaps identified in the introduction, while also creating a coherent and interconnected logical structure. The design follows a funnel approach, beginning with the broad incorporation of foundational cultural components, such as source and international culture. Subsequent layers integrate supplementary competencies—such as digital literacy and 21st-century skills—as an expansion of the core. The model then narrows to specify the constitutive elements of ICC itself, culminating in precise teaching guidelines that pair each component with corresponding pedagogical activities designed for its enhancement. Overall, the model design provides a comprehensive blueprint that defines both the what (the essential intercultural and related competencies) and the how (the practical methods for cultivating them in the classroom).

3.3 Phase III: Model Validation

As mentioned in phase I and II, to achieve its research objectives, the study adopted a DDR method. Richey (2006) asserts that validating an instructional design model involves an empirical process that not only demonstrates the model's effectiveness in practice but also provides evidence supporting the value of its components. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered to assess the intervention model. Paire-t-tests approach were employed to evaluate alterations in participants' ICC levels based on quantitative data. Semi-structured interviews were done to investigate students' perspectives of the IC intervention concerning qualitative data. Besides, class observation was conducted to capturing real-time application of ICC. Moreover, reflective writing functions as an instrument for formative assessment illustrating progress in ICC while also obtaining individual feedback.

3.3.1 Participants of the TLICCM Instruction

In the NA phase, 87 participants took part in the study, of whom 40 later participated in the TLICCM intervention with purposive sampling method, all of them (40) took part in pre-and post-self-rating scale, pre-and post ICC test, class observation, reflective writing, and 32 of them joined in the model validation semi-structured interview. This class align with typical sample ranges in DDR, where the primary objective is not statistical generalization but the iterative design, refinement, and evaluation of an instructional intervention within a specific educational context (Richey & Klein, 2014). Again, the calibration of entrance scores onto the CEFR was based on China's Standards of English Language Ability (2018). Thirty-six participants (90% of the participants) gained scores of more than 100 out of 150 (B1), and four participants' (10% of the participants) scores were more than 120 out of 150 (B2). Table 3.8 shows the English proficiency levels of the participants.

Table 3.8 English Language Proficiency Levels of Participants

Final entrance score for college	Levels of CEFR	NO.	Percent (%)
100-119	B1	36	90%
120-134	B2	4	10%
	Total	**40**	**100.00**

In Phase III, the two primary instruments are the instructional instrument and the research instrument, both of which were assessed for content validity, reliability, and practicability prior to their application in the study.

3.3.2 Instructional Instruments

The ICC course syllabus (Appendix I) is a 2-credit selective course offered to undergraduate students across all majors but English majors, taught mainly in English and partially in Chinese. It consists of 24 total teaching/learning hours—eight theory hours and 16 practical hours—delivered over a 16-week in 1.5-hour weekly sessions.

The ICC course is a core element in developing high-level global talent for China's economic, and cultural development in the context of globalization. It aims to build students' cultural positive attitude, dismantle biases, promote effective intercultural dialogues with both the source culture and international culture. It is an interdisciplinary course combines linguistics, anthropology, and sociology. It employs experiential learning method such as role-playing, cultural contrasts, case studies etc. Besides, it complements college English course, forming a dual-track system of language proficiency and cultural competence.

The course objectives comprised of knowledge and skills objective, process and methodology objective as well as values and attitudes objectives. Firstly, after the learning, students should master core intercultural terminologies, theories, identify cultural barriers, apply adaptive communication strategies, compare verbal and non-verbal norms etc., regarding process and methodology objective, after participating in the course, students should engage in collaborative learning, and develop metacognitive strategies for self-reflection. When it comes to values and attitude's objective, students should respect cultural diversity, strengthen the source culture and international culture, alleviate CCA, facilitate active IC engagement, improve flexibility and better in adapting and coping with conflicts in the IC.

The course was organized around a four-phase pedagogical framework, *Know*, *Analyse*, *Do*, and *Reflect*, to align cognitive complexity with instructional content and ensure a coherent progression from theoretical understanding to practical application and reflective engagement.

The course adopted Chen Lan's *Introduction to Cross-cultural Communication* on MOOCs, but using only the first four chapters—with additional chapters on cultural

adjustment and arts for enhancing ICC from Centre for Intercultural Competence Assessment (CICA). The teaching strategies are lecture supported by MOOC content and multimedia; case studies, role-playing, and story-circles for practical applications; guest speakers and art-based analysis for cultural value exploration. The assessment is attendance (10%), group participation in activities (45%), pre-and post-test, reflective writing (15%). Grades are pass/fail when it greater than or equal to 60 scores.

Weekly course implementation schedule and semester teaching plan

The thematic structure of the classroom instruction aligns closely with the weekly content of the MOOC, establishing a cohesive instructional sequence. In this blended design, MOOCs mainly serves as a prelude that introduces core concepts, terminology, and foundational knowledge, while the classroom sessions act as an extension that deepens learners' understanding through interaction, contextualization, and application. A detailed overview of the instructional procedures is provided in Appendix B and illustrating adherence to the principle of "teaching to the test" evaluating what was explicitly taught and practiced.

Phase 1: *Know* (Weeks 1-2) focused on knowledge acquisition related to the concept and evolution of ICC. Students engaged in lectures and multimedia instruction to explore definitions, historical development, and the scope of ICC. Phase 2: *Analyse* (Weeks 3-5), in this phase, students critically examined the relationship between communication and culture, including concepts such as cultural perception, communication models, the role of noise, and the cognitive underpinnings of perception and verbal communication styles. Phase 3: *Do* (Weeks 6-14), emphasizing experiential and participatory learning, this extended phase engaged students in real-life and simulated intercultural scenarios, art-based learning, and dialogic activities aimed at fostering empathy, emotional engagement, and perspective-taking. Phase 4: *Reflect* (Weeks 15-16), the final phase focused on reflective learning and summative assessment. Through reflective writing, students evaluated their intercultural development and articulated newly formed perspectives.

The weekly course implementation schedule and semester teaching plan were revised from Chen Lan's *Introduction to Cross-cultural Communication* in MOOCs by considering the limited class time in one semester (16 weeks), therefore, only the first four chapters were selected from the ten chapters as the content of the instruction

project. Furthermore, since it is important to cultivate students' ICC in specific practice rather than just staying in theoretical learning, the teaching plan combined Chen Lan's teaching plan, i.e. introduction, communication and culture, cultural perception, communication and language with two more chapters—cultural adjustments and arts for Enhancing ICC, which are extracted from intercultural competence assessment sponsored by CICA.

Concerning the instruction approaches, the task-based learning (TBL) approach was applied. TBL emphasizes authentic and meaningful communication since it prioritizes the use of real-world tasks and activities that learners are likely to encounter in their daily lives (Bula-Villalobos & Murillo-Miranda, 2019). In TBL, the primary focus is on conveying meaning and completing the task, rather than on the accuracy of language forms (Littlewood, 2004). Task-based learning often involves interactive activities that allow students to engage in intercultural communication (Cogen, 2000; Condrat, 2022; East, 2012; Stankic & Begonja, 2021), for example, role-playing, culture contrast, simulation, cross-cultural dialogue etc.

The weekly course implementation schedule (Appendix B) was evaluated by three experts in the field of ICC regarding the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) with an open-ended section for additional suggestions. The items for which the IOC value was higher than or equal to 0.50 were denoted as being congruent with the objectives. On the contrary, the ones with an IOC value lower than 0.50 were denoted as incongruent and were revised or deleted. According to the three experts' IOC evaluations, the average value of the IOC index for the instruction plan was 1. Every activity and content mentioned in the lesson plans gained a score equal to 1. It can be inferred that the content and procedures of the instruction plans were congruent with the objectives.

The research chose to test validity and reliability only for the weekly course implementation schedule using IOC. The justification is that the weekly schedule is the core operational instrument: it translates syllabus objectives into concrete weekly teaching content and activities. In addition, the semester plan is essentially an expanded version of the weekly schedule, and the syllabus is a condensed version. Thus, verifying the weekly schedule ensures alignment across all three. Furthermore, from a

measurement perspective, evaluating all three separately would be redundant since their content domains are largely shared.

3.3.3 Research Instruments in Phase III

The research instruments consist of the ICC post-test, the pre- and post-ICC self-rating scale, class observation, reflective writing, and model validation semi-structured interview.

Regarding the justification for choosing certain instruments, firstly, the post-ICC self-rating scale in the model validation and pre-ICC self-rating scale in the NA enabled comparison between pre- and post-intervention data over time, allowing participants to assess their growth in ICC. Likewise, the pre- and post-ICC test comparison objectively measures students' ICC development before and after the instruction. While self-ratings capture participants' subjective perceptions, the ICC test objectively measures actual learning outcomes and how much they have gained.

Secondly, semi-structured interviews served as in-depth instruments for capturing students' personal experiences, attitudes, and reflections on the ICC intervention. They allowed for deeper exploration of individual perspectives and highlighted the complexity of intercultural competence that may not be fully reflected in self-rating scales or tests. Additionally, they allowed participants to elaborate on their responses, offering explanations for attitude changes and real-world application of cultural skills.

Thirdly, class observation involves systematic observation of students' behaviour during ICC intervention activities, capturing real-time application of intercultural communication skills. Observations allow for direct assessment of how students engage with each other during intercultural exercises, simulations, and role-playing, which are core elements of intercultural communication. The observation was conducted when there was group work, e.g., role-playing, simulation, that took place.

Fourthly, reflective writing played a vital role tracing students' participation in pre-class online learning, in-class knowledge acquisition, and real-world communication activities. From reflective writing, trainers may learn which of their three modules produces the most improvement in ICC by reading students' written reflections on those modules. In other words, the reflection was about focusing on ICC intervention effectiveness (before, in, and after class) only, rather than the whole

instruction program. Moreover, reflective writing allowed students to critically engage with their learning experiences and provided insight into their personal growth, challenges, and the application of ICC. It enabled them to articulate internal cognitive and emotional processes related to intercultural competence.

The qualitative and quantitative instruments, their focus, and the number of participants were shown in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 Quantitative and Qualitative Methods for Collecting Data

Instruments	Quan.	Qual.	Participants
1. Post ICC self-rating scale	✓		40
2. Pre/post-ICC test	✓		40
3. Class observation	✓	✓	40
4. Reflective writing		✓	40
5. Model validation Semi-structured interview		✓	32

All research instruments were examined for validity and reliability. The IOC was investigated for content validity by three experts in the ICC domain. The IOC values higher than or equal to 0.50 were indicated as being congruent with the objectives. Conversely, the ones with an IOC value lower than 0.50 were denoted as incongruent and were revised. The content and structure of the post-self-rating scale mirrored those of the pre-self-rating scale (Appendix C); therefore, its validity and reliability are not elaborated here, as they have already been addressed in the section on the NA instrument. The content of the pre-self-rating scale and the post-self-rating scale are the same. The pre-self-rating scale has been conducted in the process of NA, the validity and reliability have been elaborated in session 3.1.3, no more details here.

3.3.3.1 Pre-and Post-ICC tests

The test (Appendix E) combined Chen Lang's ICC content with the test from the CICA. The ICC test by Chen Lan (2019) was based on the *Introductory Course on Cross-Cultural Communication Competence*. Considering the instruction time duration, this research selected the core topics of intercultural communication from Chapters one to four, themed at intercultural introduction, communication and culture,

culture perception, communication and language. However, how to improve intercultural communication skills in practice was rarely covered. The CICA established by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press in 2020 supplemented this shortcoming. It aimed to rely on Shanghai Foreign Language University to gather the strength of distinctive universities at home and abroad in the field of intercultural teaching and research and create the first national professional intercultural competence testing and instruction platform, it provided assessment and instruction services to Chinese students, teachers and in-service personnel with intercultural communication needed to improve their ICC. International talents with strong ability and leadership, who could participate in Sino-foreign cultural exchanges and global governance, were the aim of the centre.

Given the above, this study combined Chen Lang's ICC test with the test from CICA, which was a concrete manifestation of the combination of theory and practice. The test was designed to capture multiple dimensions of ICC through a balanced integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and application. The knowledge dimension evaluated students' familiarity with ICC theories, cultural concepts, communication patterns, and values, with particular attention to both Chinese and international cultural contexts. The skills dimension was examined through scenario-based items that required students to demonstrate critical thinking, cultural interpretation, adaptability, problem-solving, and effective communication strategies in intercultural situations. The attitude dimension targeted learners' dispositions, measuring openness, tolerance, respect for cultural diversity, and sensitivity toward differences. Finally, the application dimension was assessed through case studies simulating real-life intercultural conflicts, which required students to diagnose misunderstandings and propose culturally appropriate solutions. Taken together, this multidimensional structure ensured that the test did not merely emphasize theoretical knowledge but also addressed practical competencies and affective orientations essential for the development of ICC.

Specifically, in CICA's test, attitude, knowledge and skill have been comprised which align with the research objectives of identifying the key components of ICC instruction, and instruction effectiveness verified. For example, multiple-choice like "Which of the following is the thinking pattern of most Chinese people

(knowledge)", "When you talk to British people, which situation is less likely to happen (knowledge for international culture)?", "Wang Xiao is studying in Australia. On his birthday, Wang Xiao received a clock from his Australian classmate James. However, a clock as a gift is taboo in Chinese culture. If you were Wang Xiao, what would you do (skill)?", and "Li Peng is working in Germany. One day, when he visited his German friend Jack, he found that Jack's son Lucas, a senior high school student, was dating a girl. Li told this to Jack, but Jack wasn't worried at all and didn't stop his son. What do you think of it (attitude)?" Concerning tests referred to by CICA, as the participants were college students, the most relevant parts for college students are selected rather than other tests relating to business or travellers. Considering the appropriate range of question size, some sentences that are very long and may cause obstacles to students' reading are deleted.

Section one, the test adheres to the principle of "teaching to the test". For example, multiple choices like "Who wrote the classic ICC work *The Silent Language*?", and true or false checking items like "One of the most effective ways to learn about oneself was by taking seriously the cultures of others". In short, there were single-choice, multiple-choice, true or false checking and blank filling. The first two types of questions were worth two points each. The true or false checking and blank filling were one point for each.

In section two, most of test are in the form of single choices and three case analysis of which the first two described the scenarios of IC, and students were required to give corresponding measures, while the last one was a case study of IC conflict. For example, "based on the scenario been given, what communication strategies might you use to facilitate teamwork with someone from different cultures?" or "please describe the cross-cultural conflicts in this case and propose your strategies to cope with the conflict?". The rubrics of the case analysis are adopted from the analytic approach of writing score of CICA (Table 3.10).

Regarding validity and reliability, the IOC value has been assessed by three experts. The mean IOC score of the overall items was 0.91. However, some items were revised to deepen learners' understanding of both perspectives in the cultural conflict, and some items were revised to be more specific, especially the items in the case

analysis part, according to the experts' comments. An example of revision is presented in Table 3.11.

After being revised, the test was piloted with a group of 24 students who has similar characteristics to the main study's participants. The internal consistency of the test, the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (α) was 0.70, which is acceptable. To run Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, the case analysis session has been transformed to be numeric format (e.g. correct=1, incorrect=o, partial credit as decimals like 0.5).

Table 3.11 Example of Revised Statement to be More Specific

Original statement	Revised statement
Item 65 In the English writing class in China, your teacher asked the class to do presentations through group work. He assigned an international student John to join your group. How do you work with him? Why? (7') Item 66…please describe the cross-cultural conflicts in this case.	In the English writing class in China, your teacher asked the class to do presentations through group work…What communication strategies might you use? What challenges could arise, and how would you address them? …How could Mr. Jones adapt his approach? What cultural factors might explain Mr. Sugimoto's reaction?

Table 3.10 Rubrics of Case Analysis from CICA

Component	Criteria	Points Allocation	Details
Q1:Identifying Conflicts	Accurately describe cross-cultural conflicts	1–2 points per conflict	- 2 pts = description only - +1 pt = description + correct link to a cross-cultural theory (e.g., individualism–collectivism, high/low context, time concept, power distance).
Q2:Proposing Solutions	Suggestions for mutual understanding	2 points	General suggestion to recognize and respect cultural differences.

Table 3.10 (continued)

Component	Criteria	Points Allocation	Details
	Solutions from one party's perspective	3 points	Context-specific and reasonable measures (e.g., Mr. Jones should avoid public praise; Hilfiger should learn local business culture).
	Solutions from the other party's perspective	3 points	Context-specific and reasonable measures (e.g., Sugimoto should learn to accept praise; Mohamed should avoid being late).
Q3:Theoretical Evaluation	Application of cross-cultural theory (explanation)	2–4points depending on theory	Must explain the theory clearly (e.g., definition of high/low context, individualism/collectivism, polychronic vs. monochronic time)
	Application of theory to the case (analysis)	2–4points depending on theory	Connects theoretical framework to case details, showing how cultural values explain behaviour.

3.3.3.2 Model Validation Interviews

The interview questions were developed and validated to address the research questions from attitude, knowledge, and skills of ICC. For example, in the attitude module, questions like "How have your experiences with different cultures influenced your attitude toward further intercultural interactions?" were raised to verify the change of attitude. For the knowledge module, questions like "How do you apply your knowledge of both your own and international cultures' communication styles in real-world situations?", and questions like "How do you relate the cultural behaviours and practices of others to your cultural framework?" to further explore the thoughts of respondents.

Regarding the validity and reliability of model validation interview (Appendix H), according to the result of the IOC evaluation by three experts, most of the content aligns with the objectives of the interview. The IOC value of the questions was 0.95, which could denote excellent content validity. Besides, 15 out of 24

participants in the pilot phase were asked to clarify confusions about the interview questions, and they addressed no confusion arising while responding the questions. For the inter-coder reliability, Cohen's Kappa (κ), was assessed to measure the agreement of the coders through which a second rater examined a random sample of 20% of the participants' responses. There are 18 coded segments (unit of meaning) in the 20% random sample of the interview responses, 12 of them given the same code by the two raters. Therefore, the percentage of agreement was 0.66 (8/14), which means the strength of agreement is substantial (Landis & Koch, 1977).

3.3.3.3 Class Observation

This observation was carried out by the teacher-researcher based on the principles that the presence of a visitor or any other observer inevitably affects the classroom dynamics (Wajnryb, 1992). However, when a teacher is delivering a lesson, they may be absorbed in its purpose, procedure, and logistics, which can hinder their ability to observe students' learning processes and interactions. Recognizing the challenge of being both teacher and observer in the classroom, the lessons were recorded using a video recorder to enable further review and analysis. A second observer, who was provided with the observation checklist (Appendix F), watched the recordings to ensure inter-rater reliability from which a random sample of 20% of the participants' behaviours in the class was examined.

By reviewing the recordings, the observers were able to identify recurring themes, patterns, and behaviours related to ICC, highlighting specific moments when students demonstrated ICC-related behaviours or attitudes. For critical incidents, key moments were identified where ICC skills were prominently displayed or where communication breakdowns occurred. The analysis focused on how students managed these incidents, reflecting on the influence of the instructional intervention on their behaviours.

Regarding the validity and reliability, according to the value of the IOC evaluation by three experts, most of the content aligns with the objectives of the observation. The IOC value of the checklist was 0.97, indicating excellent content validity. Moreover, Kohen's Kappa (k) was assessed to measure the reliability, with two raters, one is the teacher researcher, and the other is an instructor with at least two years of experience in ICC. There are 17 coding segments in the 20% random sample

of class observation findings. Eleven of them were given the same code by the two raters. Thus, the *k* value is 0.65 (11/17), which could denote substantial strength of agreement.

3.3.3.4 Reflective Writing

Three prompts for each module (attitude, knowledge, skill) were given as in Appendix G and participants may choose one in each module to write. The reflection prompts were created by the researcher according to the research objectives. Regarding the validity and reliability, according to the value of the IOC evaluation by three experts, all the content aligns with the objectives of the observation. The IOC value of the prompt was 1, indicating excellent content validity. For the inter-coder reliability of the reflective writing analysis, Cohen's Kappa (κ) was calculated to assess the level of agreement between coders. A second rater independently scored a random sample comprising 20% of the participants' responses. There are 12 coded segments in the 20% random sample of the reflective writing, 8 of them were given the same code by the two raters, meaning the percentage agreement was 0.67 (8/12), which indicates a moderate level of agreement according to Landis and Koch (1977).

For easy viewing the validity and reliability values as well as validation sources for all instructional and research instruments, Table 3.13 summarizes them synoptically.

3.3.4 Data Collection Procedure for the Whole Research

The data collection procedure comprised four stages: preparation, pre-testing, intervention, and post-testing. First, ethical approval was secured and informed consent obtained from all participants. A pilot study was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of instruments. During the pre-test stage, students completed the ICC self-rating scale on *Google Forms*, ICC test (pen-and-paper test) in the classroom and NA interview on campus. Over the 16-week intervention period, class observations were conducted when there were group-based activities. At the end of the intervention, the post-ICC-test and post-self-rating scale were conducted as the way in the pre-test. After that, model validation semi-structured interview and reflective writing were carried out.

3.3.5 Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were conducted. The quantitative data from the ICC test, ICC self-rating scale, class observations were

analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, SD, behaviour counts), and inferential statistics (a paired t-test) to determine whether participants gained enhancement before and after participating in the ICC instruction. The qualitative data from class observation, semi-structured interview, and reflective writing were analysed with RTA.

3.3.5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

1. Pre-and Post-self-rating Scale

After conducting the post-self-rating scale, the inferential statistics (a paired t-test) was conducted to measure the significance between the pre and the post. For paired *t*-test, the effect size (Cohen's *d*) was measured to estimate the effect of the implementation of the instruction model on participants' ICC. The effect size values were computed dividing the difference between the means of two variable by the standard deviation of difference (Bhandari, 2022). The effect size values were based on Cohen's d effect size benchmark (Cohen, 2013), was presented in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12 Interpretations of Effect Size Values

Cohen's *d* Values	**Interpretations**
.20	Small effect size
.50	Medium effect size
.80	Large effect size

2. ICC Test

The ICC test was distributed to test participants' IC performance. The test was analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, SD). Besides, a paired t-test was conducted to measure the significance between the pre-test and the post-test. The criteria, which employed equal interval ranges (e.g., dividing a total score of 135 into five 27-point bands) is a validated and practical approach, particularly when the goal was to provide developmental feedback or general performance interpretations. The range of the mean scores and the interpretations are presented in Table 3.14. The effect size (Cohen's *d*) was calculated for the effectiveness validation of the instruction. The effect size value was the same as that of ICC self-rating part.

Table 3.13 Interpretations of the Mean Scores Gained from the Test

Ranges of Mean Scores	Interpretations
0-27	Very low performance
28-54	Low performance
55-81	Moderate performance
82-108	High performance
109-135	Very high performance

3. Class Observation

Data from classroom observations were collected using a structured checklist comprising 17 coded segments across three fundamental ICC dimensions and a couple of segments in the field note. For each observed behaviour, a five-bar gate tally system was employed to record its frequency. These tallies were later converted into numerical frequencies for analysis. Alongside the checklist, field notes were taken to capture contextual details of student-teacher and peer-to-peer interactions, including the types of classroom activities in which behaviour emerged.

The tally marks were systematically counted to produce frequency scores for each behavioural indicator. This process allowed for a quantitative representation of how often students demonstrated specific ICC-related behaviours during the observation periods. Moreover, field notes accompanying the tally data were analysed qualitatively to provide contextual insights into the behaviours observed.

3.3.5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Model validation interview

Regarding the reliability of the inter-coding from two raters, one is the teacher researcher, the other one is with two-years of teaching ICC for undergraduate students. For testing the reliability of the inter-coding, Cohens Kappa Coefficient (k) was calculated and yielded a .66 statistic value, indicating acceptable agreement between two raters.

Table 3.14 Summary of Instruments' Validity and Reliability Value

Instruments	Content validity values	Reliability values		Validation source	
	Average IOC (≥0.5)	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (≥ .70)	Kohen's Kappa Coefficient (K) (0-1)	Pilot study	Main study
1.weekly course implementation schedule	1 (Excellent)	-	-		✓
2.ICC self-rating scale	0.92 (Acceptable)	0.85 (Good)	-	✓	
3.NA interview questions and coding	0.95 (Acceptable)	-	0.68 (agreement between two coders)	✓	
4.ICC test	0.91 (Acceptable)	0.70 (Acceptable)	-	✓	
5.Class observation checklist and coding	0.97 (Acceptable)	-	0.65 (agreement between two coders)		✓
6.Reflective writing prompts and coding	1 (Excellent)	-	0.67 (agreement between two coders)		✓
7.Reflective writing rubrics	1 (Excellent)	-	-		✓
8.Model validation interview questions and coding	0.95 (Acceptable)	-	0.67 (agreement between two coders)	✓	

Reflective Writing

The reflective writing with nine guiding questions from which participants at least choose one from each component (attitude, knowledge, skill) was administered to gather the qualitative data representing the participants' change after the instruction. The participants were required to submit the writing one week after the last-time instruction. The writings were analysed by exploiting RTA. Regarding the integration of the deductive and inductive coding schemes, the data from the reflective writing were coded correspondingly.

For easy viewing, Table 3.15 demonstrated the summary of the research questions, the research instruments to collect data and the data analysis

Table 3.15 The Summary of the Research Questions, the Research Instruments to Collect Data and the Data Analysis

	Research questions	Research instruments	Data Analysis
1	How to design a model to cultivate students' ICC in a GU in China?	Pre-self-rating scale	1.Mean 2.SD
		NA interview	1.RTA
2	To what extent does the ICC instruction model help students improve ICC?	Post-self-rating scale	1.Mean 2.SD 3.Paired *t*-test
		Pre- and post ICC test	1.Mean 2.SD 3.Paired *t*-test
		Class observation	1.Behaviour counting tally (frequency)
		Reflective writing	1.RTA
		Semi-structured interview	1.RTA

3.3.6 Ethical Consideration

Surveys are extensively employed tools to gather empirical data in research endeavours. While surveys may seem innocuous and seemingly disconnected from participants, it is crucial to consider the ethical implications of doing research using surveys. The preservation of scientific rigor is of utmost importance. By using a pseudonym to respect participants for the sake of confidentiality. Each participant has been assigned a numerical code based on their sequence of participating in each data collection activity, for example, the first number in reflective writing is marked as RW1.

Written consent forms were provided to participants to be fully informed about the title, nature, duration, procedures, confidentiality assurance, potential risks and benefits of the study as well as their rights. (e.g. withdraw at any time without penalty). Explained how participants' data been protected and who would have access to it. Make it clear that participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any point. Highlighted any potential risks and benefits, contact information, and provided contact details for the researcher or ethics committee for any concerns or further inquiries. Included spaces for the participant's signature and the date to confirm their consent. The signed consent forms were collected and securely stored in a locked location with restricted access to ensure confidentiality. All written consent forms will be securely stored.

The research on ICC, especially when dealing with personal reflections, and intercultural experiences, there are potential risks related to emotional and psychological discomfort. Reflecting on past intercultural experiences, discussing sensitive cultural topics, or acknowledging one's own biases might evoke feelings of discomfort, anxiety, or frustration in participants. They may feel exposed when discussing topics like cultural misunderstandings or miscommunication. Participation was entirely voluntary, with participants having the option to withdraw at any point without penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality assurance helped participants feel secure when sharing sensitive information.

Some participants felt stressed about being assessed, particularly when completing self-rating scales, ICC tests, or during classroom observations. They felt their competence was being judged or fear negative evaluations. Stress was minimized by framing assessments as opportunities for self-reflection and growth rather than judgment or grading. Participants will be reminded that the purpose is to understand and improve their ICC.

In group activities or class observations, participants may feel pressured to conform to group norms or might fear being judged by peers for their communication style or cultural viewpoints. The classroom environment was structured to promote respect, inclusion, and open-mindedness, ensuring that all participants feel safe expressing their perspectives. Observers kept any behaviour observations strictly confidential and will avoid sharing individual observations with other participants.

Having detailed the DDR methodology and instruments, the following chapter will present the findings in three main sequential parts: first, the results of the NA which directly informed the model's design, and then the model construction and the quantitative and qualitative resulting validating the model's effectiveness in enhancing students' ICC.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings regarding the NA (RQ1) and the effectiveness of the TLICCM (RQ2). To address the research question one for ICC components, the research has been explored through participants' ICC challenges and needs self-rating scale and their perceptions towards these challenges and needs by semi-structured interviews. Moreover, to address the research question two, both qualitative and quantitative data were examined to investigate the improvement of ICC after the instruction. The results are organized as follows: first, the findings for NA, and then pre- and post-self-rating scale; second, the pre-and post ICC test, and finally, the findings from class observation, reflective writing and model validation interviews.

4.1 ICC Needs Analysis (Phase I)

The overall descriptive statistics findings and interpretations (Table 4.1) show that participants scored high level in attitude (M=3.61), followed closely by source cultural knowledge (M=3.53). In contrast, international cultural knowledge (M=2.50) received the lowest means, reflecting a significant lack of exposure to and understanding of cultures beyond their own. The skills component (M=3.10) was rated at a moderate level, suggesting room for improvement.

These findings indicate diverse requirements across the aspects of ICC. Although attitude and source cultural knowledge suggest a limited requirement for development, skills indicate a modest necessity, however international cultural knowledge demonstrates a significant demand. The data reveals a disparity in students' intercultural competency, indicating a robust alignment with their own culture while demonstrating insufficient acquaintance with international cultures, which may impede their efficient communication in varied environments.

Table 4.1 Mean, SD and Interpretation of ICC Level and ICC Needs

Mean, SD and interpretation of ICC level and ICC needs			Interpretations of the ICC level	Interpretation of the ICC needs
	Mean	**SD**		
Attitude	3.61	.42	High	Partial need
Source culture knowledge	3.53	.52	High	Partial need
International culture knowledge	2.50	.47	Low	High need
Skills	3.10	.42	Moderate	Moderate need

To address the question: What are the EFL students' ICC challenges and needs, further highlight is provided in Table 4.2. Based on the self-rating scale, students demonstrated a positive attitude toward other cultures, but their active engagement remains limited. Specifically, the data indicates that students generally exhibit a positive attitude towards other cultures (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.52) for interest in various lifestyles and values. This suggests a strong curiosity and openness to understanding cultural differences, which is a foundational aspect of ICC. However, when it comes to actively engaging in intercultural communication, the mean score drops to 3.35 (SD = 0.77).

This gap suggests that although student express openness and curiosity—a critical foundation of ICC—they may lack the confidence, experience, or strategies to engage meaningfully with people from different cultural backgrounds. The discrepancy underscores a key challenge: students are cognitively aware of cultural diversity, yet they struggle to apply this awareness in practical, real-world interactions.

Next, students are open to changing views but have limited flexibility in communication. From openness to behaviour, the results highlight a complicated interplay between cognitive openness and behavioural adaptation in students' ICC. Particularly, students demonstrate a moderate tendency to change their views following intercultural exchanges (mean = 3.20, SD = 0.64), indicating a cognitive willingness to change views. In contrast, the mean score for the ability to flexibly adjust communication behaviour (Mean = 2.90, SD = 0.87) signifies considerable issues in

behavioural adaptability, meaning that despite their cognitive openness, students struggle to dynamically adapt their communication skills to different cultural contexts. According to Byram's ICC framework, this implies an imbalance between knowledge and skill of discovery and interaction. Students are academically capable of perceiving and interpreting cultural differences, but they cannot change their communication practices flexibly.

After that, students have strong knowledge of the source culture but gaps in the international culture. The findings demonstrated that individuals possess a reasonable level of cultural knowledge, with a solid understanding of their source culture but significant deficiencies in their knowledge of international cultures. Participants exhibited a moderate to high level of awareness about many aspects of their source culture, such as historical events, literature, and customs, with mean scores ranging from 3.10 to 3.73. This demonstrates a fundamental familiarity that supports cultural identity and provides an environment for intercultural comparison. However, participants have a weaker understanding of more nuanced cultural characteristics, such as nonverbal communication (mean = 3.43, SD = 0.71) and cultural taboos (mean = 3.10, SD = 0.98). It demonstrates that, while students have broad cultural knowledge, they may lack a deeper, context-specific understanding of implicit cultural norms and practices. Participants, on the other hand, demonstrate considerable gaps in their understanding of international cultures, particularly in nonverbal communication, cultural taboos, and other cultures' historical and literary contexts, with mean scores ranging from 2.40 to 2.80. According to Byram's (1997) ICC model, cultural knowledge (savoirs) is an essential component for interpreting and connecting information across cultural barriers. The discovered gaps are indicators for students' struggle with the comparative and interpretative elements of intercultural competency, limiting their capacity to understand cultural nuances successfully. The evidence suggests a possible overreliance on basic knowledge acquisition rather than experiential and reflective learning methodologies that promote deeper cultural understanding and critical cultural awareness.

Finally, students are strong in explaining misunderstandings but lower in adapting and coping with conflicts. The evidence implied significant difficulties in students' capacity to modify their communication behaviour in intercultural settings.

Students notably identify difficulties in adapting their communication style to varied cultural backgrounds (Mean = 2.90, SD = 0.87) and in resolving conflicts stemming from cultural differences (Mean = 2.63, SD = 0.70). The low mean scores reflected a limited capacity for dynamic interaction, indicating that students may find it challenging to change their communication in real-time within multicultural environments. In contrast, students exhibit increased confidence in explaining mistakes that occur during intercultural exchanges (Mean = 3.73, SD = 0.75). This supported competence in reactive communication strategies—addressing difficulties post-occurrence—rather than utilizing proactive methods that foresee and avoid misunderstandings. This disparity denotes a dependence on corrective communication instead of adaptive, proactive measures, which are crucial for good intercultural interaction.

Table 4.2 Findings from Needs Analysis

Needs statements	Mean	SD	ICC level
Attitudes towards Other Cultures	3.93	.526	High
1. I am interested in the lifestyle and values of various cultures,			
2. I like to actively communicate with people from different cultures.	3.35	.770	Moderate
3. If people from different cultures take the initiative to communicate with me, I can respond positively	3.80	.608	High
4. When communicating with people from different cultures, if the other person's point of view is different from mine, I can respect the other person’s point of view.	3.80	.723	High
5. I am open to changing my views based on interactions with people from other cultures.	3.20	.648	Moderate
Total mean of attitudes towards other cultures	3.62		High
Knowledge of Source Culture	3.40	.928	Moderate
6. I know the lifestyle of the Chinese source culture.			

Table 4.2 (continued)

Needs statements	Mean	SD	ICC level
7. I know the historical events and historical figures of the Chinese source culture.	3.73	.679	High
8. I understand key aspects of the Chinese source culture, including its important writers, literature, folklore, modern media, and cultural traditions.	3.63	.740	High
9. I understand the taboos of the Chinese source culture.	3.10	.982	Moderate
10. I understand non-verbal communication, including gestures and posture the Chinese source culture.	3.43	.712	High
11. I understand the customs and habits of the Chinese source culture.	3.65	.770	High
12. I understand the current important events and hot events in Chinese source culture.	3.63	.807	High
13. I understand the appropriate body distance in each other's culture in the Chinese source culture.	3.63	.667	High
14. I understand the time concept of the Chinese source culture.	3.75	.670	High
15. When I talk to people from different Chinese cultures, I understand the geography of their culture.	3.43	.712	High
Total mean of knowledge of source culture	3.54		High
Knowledge of international culture	2.60	.744	Low
16. When communicating with people from different cultures, I know the lifestyle of the other culture.			
17. I know the historical events and historical figures of the other culture.	2.65	.770	Moderate
18. I know the literature and important writers of the other culture.	2.80	.791	Moderate
19. I understand the taboos of the other culture.	2.40	.810	Low
20. I understand non-verbal communication, including gestures and posture.	2.53	.751	Low

Table 4.2 (continued)

Needs statements	Mean	SD	ICC level
21. I understand the customs and habits of the other culture.	2.53	.640	Low
22. I have a broad understanding of key cultural trends, historical influences, and current events in the Chinese source culture.	2.33	.764	Low
23. I understand the appropriate body distance in each other's culture.	2.43	.781	Low
24. I understand the time concept of the other culture.	2.25	.670	Low
25. When I talk to people from different cultures, I understand the geography of their culture.	2.55	.639	Low
Total mean of knowledge of international culture	2.51		Low
Intercultural Communication Skills	3.25	.588	Moderate
26. When interacting with people from different cultures—We can get along well with each other			
27. I find it easy to cope with the conflicts caused by cultural differences.	2.63	.705	Moderate
28. I find it easy to flexibly adjust my communication behavior according to the cultural background of both parties.	2.90	.871	Moderate
29. I actively explain the misunderstandings that occur.	3.73	.751	High
30. I can deal with various social situations and relationships.	3.00	.641	Moderate
Total mean of intercultural communication skills	3.10		Moderate

To address the question: What are the EFL students' perceptions of ICC challenges and needs, further insights emerge from the coding results of the interview transcripts. The interview findings largely consistent with the results from the self-rating scale. Overall, participants expressed positive attitudes towards other cultures but demonstrated limited active engagement. They exhibited a strong understanding of

their source culture yet showed noticeable gaps in knowledge about international cultures, particularly regarding nonverbal communication and taboos. While they appeared open to revising their views, their communication flexibility was limited. Additionally, although they were relatively skilled in explaining misunderstandings, they struggled with adapting and coping effectively during intercultural conflicts.

When exploring ways to enhance ICC among students, participants consistently emphasized their positive attitudes towards other cultures. All 12 interviewees highlighted cultural knowledge as fascinating, describing it with words such as *exciting*, *curiosity*, *horizon broadening*, and *cognition enriching*. Despite encountering challenges, two participants believed that positive attitudes outweighed negative ones, as reflected in the excerpts from NA interview participant (hereafter NAI) number 3 and number 9 for the consideration of ethics.

However, only one participant had direct experience with intercultural communication, engaging in such interactions twice a year during her part-time employment over summer and winter breaks. Three others reported acquiring intercultural knowledge through online platforms such as Bilibili, live streaming, and TikTok. The remaining participants (n=8), however, had no prior interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

"*I am positive, but at the same time, I think it is a challenge for me, I am worried that I cannot express exactly what I want to say*." (NAI3)

"*For me, it is positive, and there may be a clash of ideas when communicating with people from other cultures, but it is also negative; overall, the positive outweighs the negative*." (NAI9)

"*I saw Mr. Bean, the famous comedy actor, live streaming on TikTok, but I didn't dare to connect and talk with him online. I don't know, I feel very nervous at that moment.*" (NAI8)

"*I usually don't take the initiative to communicate with foreigners. I watch some bloggers' vlogs through some websites such as BiliBili (a video sharing platform that hosts user-generated content)*." (NAI11)

Participants possessed strong knowledge of the source culture, but gaps in the international culture. Due to the influence of history, geography, and general laws courses from junior middle school, along with daily life experiences, respondents exhibit confidence in their understanding of the source culture. Five participants indicated familiarity with the source culture, self-rating above 6 out of 10. Though one informant expressed dissatisfaction, acknowledging the limited understanding of the nuances of how and why regarding the culture.

"*I know that China has a splendid culture that has lasted for 5,000 years. I know most of the customs in my hometown, and now I know Pu'er city because my university is here*." (NAI1)

"*I learn(ed) history, geography, and culture since primary school, and I experienced various traditional festivals, now still leaning…I am confident about Chinese culture*." (NAI8)

"*I give myself 5 (score). I feel that I only know it exists, and sometimes I don't understand it in depth. For example, I didn't know the exact meaning of Nian (Chinese Spring Festival origin) even though I celebrated it for more than 18 years until I read the mythology book from my niece*." (NAI3)

The self-assessment score for international culture is significantly lower than that of the source culture. Two informants opted to forgo answering the question after a period of silence, while 6 expressed difficulties in self-evaluation, citing that their knowledge is primarily derived from second-hand sources such as bloggers, teachers, dramas, and films. Additionally, two individuals admitted their scores were below 5, possibly as low as 3.

"*…oh, only 3 (score), I think (scratching head), I've never been abroad, and I like to stay by myself, I don't want to talk to strangers proactively*." (NAI10)

"*I only know the knowledge of other cultures from textbooks, and the communication with teachers in China, anyway, I didn't know much about them*." (NAI6)

Participants are open to changing views but have limited flexibility in communication. Some answers adhere to the ancient Chinese proverb (n=3) “the sea encompasses all rivers, and the larger it is, the more it can contain.” Informants consider it essential to remain updated and accessible to diversity (n=9). Some of them changed after meeting people from different cultures (n=2). Regarding in-depth communication, some of them suggested employing euphemistic communication with people from various cultures, and if consensus is impossible to achieve, to cease further interaction (n=5).

“*It’s not good to cling to the past and stay the same; it’s better to embrace new ideas.*” (NAI1)

“*Yup, I will change my views when I think another interlocutor is right.*” (NAI3)

“*There is a saying, ‘take the essence and discard the dross’, I belong to this kind of person, and I think I have critical thinking about different cultures…for communication, I don’t think it is a respectful way to debate or argue with people because of differences. I will stop or let it go if there is (are) no agreed views*.” (NAI5)

“*On the street, there is an Apple Store with a picture of Steve Jobs. A few foreign tourists took pictures with the portrait while making exaggerated expressions and looking very happy. I think it's embarrassing for me to do that in front of so many people. I’m afraid of others’ strange looks. But this event really changed me from that day on. These people always push me to be braver when I don't feel like trying something new. After going to school in Pu'er city, I became more adventurous*.” (NAI8)

When inquired about managing circumstances with differing communication styles, most respondents exhibited overgeneralization or a lack of contextual adaptability. For instance, respect and sticking to their own were mentioned, although none provided elaboration on their implementation.

"*First, respect is important; if the other interlocutor does not understand, I think I will jump to another topic*." (NAI1)

"*I won't change my way of communicating if I think I am not wrong*." (NAI7)

Participants were strong in explaining misunderstandings but lower in adapting and coping with conflicts (n=9). Interestingly, some students were eager to clarify numerous cultures, particularly from the Chinese cultural perspective, and they demonstrated greater commitment to studying and providing more comprehensive explanations (n=7). The participants, due to their limited experience in intercultural contexts, expressed uncertainty and admitted they were unsure how to navigate such scenarios, admitting that they had rarely encountered them before. Their responses were generally broad and abstract rather than grounded in concrete strategies (n=10).

"*I prefer to make the explanation of other cultures by comparing with Chinese culture, I could ask for help from teachers and peers, surf on the internet, and I have confidence to make it clear*." (NAI3)

"*I can explain (the misunderstandings) why it happened, because we don't share the same cultural background, I should put myself in other people's shoes. Besides, our cognitive level could be different; what she or she accepted may be unacceptable to me, I must explain and find out the answer.*" (NAI7)

"*It (conflict) never happens before, if it happens, I will try to minimize the conflict, hopefully I can deal with it peacefully*." (NAI1)

Regarding participants' learning needs for ICC, some of them have a clear understanding of their ICC needs (n=7), from language to cultural details such as non-verbal communication and taboos. Some of them communicated logically, beginning with food names, numbers, and the most prevalent daily expressions, enabling them to navigate their surroundings effectively (n=5). Certain individuals consider that solely concentrating on memorizing these elements of culture is too rigid, and robotic. They advocate for increased opportunities for direct, face-to-face interactions with individuals from diverse cultures (n=11). Furthermore, due to a deficiency in

international cultural knowledge, they seek tools and methodologies that might facilitate an accessible, flexible, self-directed learning environment. Three students endorsed MOOCs for their conversation opportunities (n=11), foundational intercultural knowledge, and flexibility, respectively. Several individuals suggested engaging in reflective thinking prior to sleep or undertaking reflective writing on various social media platforms or in a diary, as these practices facilitate learning and help prevent the repetition of past mistakes (n=6).

"*…anyway, to show the respect, to let other people think I want to be respectful is important, I don't want to step on other people's taboos, I think that is not safe. I want to learn something related to non-verbal and taboos*." (NAI11)

"*I will feel very nervous when I cannot say it clearly, I want to buy something from the local people, I should make myself understood. I am a foodie, and I want to make sure the amount and the price, so the most used expression for daily life is important for me*." (NAI8)

"*…no, I'm tired of rote memorizing, I learn from doing and observing, practice must go with the rigid intercultural knowledge, for example, teachers can invite some foreigners into our classroom to share and talk with us. After I graduate, I have enough money, I will go and travel in different countries (smiling with confidence)*." (NAI9)

"*I recommended MOOCs, in the first page of this application, the sentence is A good university has no wall. My university is not good, but MOOCs provide a possibility to learn from many other university professors; I can learn the basics intercultural knowledge, for example, history, geography, taboos from the MOOCs and on top of that, there is a discussion session, different people from various universities are sharing their IC experience and give recommendation to some questions or problems. I can learn whenever I want to learn, I can replay the chapter which I don't understand, overall, the accessibility and convenience are highly recommended*." (NAI7)

"*Before sleeping, when lying on the bed, I start thinking about the problem, how it can be solved, what I should do to solve the problem. Sometimes I talk to my sister, but most of the time, I think by myself. I think it is a good way to make progress.*" (NAI9)

"*...to write it down, the whole story, this is what I often do, when I go back and read again, it's like a history which makes me wiser*." (NAI4)

4.2 NA Implications for the TLICCM Construction (Phase II)

Table 4.3 synthesized the empirical NA data, theoretical framework with the subsequent instructional design, providing a transparent roadmap of how the TLICCM was systematically constructed. The table is structured into two primary domains: the NA results on the left, which diagnose learner competencies and deficits of ICC, and the resultant pedagogical framework of the TLICCM on the right, which prescribes targeted instructional interventions drawn from previous research. The foundational logic of the derivation proceeds from left to right, where the "Interpretation of the ICC needs" for each component together with the previous theoretical framework directly dictates its placement and activity within the model's layered structure.

The NA showed that attitude, knowledge, and skills, which are the three main parts of ICC according to the earlier theoretical framework of other researchers (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006), all fall between partial need and high need. This indicates that each component requires intentional cultivation rather than selective emphasis, thereby offering substantive guidance for constructing the bottom layer of the instructional model. The results specifically highlight that the ICC model could be framed to include both source culture an international culture, enabling learners to cultivate a balanced and contextually informed comprehension of various cultural perspectives.

The NA results also help build the middle layer addresses the essential ICC components derived from learners demonstrated needs, it expands the framework to incorporate competencies that are indispensable for intercultural functioning in contemporary educational and professional contexts. Specifically, the integration of global competence, digital literacy, 21st-century skills, and the top ten soft competencies responds to both national policy directives and international trends that

position intercultural communication as inseparable from broader global citizenship and employability frameworks. These transversal competencies are integral to learners' intercultural development. For example, the growing use of digital platforms for intercultural communication shows how important it is to make digital literacy a part of ICC practice. Likewise, global competence and 21st-century competencies—such as critical thinking, adaptability, and collaborative problem-solving—serve as mediating capacities through which learners interpret cultural information, negotiate perspectives, and engage in intercultural tasks. Embedding soft skills, including empathy, active listening, and conflict management, further strengthens the model's alignment with the behavioral dimension of ICC, ensuring that learners are equipped with the interpersonal tools required for real-world intercultural encounters.

Furthermore, the NA findings (both qualitative and quantitative) together with previous mentioned constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and experiential learning (Kolb,2014), gave implications for the construction of the top layer in which each sub-component of attitude (respect, openness, and curiosity), knowledge of the source culture and international culture (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999), and skills including listening, observing, assessing, analysing, interpreting, and relating (Kolb,2014;Vygotsky, 1978) are incorporated. Except for the above-mentioned quantitative findings, the findings from the semi-structured revealed four main challenges and the research elicited the NA based on the challenges they encountered, participants are, (1) positive towards other cultures but limited active engagement, (2) with strong knowledge of the source culture but gaps in the international culture, (3) open to change views but limited flexibility in communication, (4) strong in explaining misunderstandings but lower in adapting and coping with conflicts.

Overall, these qualitative patterns reinforce and elaborate the quantitative results, jointly indicating that learners' needs are not only broad across the three main ICC components but also unevenly distributed within each component. As such, the top layer of the TLICCM was designed to articulate the specific sub-components that directly correspond to the deficits and developmental potentials highlighted by the NA.

For the attitude dimension, the challenges related to limited engagement and restricted flexibility point to the need for cultivating respect, openness, and curiosity, which function as the affective dispositions that motivate deeper interaction,

perspective-taking, and intercultural initiative. For the knowledge dimension, the strong-weak asymmetry between source cultural knowledge and international culture knowledge clearly justifies differentiating these two sub-components so that instruction can address the imbalance explicitly. For the skills dimension, learners' difficulty in adapting, copying with conflicts, and communicating flexibly underscores the importance of systematically developing the specific skills of listening, observing, assessing, analysing, interpreting, and relating. These skills together form the behavioural repertoire necessary for managing complex intercultural encounters rather than merely explaining them.

Considering the application of MOOCs, in July 2015, the State Council of China released the Guiding Opinions on Actively Promoting the "Internet +" Initiative (Jiang et al., 2023), affirming the transformative role of the Internet across all sectors and specifying that "Internet + Education" aims to enhance and optimize educational resources through Internet utilization. The policy proposed permitting enterprises and private training and educational organizations to create digital educational resources in response to market demand and to offer online educational services. It also urged educational institutions to "utilize digital educational resources and service platforms to progressively investigate new models of networked education." This policy stipulates that universities and primary and secondary schools must engage in "exploring the networked education model" to implement "Internet + Education." Considering implications from the NA findings, eleven participants in the NA semi-structured interviews endorsed the use of MOOCs for their ICC development, noting that MOOCs offer flexibility, abundant resources, and continuous 24/7 accessibility within an increasingly information-rich environment. When considered alongside prior research demonstrating the effectiveness of MOOCs in fostering open, respectful, and curious attitudes—core affective components of ICC—it becomes clear that MOOCs function as an appropriate pedagogical tool for the top layer of the instructional model. Accordingly, MOOCs are implemented primarily before class to support the cultivation of students' attitudes; however, this does not mean that their use is restricted to the pre-class stage. Rather, the activities across all stages are interconnected, and students are encouraged to engage with MOOCs whenever they find them pedagogically meaningful.

Table 4.3 The Systematic Derivation of the TLICCM from NA Results

The Systematic Derivation of the TLICCM from NA Results and Previous Theoretical Frameworks									
NA results					TLICCM derives from NA results and theoretical framework in previous research				
ICC components	Mean	SD	Interpretations of the ICC level	Interpretation of the ICC needs	→	Bottom layer	Middle layer	Top layer	Instruction activities
Attitude	3.61	.42	High	Partial need	→	Source and international culture	Global competence, digital literacy, 21st century competence, top 10 soft competence	Attitude (respect, openness, curiosity) (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006)	→ China's Internet + Education policy: MOOCs (the State Council, 2015): MOOCs
Source culture knowledge	3.53	.52	High	Partial need				Knowledge of source culture and international cultures (Cortizzi & Jin, 1999)	Constructivism (Vygotsky,1978) and experiential learning (Kolb, 2014): case studies, culture contrast, role-playing, simulations, story circle, cross-cultural dialogue
International cultural knowledge	2.50	.47	Low	High need	→				
Skills	3.10	.42	Moderate	Moderate need				Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and experiential learning (Kolb, 2014): Listening, observing, assessing, analysing, interpreting, relating	The reflection of DDR: reflective writing

In the classroom, experiential learning principles and constructivist theory guide the design of learning activities in response to key challenges identified in the qualitative NA findings—particularly learners' limited flexibility in communication and their tendency to explain misunderstandings rather than adapt to or manage intercultural conflicts. To address these gaps, a range of interactive and experience-based instructional activities are incorporated, including lectures, case analyses, simulations, and cross-cultural dialogues. These practices provide the concrete experiences, perspective-taking opportunities, and collaborative contexts necessary for learners to practice adaptive communication, engage in conflict negotiation, and construct deeper intercultural understanding.

Following the classroom sessions, reflective writing is implemented as a key component of the DDR process. This practice enables students to consolidate their learning, articulate insights, evaluate their intercultural experiences, and critically

examine their evolving competence, thereby reinforcing the developmental aims of the model and strengthening the coherence of the instructional sequence.

Altogether, attitude is maintained and primed via pre-class MOOCs, source and international cultural knowledge are expanded and connected through in-class experiential modules, and skills are consolidated and internalized via post-class reflective writing. Importantly, the before-class, in-class, and after-class phases form a mutually influential cycle: the outcomes of pre-class preparation shape the effectiveness of in-class learning, which in turn reinforces attitude cultivation; similarly, the learning achieved in class determines the quality of post-class reflection, while reflection reciprocally deepens understanding and enhances participation in subsequent classes. This cyclical structure exemplifies the iterative nature of learning advocated by social constructivism and experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978), ensuring that students' progress from cultural awareness toward adaptive intercultural competence.

The updated Triad-Layers ICC Model (Figure 4.1) is constructed by incorporating these above-mentioned layers and instructional activities from the NA into the previously established model derived from the literature review and the contextualization of Chinese GUs.

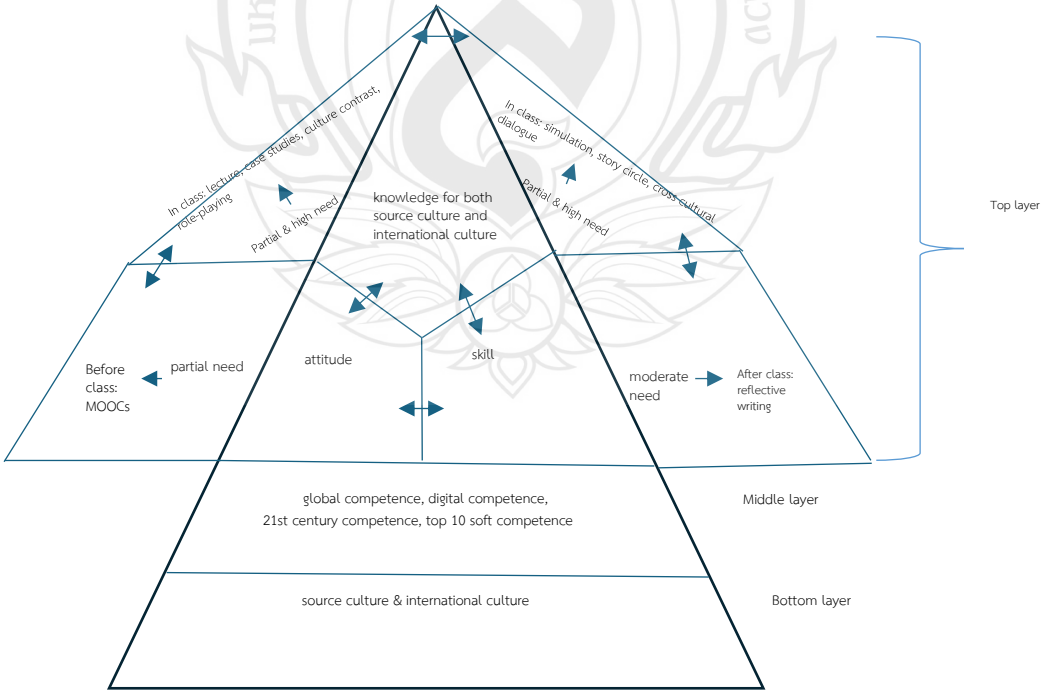


Figure 4.1 Triad-Layers ICC Model (updated, 2nd version)

4.3 TLICCM Model Validation (Phase III)

4.3.1 Results from the Pre-self-rating scale and post-self-rating Scale

To assess changes in learners' self-perceived intercultural competence, a self-rating scale was administered before and after the instruction. Table 4.4 presents the paired samples statistics comparing pre- and post-instruction scores.

Table 4.4 Paired Samples Statistics of Pre-Self-rating Scale and Post Self-rating Scale

Paired Samples Statistics				
		Mean	**SD**	**Std. Error Mean**
Pair 1	pre-attitude	3.62	.43	.07
	post-attitude	4.11	.74	.12
Pair 2	pre-source culture knowledge	3.53	.52	.08
	post-source culture knowledge	3.96	.68	.11
Pair 3	pre-international culture knowledge	2.51	.46	.07
	post-international culture knowledge	3.43	.64	.10
Pair 4	pre-skills	3.61	.70	.11
	post-skills	3.09	.42	.07

Attitude improved from a pre-test mean of 3.62 (SD = 0.43) to a post-test mean of 4.11 (SD = 0.74), suggesting that participants developed a more positive and open orientation toward intercultural interactions. The relatively higher post-test standard deviation (SD = 0.74) implies increased variability in self-perception following the intervention.

Source cultural knowledge also increased from 3.53 (SD = 0.52) to 3.96 (SD = 0.68), indicating a stronger understanding of participants' own cultural context. Similarly, international cultural knowledge demonstrated a notable increase from 2.51 (SD = 0.46) to 3.43 (SD = 0.64), reflecting enhanced awareness and understanding of international cultural perspectives.

In contrast, skills showed a decrease from 3.61 (SD = 0.70) to 3.09 (SD = 0.42). This decline could be interpreted as a shift in participants' self-assessment following the intervention, possibly due to increased awareness of the complexity of intercultural

skills, leading to a more critical and realistic self-evaluation (a common effect in reflective self-rating studies). Overall, the descriptive data suggest significant positive gains in attitude and knowledge components, while the reduction in self-rating skills may warrant further qualitative investigation to understand participants' evolving self-perceptions.

To better respond to research question two, the quantitative results from the pre- and post-self-rating scales were compared using a paired t-test (Table 4.5). Statistical analyses revealed significant improvements across multiple dimensions of intercultural competence following the intervention. For attitudes, a mean difference of –0.50 (SD = 0.96) between pre- and post-test scores was observed, $t(39) = –3.25$, $p = .002$, with a 95% confidence interval of [–0.80, –0.19]. The moderate effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.51$) suggests that the program effectively enhanced participants' openness, curiosity, and willingness to engage with diverse cultures. Similarly, for source cultural knowledge, the mean difference of –0.43 (SD = 0.90) was statistically significant, $t(39) = –3.01$, $p = .005$, with a 95% CI of [–0.72, –0.15], and a medium effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.48$). This indicates that the intervention encouraged participants to reflect more critically on their own cultural norms, values, and communication styles. The most substantial gains were observed in international cultural knowledge, where a significant mean difference of –0.92 (SD = 0.85) was found, $t(39) = –6.85$, $p < .001$, with a 95% CI of [–1.19, –0.65]. In contrast, results for intercultural skills revealed a significant increase in the mean score (M= +0.52, sd=0.95), $t(39)=3.41$, $p =.002$, with a 95% CI of [0.21, 0.82]. However, this change represented a decrease in participants' self-related intercultural skills, as indicated by a moderate negative effect size (Cohen's $d = -0.54$). Overall, a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.08$) indicates that participants acquired considerable understanding of global cultural practices, norms, and communicative behaviours, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in fostering global competence.

Table 4.5 Paired-Samples t-test of the Pre-self-rating Scale and Post-self-rating Scale

Paired Samples Test										
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Cohen's *d*
		Mean	SD	SEM	95% CID Lower	95% CID Upper				
Pair 1	pre_attitude - post_attitude	-.50	.96	.15	-.80	-.19	-3.25	39	.002	0.51
Pair 2	pre_source culture knowledge - post_source culture knowledge	.43	.90	.14	-.72	-.149	-3.01	39	.005	0.48
Pair 3	pre_international culture knowledge - post_international knowledge	.92	.85	.13	-1.19	-.65	-6.85	39	.000	1.08
Pair 4	pre-skills post-skills	.52	.95	.15	.21	.82	3.41	39	.002	-0.54

Note ***p < .001, **p < .01

4.3.2 Results of the Pre-ICC-test and Post-ICC test

While the ICC self-rating scale assessed ICC subjectively, the ICC test provided an objective measure of students' competence. The test was designed not only to evaluate overall ICC understanding but also to assess each component of the test individually including total score, ICC introduction, source culture knowledge, international culture knowledge, skills and attitude. In addition, the test measured students' ability to analyse intercultural cases, offering further insight into their practical application of knowledge. The results of the pre-and post-instruction ICC test are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Paired Samples Statistics of Pre and Post ICC Test

Paired Samples Statistics				
		Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pre_total_score	43.45	9.44	1.49
	post_total_score	56.75	10.88	1.72
Pair 2	pre_ICC_introduction	13.00	4.78	.75
	post_ICC_introduction	15.35	5.90	.93
Pair 3	pre_source culture knowledge	5.30	2.50	.39
	post_source culture knowledge	7.65	3.16	.50

Table 4.6 (continued)

Paired Samples Statistics				
		Mean	**SD**	**Std. Error Mean**
Pair 4	pre_international culture knowledge	4.60	2.08	.33
	post_international culture knowledge	5.75	2.79	.44
Pair 5	pre_skills	14.25	3.68	.58
	post_skills	17.40	4.68	.74
Pair 6	pre_attitude	4.75	3.25	.51
	post_attitude	7.25	3.19	.50
Pair 7	pre_case_analysis	1.55	1.60	.25
	post_case_analysis	3.35	3.34	.52
N	40			

A clear improvement was observed in overall performance, with the total score increasing from a pre-test mean of 43.45 (SD = 9.44) to a post-test mean of 56.75 (SD = 10.88), reflecting a mean gain of 13.30 points, from low performance to moderate performance in mean score range. This marked increase indicates that the intervention significantly enhanced the participants' ICC-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Notable domain-specific gains were observed. Source cultural knowledge improved from 5.30 (SD = 2.50) to 7.65 (SD = 3.16), a mean increase of 2.35 points, suggesting a deeper understanding of participants' own cultural frameworks. Similarly, international cultural knowledge rose from 4.60 (SD = 2.08) to 5.75 (SD = 2.79), indicating improved awareness of cross-cultural concepts. A significant improvement was seen in skills, increasing from 14.25 (SD = 4.68) to 17.40 (SD = 4.68), as well as in attitude, which rose by 2.5 points (from 4.75 to 7.25), reflecting a more positive and open orientation toward intercultural engagement. The largest relative improvement was recorded in case analysis, which more than doubled from 1.55 (SD = 1.60) to 3.35 (SD = 3.34), underscoring an enhanced ability to critically apply ICC principles to real-world scenarios.

To comprehensively address research question two, the pre- and post-test results were further analysed using a paired t-test. The outcomes of this analysis are summarized in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Paired-Samples T-test of the Pre-ICC Test and Post-ICC Test

Paired Samples Test										
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Cohen's *d*
		Mean	SD	SEM	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper				
Pair 1	pre_total score post_total_score	-13.30	9.50	1.50	-16.33	-10.26	-8.85	39	.000	1.40
Pair 2	pre_ICC_introduction post_ICC_introduction	-2.35	5.66	.89	-4.16	-.53	-2.62	39	.012	0.41
Pair 3	pre_source_culture_ knowledge post_source_culture_ knowledge	-2.35	3.38	.53	-3.43	-1.26	-4.39	39	.000	0.69
Pair 4	pre_international_ culture_knowledge post_international_ culture_knowledge	-1.15	3.10	.49	-2.14	-.15	-2.34	39	.024	0.37
Pair 5	pre_skills-post_skills	-3.15	4.57	.72	-4.61	-1.68	-4.35	39	.000	0.69
Pair 6	pre_attitude post_attitude	-2.50	3.75	.59	-3.70	-1.29	-4.21	39	.000	0.67
Pair 7	pre_case_analysis post_case_analysis	-1.80	2.66	.42	-2.65	-.94	-4.27	39	.000	0.68
N	40									

Note ***p < .001, **p < .01

Firstly, participants showed a moderate improvement in their understanding of ICC concepts in the introduction section. Mean scores increased from 13.00 (SD = 4.78) to 15.35 (SD = 5.90), t (39) = -2.62, p = .012, with a medium effect size (Cohen's d = 0.41). Secondly, there was a statistically significant increase in students' source cultural knowledge. Scores rose from M = 5.30 (SD = 2.50) to M = 7.65 (SD = 3.16), t (39) = -4.39, p < .001, reflecting a medium-to-large effect size (d = 0.69). This result suggests that the intervention effectively reinforced students' awareness of their own cultural

background. Thirdly, participants also demonstrated a significant gain in international cultural knowledge. Mean scores increased from M = 5.15 to 6.30 (inferred from mean difference = -1.15), t (39) = -2.34, p = .024, with a small-to-medium effect size (d = 0.37). While the effect size is smaller than other dimensions, the improvement remained statistically meaningful. Fourthly, skills improved from pre- to post-test with a significant mean difference of -3.15, t (39) = -4.35, p < .001, indicating a medium-to-large effect size (d = 0.69). These results revealed that students made substantial gains in applying ICC-related skills. Fifthly, Students' attitudes also improved significantly. A mean difference of -2.50, t (39) = -4.21, p < .001, with an effect size of d = 0.67, suggest moderate to substantial growth in openness and willingness to engage across cultures. Lastly, improvements in students' case analysis ability were evident. The pre-post mean difference was -1.80, t (39) = -4.27, p < .001, with a medium-to-large effect size (d = 0.68), indicating strengthened capacity to apply ICC knowledge in real-life scenarios.

In summary, when the extent of improvement across all components is ranked, the most substantial gains were funded in source cultural knowledge, followed by skills, attitude, case analysis and international cultural knowledge.

4.3.3 Results of the Class Observation

To capture the real-time application of intercultural knowledge and skills, classroom observation was employed to directly observe how students engage with each other during group-work intercultural exercises, such as simulations, role-playing, guest-speaker workshops. These observations lasted 40 to 60 minutes, depending on the duration of each group activity. Using an observation checklist, three primary themes (attitude, knowledge, skill) and some subthemes were identified, which aligned with those discussed in reflective writing and model validation semi-structured interview. The detailed findings are presented in Appendix F.

The first theme, attitude, reflected students' openness, empathy, and willingness to engage with cultural differences, which was most evident through active participation. Fourteen instances were recorded during group discussions where students contributed particularly in small-group tasks, displaying readiness to share and respond to diverse viewpoints. Additionally, 42 instances of students asking questions about unfamiliar customs or values during the guest speaker session demonstrated

genuine curiosity. For example, one participant inquired about the differences between traditional clothing in India and Pakistan.

Moreover, in a simulation game named "Create a Culture", students groups invented 5-10 words with arbitrary sounds (e.g., Kopa=friend), then assigned cultural values to words (e.g., Kopa implies loyalty); After that, one must negotiated a trade using only their new language and gestures, observers noted how “foreign” terms forced new thought patterns (e.g., if time has no word, how do they agree on deadlines?), Students refrained from dismissing unfamiliar gestures or nonsensical words and instead made deliberate efforts to understand intent and meaning. Some paraphrased through body language or repeated invented terms to clarify understanding, showing persistence rather than frustration. Others smiled, nodded supportively, or waited for clarification rather than interrupting, illustrating empathy and a suspension of judgment. Overall, eight times of record about demonstrating empathy and withholding judgments.

The second theme, knowledge, was observed in students’ ability to effectively apply intercultural concepts during case-based assignments. In group discussions, 10 instances were recorded in which students referenced cultural theories or concepts to analyze events or interpret behaviours. For example, one student explained that an inadequate mobile connection could be perceived "noise" in communication. Moreover, seven instances of recognizing cultural norms and values during role-playing scenarios were noted, particularly concerning communication styles, such as high-context and low-context, power distance, individuality versus collectivism, and masculinity versus femininity. Additionally, 10 instances were recorded in which students identified how cultural variables influence behaviors and communication methods.

The third theme, skills, encompassing a wide range of observable intercultural competences. Students demonstrated eye contact properly, used affirming non-verbal cues (e.g., nodding), and engaged in attentive listening during cross-cultural exchanges, with 21 instances recorded in the tally. There was also constructive feedback provided to peers on communication strategies, with 12 instances where students advised one another on the cultural implications of behaviours such as eye contact. For example, one participant remined their group member: “You maintained strong eye contact, which is positive in many cultures, but in some Asian cultures it might feel

uncomfortable. Maybe you (other group members) may observe their (interlocutors) body language and adjust accordingly."

During debriefing sessions following intercultural role-play activities, students posed reflective follow-up questions and critically yet respectfully, evaluated peer responses in spoken forms. Nine instances of this behaviour were recorded. For instance, after a scenario involving a misunderstanding between a direct communication and an indirect communication. One student asked, “Do you think the silence from him (another group member) meant agreement or discomfort in a silent way?” Another student replied, “it could be either, depending on cultural context”. This dialogue demonstrated students’ ability to analyse communication strategies critically while maintaining a respectful tone and an open attitude toward alternative perspectives. Interestingly, during role-playing activities, participants adjusted their voice tone, and communication styles to accommodate cultural differences, with 14 instances of this occurring. However, their ability to summarize key points from diverse cultural backgrounds was less pronounced, with only five instances recorded. Additionally, students shared personal anecdotes, particularly regarding inter-ethnic misunderstandings among various minority groups in China, such as between the Dai minority and the Han people. Thirty-three instances of such sharing were recorded, which highlighted the similarities and differences in cultural practices.

Furthermore, in simulations requiring negotiation or resolution of misunderstandings, students proposed alternative strategies to bridge cultural gaps and adjust their communicative approaches. Four instances of this behaviour were noted, such as during a negotiation between a student portraying a low-context communicate and another playing a high-context communicator. One student suggested, “Maybe before we talk about the contract details, we can share more about our goals and values to build some mutual understanding?” This approach acknowledged the importance of trust and relational context in the other’s culture, helping de-escalate initial tension caused by mismatched communication styles.

Field notes indicated intercultural breakdowns. For instance, one participant stopped speaking after receiving immediate feedback that her phrases were unclear, which led to a visible blush. Additionally, during a story circle, one participant repeatedly interjected with questions or comments while another member was

presenting, despite being reminded twice. This behavior continued intuitively. Moreover, participants frequently discussed their experiences with intercultural interactions within national boundaries, among various minority groups, whenever one individual broached the topic. This suggests a limited understanding of full scope of ICC.

Statistically, the findings suggest that students demonstrated strong curiosity and engagement in intercultural discussions, alongside a solid foundation of communication skills. However, the ability to critically analyze cultural scenarios and empathize with differing perspectives was less developed.

4.3.4 Results of the reflective Writing

Reflective writing participants (hereafter, RW) demonstrated improvement across three key aspects of ICC. First, most of the participants (n=30) underwent a transformation from fear or indifference to curiosity and respect toward other cultures. This shift was accompanied by increased open-mindedness, greater willingness to adapt, and a growing appreciation for cultural diversity. Reflective entries revealed several emerging subthemes, including a deeper understanding of cultural practices and worldviews, an awareness of contrasts between their own source cultures and international ones, and an acknowledgement of how cultural values shape behaviours. Regarding skills, students demonstrated an increasing awareness and effective application of interactional strategies (n=8). They became more adept at adjusting language use, managing misunderstandings, utilizing non-verbal cues, and demonstrating cultural sensitivity in their communication. These changes in both perception and skills also fostered greater cultural introspection, communication sensitivity, and a profound awareness of cultural diversity through meaningful connections with different cultures. Participants acknowledged that successfully intercultural communication involves more than just academic understanding; it also required an open-mindedness in exploring their perspectives but also sparked motivation and enthusiasm for English language acquisition (n=15).

Perception altered following the lesson, hence motivating future plans (n=19)

"*I held a rather dismissive attitude. I thought it was just a subject that dealt with obvious differences like greetings and table manners in various cultures…towards IC studies has undergone a profound transformation.*" (RW37)

"*Before, I always thought that this course had no substantive meaning to me. I thought it was nothing more than a language barrier. I learned English well. I could overcome these difficulties. But my idea was wrong. Until I studied this course*." (RW38)

"*If I work in a multinational company, I will use active listening and open-mindedness to understand colleagues from different cultures, preventing misunderstandings.*" (RW1)

"*…not only enable me to communicate effectively but also allow me to embrace cultural differences, which I will surely apply in my future career*." (RW3)

Comparison with non-Chinese people who love China better participants' culture reflection (n=4)

"*What shocked me was that he (the guest speaker) had not only developed a deep affection for Chinese culture, but also… I think I need to learn more (about Chinese culture) as a Chinese, otherwise, it is unacceptable*." (RW34)

"*I learned that this foreign teacher stays in China because he is attracted by China's extensive and profound culture, this let me think about what I should learn if I want to learn or live in another country*." (RW11)

Enhanced communicative sensitivity through accuracy and cultural awareness (n=21)

A couple of participants wrote in the reflection that it is vital to use words, face expression, body language accurately. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" is the slang participants cited most from which the accuracy of expression is highlighted.

"*…I chose my words carefully. For example, when discussing art, I was aware that Westerners might focus more on individual expression while Chinese might emphasize the harmony of the whole.*" (RW26)

"*Third, use clear and concise language rather than the "big words" to express your views, and avoid using terms or expressions that may cause misunderstandings*." (RW30)

"*When communicating with people from some European countries, they place greater emphasis on language accuracy and logic. Therefore, we should systematically organize ourselves and provide clear viewpoints and reasons*." (RW5)

Go beyond superficial differences to explore the deeper cultural logic behind communication(n=14)

Grasp the deep cultural logic behind communication by studying cultural symbol systems (art, mythology, philosophy, language habits, idioms, etc.).

"*This exchange (painting comparison) not only broadened my horizons…a wonderful opportunity to appreciate the beauty of both Chinese and Western paintings*." (RW6)

"*Mythology is a good way to understand the origin of cultures*." (RW33)

"*Studying philosophy has helped me better understand Christianity, Buddhism and Confucianism. From there, I try to recognize the difference in the intercultural communication.*" (RW13)

"*…food is determined by geography. Chinese food is mainly grains as the large population and it is geographically not suitable for animal husbandry... After cooking, food is hot and soft and not suitable for hand-grabbing, so the Chinese invented chopsticks. There is developed animal husbandry in the West because of the marine climate. Western food is mainly meat, and meat needs to be cut, so Westerners use knives and forks*." (RW22)

"*I realized that communication with people from different culture is not only about language, but also about what kind of culture background this person is*." (RW38)

"*I first studied different cultural backgrounds under the customs, values and beliefs for in-depth study to better understanding….*" (RW19)

"*I was careful not to assume that certain gestures Doctor Majed (the guest speaker) expressed had the same meaning as in my own culture*." (RW39)

IC is everywhere and more complex than it seems; active engagement is essential(n=33)

"*…I mentioned the slow-paced lifestyle in Zhaotong, which surprised him, since life in Beijing is usually fast paced. This encounter taught me that even within the same country, cultural differences can be visible*." (RW36)

"*Finally, we integrated elements. We added Yi seasonings to Han veggies and adjusted Dai soup…my intercultural skills bridged gaps, making our dorm a harmonious, culturally rich place where we embrace differences and grow together*." (RW27)

"*…for example, I learned to be more indirect in some cultures where directness might be seen as rudeness*." (RW38)

"*I held a rather dismissive attitude. I thought it was just a subject that dealt with obvious differences like greetings and table manners in various cultures…confronted with a vast culture different from my own….*" (RW37)

"*Sometimes seeing is not believing, you have to image what it is under the ice-burg (culture)*." (RW40)

IC enhances motivation and interest in English learning (n=16)

"*Overall, this (cultural) festival was an excellent opportunity for us to explore English-speaking cultures and improve our language abilities in an enjoyable way*." (RW10)

"*This (course) open a new window for my English learning. My old approach was to do exercise, remember words, memorizing grammar. I did not expect this approach to be interesting and informative*." (RW35)

4.3.5 Results of the Model Validation Interview

To triangulate and support the quantitative data, the findings from the semi-structured interview was presented. Upon coding the interview transcripts, several prominent themes emerged. Most notably, validation interview participants (hereafter VI) initially viewed IC as a challenge, but by the end of the instruction, they saw it as an opportunity. This shift in perspectives led students to actively seek out opportunities for intercultural engagement, both during and after the course. Despite much of this engagement taking place online and students primarily learning about other cultures through IaH approaches, they demonstrated the development of strategies to overcome stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings. They also gained practical communication skills to navigate cultural conflicts and adapt more effectively to diverse cultures. Based on their experience, participants recommended inviting more foreign teachers from various cultural backgrounds into the classroom.

4.3.5.1 Cultural differences are seen as opportunities rather than barriers

While a minority of participants (n = 9) perceived cultural differences as obstacles, a greater number (n = 25) regarded them as opportunities for personal development in the era of globalization, participants explicitly noted that cross-cultural awareness helps reduce misconceptions (e.g., shaking one's head in affirmation in India) and enhances professional competitiveness. For example, "Adequate ICC potentially assists in securing employment in a multinational corporation" (VI1). "The merging of diverse cultures can stimulate creative thought, presenting various solutions to identical challenges" (VI31).

4.3.5.2 Actively participate in IC engagement in and after the classroom

Students acknowledged that classroom activities boosted their IC participation, motivated them to increase active engagement after class and they gained

Chinese culture confidence in the interaction. The excerpts confirmed the effectiveness of ICC development in IaH context. Several students mentioned about it. “The story circle forced me to listen and share. At first, I was shy, but hearing others’ stories made me open” (VI9). “Role-playing as someone from other cultures made me think differently. I had to “be” them, not just observe” (VI12). “After class, I joined an online forum to chat with foreigners, even sometimes with language gaps, and I tried using translation applications” (VI18). “I now comment on foreigners’ videos if they misunderstand Chinese culture, and I politely explain the facts” (VI 22). “About Chinese traditions and communications, I think I feel more confident about Chinese norms than before” (VI 7).

4.3.5.3 Confronting stereotypes through critical reflection and experiential learning

Participants (n=22) realized their stereotypes toward other cultures (e.g., “African people are lazy”, “Indian way of eating with fingers is not clean”) and sought to dispel them through active learning and critical thinking by emphasizing “seeing is believing” and avoiding one-sided judgments (n=8). For example, verifying information through books, movies, or direct communication (n=14). “After watching a video of Africans cooking, I looked up information and found out that it was a habit caused by resource shortages” (VI26). “My English teacher said the Indian way of eating seems unclean, but it is a good way to protect the environment by reducing disposable utensils. I agree with that” (VI20). “Only 60% of online information is credible, and it needs to be combined with personal experience” (VI22).

4.3.5.4 Adapt cross-culturally by understanding taboos and non-verbal signals (n=28)

Participants exhibited advancements in intercultural adaptation and conflict resolution during the interview. They utilized non-verbal communication adaptively, emphasizing smiles and relaxed facial expressions, enhanced their awareness of cultural taboos through prior preparation, and inquired about the other party's origin at the outset of communication to subsequently adjust their communication style accordingly. “During a trip to Laos, I used gestures to communicate when language failed, like pointing to water and noodles to ask for hot water” (non-verbal, VI6). “Some people say Chinese people are unsanitary because they don't take off their shoes before

entering a residence. I emphasized that shoes could stay warm in most of China's frigid winters. Instead, if the host asks guests to take off their shoes when entering the house, it will be misinterpreted as if looking down on them and disliking them" (conflict coping, VI7). "I only surf the internet for delicious food and good scenery before travelling. After this course, I think it is necessary to learn something about taboos. At least to show people I am trying to respect them" (awareness of taboos, VI15)."I consciously ask where he or she is from so that I can find some corresponding communication methods" (adjusted accordingly, VI31)."I found that body language is sometimes more important than words, and keeping a smile, relaxed facial expression, rather than a threatening face, is important" (VI1)."I used paraphrasing to understand the foreign customer's subtle message" (flexibility, VI9).

4.3.5.5 Evaluation and suggestions on course activities

Participants ranked the most effective training activities as inviting foreign guest teachers (n=27), providing direct practice opportunities, story circles (n=19), promoting cultural empathy by sharing personal experiences, and role playing (n=12), simulating real-life scenarios to improve resilience (n=9). Besides, they suggested increasing the frequency of communication with foreign teachers (n=21), integrating online resources (e.g., short video analysis) (n=10), and expanding practical opportunities (e.g., international pen pal programs) (n=7).

Overall, the findings suggest that students preferred activities that went beyond theoretical instruction to emphasize experiential, dialogic, and reflective practices. These activities enabled students to actively construct intercultural understanding and competence. There is a clear recommendation to balance in-person interaction with creative online resources and provide more frequent, structured opportunities for real-world intercultural practice.

4.3.5.6 An Updated Model after the Implementation and Validation

The model evolved through three iterative versions: a theoretically-grounded first version constructed prior to the NA (Figure 2.9 in Chapter 2), a second version refined based on NA results (Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4), and a final, recommended third version validated through implementation (Figure 4.2). While the bottom and middle layers of the model remained consistent, the top layer underwent significant refinement. A key insight from the NA was that students already possessed a positive

attitude towards other cultures. This finding shifted the instructional focus from merely establishing the interrelated relationships between attitude, knowledge, and skill to strategically sequencing their cultivation. Consequently, the model incorporates the sequential logic of Deardorff's (2006) process model, which positions attitude as the foundational prerequisite. The current framework positions attitude as the foundational prerequisite for developing ICC, because without a willingness to engage openly and non-judgmentally, learners are unlikely to invest effort in deeper cultural learning (from the ICC test and model validation interview, students ICC knowledge is superficial, they sometimes trapped in stereotypes about other cultures, make judgement easily). A cultivated attitude—marked by curiosity, openness, and respect—provides the motivational energy that drives learners to seek and construct intercultural knowledge, thus a cultivated attitude serves as the essential fuel for motivating knowledge acquisition, which in turn creates the necessary precondition for practicing ICC skills in authentic communication experiences. Thus, the third model version conceptualizes the relationship not as a linear path but as an iterative cycle, where initial attitude facilitates knowledge and skills, which then reinforce and deepen the initial attitude, creating a virtuous circle of ICC development.

Furthermore, the model was refined through three key revisions, each empirically supported by the study's findings, to enhance its scope and pedagogical structure. First, the specific concept of "MOOCs" was generalized to the broader category of "digital platform-based ICC preparation." Interview data, which revealed that students access intercultural content through diverse platforms like TikTok and WeChat, justified this adaptation to enhance the model's flexibility and applicability. Second, "reflective writing" was expanded to "reflective work" to include a more diverse set of reflective activities, such as oral presentations. This revision was directly informed by student interviews, which indicated that some students who were less engaged in written reflection were highly talkative and reflective in oral formats. Third, the model was enhanced with an additional, experiential component: structured intercultural exposure within the classroom, for instance through interactions with foreign guest speakers. This addition was a direct response to student suggestions during the model validation phase, which called for more opportunities to interact with foreigners. Together, these revisions create a more comprehensive and structured

pedagogical sequence: students' enhanced ICC attitudes and accumulated knowledge form the foundation for reflective work, while direct intercultural experiences provide immediate, authentic material for this reflection, thereby deepening their learning.

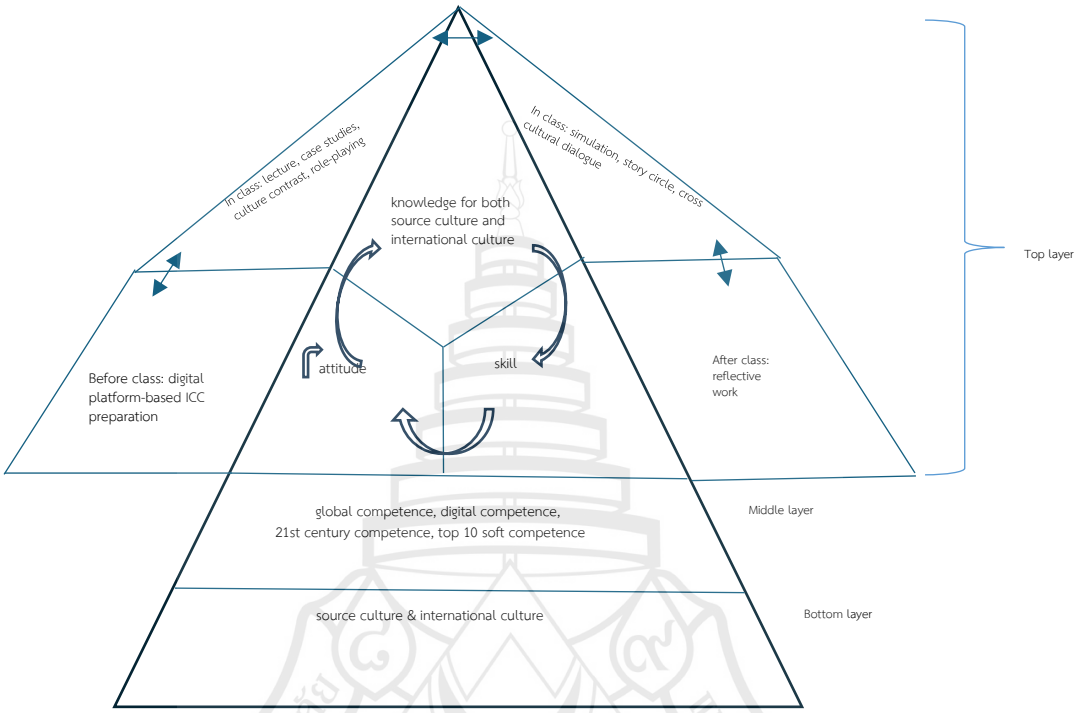


Figure 4.2 Triad-Layers ICC Model (3rd version)

In summary, the findings presented in this chapter not only demonstrated the efficacy of the TLICCM in addressing the identified needs but also provided the empirical foundation for its final refinement. Quantitative data from pre- and post-intervention assessments revealed statistically significant improvements in students' intercultural knowledge and attitudes, thereby validating the model's core sequential logic where a positive attitude serves as the prerequisite for knowledge acquisition. Qualitative evidence from semi-structured interviews and reflective work further confirmed the model's impact, indicating enhanced adaptability in students' communication skills and a deeper, more critical engagement with intercultural experiences. Crucially, these qualitative insights—such as students' diverse digital habits and their preference for varied reflective formats—directly informed the key revisions to the model, culminating in the validated third version described in section 4.3.5.6. Together, these convergent mixed-methods results provide a robust empirical

justification for the updated TLICCM. The subsequent chapter will interpret these findings in depth, examining their alignment with established theory, discussing the pedagogical implications of the refined model, and considering the contributions and limitations of the study within the broader context of intercultural education in Chinese general universities.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a comprehensive synthesis and interpretation of the study's findings, situating them within the broader context of ICC theory and pedagogy. Building upon the empirical results presented in Chapter 4, the discussion revisits the initial challenges identified in the NA and evaluates the efficacy of the TLICCM IN addressing them. The chapter is structured to first conclude and discuss the findings from NA. After that, it deliberates the discussion for the effectiveness of TLICCM. Subsequently, it delineates the practical implications for educators, acknowledges the study's limitations, and concludes with targeted recommendations for future research and instructional practice, ultimately affirming the study's contribution to fostering ICC within the context of Chinese GUs.

5.1 Conclusion of the Findings

The findings from self-rating scale in Phase I show that students' ICC attitude (Mean=3.61, SD=.42) and source cultural knowledge (Mean=3.53, SD=.52) are at a high level, and there is a partial need of instruction, while the scores for skill and international cultural knowledge are moderate (Mean=3.10, SD=.42) and low (mean=2.50, SD=.47), respectively, and they are at a moderate and high need of development. Furthermore, the findings from semi-structured interview in Phase I indicate that students in GUs need to enhance their intercultural engagement, despite maintaining generally positive attitudes toward other cultures. Limited opportunities for intercultural interaction in the GU context appear to constrain the development of ICC. Moreover, the traditional exam-oriented and rote-learning pedagogy in China restricts practical skill development, highlighting the need for hands-on training approaches such as simulations, cross-cultural dialogue, and experiential exercises. While students demonstrated strong knowledge of their source culture, deficits in international understanding reveal a structured imbalance, which may challenge their

effectiveness in broader intercultural contexts. These findings underscore the importance of designing instructional strategies that integrate both the source and internation cultural perspective, enabling students to interpret cultural cues accurately and engage meaningfully in intercultural communication.

The study further identifies that non-verbal communication and awareness of cultural taboos are among the weakest ICC components. Qualitative data revealed that students often struggle to recall numerous ethnic taboos, and non-verbal communication, being inherently implicit, poses additional recognition and analysis challenges. The participants' socio-cultural environment, particularly in Yunnan Province with its rich ethnic diversity, may contribute to a cognitive overload, limiting the assimilation of international cultural knowledge. While their diverse background potentially fosters baseline intercultural awareness, it may paradoxically impede the efficient encoding and application of new cultural schemas. These insights highlight the need for explicit scaffolding of non-verbal and culturally sensitive communication skills, and pedagogical activities such as story circles were found to be promising in making these aspects more explicit.

The findings also revealed that while students are generally open to new perspectives, they exhibit limited adaptability in real-time intercultural communication. They demonstrate competence in explaining intercultural misunderstandings yet struggle to adjust their communication strategies and manage conflicts effectively. This suggests a gap between cognitive understanding and behavioural application, which can be addressed through experiential learning approaches, including role-playing, simulations, and reflective practices. MOOCs were recognized as valuable tools for ICC development, offering indirect intercultural exposure, though their effectiveness is contingent on consistent pre-class engagement and scaffolding. Limited gains in the ICC introduction section indicate the importance of monitoring student preparation to maximize learning outcomes from online resources.

Moreover, the analysis of pre- and post-test results in Phase III confirmed the overall effectiveness of the ICC instructional model. Significant improvements were observed across all components, including attitudes, knowledge, and skills, with a large overall effect size ($d = 1.40$). Notably, although the mean score for intercultural skills showed a statistically significant increase ($M = +0.52$, $SD = 0.95$), $t(39) = 3.41$, p

= .002, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.21, 0.82] in pre- and post ICC test in Phase III, the self-assessed intercultural skills decreased slightly in the self-rating of NA in Phase I (from Mean=3.60, SD= 0.69 to Mean=3.09, SD=0.42), this reflected heightened metacognitive awareness rather than a decline in ability, aligning with phenomena described by metacognitive and Dunning-Kruger research. International cultural knowledge showed the largest perceived improvement, though actual performance gains were modest, suggesting a gap between self-perception and demonstrated competence. This underscores the need for instructional balance between source and international culture content and emphasizes the importance of activities that foster deep understanding rather than surface-level knowledge acquisition.

Reflective writing and interviews further highlighted attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral development. Students reported a shift from initial apprehension toward curiosity, open-mindedness, and respect for other cultures. They developed deeper knowledge of both source and international cultures and an appreciation for underlying cultural logic beyond superficial markers. Skill development included enhanced interaction management, effective non-verbal communication, and cultural sensitivity, reflecting improved behavioral adaptability. Participants also demonstrated motivation for English learning linked to meaningful intercultural engagement. Classroom observations corroborated these findings, revealing active participation, tolerance for ambiguity, and the application of intercultural concepts in discussions, simulations, and role-plays. Nonetheless, occasional communication breakdowns and ethnocentric tendencies highlighted the need for further scaffolding to broaden students' conceptualization of culture and ICC beyond national or ethnic boundaries.

Likewise, findings from the class observation showed that participants actively contributed to group discussions and posed questions during guest speaker sessions, indicating openness, empathy, and a willingness to interact with cultural differences, which is the hallmarks of the affective dimension. In simulation activities like "Create a Culture," students persevered and suspended judgment to comprehend foreign gestures, demonstrating tolerance for ambiguity and the cognitive flexibility emphasized in effective intercultural learning. They also applied intercultural concepts such as high- and low-context communication, individualism and collectivism during discussions and role-playing, reflecting an emerging understanding of how cultural

norms shape behaviors and communication styles (Hall, 1976; Hofstede et al., 2010). Furthermore, participants exhibited attentive listening, adaptive non-verbal behaviors, and critical evaluation of communication tactics, suggesting growing behavioral adaptability. Besides, in multicultural conversations, they offered constructive comments and adjusted their communication approach.

Finally, the findings confirm the overall effectiveness of the TLICCM. The model addresses structural and pedagogical gaps by balancing source culture knowledge with international cultural knowledge, bridging theory-practice divides, and transforming communication challenges into learning opportunities. It operationalizes social constructivist and experiential learning principles, facilitating co-construction of knowledge and iterative practice. Measurable improvements in intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and strategic communication indicate that the model successfully compensates for the systemic lack of coordinated ICC initiatives in GUs. These results demonstrate that ICC development is a dynamic, socially mediated, and experiential process, achievable within domestic educational contexts without reliance on physical mobility, thereby providing a scalable framework for cultivating globally competent graduates in Chinese higher education.

5.2 Discussion of TLICCM

The findings from the model validation offer critical insights for each layer of the TLICCM. Regarding the bottom layer, the findings suggested that students' ICC knowledge is superficial rather than deep. This resonates with previous research by Baltag (2017) who noted that superficial knowledge—e.g., formal, institutional, and visible aspects of a culture—is easier to obtain than deep culture—e.g., the informal, often invisible patterns of everyday life—which encompasses values, beliefs, perceptions, and communication styles. On the other hand, the model provides a practical solution to fostering intercultural competence by balancing source culture awareness with international cultural knowledge, aligning with findings from Wu et al. (2013) and Peng et al. (2020) that emphasize the importance of cultivating both local rootedness and global awareness. To better address this cultural balance, instructors

should encourage students to obtain knowledge of both the superficial and deep dimensions of both cultures. Thus, it is recommended that instructors explicitly identify these types of cultural knowledge and ensure both are incorporated in the curriculum.

Furthermore, in the middle layer, the inclusion of complementary competencies responds to the call for implementing internationalization-at-home strategies. To better address this, the TLICCM encourages students to maintain the valuable attributes of their Confucian heritage while simultaneously developing a more international outlook, thus fostering a dual cultural identity.

The top layer provides a theoretically grounded, pedagogically coherent, and contextually sensitive framework for developing ICC in Chinese GUs. By integrating digital platform-based preparation with active in-class experiential activities and structured reflection, the model operationalizes both social constructivist and experiential learning principles, ensuring that knowledge is actively co-constructed and applied. This design responds directly to the research gap regarding the lack of a comprehensive and coordinated ICC instructional model for GUs. Moreover, the model bridges the theory-practice divide in digital instruction by embedding pre-class learning into a structured pedagogical sequence, thereby fostering meaningful application and the development of strategic competence—a finding that confirms prior assertions that ICC development requires integrated attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral engagement (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Liu & Zhang, 2021). This integrated approach specifically addresses the problem of fragmented ICC initiatives. However, based on the validation, the top layer of the model underwent various refinements to improve its applicability.

The validation confirmed that each component in the top layer works well, and the refinements were directly informed by the findings. For instance, the identification of pre-judgement and stereotypes in the NA led to the deliberate treatment of a positive attitude as the starting point of the instruction, which is then sequentially followed by ICC knowledge acquisition and application of ICC skills. This refinement is pedagogically sound because it aligns with both the empirical findings of this study and established principles of effective pedagogy. Furthermore, other refinements, such as generalizing from MOOCs to digital platform-based preparation and from reflective writing to reflective work, were implemented to respond to students' suggestions and

increase the model's flexibility. Finally, the model was enhanced with additional, structured opportunities for intercultural exposure, such as interactions with guest speakers and pen pal programs. These experiences are designed to provide authentic material for the varied forms of reflective work, thereby closing the loop between experience, reflection, and deeper learning.

Overall, the model transforms communication breakdowns and intercultural challenges into learning opportunities, leveraging peer scaffolding and instructor guidance to cultivate resilience, adaptability, and critical reflection. This aligns with the experiential learning emphasis on iterative cycles of experience, reflection, and experimentation, while also directly addressing contextual challenges such as Confucian-inspired classroom norms, student risk-aversion, and resource limitations in GUs (Meng et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2022). By doing so, the model provides a needed structure in an area where institutional practice has historically lacked coherence.

Critically, the TLICCM operationalized a holistic approach to ICC by simultaneously targeting attitudes, knowledge, and skills. The findings indicate measurable improvements in students' intercultural openness, cultural knowledge, and strategic communication, demonstrating the model's capacity to meet the stated research objectives. This confirms that a structured, context-sensitive framework can compensate for the systemic lack of coordinated ICC initiatives in GUs, as initially highlighted. This outcome further confirms that a carefully structured, context-sensitive pedagogy can compensate for the resource constraints typical of GUs, providing an inclusive pathway for ICC development within domestic educational contexts (Rai et al., 2023; Sercu, 2023).

Finally, by linking theoretical constructs, empirical findings, and pedagogical practices, this study concludes that ICC is not a static skill but a dynamic, socially mediated, and experiential process. This reconceptualization directly addresses the conceptual gap in existing GU ICC practice. The TLICCM thus represents a robust, evidence-based model that bridges policy goals, instructional practice, and student outcomes, offering a scalable and adaptable framework for fostering globally competent graduates in Chinese higher education.

The effectiveness of TLICCM is validated after the implementation. To begin with, the examination of self-rating compared to objective ICC test uncovers a

significant metacognitive transition that directly influences the educational strategy required to bridge the theory-practice divide. While the average score for intercultural skills demonstrated a statistically significant enhancement in the objective ICC test, a marked decline was noted in the self-rating skills segment. This pattern presumably indicates a favorable change in self-perception, characterized by increased metacognitive awareness resulting in more critical self-evaluation, rather than a genuine decline in capability. This view, bolstered by metacognitive theory and aligned with the Dunning-Kruger effect (Banner and colleagues, 2025; Kruger & Dunning, 1999), is additionally corroborated by a moderate negative effect size (Cohen's d = – 0.54). This finding emphasizes that effective ICC pedagogy must extend beyond mere knowledge transmission; it must integrate structured reflective practice to cultivate the precise self-assessment essential for closing the divide between cognitive comprehension and behavioral proficiency, a fundamental challenge highlighted in the introduction.

Moreover, the comparison of pre- and post-tests offers compelling evidence that the TLICCM effectively fills the essential research void: the absence of a practical, organized instructional model for GUs. The model's adoption resulted in quantifiable improvements in all ICC components, exhibiting a substantial overall impact size (d = 1.40). This illustrates that a meticulously crafted educational intervention can successfully address the structural resource limitations and disjointed instruction characteristic of GUs. The findings demonstrate that significant development of intercultural competence (ICC) is attainable within a domestic, resource-constrained environment via IaH strategies (Beelen & Jones, 2015), thereby directly contesting the structural inequities that restrict international learning opportunities for GU students and offering a practical, evidence-based framework for achieving equitable internationalization results.

A closer examination of specific components, however, reveals areas for refinement. Integrating MOOCs as pre-class materials can expand students' exposure to global content, addressing the structural limitations of GUs while supporting autonomous, self-paced learning. However, the limited improvements in the ICC introduction section underscore the need for instructors to monitor students' preparation with MOOCs more rigorously and provide clearer guidance on how these materials

should be used. Chapters 1 to 4 of the instructional plan were designed to introduce foundational ICC concepts—such as the relationship between communication and culture, cultural perception, and the links between communication and language—to prepare students for subsequent classroom activities. Despite this design intention, the test results indicated a relatively low effect size (d = 0.41), pointing to only modest gains in students' foundational ICC knowledge compared with other course components. This outcome is echoed in the interview data. As three participants remarked, "I think it is the same as a normal English class, I feel bored and difficult to hear many terms" (P13). The difficulty in understanding terms likely reflects that the preview work through MOOCs was not fully implemented, as all key terminology had already been introduced online but was not adequately reinforced in class due to insufficient checking of students' preparation. Furthermore, MOOCs were not ranked among the favourable activities by any students in the model validation interviews, suggesting that without active facilitation and integration, online materials alone may not effectively support ICC development. These findings align with previous research emphasizing that students' engagement with preparatory online materials significantly influences their ability to grasp complex theoretical concepts in class (Means et al., 2014). Without sufficient scaffolding and accountability for pre-class learning, students often perceive theoretical contents as abstract and disconnected from practice, leading to lower motivation and increased cognitive overload during lectures (Chen & Law, 2016; van Alten et al., 2019).

The analysis of international cultural knowledge reveals a critical discrepancy between students' self-perceived mastery and their objectively measured proficiency, highlighting a significant pedagogical challenge rooted in curricular imbalance. Specifically, the analysis of international cultural knowledge reveals a critical pedagogical challenge that directly addresses the research gaps concerning curricular imbalance and the theory-practice divide. A notable disparity emerged between students' self-perception and their demonstrated proficiency: while this component showed the most significant enhancement on the self-assessment scale, its actual progress on the objective ICC test was minimal, with a modest effect size (d = 0.37).This finding diverges from some previous research (e.g., Thompson, 2010) and points to context-specific issues in instructional design. This discrepancy can be

understood as a direct consequence of the identified curricular imbalance. While the intention to enhance students' identity and to remediate CCA by reinforcing source culture was valuable, the instructional emphasis may have been disproportionate, thereby limiting the depth and retention of international cultural content. More fundamentally, the pedagogy, potentially focused on transmitting a "wide range of international cultural facts," may have fostered an "illusion of fluency"—creating the impression of learning without fostering the deep, critical understanding necessary for application. Consequently, students retained surface-level information that inflated their self-ratings but failed to equip them for the analytical demands of the test. This underscores a key limitation of traditional GU pedagogy: it often prioritizes breadth of knowledge over depth of comprehension, leaving a gap between perceived and actual competence that the TLICCM may address through more immersive and application-based instructional strategies.

In contrast to these challenges, the findings on reflective writing illustrate significant and holistic development across the attitude, knowledge, and skill dimensions of ICC. This holistic progress demonstrates the efficacy of the TLICCM as a structured, effective model for GUs, providing a replicable framework that systematically targets all core components of ICC, which was previously absent. Participants reported a transition from initial apprehension to curiosity and respect toward other cultures, accompanied by heightened open-mindedness and a readiness to adapt, reflecting the affective dimension of ICC as theorized by Deardorff (2006). Reflective writing further revealed inductively derived subthemes, including deeper understanding of cultural practices and worldviews, an awareness of contrasts between source and international cultures—a finding that directly addresses the research gap concerning the imbalance in cultural knowledge by demonstrating the model's success in fostering a comparative and balanced perspective. These outcomes were aligned with Byram's (1997) notion of savoir être—the disposition to decentre from one's own cultural frame and engage with the difference.

In terms of skills, students demonstrated personal growth in managing interactional strategies, including adjusting language use, handling misunderstandings, employing non-verbal cues effectively, and showing cultural sensitivity, which is the hallmarks of behavioural adaptability (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Fantini, 2009).

This tangible development of practical skills is a direct result of the experiential engagement built into the model, effectively countering the limited opportunities for practice in traditional GU contexts. Notably, participants highlighted the importance of moving beyond superficial cultural markers (e.g., greetings and table manners) to explore the "deep cultural logic" underlying communication, such as mythology, values, and historical influences. This reflective cultural introspection resonates with (Kolb, 2014) experiential learning model and, crucially, signifies a fundamental shift away from the pedagogical focus on passive knowledge towards active, critical analysis. Additionally, participants recognized that ICC extends beyond theoretical understanding, requiring active engagement and practical application in diverse contexts (Jackson, 2015), a realization that underscores the model's success in overcoming the passive learning paradigm. The instruction not only broadened cultural perspectives but also ignited enthusiasm for English language learning, suggesting that ICC development can motivate learners by connecting linguistic skills with meaningful cultural exploration (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). These findings underscore the efficacy of experiential and reflective pedagogies in cultivating sensitivity, flexibility, and motivation, enabling learners to navigate complex intercultural environments with greater confidence and competence.

The findings from the model validation interviews provide compelling evidence of participants' growth across all three dimensions of ICC. This comprehensive evolution confirms the TLICCM as a systematic and successful model for GUs, illustrating its ability to systematically foster ICC in a culture that previously lacked such frameworks. Initially, students transitioned from perceiving cultural differences as barriers to viewing them as opportunities for personal and professional development in an increasingly globalized world. This attitudinal shift aligns with Deardorff's (2006) pyramid model and was facilitated by the model's provision of experiential engagement through activities like story circles and role-playing, which directly counter the traditional lack of such opportunities. Participants' increased willingness to explore cultural nuances both during and beyond the classroom suggests that the instructional design successfully fostered intrinsic motivation for intercultural learning (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

Through experiential and reflective activities such as story circles and role-playing, students actively confronted stereotypes and developed critical cultural awareness—essential cognitive components of ICC (Byram, 1997; Jackson, 2015). This represents a fundamental shift from a pedagogical focus on passive knowledge to one of active co-construction and critical analysis. The findings also highlight advancements in behavioural adaptability, as students reported effectively navigating non-verbal communication and adjusting interactional styles. This growth in practical skills underscores the model's success in bridging the theory-practice divide through applied learning. Importantly, participants' ability to link ICC to enhance confidence in their own cultural heritage directly addresses the imbalance between source and international cultural knowledge by demonstrating that intercultural engagement, as designed in this model, strengthens cultural identity while fostering global empathy (Phipps & Guilherme, 2004). Moreover, student suggestions for more authentic experiences (e.g., international pen pal programs) confirm the value they place on the experiential approach's central to the model. In conclusion, these findings confirm that the integrated IaH and experiential learning approach of the TLICCM offers a comprehensive solution to the interconnected research gaps, effectively preparing GU students for global engagement and addressing IaH.

The classroom observations provide tangible, behavioral evidence of the TLICCM's impact, directly demonstrating its capacity to address the core research gaps. Findings showed that participants actively contributed to group discussions and posed questions during guest speaker sessions, indicating openness, empathy, and a willingness to interact with cultural differences. This observed affective engagement is a direct outcome of the model's structured, experiential design, which creates a supportive environment for interaction that was previously lacking in GUs. In simulation activities like "Create a Culture," students persevered and suspended judgment to comprehend foreign gestures, demonstrating tolerance for ambiguity and cognitive flexibility (Jackson, 2015). This represents a crucial shift away from a pedagogical focus on passive knowledge towards active, inquiry-based learning. They also applied theoretical concepts such as high- and low-context communication during role-playing, showing an ability to integrate and apply knowledge that addresses the imbalance between source and international cultural knowledge on a practical level.

Furthermore, participants exhibited attentive listening and adaptive non-verbal behaviors, suggesting growing behavioral adaptability (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). This observed skill development is a direct result of the limited opportunities for experiential engagement being systematically remedied by the model's interactive activities.

Simultaneously, the observational data from instances of communicative failure provide crucial evidence of the persistent challenges that the TLICCM is designed to mitigate, thereby validating the ongoing relevance of the research gaps. One participant's response to ambiguous phrasing—discontinuing communication and displaying embarrassment—illustrates a low tolerance for ambiguity and a deficiency in adaptive confidence, directly stemming from the historically limited opportunities for experiential engagement in safe, scaffolded environments (Macintyre et al., 1998). This withdrawal, instead of efforts to reformulate, makes the theory-practice gap visible and underscores the critical need for the very kind of structured, real-time feedback that the model provides (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Likewise, behaviors such as persistently interrupting colleagues explicitly illustrate the ethnocentric communication styles identified as a barrier, highlighting that the model's ongoing scaffolding is essential to cultivate the "intercultural mindfulness" needed to overcome deep-seated habits (Ting-toomey & Kurogi, 1998). These observed struggles do not negate the model's effectiveness but rather confirm the necessity of its continued, structured application to fully address the complex, layered nature of the research gaps.

In conclusion, the TLICCM intervention demonstrated significant efficacy in fostering key dimensions of intercultural competence among Chinese GU students. The study's mixed-methods data confirmed statistically significant improvements in students' intercultural attitudes, their knowledge of both source and international cultures, and their self-reported practical skills. However, the implementation also revealed specific areas for pedagogical refinement in future iterations.

First, the pedagogical sequence should be enhanced by strengthening its bookends: digital platform-based preparation should be more critically engaged, and reflective work should be diversified in form and function to deepen the processing of experiences. Second, the model would benefit from a greater emphasis on authentic, interactional exposure by integrating direct engagement with cultural informants and

sustained, project-based tasks such as online collaborative projects or pen-pal programs. These strategies would directly address the theory-practice divide by creating more opportunities for the application of knowledge. Finally, to ensure the model's continued relevance in a complex global landscape, the very conceptualization of "culture" within the framework could be extended beyond a national paradigm to encompass intra-national ethnic, linguistic, and regional diversity.

By incorporating these refinements, the TLICCM can evolve into an even more robust tool, ultimately providing a comprehensive and scalable pathway for developing globally competent graduates within the Chinese higher education context.

5.3 Implications for TLICCM Pedagogical Practice

Regarding implications, for educators and curriculum designers, the model provides a blueprint for integrating ICC into GU curricula. To address this issue, it is recommended that instructors incorporate short in-class quizzes or peer discussion at the start of each session to monitor students' comprehension of MOOC materials and reinforce key concepts. In addition, adopting more interactive teaching strategies, such as concept mapping, may help bridge the gap between abstract theories and their practical applications.

Furthermore, the instructional design must maintain an equitable balance between source cultural knowledge and international cultural perspectives to cultivate truly effective intercultural communicators. This balanced approach is fundamental to developing the global competence required for meaningful international engagement, as outlined in the introduction. Future course designs should therefore structure syllabi to include dedicated modules on diverse world regions and global themes. This can be effectively complemented by implementing authentic intercultural exchange activities, such as collaborative projects with international peers or virtual exchange programs. To solidify this learning, introducing regular reflective and comparative assignments will prompt students to critically analyze cultural similarities and differences, moving beyond a single-culture framework to build the flexible, global mindset central to ICC.

Moreover, teachers should encourage students when there are intercultural communication breakdowns timely rather than allowing learners to withdraw or feel discouraged, instructors should scaffold these moments as valuable learning opportunities by modelling effective repair strategies and fostering a supportive classroom climate. For example, teachers can normalize misunderstandings as an inevitable part of intercultural interaction and guide students in reformulating their messages, seeking clarification, or using alternative communicative strategies.

Lastly, the findings indicate that participants' focus on minority groups within national boundaries reflects a narrow and ethnocentric view of culture, consistent with Bennett's (1993) model of intercultural sensitivity. Pedagogically, this underscores the need to broaden learners' understanding of culture beyond domestic diversity toward a global and dynamic perspective. Educators should design curricula that differentiate between intracultural and intercultural dimensions by connecting local diversity to global diversity. For example, discussions about ethnic minority traditions in Thailand or China can be extended to compare with indigenous or minority groups abroad.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The study has three limitations. First, the study was conducted within a single GU. The results may not fully generalize to rural or remote, different types of institutions, for example, vocational colleges. Secondly, this study employs a DDR approach, characterized by iterative cycles of design, implementation, evaluation, and reflection. The model is supposed to be refined across multiple iterations based on empirical findings and evolving participant needs. A longitudinal investigation would strengthen this process further, allowing for a more robust validation of the model's sustainability and effectiveness. Thirdly, the model's integration of MOOCs and potential for virtual exchange assumes a baseline level of technological infrastructure and digital literacy among both students and instructors. The feasibility of replicating this model in GUs with more constrained digital resources, unreliable internet access, or less technologically adept stakeholders represents a significant contextual limitation.

The success of the blended component is not guaranteed across all institutional settings within the GU sector.

5.5 Recommendations

In response to the limitations, there are a several recommendations for future research. Future research could transcend the single-case design of this study to establish the broader validity and adaptability of the TLICCM. A primary direction involves implementing multi-institutional studies that apply the model across a diverse spectrum of GUs, including those in China Eastern areas and remote regions in the West areas, as well vocational colleges. Moreover, longitudinal research is strongly recommended. Future studies could track participants' ICC development over extended periods—ranging from one to several years post-intervention—using delayed post-tests, interviews, and portfolios. Future research could aim to determine the durability of attitudinal shifts, the retention of cultural knowledge, and, most importantly, the transfer of behavioral skills to authentic, real-world intercultural encounters. Understanding the long-term trajectory of ICC development is fundamental to validating the sustainable impact of pedagogical interventions.

As a DDR study, this study represents an initial cycle. Future work may engage in dedicated, multi-cyclical refinement of the TLICCM. This involves using the empirical findings from this study to inform a redesigned and enhanced version of the model, which would then be implemented and evaluated in a subsequent cycle. Research focusing on this iterative process would yield valuable insights into the evolution of educational design principles for ICC and contribute to a more mature and robust pedagogical framework.

The pivotal role of the instructor warrants dedicated investigation. Future research may want to explore teacher cognition, including the beliefs, attitudes, and perceived self-efficacy of instructors tasked with implementing complex ICC models like the TLICCM. Studies identifying the specific competencies—pedagogical, cultural, and technological—required for successful facilitation would inform the development of targeted teacher training programs and support mechanisms.

Finally, future research may explicitly address the discrepancy between self-rating scale and ICC test. To mitigate the limitations of the self-rating scales, researchers are recommended to adopt a multi-method assessment approach. This could involve triangulating self-report data with more objective measures, such as behavioural observations, situational judgment test, or assessments by external evaluator, to provide a more holistic and accurate picture of an individual's intercultural communicative competence.

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APPENDIX A

DOCUMENT CERTIFYING HUMAN ETHICS APPROVAL

The Mae Fah Luang University Ethics Committee on Human Research
333 Moo 1, Thasud, Muang, ChiangRai 57100
Tel: (053) 917-170 to 71 Fax: (053) 917-170 E-mail: rec.human@mfu.ac.th

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

COA: 29/2025 **Protocol No: EC 25010-10**

Title: Cultivating Chinese Higher Education Students' Intercultural Communicative Competence by Using Triad-layers ICC Model in a General University in China

Principal investigator: Mrs. Zheng Yang

School: Liberal Art

Funding support: Mae Fah Luang University

Approval:

1) Research protocol — Version 2 Date February 11, 2025
2) Information sheet and informed consent documents — Version 2 Date February 11, 2025
3) Assessment form — Version 1 Date December 16, 2024
4) Advertising information sheet — Version 1 Date February 11, 2025
5) Principal investigator and Co-investigators
   - Mrs. Zheng Yang
   - Asst. Prof. Wilawan Champakaew, Ph.D.
   - Asst. Prof. Sasima Charubusp, Ph.D.

The aforementioned documents have been reviewed and approved by the Mae Fah Luang University Ethics Committee on Human Research in compliance with international guidelines such as Declaration of Helsinki, the Belmont Report, CIOMS Guidelines and the International Conference on Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use - Good Clinical Practice (ICH - GCP)

Date of Approval: February 18, 2025
Date of Expiration: February 17, 2026
Frequency of Continuing Review: 1 year

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(Jullapong Achalapong, M.D.)
Chairperson of the Mae Fah Luang Ethics Committee on Human Research

APPENDIX B

ITEMS-OBJECTIVES CONGRUENCE (IOC) OF THE WEEKLY COURSE IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Week	MOOC Chapters	Class content focus	Activities	Time	Corresponding Qs in ICC test	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Comments
						1	2	3		
1	Not Applicable	Pen and paper test Survey questionnaire	Test	1.5		+1	+1	+1	1.00	
2	Introduction to ICC (definitions of culture, intercultural, IC, ICC etc.)	Chapter 1 Introduction 1.1 Course overview 1.2 The notion of Intercultural Communication 1.3 The historical view of the study of ICC 1.4 The nature of the study of ICC and its application Why should we learn ICC?	Lecture, video clips from movie, case studies	1.5	1-7	+1	+1	+1	1.00	

Week	MOOC Chapters	Class content focus	Activities	Time	Corresponding Qs in ICC test	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Comments
						1	2	3		
3	Communication and culture (the origin and definition of communication, noise, the model of communication by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949).	Chapter 2 Communication and Culture 2.1The notion of communication 2.2 The model of communication process 2.3 The noise in communication 2.4 Communication in culture Case: A Brief History of Human Communication	Lecture, video clips from movie, case studies, art (paintings)	1.5	8-14	+1	+1	+1	1.00	
4	The characteristics and elements of culture, the way to find out about people's values.	Chapter 3 Cultural Perception 3.1 Understanding culture 3.2 Culture and perception Cases of cultural perception	Lecture, video clips from movies, case studies, role-playing, culture contrast	1.5	15-21	+1	+1	+1	1.00	

Week	MOOC Chapters	Class content focus	Activities	Time	Corresponding Qs in ICC test	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Comments
						1	2	3		
5	The definition and importance of language, The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, the social categories of language.	Chapter 4 Communication and Language 4.1 Language and culture 4.2 The notion and types of verbal communication 4.3 Verbal communication styles 4.4 Verbal communication in Intercultural settings The notion of Speech Act Cases of the language use	Lecture, culture contrast, case studies, role-playing, simulation	1.5	22-28	+1	+1	+1	1.00	
6-9	Openness, respect, and curiosity of attitude of ICC. The process and coping strategies of cultural adjustment.	Chapter 5 Improving Intercultural Communication Competence Cultural adjustment Achieving intercultural understanding 5.1 Knowing Chinese culture 5.2 Knowing the international culture 5.3 Communicative skills 5.4 Cognitive skills 5.5 Attitude Cases of cultural adjustment	Lecture, case studies, role-playing	6	29-66	+1	+1	+1	1.00	

Week	MOOC Chapters	Class content focus	Activities	Time	Corresponding Qs in ICC test	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Comments
						1	2	3		
10	Cultural fingerprints in art (e.g., Chinese harmony vs. Western individualism)	Chapter 6 Art for Enhancing ICC: paintings in various cultures	Compare the paingtings between various cultures	1.5		+1	+1	+1	1.00	
11-12	Cultural values shape storytelling, visuals, and themes in Chinese vs. Western films	Chapter 6 Art for Enhancing ICC: Films	Watch a movie with ICC elements	1.5		+1	+1	+1	1.00	
13-14	Listening, observing,assessing, analyzing, interpreting and relating	Cross-cultural dialogue	Students have cross-cultural dialogues with someone from diverse cultures	3		+1	+1	+1	1.00	

Week	MOOC Chapters	Class content focus	Activities	Time	Corresponding Qs in ICC test	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Comments
						1	2	3		
15	Listening, observing,assessing, analyzing, interpreting and relating	Story Circle		3		+1	+1	+1	1.00	
16	Summary review	Post pen and paper test and Post rating scale		1.5		+1	+1	+1	1.00	
Average IOC score (11/11)									1.00	Appropriate

APPENDIX C

IOC OF THE NA SELF-RATING SCALE

Focus	ICC self-rating items	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and comments
		1	2	3		
General information	Section I: General Information 1. Your gender: male_____ female_____	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	2. Your major: _____	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	3. Do you have any overseas experiences: yes_____ no_____	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	4. Do you have any experience of communicating with foreigners: yes_____ no_____	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	5. What's your final entrance English score for college_____	+1	+1	0	0.67	The relevance of English proficiency to ICC isn't clear without further context. Clarify how this aligns with the study's goals or modify to inquire about general language proficiency in intercultural settings.

Focus	ICC self-rating items	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and comments
		1	2	3		
Attitudes towards Other Cultures	(1) I am interested in the lifestyle and values of various cultures, and I'm willing to communicate with people from different cultures.	0	+1	+1	0.67	Add "international" between different and cultures.
	(2) I like to actively communicate with people from different cultures	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(3) If people from different cultures take the initiative to communicate with me, I can respond positively.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(4) When communicating with people from different cultures, if the other person's point of view is different from mine, I can respect the other person's point of view.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(5) I am open to changing my views based on interactions with people from other cultures.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
Knowledge of source culture	(6) I know the lifestyle of the Chinese source culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(7) I know the historical events and historical figures of the Chinese source culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	ICC self-rating items	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and comments
		1	2	3		
	(8) I know the literature and important writers of the Chinese source culture.	+1	+1	0	0.67	Literature alone may not address broader cultural practices, values, or perspectives that are critical for intercultural understanding. ICC involves understanding behaviors, communication styles, and societal norms, which are not aways captured in literary works. Suggested Revision: I understand key aspects of the Chinese source culture, including its important writers, literature, folklore, modern media, and cultural traditions.
	(9) I understand the taboos of the Chinese source culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(10) I understand non-verbal communication including gestures and posture the Chinese source culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(11) I understand the customs and habits of the Chinese source culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	ICC self-rating items	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and comments
		1	2	3		
	(12) I understand the current important events and hot events in Chinese source culture.	+1	+1	0	0.67	Current events may provide context for recent development but also lack the depth needed to understand underlying cultural norms, values, and practices that are essential for ICC. trends, historical influences, and current events in the Chinese source culture.
	(13) I understand the appropriate body distance in each other's culture in Chinese source culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(14) I understand the time concept of the Chinese source culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(15) When I talk to people from different Chinese cultures, I understand the geography of their culture.	+1	+1	0	0.67	Geography's relevance to ICC is less direct. Clarify or replace with a more behavior-oriented item.
Knowledge for international culture When communica-ting with people from different cultures	(16) I know the lifestyle of the other culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	ICC self-rating items	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and comments
		1	2	3		
	(17) I know the historical events and historical figures of the other culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(18) I know the literature and important writers of the other culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(19) I understand the taboos of the other culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(20) I understand non-verbal communication including gestures and posture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(21) I understand the customs and habits of the other culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(22) I understand the current important events and hot events in the other culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(23) I understand the appropriate body distance in each other's culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(24) I understand the time concept of the other culture.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(25) When I talk to people from different cultures, I understand the geography of their culture.	+1	0	+1	0.67	The same as item number 15.

Focus	ICC self-rating items	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and comments
		1	2	3		
Skills (listening, observing, evaluating, analysizing, interpreting, relating)	When interacting with people from different cultures	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(26) We can get along well with each other.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(27) I find it easy to cope with the conflicts caused by cultural differences.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(28) I find it easy to flexibly adjust my communication behavior according to the cultural background of both parties.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(29) I actively explain the misunderstandings caused by cultural differences.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	(30) I can deal with various social situations and relationships.	0	+1	+1	0.67	Clarify or give examples of social situations.
Average IOC score (27.69/30)					0.92	Appropriate

APPENDIX D

IOC OF NA SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Focus	Questions	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and comments
		1	2	3		
Positive attitude towards other cultures but limited active engagement	1.How do you feel about interacting with people from cultures different from you?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	2.Do you believe learning about other cultures is important? Why or why not?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	3.Engagement: How often do you actively seek opportunities to interact with people from other cultures?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
Strong knowledge of source culture but gaps in international culture	4.How do you describe your understanding of your own culture's history, values and traditions?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	5.How familiar are you with the customs, values and traditions of other cultures?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	6.How confident are you in explaining the cultural norms of other countries?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and comments
		1	2	3		
Openness to changing views but limited flexibility in communication	7.Are you willing to change your opinions or beliefs after learning about other cultures?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	8.Have you ever changed your perspectives on an issue after interacting with someone from a different culture? Can you provide an example?	0	+1	+1	0.67	Adjusted to include a reflective prompt: “Can you describe a time when you changed your perspective after interacting with someone from a different culture?” This narrative structure may encourage participants to share lived experiences and not just opinions.
	9.How do you handle situations where communication styles differ from your own (direct Vs indirect, high and low)	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and comments
		1	2	3		
Strong in explaining misunderstandings but lower in adapting and coping with conflicts	10.How do you feel when someone misunderstands you due to cultural differences?	+1	0	+1	0.67	Streamline and sequence logically, starting from emotional responses "What emotions do you experience when someone misunderstands you due to cultural differences?" to behavioral coping strategies.
	11.How do you handle misunderstandings that arise from cultural differences?	+1	0	+1	0.67	How do you usually respond to misunderstandings caused by cultural differences? "Usually respond to" is more behaviorally focused.
	12.Conflict adaptation: how do you react when a cultural difference leads to a conflict? What is your typical response when…?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	13.Are you able to adapt your behavior to avoid or resolve conflicts in intercultural settings?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and comments
		1	2	3		
MOOCs for ICC	14.How do you think MOOCs could help you overcome challenges in developing intercultural competence?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	15.How important is it for a MOOC to offer personalized learning paths based on your current level of intercultural competence?					
	16.Would you prefer a MOOC that allows you to choose modules based on your specific interests or needs?					
Reflective thinking for ICC development	17.How do you typically reflect on your intercultural experiences? Do you find it helpful, and why or why not?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and comments
		1	2	3		
	18.How has reflective writing helped you better understand your own cultural identity and biases?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
intended activities	19.What kind of training do you think you need to improve your ICC?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
Average IOC score (18.01/19)					0.94	Appropriate

APPENDIX E

IOC OF ICC TEST

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
Chapter 1 Define ICC and the history of ICC studies	1 Single choice（2′）The intercultural field split its orientation into divergent directions after it came into being in the U.S., which of the following is not studying? A. issues dealings with members of the global community B. issues concerning about multiculturalism outside of work C. issues about cultural diversity within the workplace. D. issues about world peace	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	2 Multiple choices（2'）Which of the following is/are the growth of intercultural communication as a field of study based on? A. Many human civilization's failures tend to be personal as well as global. B. Technologies used by people of different cultures vary. C. More and more people have to get along with groups removed by space, ideology or behaviors from their own. D. There is increased contact with other cultures.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	3 Multiple choices（2'）Who wrote the classic ICC work The Silent Language? A. An anthropologist working in the Foreign Service Institute in the U.S. B. Navajo and Hopi C. The founder of ICC D. Edward Hall	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	4 Ture or false（1'）The study originated in the U.S. in the late 1950s and gained acceptance through training and testing practice in the 1960s and 1970s. □√ □×	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	5 Ture or false（1'）One of the most effective ways to learn about oneself is by taking seriously the cultures of others. □√ □×	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	6 Ture or false（1'）ICC studies was first introduced into China during the early 1990s. □√ □×	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	7 Blanking filling（1'）Intercultural communication involves interaction between people whose cultural_____and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication event.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
Chapter 2 Communication and culture	8 Single choice（2'）Which of the following are not the characteristics of culture? A. Culture is learned. B. Culture is ethnocentric. C. Culture remains unchanged. D. Culture is based on symbols.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	9 Single choice（2'）Which of the following refers to anything that distorts the message the source encodes. A. Message B. Source C. Context D. Noise	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	10 Multiple choices（2'）Which of the following is /are Intrapersonal communication? A. communication that involves face-to-face exchange of information B. communication between people C. communication that involves information exchange D. communication that occurs inside of one person	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	11 True or false（1'）All cultures require and value politeness, but the ways in which politeness is achieved may vary significantly. □√ □×	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	12 True or false（1'）In intercultural communication, we should not separate one's individual character from cultural generalization. □√ □×	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	13 Ture or false（1'）Intercultural communication is based on interpersonal communication. □√ □×	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	14 Blanking filling（1'）The_____usually does not decode a message into exactly the same meaning that the source had in mind when encoding the message.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
Chapter 3 Cultural perception	15 Single choice（2'）Which statement is incorrect? A. Ethnocentrism can lead to racism. B. Ethnocentrism can lead to cultural relativism. C. Ethnocentrism can lead to ageism. D. Ethnocentrism can lead to sexism.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	16 Single choice（2'）What is not the reason for perceived identities? A. People of one culture share common early experience. B. People of one culture are all the same. C. The common early experience helps to shape the similar personality. D. Since early life experiences are different from one culture to another, people present different personality identities.	+1	+1	0	0.67	"People of one culture are all the same" (B) is overly simplistic and may confuse students. Reframe the options to better address identity.
	17 Multiple choices（2'）Which is true about stereotypes? A. They apply the same criteria to all the people from a culture. B. Some of them might be partly true. C. They are general statements. D. They are far beyond the facts.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	18 True or false（1'）Culture not only provides the basis for interpreting cognition but also guides us to choose and induce objects of cognition. □√ □×	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	19 True or false（1'）Cultures tend to be internally inconsistent. □√ □×	+1	+1	0	0.67	"Cultures tend to be internally inconsistent" is debatable and lacks clarity. Reframe to avoid confusion.
	20 True or false（1'）Selection is an important part of the process of our perception. □√ □×	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	21 Blanking filling（1'）_____is the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the environment.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
Chapter 4 Language and communi-cation	22 Single choice（2'）Which is the characteristic of collectivistic culture? A. explicit messages in communication B. direct communication style C. a lot of self-disclosures in communication D. emphasis on relationship	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	23 Single choice（2'）Which culture of the following does Canada belong to? A. individualistic culture B. low-context culture C. disclosing culture D. all above	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	24 Multiple choices （2'）Which of the following communication functions can be served by “I couldn’t agree with you more”? A. Refusal B. Disagreement C. Agreement D. Approval	+1	+1	0	0.67	While "I couldn’t agree with you more" serves multiple communication functions, the options could be more focused to avoid ambiguity.
	25 True or false（1'）A speech act is heavily constrained by culture and context. □√ □×	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	26 True or false（1'）Direct communication style prevails in Chinese business as people tend to maintain harmony and try to save face. □√ □×	+1	+1	0	0.67	The assertion about Chinese business communication is questionable. Consider refining or replacing this item.
	27 True or false（1'）The Americans and Chinese are likely to use a personal communication style instead of a contextual one. □√ □×	+1	+1	0	0.67	The statement may oversimplify cultural tendencies. Consider providing context or rephrasing.
	28 Blanking filling（1'）The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has two versions linguistic relativity and linguistic_____.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
Knowledge of source culture	29 Single choice（2'）Tea plays a significant part in the daily life of Chinese people. Which of the following behaviors is NOT in line with the Chinese tea ceremony A. Offer a full cup of tea B. Refill the tea cup for the elders first C. Serve tea with both hands D. Avoid slurping tea	0	+1	+1	0.67	It's better to bold the word "NOT".
	30 Single choice（2'）Which of the following is the thinking pattern of most Chinese people? A. Objective thinking B. Linear thinking C. Holistic thinking D. Abstract thinking	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	31 Single choice（2'）Which of the following is NOT the basic content of core socialist values in China? A. Loyalty, courtesy, diligence, righteousness B. Patriotism, dedication, integrity, friendship C. Prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony D. Freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law	0	+1	+1	0.67	It's better to bold the word "NOT".

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	32 Single choice（2'）Which DyNAty was the Silk Road formally established? A. Ming DyNAty B. Qing DyNAty C. Han DyNAty D. Tang DyNAty	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	33 Single choice（2'）Which one is the highest moral principle advocated by Confucian culture? A. Loyalty B. Courtesy C. Righteousness D. Benevolence	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	34 Which statement is NOT true in the following about handshaking in China? A. handshake is becoming a standard Chinese business greeting, particularly when meeting foreigners. B. It is often the hosts that offer their hands first when meeting guests. C. Chinese handshakes are often prolonged, strong rather than weak. D. It is rude to refuse someone's handshake, especially the elders.	+1	+1	0	0.67	The item has ambiguity in the phrasing of "prolonged, strong"handshakes. Feedback: Clarify whether the handshake aspect refers to common practice or a misconception.

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	35 Single choice（2'） Which of the following does NOT belong to the main activities of the Dragon Boat Festival? A. Eat rice dumplings B. Drink realgar wine C. Drink chrysanthemum wine D. Dragon boat race	0	+1	+1	0.67	It's better to bold the word "NOT".
Knowledge for the international culture	36 Single choice（2'） Which statement is NOT true in the following about Gender Roles in France? A. Many women are still expected to fulfill more traditional gender-stereotypical role, such as cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing. B. Women are often still seen as the primary income earners of a family. C. Women face expectations to uphold a stereotypical view of "feminine" in terms of dress, physique, and demeanor. D. Nearly all French women engage in paid labor and the dual-career family is becoming the norm.	0	+1	+1	0.67	It's better to bold the word "NOT".
	37 Single choice（2'） When you talk to British people, which situation is less likely to happen? A.They avoid direct confrontation to save face. B. They rarely use indirect, ambiguous language and humor. C. They often associate accents with one's social class and educational level. D. They tolerate and even encourage individual eccentricities at times	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	38 Single choice（2'） Which of the following is NOT a color taboo in Brazil? A. Purple B. Yellow C. Red D. Dark brown	0	+1	0	0.33	Ambiguity exists in identifying "color taboos" without a clear explanation of cultural contexts. Feedback: Provide additional guidance or contextual information.
	39 Single choice（2'） Which of the following is NOT treasured by most British people? A. Encouraging fairness and justice for all B. Aiming for an ideal but not realistic in practice C. Respecting for birthright and hierarchy D. Seldom showing off material possessions	+1	+1	+1	1.00	It's better to bold the word "NOT".
	40 Single choice（2'） In Malaysia, which of the following the Malay and aboriginal people often do? A. eat with chopsticks B. eat with their left hand directly C. eat with their right hand directly D. eat with forks	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	41 Single choice（2'） People in Nigeria will give others a thumbs-up to express their feelings when there is a quarrel. What does the thumbs-up probably mean in this circumstance? A. Insult B. Praise C. Catch a ride D. Agree	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	42 Single choice（2'） Which of the following is a cultural taboo in Italy? A. Booking a seat with the number 11. B. Women start to eat before men. C. Being late for a banquet. D. Wearing a sleeveless blouse to visit a Catholic museum.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
Skills (listening, observing, evaluating, analysizing, interpreting, relating)	43 Single choice（2'） Wang Xiao is studying in Australia. On his birthday, Wang Xiao received a clock from his Australian classmate James. However, a clock as a gift is taboo in Chinese culture. If you were Wang Xiao, what would you do? A. Give back James' gift. B. Receive the gift and tell him your cultural taboo. C. Tell him that you prefer other gifts. D. Ask James why he chose the clock as a gift and get angry with him.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	44 Single choice（2'） Bruce, a ten-year-old boy who grew up in the United States, came to China with his parents to visit his Chinese grandfather. One day, at the dinner table, Bruce seemed to have no interest in the food and stuck chopsticks uprightly in rice. If you were the grandfather, what would you do? （2'） A. Feel hurt and leave the table immediately. B. Smile and tell Bruce that sticking chopsticks is thought to bring misfortune in China. C. Ignore Bruce's behavior but criticize his parents. D. Get annoyed and blame your grandson directly.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	45 Single choice（2'） Wang Qiang is taking an MBA course at Zhejiang University and there is a Brazilian girl Keyla in his class. At the end of the semester, his classmates had a party together in a restaurant and Wang Qiang took his girlfriend Luo Fang with him. When Keyla saw Luo Fang, she greeted her with a hug. But Luo Fang was shocked and backed away, which made Keyla very embarrassed. If you were Luo Fang, what would you do? A. Feel awkward and talk with other friends. B. Talk with Keyla about the plans for the next semester. C. Say sorry to Keyla and tell her the Chinese way of greeting. D. Tell Keyla a joke to relieve the embarrassment.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	46 Single choice（2'） You are on a business trip in Germany. One of your German friends decides to invite you to have dinner at a high-end restaurant in Berlin. When you begin to eat your meal, what would you do? A. Eat gently. B. Fill your plate with food. C. Make noise with your knife and fork. D. Talk with your friend with your mouth full of food.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	47 Single choice（2'） One day, you went to meet an Indonesian customer at the airport. When the Indonesian customer showed up and came up to you, how would you greet him? A. Greet him with a kiss on the cheek. B. Shake hands with him gently. C. Ask him about how his family is. D. Hug him.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	48 Single choice（2'） You are a Chinese employee working at a Sino-German joint venture. Today, you are having an online meeting at ZOOM with your German colleagues. During the speech of a German colleague, it's hard to catch and understand his words due to the unstable network. What would you do? A. Mute him and prepare my speech. B. Keep listening carefully and take notes. C. Interrupt his speech directly.		+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	D. Inform him of the situation.					
	49 Single choice（2'） You are a science teacher in a British middle school. In class, you asked one of your British students Sophie to answer a question. But Sophie didn't reply at once and started to chat with her classmate, which made you a little bit embarrassed. What would you do? A. Stop Sophie and criticize her in class. B. Ask another student to answer and understand Sophie's behavior. C. Ignore Sophie and interact with other students. D. Say her name loudly until she answers your question.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	50 Single choice（2'） Your family has recently moved to Texas, USA, and you find that your new neighbor often asks his child to do chores such as cleaning the garden. What do you learn from this experience? A. Children have to take full responsibility for the housework in America. B. It's normal for children to help with housework in America. C. In America, parents usually use this way to teach their children to be filial. D. Americans regard housework as more important than study.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	51 Single choice（2'） You are a freshman at Harvard University. One day, when you returned to your dormitory at dusk, you found that your roommate facing west kneeled and kowtowed three times. How do you explain his behavior? A. He may be a Christian and he's praying. B. He may be a Buddhist and he's praying. C. He may be a Catholic and he's praying. D. He may be a Muslim and he's praying.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	52 Single choice（2'） You are working in Siemens in Germany. During work time, you find it is common that German colleagues mainly talk about business whereas Indian colleagues often chat. What can you learn from the above differences? A. Most Germans separate their private life from their professional life. B. In Indian culture, daily life is more emphasized than business. C. Most Germans value business more than daily life. D. In German culture, it is forbidden to talk about personal matters during work.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	53 Single choice（2'） You are studying in the UK and your roommate is a Muslim. In September, you found that he didn't eat anything during the day for nearly a week. How would you explain his behavior? A. He is in a bad mood and doesn't want to eat. B. He is observing Ramadan. C. He is punishing himself for making a religious mistake. D. He is on a diet.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	54 Single choice（2'）You are a sales representative who is about to have a business meeting with a Brazil client at 6 pm. You arrive half an hour before the appointed time, but he arrives at nearly 7 pm. What could you learn from this experience? A. Brazilians spend much time on their dressing and images for business meeting. B. Brazilians pay less attention to business etiquettes. C. Brazilians arrive late to show their respect. D. Brazilians are casual about time.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	55 Single choice（2'） You were assigned to meet a French client at Beijing Airport. When you first met, he greeted you with a kiss and you felt very uncomfortable about it. What can you learn from this conflict? A. In France, a kiss is a sign to express loving care. B. French people don't pay attention to manners. C. French people have low power distance. D. In France, people often greet others with light cheek kisses.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	56 Single choice（2'） You were studying at Queensland University, Australia. At the first meet you addressed your supervisor "teacher". He felt very awkward and told you to call him by his name. What can you learn from this situation? A. Australians are causal about the addressing way. B. Australians are easygoing. C. Australians have high power distance. D. Australians have low power distance.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
Attitude	57 Single choice（2'） Li Hua immigrated to America eight years ago and his wife Cindy is an American. Li Hua's father lives alone in China and he is getting older, so Li Hua decides to take his father to America. However, Cindy suggests that Li Hua send his father to a nursing home or assisted-living community. How do you think of Cindy's decision? A. She thinks the living habits of Li Hua's father are unbearable. B. She does not want Li Hua's father to interrupt their happy life.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	C. She does not want to shoulder the responsibility of taking care of her father-in-law. D. She thinks Li Hua is an independent married man and should not live with the parents anymore.					
	58 Single choice（2'） Li Peng is working in Germany. One day, when he visited his German friend Jack, he found that Jack's son Lucas, a senior high school student, was dating a girl. Li told this to Jack but Jack wasn't worried at all and didn't stop his son. How do you think of it? A. Jack didn't intervene too much in his son's life. B. Jack wanted to maintain a good relationship with his son at a rebellious age. C. Jack was spoiling his son and it might turn Lucas into a disorderly person. D. Jack thought it was normal and natural for Lucas to date girls at his age.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	59 Single choice（2'） Zhao Jie gives a presentation of research articles assigned by the teacher in class. After her presentation, her classmate Tom who is an international student from America challenges her with some tough questions. How do you think of Tom's behavior? A. He is not friendly toZhao Jie and intends to embarrass her. B. He is a little stubborn and never gives up his ideas. C. He is used to expressing ideas in a direct way. D. He intends to leave a good impression on the teacher.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	60 Single choice（2'） Guo Ming invites his American friend Jack who believes in Judaism to his house for the weekend. Which of the following do you think is probably NOT appropriate? A .Guo Ming offers Jack a cup of hot water. B. Guo Ming prepares forks and knives for Jack. C. Guo Ming removes pin bones from fish fillets. D. Guo Ming cooks beef for Jack.	0	+1	+1	0.67	It's better to bold the word "NOT".
	61 Single choice（2'） Mr. Sun is a Chinese manager at a multinational corporation in Shanghai. He and his team are going to Kuala Lumpur to negotiate with a Malay company. Sun's business partner is a Malay lady. When he meets the lady, which of the following is the most appropriate way for Sun? A. He hugs her excitedly. B. He shakes hands with her. C. He bows while placing his right hand over his heart. D. He kisses her on her cheeks.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	62 Single choice（2'） Prof. Zhang attended the M.A. thesis defense of her department yesterday. During the thesis defense meeting, she found a male Pakistani student wearing slippers. How do you think of the Pakistani student's behavior? A. He wore slippers for religious reasons. B. He didn't take the thesis defense seriously.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	C. He wanted to be cool and attract other's attention. D. He used to wear slippers in his country.					
	63 Single choice（2'） Liu Fang is a Chinese boy who has been studying in the Netherlands for one month. One day when he was walking in the park with his local classmate Eva, Eva came across her friend Sarah and they gave three kisses on each other's cheek; however, Sara greeted Liu Fang with a handshake. How do you think of it? A. Sara did not want to make friends with Liu Fang. B. Sara would feel shy if she gave kisses on Liu Fang's cheek. C. Sara did not greet foreigners by kissing on the cheek. D. Sara thought it was appropriate to greet strangers with a handshake.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
Part III Case studies	64.Ben is an international student in your class who comes from Brazil. Today, you and Ben are going to meet together in a cafe at 6:00 pm, but he is late for an hour without informing you in advance. When he arrives, he doesn't offer an apology or explanation. How do you feel about it? Why? What would you do? (8')	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	65.In the English writing class in China, your teacher asked the class to do presentations through group work. He assigned an international student John to join your group. How do you work with him? Why? (7')	0	+1	0	0.33	The question highlights an intercultural context involving group work, which is relevant. However, the task could

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
						be more specific to guide students in exploring potential challenges and strategies when working with someone from a different cultural background. For instance, it could include prompts like: >> What communication strategies might you use? >> What challenges could arise, and how would you address them? Adding more context or specific prompts would reduce ambiguity and make the question more congruent with ICC goals.

Focus	Questions item	Experts scores			IOC scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
	66. Sugimoto, a Japanese, was praised in public by his American manager Mr. Jones for his good performance recently. The conversation is listed as follows: Mr. Jones: Mr. Sugimoto, I have noticed that you are doing an excellent job on the assembly line. I hope that the other workers could learn from you. Sugimoto:(He is uneasy). It's my duty and I am only doing my job. Mr. Jones: You are one of the most excellent and dedicated workers in our company. Sugimoto: … (He blushes and nods his head several times and keeps working.) Mr. Jones: … (He seems confused about Sugimoto's reaction to his praise.) Sugimoto: Excuse me, Mr. Jones. May I leave for five minutes? Mr. Jones: Sure. (He looks a little uncomfortable when Sugimoto walks away. He thinks Japanese workers are so rude and impolite.) Please describe the cross-cultural conflicts in this case. (15')	0	+1	0	0.33	This case study is highly relevant and well-crafted to illustrate cross-cultural conflicts arising from norms (direct vs. indirect communication). It challenges students to analyze the interaction and reflect on cultural differences in giving and perceiving praise. The open-ended nature encourages critical thinking, but it could be enhanced by adding prompts such as: How could Mr. Jones adapt his approach? What cultural factors might explain Mr. Sugimoto's reaction?
Average IOC score (60.36/66)					0.91	Appropriate

APPENDIX F

IOC OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Focus	Checklist	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Meaning and Comments	Tally	Frequency
		1	2	3				
attitude	1.Participating in discussions with people in the classroom.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	𝍸 𝍸||||	14
	2.Asking questions or showing curiosity about cultural differences.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 ||	42
	3.Demonstrating empathy and withholding judgments when presented with unfamiliar cultural practices or perspectives.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	𝍸 |||	8
knowledge	4.Applying knowledge to analyze specific situations.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	𝍸 𝍸	10
	5.Accurately identify cultural norms in case studies or discussions.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	𝍸 ||	7

Focus	Checklist	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Meaning and Comments	Tally	Frequency
		1	2	3				
	6.Recognize how cultural factors influence behaviors and communicative styles.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	卌 卌	10
Skill (listening, observing, evaluating, analysizing, interpreting, relating)	7.Maintains eye contact and uses firming body language (nodding) during conversations.	+1	+1	-1	0.67	This item is somewhat ambiguous, as the appropriateness of eye contact and body language can vary significantly across cultures. While these are common indicators of attentiveness in some cultures, they may be interpreted differently in others. The item could be clearer by specifying which cultural norms are being referenced and how body language may vary.	卌 卌 卌 卌 |	21
	8.Summarizes key points made by peers from different cultural backgrounds.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	卌	5

Focus	Checklist	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Meaning and Comments	Tally	Frequency
		1	2	3				
	9.Accurately ask follow-up questions that reflect understanding or curiosity about cultural nuances.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	𝍸 ||||	9
	10.Provide constructive feedback to peer's communication strategies in intercultural scenarios (e.g. role-playing).	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	𝍸 𝍸 ||	12
	11.Propose alternative approaches to resolve miscommunication or improve interactions.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	||||	4
	12.Provide insightful interpretation of intercultural case studies. Relates communication patterns to underlying cultural values during discussion.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	||	2
	13.Share personal experiences in class that, are related to or contrast with others' cultural perspectives	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 |||	33

Focus	Checklist	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Meaning and Comments	Tally	Frequency
		1	2	3				
	14.Modify communication style to accommodate the cultural background of peers during group activities.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate	𝍸 𝍸 ||||	14
					0.97	Appropriate		

APPENDIX G

IOC OF REFLECTIVE WRITING PROMPTS

Focus	Writing Prompts	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
attitude	1.Reflect on your initial attitude toward ICC at the beginning of this instruction. How has your perspective shifted, and what experiences influenced this change?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	2.How have your feelings toward the challenges of ICC? Do you view these challenges as opportunities for growth? Provide an example.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	3.How has your attitude toward learning about other cultures changed throughout this instruction? Describe how this shift has impacted your interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
knowledge	4.Consider a scenario where you had to adapt your communication style to better connect with someone from a different culture. How did your knowledge of ICC help you?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	5.Reflect on a situation where you had to communicate with someone from a different culture. How did your understanding of ICC guide your behaviors?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	6.Discuss how ICC can lead to more meaningful and respectful interactions in a diverse learning environment. How do you plan to apply this knowledge in your future career?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Writing Prompts	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
Skill (listening, observing, evaluating, analysizing, interpreting, relating)	7.Reflect on a recent experience where you successfully communicated with someone from a different culture. What specific skills did you use to ensure the conversation went smoothly?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	8.Think about a situation where you managed a misunderstanding or conflict due to cultural differences. What strategies did you use to resolve this issue, and how did your intercultural communication help?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	9.What techniques have you developed to build trust and rapport with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds? Provide an example where this skill helped maintain positive communication.	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
Average IOC score (9/9)					1.00	Appropriate

APPENDIX H

IOC OF MODEL VALIDATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Focus	Questions	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
Attitude toward the source and the international cultures	1. How has your attitude towards other cultures changed before and after this training?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	2.How have your experiences with different cultures influenced your attitude toward further intercultural interactions?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	3.How do you view cultural differences: as challenges, opportunities, or sth. else, why?____	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
Knowledge of the source and international cultures	4.How do you apply your knowledge of both your source culture and the international cultures' communication styles in real-world situations?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	5.Can you share a situation where your understanding of both your own and the international helped you to resolve a cultural misunderstanding?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	6.In what ways has your knowledge of both cultures helped you adapt your behavior or language to fit different social contexts?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
Skills (listening, observing, evaluating, analysizing, interpreting, relating)	7.Can you provide an example of an intercultural interaction that taught you a valuable lesson about discovery or communication?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	8.How do you use the information you discover about a culture to improve your interactions with people from that culture?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	9.What are some common assumptions or stereotypes that people from your culture might have about other cultures? How do you challenge or address them?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	10.How do you ensure that you understand the cultural context behind certain behaviors or practices before forming an interpretation?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	11.How do you relate the cultural behaviours and practices of others to your own cultural framework/ How does this help in communication?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	12.How have your experiences in interpreting and relating to different cultures influenced your approach to intercultural communication?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate

Focus	Questions	Experts' scores			IOC Scores	Meaning and Comments
		1	2	3		
The importance sequence of each activity	How do you rate and sequence all the activities during the course?	+1	0	+1	0.67	You may want to list the activities in case participants cannot remember all the activities.
Comments and suggestions on the instruction	14.Would you recommend this training to new students for the coming year? Why or why not?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
	15.What is your suggestion for this instruction project?	+1	+1	+1	1.00	Appropriate
Average IOC score (1/15)					0.95	Appropriate

APPENDIX I

COURSE SYLLABUS

滇西应用技術大學
WEST YUNNAN UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Intercultural Communicative Competence

Course Code： OB1066

Target students： Undergraduate students

Instructors： Zheng Yang

Reviewer：

Preparation time： Jan, 2025

Intercultural Communicative Competence Course Syllabus

Section 1: General Information

code	OB1066	**Course Category**	selective
name	Intercultural Communicative Competence		
Course Credits	2	**Recommended study period**	1st-2nd semester
Total hours	24	**Theory hours**	8
		Practical hours	16
Applicable majors	all		
Course Director	Zheng Yang	**Reviewer**	
Preparation time	Jan, 2025	**Language of Instruction**	English, Chinese

Section 2: Course Positions, Nature and Objectives

Course Positions

The intercultural communication competence (ICC) course is a fundamental component China's higher education system, serving the nation's strategic demand for high-level global talents in economic, political, and cultural development. In an era of globalization, this course plays a pivotal role in fostering students' cross-cultural understanding, dismantling cultural biases, and building bridges for meaningful dialogue. As a critical link between language proficiency and cultural competence, it cultivates students' global citizenship and enhances their international competitiveness, making it indispensable in cultivating future leaders capable of navigating diverse cultural landscapes.

Course Nature

The ICC course is a distinctive course within higher education, combining theoretical depth with practical application. It is designed for students across all disciplines and features in two key characteristics:

(1) Interdisplinary approach integrates perspectives from linguistics, anthropology, sociology, and psychology.

(2) Experiential learning: Employs immersive teaching methods such as role-playing, cultural contrasts analysis, and case studies.

(3) The course is typically offered as a selective course for freshmen, complementing college English courses to form a dual-track system of “language proficiency and culture competence”.

Course objectives

Guided by the "Knowledge-Experience-Reflection" framework, the course fulfills two core missions. The first is theoretical foundation. To equip students with key intercultural theories (e.g., Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, Hall’s high-/low-context theory) to analyze cultural influences on perception, communication, and behavior. The second is the practical competence: Develop adaptive skills through simulations (e.g., cross-cultural negotiations, conflict mediation) to enhance cultural empathy and problem-solving agility. Through this course, students will achieve the following goals:

1. Knowledge and skills objectives:

Firstly, master core theories of intercultural communication (e.g., Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Hall's high/low context theory) and analyze their practical implications. Secondly, identify cultural biases and communication barriers in real-world scenarios using academic frameworks. Thirdly, demonstrate adaptive communication strategies in intercultural settings. Fourthly, compare cultural norms in verbal/non-verbal communication (e.g., gestures, eye contact, silence) across cultures. Fifthly, apply critical thinking to evaluate cultural representations in intercultural settings.

2. Process and methodology objectives

Firstly, employ collaborative learning methods (e.g., story circles, role-playing) to examine cultural perspectives. Secondly, develop metacognitive strategies to reflect on personal cultural biases and adaptation processes.

3. Values and attitudes objectives

Firstly, cultivate respect for cultural diversity while strengthening Chinese cultural identity. Secondly, articulate China's cultural narratives (e.g., "community with a shared future for mankind" in intercultural dialogue).

Section 3: Correspondence between course objectives and graduation requirements

Course objectives	Graduation requirement indicators supporting	Support graduation requirements
1	2-8 Be familiar with a foreign language, be able to use English to read and translate professional literature, obtain information, and have a certain initial ability to communicate, compete and cooperate in a cross-cultural environment, especially in Southeast Asia.	2. Professional skills and quality 3. Scientific and cultural quality
2	3-1 Proficient in a foreign language, have a certain international perspective, and be able to communicate and interact in a cross-cultural context. 4-1 Have good psychological qualities and team spirit.	3. Scientific and cultural quality 4. Mental and physical quality
3	1-1 Have a correct world view, values and outlook on life. 1-2 Possess humanities and social sciences qualities and social responsibility. Possess good civic	1. Ideological and moral quality

	awareness and social responsibility. 2-1 Master general knowledge in philosophy, law, sociology, history, science and technology, language and literature, art, career development and education and training.	

Section 4: The relationship between course content and course objectives

Course content	**Teaching methods**	**Supporting course objectives**	**Number of classes (45min/each)**
Chapter 1 ICC Introduction	Task-based Instruction (TBL)	Objective (1), (2), (3)	2
Chapter 2 Communication and Culture		Objective (1), (2), (3)	2
Chapter 3 Cultural Perception		Objective (1), (2), (3)	2
Chapter 4 Communication and Language		Objective (1), (2), (3)	2
Chapter 5 Improving ICC		Objective (1), (2), (3)	6
Chapter 6 Art for Enhancing ICC (Paintings and films)		Objective (1), (2), (3)	4
total			18 classes

Section 5: Development of Students' Learning Outcomes

1. Academic domain

1.1 Demonstrate openness, respect, and curiosity toward diverse cultures in intercultural communication contexts.

1.2 Apply ethical principles in intercultural interactions, including cultural sensitivity and respect for differing values.

Teaching strategies

(1) Guided discussions on case studies highlighting intercultural ethics and conflict management scenarios.

(2) Reflective writing tasks on personal cultural encounters and attitudes toward diversity.

(3) Role-playing and simulations to practice respectful intercultural communication in varies contexts.

Evaluation

(1) Reflective writing (Rubrics).

(2) Class participation in case study discussions.

(3) Role-play performance.

2. Intercultural Knowledge and Analytical Domain

Learning outcomes

2.1 Explain core concepts of intercultural communication, including definitions of culture and cultural perception.

2.2 Analyze cultural phenomena, values, and communication styles using theoretical models and frameworks.

Teaching Strategies

(1) Lectures are integrated with MOOC video content and readings from academic sources.

(2) Group analysis of films, artworks, and other cultural artifacts to identify cultural fingerprints.

(3) Cross-cultural dialogue and culture contrast activities.

Evaluation

Peer evaluation of group contributions.

3. Intercultural Communication Skills Domain

Learning Outcomes

3.1 Demonstrate skills in listening, observing, evaluating, interpreting, and relating across cultural contexts.

3.2 Apply verbal and non-verbal communication strategies effectively in intercultural situations.

Teaching Strategies

(1) Guest speaker sessions followed by Q&A and small-group cultural dialogues.

(2) Story Circle activities for practicing deep listening and cultural storytelling.

(3) Simulations and role-plays to address intercultural challenges and adaptation strategies.

Evaluation

(1) Participation in Story Circle.

(2) Simulation/role-play assessment.

(3) Observation checklists for intercultural communication skills (Rubrics).

4. Communicative and Technological Application Domain

Learning Outcomes

4.1 Use digital tools and multimedia resources to enhance intercultural communication learning.

4.2 Apply online learning strategies (via MOOCs) to prepare for and engage in intercultural classroom activities.

Teaching Strategies

(1) Integration of MOOC modules for pre-class preparation.

(2) Use of multimedia in cultural presentations and discussions.

Evaluation : MOOC completion engagement logs.

Section 6: Lesson Plan and Evaluation

1. Evaluation Plan

Domain of Learning	Assessment method	Weight	Assessment week	Evaluator
	Attendance	10%	1-16	instructor
	Participation in group work, e.g. role-playing, simulation, cross-cultural dialogue etc.	45%	4,5,6,7,8,9	Peer review
	Pre-and Post test	30%	1, 16	instructor
	Reflective writing	15%	16	instructor

Grading

Grade Satisfaction (**≥60%**)= 60-100 （Pass）

Unsatisfaction (＜60%)=0-59.99 (U)

APPENDIX J

SEMESTER TEACHING PLAN

Week: 1 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

<table>
<tr><td>Topics</td><td colspan="2">Course overview</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Objectives:
Introduce the course content, teaching arrangements, learning methods and requirements, assessment methods, etc.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Teaching design
Step 1：course introduction Step 2: ICC pre-test</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Key points and difficulties of this teaching session: Teaching schedule, learning methods, requirements, and assessment methods</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Teaching content summary and time allocation</td><td>Methods and activities</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1. Course introduction （30 min）
Explaining the teaching syllabus, teaching schedule, lesson plan, and other documents. And explaining the learning methods, requirements, and assessment methods, and introducing the learning resources and platform usage.
● The importance of the ICC
● Teaching schedule
● Assessment method
● MOOCs introductions
● Suggestions to obtain course materials
● Suggestions for using the platform to learn
2. Pre-test (60 min)</td><td>Task-based Instruction (TBL), cooperative learning audio-lingual method situational language learning, PPT</td></tr>
</table>

Extracurricular review and preview requirements for next week ▪ Complete the login of the e-textbook resource website and read the e-textbook. ▪ Complete the download of the Chinese University Mooc App and join the "College English Cross-Cultural Communication" course ▪ Watch the first chapter of the course on the MOOC App and complete the pre-study questions based on the questions in the tutorial. ▪ Suggested materials links:

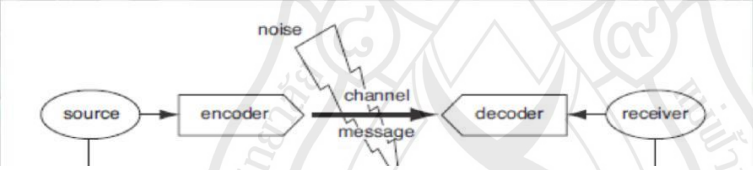
Week: 2 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

Topics	Chapter 1: Defining Intercultural Communication	
Objectives: After teaching and learning, students will know: 1. The definition of intercultural communication. 2. The development of the study of ICC 3. The nature and characteristics of ICC. 4. The application of ICC.		
Teaching design Step 1 : Lead-in Step 2: lecture delivered Step 3: case analysis		
Key points: definition of intercultural communication and the nature and characteristics of ICC. The difficult point is the application of ICC.		
Teaching content summary and time allocation		Methods & activities
1. Lead-in questions（15min） Students watch a video clip about Asian and Western dinner etiquette differences and think about what ICC is. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=029kdjdasyM, 2. Lecture delivered (40 min) Edward T. Hall's *Silent Language,* Samovar and Poter's definition of ICC in 2009, Kramsh (1998).		

The study originated in…and gained acceptance through…It has made great achievements in theory and practice since the 1980s, and it is now acknowledged worldwide.The ICC development in China began in the 1980s, and the association was established in 1995.The study of ICC is multidisciplinary（Roger,1999）, it is applied, it has an international favor; it grew from its beginning in anthropology and linguistics to become a special field of communication, it recognizes nonverbal communication as a component and its teaching emphasizes experiential and participatory learning. ICC has been applied to many fields such as education, business, management, marketing etc. 3. Case analysis (35) Discuss the following cases of communication and decide to what extent intercultural communication is between a Chinese and an American? A Canadian and a South African? A male and a female? A first-generation Chinese American and a third-generation one? A software technician and a farmer?	TBL, Lectures, video clips, case studies
Recommended resources and assignment Preview the next chapter on MOOCs. Further learning visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMyofREc5Jk (what is ICC?)	

Week: 3 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

Topics	Chapter 2: Communication and culture
Objectives: After teaching and learning, students could understand 1. The notion of communication. 2. The model of communication process 3. The noise in communication. 4. Communication in culture.	
Teaching design Step 1：Lead-in Step 2: Lecture delivered (culture contrast). Step 3: case analysis, role-playing	

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Key point is communication in culture. The difficult point is the noise of communication.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Teaching content summary and time allocation</td><td>Methods & activities</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. Lead-in discussion (10min)
Ask students to answer a question after looking at a picture (a man taking a nap). “Is this man communicating with others?”
2. Lecture delivered (40 min)
What is communication? The Latin “communicare” means…to be specific, communication is the process through which participants create and share information as they move forward toward reaching mutual understanding.
The model of communication by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949)
 

However, human communication is never perfectly effective, as it is often hindered by factors such as real noise, cultural differences, and personal judgments.
3. Culture contrast and role-playing (40)
Consider the noise in your communication and act it out through role-playing in groups (2-3 people per group).
Make the contrast between Chinese culture and international cultures about “noise” in the conversation, from language or others? How to deal with the noise in the model?</td><td>TBL, Lectures, video clips, case studies, role-playing, culture contrast</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Recommended resources and assignment:
Preview the next chapter on MOOCs. For further learning about the history of communication, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDkxsNmKDGk</td></tr>
</table>

Week: 4 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

<table>
<tr><td>Topics</td><td colspan="2">Chapter 3 Cultural Perception</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Objectives: After teaching and learning, students could understand
1. The definition of culture. 2. The characteristics of culture 3. The important elements of culture. 4. The ways to find out about people’s values.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Teaching design Step 1 ： Lead-in Step 2: Lecture delivered (culture contrast).
Step 3: case analysis, role-playing, simulation</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Key point is the definition of culture. The difficult point is the way to find out about people’s values</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Teaching content summary and time allocation</td><td>Methods & activities</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1. Lead-in discussion（10min）
The teacher lead in by asking questions: What is culture? Is food a kind of culture? How do you define culture?
2. Lecture delivered (40 min)
Edward T Hall’s (1966) definition of culture, and two normal uses of culture (Scollons, 2001), high culture (big C) and anthropological culture (small C). The characteristics of culture include culture is not innate, it is learned; culture is based on symbols; culture is transmitted from generation to generation; culture is ethnocentric; culture is subject to change. The important elements of culture could be seen in the picture
It includes beliefs, attitudes, and values
Belief is an individual’s representation of the outside world. Attitudes are emotional responses to objects, ideas, and people. Values are what people who share a culture regard strongly as good or bad. It’s most important to know that cultural values guide both perception and communication. Values are the core of culture, and cultures are mainly differentiated from</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

others by way of different values held by people. The way to find out people's values is from people's behaviour patterns via observation, from what people say about themselves via questionnaire and interview, from myths, tales of heroes, and rituals via field survey, and from folk tales, proverbs, and sayings via literature reading and critical thinking. 3. Lead-in discussion（10min） The teacher lead in by asking questions: What is culture? Is food a kind of culture? How do you define culture? 4. Lecture delivered (40 min) Edward T Hall's (1966) definition of culture, and two normal uses of culture (Scollons, 2001), high culture (big C) and anthropological culture (small C). The characteristics of culture include culture is not innate, it is learned; culture is based on symbols; culture is transmitted from generation to generation; culture is ethnocentric; culture is subject to change. The important elements of culture could be seen in the picture It includes beliefs, attitudes, and values Belief is an individual's representation of the outside world. Attitudes are emotional responses to objects, ideas, and people. Values are what people who share a culture regard strongly as good or bad. It's most important to know that cultural values guide both perception and communication. Values are the core of culture, and cultures are mainly differentiated from others by way of different values held by people. The way to find out people's values is from people's behaviour patterns via observation, from what people say about themselves via questionnaire and interview, from myths, tales of heroes, and rituals via field survey, and from folk tales,	TBL, lectures, case studies, role-playing

proverbs, and sayings via literature reading and critical thinking. 5. Culture contrast, role-playing, and case studies (40) Divide students into small groups. Group A researches the big C of a specific country, and Group B researches the small C of the country and and then presents the findings. Role-playing for a situation where a business meeting happened between a German executive and a Brazilian executive, assign students to play each executive. Case study: McDonald's adapting menus globally (e.g., India's McAloo Tikki burger).	
Recommended resources and assignment: Preview the next chapter on MOOCs. For further learning about https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yB7WwENGOgw	

Week:5 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

Topics	Chapter 4 Communication and language
Objectives: After teaching and learning, students could understand: 1. The importance of language. 2. The definition of language. 3. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. 4. The social categories in language.	
1. Teaching design, Step 1：Lead-in, Step 2: Lecture delivered (culture contrast), Step 3: case studies, role-playing, simulation	
Key point is the importance of language. The difficult point is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.	
Teaching content summary and time allocation	Methods & activities
1. Lead-in discussion（10min） The teacher lead in by asking questions: Can someone understand Indian society without knowing Hidi?	

2. Lead-in discussion（10min） The teacher lead in by asking questions: Can someone understand Indian society without knowing Hidi? 3. Lecture delivered (40 min) Language definition: Language is the use of vocalized sounds, or written symbols representing these sounds or ideas, in patterns organized by grammatical rules to express thoughts and feelings. It allows humans to perceive reality symbolically. Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication. It has the following features: arbitrary in the sounds and in its word choice as well. It is vocal; it is governed by situational variables; it is species-specific to man. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is that we inherit a language used to report knowledge, so we would expect that language to influence the organization of our knowledge in some way. Social categories in language: Language, which is a part of culture, affects human communication through thought and perception. 4. case studies, role-playing, simulation (40 min) Role-playing: Demonstrate how language shapes perception and cultural identity. Scenario: A tourist tries to buy medicine in a pharmacy in China but speaks no Chinese. A local knows basic English but struggles to explain cultural nuances (e.g., traditional vs. Western medicine). Local: Attempts to help but miscommunicates due to linguistic barriers. Case Study Activity: "Language & Assimilation"	TBL, lectures, case studies, role-playing, simulations

Singapore's "Speak Mandarin Campaign" and its effect on Chinese Singaporean identity. Simulation: "Create a Culture", design a language, groups invent 5-10 words with arbitrary sounds (e.g., Kopa=friend), assign cultural values to words (e.g., Kopa implies loyalty); simulate communication, pair groups: one must negotiate a trade using only their new language and gestures, observers note how "foreign" terms force new thought patterns (e.g., if tome has no word, how do they agree on deadlines?)	
Recommended resources and assignment: Preview the next chapter on MOOCs. For further learning about the topic of understanding culture, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PcLlf2yesI	

Week:6 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

Topics	Chapter 5 Improving ICC: attitude, cultural adjustment
Objectives: After teaching and learning, students will be able to: 1. Define and demonstrate the key attitudes of intercultural communication: openness, respect, and curiosity. 2. Understand the process of cultural adjustment. 3. Apply coping strategies to navigate cultural adjustment 4. Practice these skills through case studies and role-playing in realistic scenarios.	
Teaching design, Step 1：Lead-in, Step 2: Lecture delivered (culture contrast), Step 3: case studies, role-playing.	
Key point: linking attitudes to successful cultural adjustment. The difficult point: managing the emotional challenges of culture shock and applying coping strategies.	
Teaching content summary and time allocation	Methods & activities
1. Lead-in discussion（10min） The teacher asks: "Have you or someone you know experienced culture shock? What happened?" "What strategies do you think might help someone adjust to a new culture?"	

2. Lead-in discussion（10min） The teacher asks: "Have you or someone you know experienced culture shock? What happened?" "What strategies do you think might help someone adjust to a new culture?" 3. Lecture delivered (40 min) Attitudes for Intercultural Communication: Openness: Willingness to adapt and learn. Respect: Valuing differences without judgment. Curiosity: Asking questions to understand, not stereotype. Cultural Adjustment Process: Culture Shock: Emotional stages (excitement, frustration, adaptation). U-Curve Model: *Honeymoon*, *Crisis*, *Recovery*, *Adjustment*. Coping Strategies: *Observe and learn local customs*. Ask questions respectfully. Accept mistakes as part of learning. Find a cultural ally or support group. Be patient: adjustment takes time. Show the U-Curve graph and clips of people sharing culture shock experiences. Step 3: case studies, role-playing (40 min) Case 1: "An American student in Japan feels lonely and frustrated after the 'honeymoon phase' ends." Groups discuss: Which U-Curve stage is this? How could openness/curiosity help? (e.g., joining a club, asking a local friend for advice). Case 2: "A Brazilian employee in Germany struggles with direct feedback (vs. indirect communication at home)." Brainstorm coping strategies (e.g., observing colleagues, asking for clarification). Role-Playing, scenario 1: "Navigating the 'Crisis' Phase"	TBL, lectures, case studies, role-playing

Student A: International student overwhelmed by cultural differences (e.g., food, loneliness). Student B: Cultural ally (e.g., local student or fellow international who adjusted). Task: Practice coping strategies (e.g., asking for help, joining events).	
Recommended resources and assignment: Preview the next chapter on MOOCs. For the topic of how to deal with culture shock, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrbzuV2Paw0	

Week:7 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

Topics	Chapter 5 Improving ICC: experience Chinese culture
Objectives: After teaching and learning, students could understand 1. Understand key elements of Chinese culture (e.g., traditions, values, symbols). 2.Analyze how cultural practices shape communication and daily life in China. 3. Apply knowledge through interactive activities (case studies, role-playing).	
Teaching design, Step 1：Lead-in, Step 2: Lecture delivered, Step 3: case studies, role-playing	
Key Point: Core values and symbols in Chinese culture. Difficult Point: Bridging cultural differences in real-world scenarios.	
Teaching content summary and time allocation	Methods & activities
1.Lead-in discussion（10min） What comes to mind when you think of Chinese culture?" (e.g., food, festivals, language). "How might a foreigner misunderstand Chinese customs like 'face' (面子) or guanxi (关系)?" |2. Lecture delivered (30 min) Symbols: Chinese characters, red envelopes (红包), dragon motifs.	

Values: Collectivism, harmony, filial piety. Traditions: Spring Festival, tea ceremonies, Confucian etiquette. Communication Styles: Indirectness, high-context communication. Show images/videos of festivals, calligraphy, or family rituals. 3: case studies, role-playing (50 min). Case 1: "A foreign businessperson gifts a clock to a Chinese partner (taboo: 'giving a clock' sounds like 'attending a funeral')." Groups discuss: Why did this offend? How could cultural research prevent this? Case 2: "A student refuses a teacher's offer of tea repeatedly (in China, polite refusal is expected before acceptance)." Debate: Is this custom logical or confusing? Role-Playing (30 min) Simulated Scenarios. Scenario 1: "Dinner with a Chinese Host". Student A: Foreign guest who finishes all the food (impolite in China; implies the host didn't provide enough). Student B: Chinese host who keeps serving more food (hospitality custom). Observer: Notes nonverbal cues (e.g., pushing dishes, refusal rituals). Scenario 2: "Job Interview in China". Student A: Candidate who boasts about individual achievements (vs. expected humility). Student B: Interviewer reacting subtly (e.g., silence, nodding). Recommended resources and assignment: Preview the next chapter on MOOCs. For further learning about the topic of Chinese culture, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bufV3EgyPGU	TBL, lectures, case studies, role-playing

Week:8 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

<table>
<tr><td>Topics</td><td colspan="2">Chapter 5 Improving ICC: Experience International Culture</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Objectives: After teaching and learning, students will be able to:
1. Identify key elements of diverse international cultures (e.g., customs, values, communication styles). 2. Analyze how cultural differences influence global interactions. 3. Apply knowledge through case studies and role-playing to bridge gaps in cross-cultural communication.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Teaching design, Step 1：Lead-in, Step 2: Lecture delivered, Step 3: case studies, role-playing</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Key Point: Understanding cultural diversity and its impact on communication.
Difficult points: navigating cultural knowledge through case studies and role-playing bridge gaps in cross-cultural communication.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Teaching content summary and time allocation</td><td>Methods & activities</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1.Lead-in discussion（10min）
Teacher asks: “What are some cultural practices from other countries that surprise or confuse you?" (e.g., bowing in Japan, siesta in Spain). "How might cultural differences lead to misunderstandings in business or travel?"
2. Lecture delivered (30 min)
Cultural Dimensions: Hofstede’s model (e.g., individualism vs. collectivism, power distance). Symbols & Rituals: Examples like Japanese tea ceremonies, Indian festivals (Diwali), or Italian family dinners. Communication Styles: Direct (e.g., Germany) vs. indirect (e.g., Saudi Arabia); high-context vs. low-context cultures. Taboos: Common faux pas (e.g., thumbs-up in the Middle East, shoes indoors in Scandinavia). Show images/videos of cultural practices, gestures, or festivals.</td><td></td></tr>
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3. Case studies, role-playing (50 min) Case 1: "An American manager criticizes a Thai employee publicly (Thailand values 'saving face')." Groups discuss: Why did this backfire? How could feedback be given respectfully in Thai culture? Case 2: "A German tourist refuses a second helping of food in Argentina (hospitality = insistence)." | Debate: Is this custom welcoming or overwhelming? Role-Playing (30 min). Scenario 1: "Business Negotiation in Japan". Student A: American executive (direct, fast-paced). Student B: Japanese executive (indirect, relationship-focused). Observer: Notes on how silence, nodding, and business card etiquette affect the interaction. Scenario 2: "Dining Etiquette in France" Student A: Tourist who eats bread with hands (acceptable) but cuts salad with a knife (taboo). Student B: French host subtly correcting the guest. Recommended resources and assignment: Preview the next chapter on MOOCs. For further learning about the topic of international culture, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IesWWZEh604	TBL, lectures, case studies, role-playing

Week:9 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

<table>
<tr><td>Topics</td><td colspan="2">Chapter 5 Improving ICC: Communicative skills (listening, observing, relating) and cognitive skills (assessing, analyzing, interpreting)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Objectives: After teaching and learning, students will:
1.Master six core intercultural skills: listening, observing, assessing, analyzing, interpreting, and relating. 2. Understand how these skills interconnect in cross-cultural situations. 3. Apply skills through structured practice in case studies and role-plays. 4. Develop metacognitive awareness of their skill application.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Teaching design: Step 1 ： Lead-in, Step 2: Lecture delivered, Step 3: case studies, role-playing.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Key Point: The cyclical relationship between receiving information and processing it. Difficult points: maintaining a non-judgmental assessment while accurately interpreting cultural behaviors.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Teaching content summary and time allocation</td><td>Methods & activities</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1.Lead-in discussion（10min）
"Close your eyes for 60 seconds - what sounds do you notice? How might these differ across cultures?" (Listening)
Show image of crowded Asian market vs. Swedish supermarket - "What details stand out?" (Observing)
2.Lecture delivered (30 min)
Six skills frameworks: Listening: Beyond words - tone, pauses, silence, meanings. Observing: Nonverbals, environmental cues, rituals. Assessing: Separating facts from assumptions. Analyzing: Cultural patterns behind behaviors. Interpreting: Multiple plausible meanings. Relating: Connecting to own experiences without bias.</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

3.Case studies, role-playing (50 min) Case 1: "Japanese team's silence during Canadian presentation" Group 1: Listens to audio clip (no visuals). Group 2: Views silent video of body language. Groups combine observations to analyze possible meanings. Case 2: "Italian professor's animated feedback confuses Finnish student". Groups assess: What's factual (e.g., hand gestures) vs. assumed (e.g., anger)? Business Role-Playing (25 min) Layered Skill Practice Scenario 1: "Medical Consultation" Patient (Culture A): Uses metaphors ("fire in my bones") Doctor (Culture B): Prefers symptom lists Rounds: First run: Natural interaction. Second run: Observer calls "freeze" to identify skill moments. Third run: Guided application of all six skills	TBL, lectures, case studies, role-playing
Recommended resources and assignment: Preview the next chapter on MOOCs. For further learning about the topic of international culture.	

Week:10 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

Topics	Chapter 6 Art for enhancing ICC: Paintings
Objectives: After teaching and learning, students will: 1. Analyze how cultural values shape artistic expression in Chinese vs. Western paintings. 2. Identify key differences in composition, themes, and techniques reflecting cultural worldviews. 3. Apply ICC skills (observation, interpretation, relating) to discuss art across cultures.	
Teaching design, Step 1：Lead-in, Step 2: Lecture delivered, Step 3: culture contrast.	

Key Point: Cultural fingerprints in art (e.g., Chinese harmony vs. Western individualism). Difficult points: Avoiding ethnocentric interpretations of symbolic elements.	
Teaching content summary and time allocation	Methods & activities
1.Lead-in discussion（10min） Display: Fan Kuan (Chinese) vs. Monet (Western) landscapes without labels. And then ask questions:" What emotions do each evoke? Why might they differ?" "What natural elements are emphasized/reduced?" 2.Lecture delivered (30 min) Composition: Chinese: Space (留白) as philosophical depth. Western: Perspective lines for realism. Themes: Chinese: Harmony with nature (山水画). Western: Human centrality (Renaissance portraits). Symbols: Chinese: Bamboo = resilience; Western: Olive branch = peace. Visual Aids: Side-by-side slides: Zhang Zeduan's清明上河图 vs. Bruegel's peasant scenes. Close-ups of brushstrokes: Ink wash vs. oil layering. | 3. Culture contrast (50 min) Case 1: "Political Power in Art" Group A: Chinese Emperor Portraits (symbolic hierarchy, dragon motifs). Group B: Napoleon's Coronation (individual glory, Christian imagery). Task: Identify 3+ cultural values embedded in each.	

Case 2: "Gender Depictions" Group A: Tang DyNAty Court Ladies (pale skin, flowing robes = ideal femininity). Group B: Rubens' Women (voluptuousness = prosperity). Debate: How do these reflect historical gender norms? Recommended resources and assignment: Preview the next chapter on MOOCs. See more paintings comparison in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tx97C0b9VTc	TBL, lectures, case studies, culture contrats

Week:11 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

Topics	Chapter 6 Art for enhancing ICC: films
Objectives: After teaching and learning, students will: 1. Analyze how cultural values shape storytelling, visuals, and themes in Chinese vs. Western films 2. Identify key differences in narrative structures, character development, and cinematography reflecting cultural perspectives. 3. Apply ICC skills (observation, interpretation, critical thinking) to discuss films across cultures.	
Teaching design: Step 1：Lead-in, Step 2: Lecture delivered, Step 3: culture contrast	
Key Point: Cultural influences on filmmaking (e.g., collectivism vs. individualism, high-context vs. low-context communication). Difficult points: Avoiding stereotypes while recognizing culturally specific storytelling techniques.	
Teaching content summary and time allocation	Methods & activities
1.Lead-in discussion（10min） Play two short clips, Chinese Clip: A scene from 《卧虎藏龙》 (Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon) showcasing martial arts and nature	

symbolism. Western Clip: A scene from The Dark Knight focusing on individual heroism and dialogue-driven conflict. Ask: "How do these clips make you feel? What stands out as culturally distinct?" "What priorities of each culture might be based on these scenes?" 2.Lecture delivered (30 min) Narrative Structure: Chinese: Circular storytelling (e.g., 《霸王别姬》), emphasis on collective destiny. Western: Linear three-act structure (e.g., The Godfather), focus on individual arcs. Character Development: Chinese: Characters often represent societal roles or philosophies (e.g., Confucian values in 《活着》). Western: Characters emphasize personal growth and conflict (e.g., Forrest Gump). Visual Style: Chinese: Symbolic use of color and space (e.g., red in 《大红灯笼高高挂》). Western: Realism and dramatic lighting (e.g., Citizen Kane). Side-by-side screenshots of scenes highlighting cultural differences. Short clips demonstrating contrasting dialogue styles (e.g., indirect vs. direct communication). | 3. culture contrast (50 min) Case 1: "Family Dynamics"Group A: Analyze a scene from 《喜宴》 (The Wedding Banquet) focusing on filial piety and generational conflict. Group B: Analyze a scene from Little Miss Sunshine focusing on individualism and family support.	TBL, lectures, case studies, culture contracts

Recommended resources and assignment: Preview the next chapter on MOOCs. Watch the movie named Kungfu Panda and find out the difference of Chinese and American cultures in the movie.	

Week: 12 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

Topics	Chapter 6 Art for Enhancing ICC: films
Objectives: After teaching and learning, students will: 1. Analyze how American cultural values reshape Chinese storytelling in Kung Fu Panda 2. 2. Identify 3+ Western film elements (narrative, humor, visuals) that diverge from traditional Chinese artistic principles.	
Teaching design： Step 1 ：Lead-in, Step 2: Movie watching, Step 3: Lecture.	
Key Point: Cross-cultural reinterpretation vs. cultural appropriation. Difficult points: Distinguishing respectful adaptation from stereotyping.	
Teaching content summary and time allocation	Methods & activities
1:Lead-in discussion（10min） Ask the following questions before playing the movie Kung Fu Panda 2, and encourage students to think about these while watching. "What feels authentically Chinese? What feels ‘foreign’?" "Why might DreamWorks adapt Chinese culture this way?" 2: Movie watching (60 min) 3: Lecture (20) Contrasting film traditions: Narratives: Chinese: Cyclic journeys (Journey to the West)	

Western: Hero's linear growth (Po's "find yourself" arc). Humor: Chinese: Wordplay, historical references Western: Slapstick, pop-culture nods (Po's "dramatic chipmunk" face) Visuals: Chinese: Subtle ink-wash influences. Western: Fast cuts, exaggerated expressions. Po's inner peace scene (Chinese philosophy Hollywood spectacle). Shen's weapon factory (Chinese aesthetic + steampunk Western style) Recommended resources and assignment: Preview the next chapter on MOOCs.	TBL,culture contracts

Week: 13 Grade level: one time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

Topics	Cross-Cultural Dialogue: Live Interaction with a Foreign Guest Speaker
Objectives: After teaching and learning, students will: 1. Engage in real-time cross-cultural dialogue with an international guest speaker. 2. Identify and practice key ICC behaviors: active listening, perspective-taking, and adaptive communication. 3. Reflect on how cultural backgrounds shape communication styles and expectations.	
Teaching design Step 1 : Lead-in Step 2: Movie watching. Step 3: lecture	
Key Point: Bridging cultural gaps through live interaction. Difficult points: Navigating spontaneous cultural misunderstandings respectively.	
Teaching content summary and time allocation	Methods & activities
1: Lead-in discussion（10min） Students brainstorm 3-5 cultural norms from the guest's home country (e.g., Pakistan)	

2: Guest speaker session (50 min) 3: Lecture (30) Guest shares: A personal culture shock experience, examples of ICC successes/ failures in their career. "What I wish people knew about my culture", experience sharing about ICC. Interactive activities ●Assumption check Students write one assumption about the speaker's culture (e.g., Pakistani people always…). After that, the speaker confirms or challenges these, respectively. ●Culture gap role-play: guest reacts to a past miscommunication (e.g., misunderstanding "Have you had breakfast? (吃了吗)" as a real question rather than a Chinese greeting way. And then students suggest ICC strategies to resolve it. ●Debrief and reflection ●Small group discussion: What surprised you about the speaker's communication styles? How did your preconceptions change? Recommended resources and assignment: Preview the next chapter on MOOCs.	TBL,cultural contract, guest speaker workshop

Week: 14 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

<table>
<tr><td>Topics</td><td colspan="2">Story circle</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Objectives: After teaching and learning, students will:
1. Practice active listening and perspective-taking through structured story circles.
2. Share personal intercultural experiences in a safe, respectful environment. 3. Identify 3+ common themes across diverse narratives to build cultural empathy.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Teaching design: Step 1 ： preparation, Step 2: story circle.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Key Point: Creating shared understanding through personal storytelling. Difficult points: maintaining confidentiality and avoiding judgment during sensitive stories</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Teaching content summary and time allocation</td><td>Methods & activities</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Preparation (5 min)
Arrange chairs in 6-person circles (pre-mixed for diversity)
Distributed printed protocol rules: no interruptions during sharing. Confidentiality: “What’s shared here stays here.” Use “I” statements (e.g., “I felt…”)
2: Round 1: Introductions (15 min), identify icebreaker prompt
State your name and three words/phrases that represent your cultural background. Explain briefly why they matter.” E.g., I’m Lin, my words: Dragon Boat Festival (family tradition), Spicy food (Sichuan pride), face (social value).’
Rules: 2 minutes per person, no comments or questions until round 2: Intercultural stories (30 min), focused storytelling, prompt choices (assign 1 per circle).</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Share a memorable encounter with someone from a different background. What did you learn？ Describe a time you felt culturally misunderstood. How did you respond? Rules: 3 minutes per story, listeners note non-verbal cues (tone, pauses) Round 3: Reflection (20 min) structured feedback protocol. Each member tells one speaker: “The part of your story that stood out me was ___ because ____.”Recommended resources and assignment: Preview the next chapter on MOOCs. Journal entry: "How will I apply today’s listening skills in real life?"	TBL, story-circle

Week: 15 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

Topics	Reflective writing
Objectives: By completing this session, students will 1. Demonstrate ICC competency growth through a standardized post-test. 2. Articulate personal learning experiences via one-on-one interviews. 3. Provide actionable feedback for curriculum refinement.	
Teaching design Step 1 ： post-test, Step 2: Semi-structured interview.	
Key Point: Triangulating quantitative and qualitative data. Difficult points: Ensuring the interview is consistent across 32 participants.	
Teaching content summary and time allocation	Methods & activities
Step 1: Post-test Define reflective writing, it is not a summary, but a deep analysis of HOW and WHY you changed.’	

Introducing 3 domains: Attitude (mindset shifts), knowledge (cultural frameworks applied), skills (Concrete behaviours and practices). Show prompts table Project Table 2.3.5 (attitude/knowledge/skill prompts), and emphasize choosing more than one prompt per domain. Writing workshops (15 minutes) Step 1: Prompt selection: students pick prompts (e.g., attitude, how has your view of ICC challenges changed?) Step 2: ABC outline: Anchor: Experience (e.g., role-play with Pakistani guest) Bridge: ICC concept (e.g., high context communication) Change: Growth (e.g., Now I pause instead of assuming silence disagreement) Step 3: Drafting (60 min) Submit the writing to the teacher.	TBL, reflective writing
Recommended resources and assignment: Preview the next chapter on MOOCs. Journal entry: "How will I apply today's listening skills in real life?"	

Week: 16 Grade level: one Time allotted: 1.5 hrs. date:

<table>
<tr><td>Topics</td><td colspan="2">Post -test and semi-structured interview</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Objectives: By the end of this session, students will
1. Critically reflect on their ICC development across attitudes, knowledge, and skills. 2. Articulate personal growth through structured writing using reflective prompts. 3. Synthesize course experiences into actionable insights for future intercultural interactions.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Teaching design Step 1 : Lead-in Step 2: Movie watching. Step 3: lecture</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Key Point: connecting theory to personal transformation. Difficult points: Honest self-assessment of biases and skill gaps.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Teaching content summary and time allocation</td><td>Methods & activities</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Step 1: Post-test
Step 2: interview (flexible 320-480 min total)
Opening: reflect on your ICC journal this term.
Core questions:
Attitude: "How do you view cultural differences now: as challenges, opportunities, or something else? Why?" (Q3) "How has your attitude toward intercultural interactions changed?" (Q1).
Knowledge: "Share a situation where your cultural knowledge resolved a misunderstanding." (Q5). "How do you adapt your behavior for different cultural contexts?" (Q6)
Skills:
"Give an example of an intercultural interaction that taught you a key lesson." (Q7)
"How do you challenge stereotypes about other cultures?"(Q9)
Closing Feedback: "Would you recommend this training? Why?" (Q13)
"Suggestions for improvement?" (Q14)</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Logistics: Schedule slots over 3–4 days (e.g., 8 interviews/day). Record responses (audio/notes) with consent. Allow flexible time (10–20 min) based on the depth of discussion. Note: the sequence of questions is flexible to each interviewee.	TBL, reflective writing
Recommended resources and assignment: Nothing	

CURRICULUM VITAE

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EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

2014	Master of Translation Yunnan University
2012	Bachelor of English Honghe University

WORK EXPERIENCE

2021-up to now	Lecturer of English West Yunnan University of Applied Sciences, College of Tea (Pu'er)
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PUBLICATION

Yang, Z. (2013). Thoughts on Benjamin's The Task of the Translator. *Science and Education Journal, 2013*(9), 56-58.

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