

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT

Summary. *In an increasingly globalized economic landscape, intercultural communication competence (ICC) has emerged as a crucial skill for students in economics and business disciplines. This article explores the assessment of ICC within a dedicated course at the tertiary level, focusing on learners at economy universities. It examines the goals, challenges, and effective practices of ICC assessment while proposing forward-thinking strategies to enhance inclusivity, relevance, and impact. By aligning assessment with institutional objectives and real-world demands, educators can better prepare students for the intercultural complexities of global economic engagement. This paper builds on our own experience gathered in a setting where we taught the online ICC to two groups of Master's degree students. That experience has made us face various challenges and raise questions on how such a course should be designed and assessed.*

Key words: *Intercultural communicative competence, formative and summative assessment, self-awareness, scaffolded assignments.*

Аномація. *В умовах глобалізації економіки міжкультурна комунікативна компетентність (МКК) стала невід'ємним вмінням студентів у вищих навчальних закладах. У цій статті досліджується оцінювання МКК в рамках спеціального курсу на рівні вищої освіти, зосередженого на студентах економічних факультетів. У ній розглядаються цілі, виклики та ефективні практики оцінювання МКК, а також пропонуються перспективні стратегії для підвищення інклюзивності, релевантності та впливу. Узгоджуючи оцінювання як з інституційними цілями, так і з реальними потребами, викладачі можуть краще підготувати студентів до міжкультурних складнощів глобальної економічної взаємодії. Ця стаття ґрунтується на нашому власному досвіді, отриманому під час викладання онлайн-курсу з МКК для двох груп студентів магістратури. Цей досвід змусив нас зіткнутися з різними проблемами і поставив кілька запитань про те, як слід розробляти і оцінювати такий курс.*

Ключові слова: *міжкультурна комунікативна компетентність, формуюче та підсумкове оцінювання, самооцінювання, самоусвідомлення, скафолдинг.*

Introduction. Communication across cultures is essential for graduates working in international economic environments. Whether managing cross-border teams, negotiating with foreign partners, or interpreting diverse consumer behavior, intercultural competence is key. Designers of ICC courses now embed into economics programs to build students' understanding of cultural differences and improve their interaction skills. However, while the importance of such training is evident, the assessment of ICC remains complex. Among those who have made a compelling exploration in this field by presenting various ways, modes, or strategies for assessing the learners' intercultural communicative competence are [1] M. Byram, 1997, 2020; [3] D. K. Deardorff [3], 2006. This article addresses the core questions: What is important to assess? How can assessment reflect real-world needs? Moreover, how can it be inclusive, meaningful, and future-ready?

Problem statement. Assessment should reflect the multifaceted nature of ICC, encompassing knowledge (e.g., cultural dimensions), skills (e.g., active listening), and attitudes (e.g., openness, curiosity). The goal is to evaluate what students know and how they apply this understanding in authentic, culturally diverse contexts. Well-designed assessments should reinforce the course's learning outcomes and contribute to students' long-term professional development. Assessing intercultural growth is inherently challenging. Competence is not always observable, and cultural behaviors can be interpreted differently depending on the context. Persistent issues are subjectivity, bias, and the difficulty of standardizing personal development. Furthermore, diverse classrooms introduce additional complexity in ensuring fairness across cultural backgrounds.

Findings. A blend of formative (mind-map activities, break-out activities) and summative assessments is essential to address the above-mentioned challenges. Reflective journals, cultural self-assessments, peer evaluations, and case study analyses allow students to demonstrate growth over time. Simulations, role-plays, and real-world scenarios can assess their ability to apply ICC in practice. Rubrics with clear, culturally sensitive criteria help ensure transparency and consistency. Teachers measure progress in ICC over time through scaffolded tasks [5]. Scaffolding assignments help students master the intended learning outcomes of the assignment by breaking up the cognitive tasks so that they are smaller and more manageable. They recognize learning as a process where students can master one skill or achievement before the next. Pre- and post-course self-assessments can highlight changes in perception and behavior. Digital portfolios or reflective blogs allow students to document their learning journey. Ongoing feedback helps guide improvement and fosters metacognitive awareness of intercultural growth [4]. The tool helps students look at themselves and their intercultural competence and recognize their strong points as well as areas that need further development. They need to have a quiet 20 or 30 minutes, sit back, and reflect on the list of I-statements describing observable behavior. Students must think of themselves in the context of the people surrounding them, people who are close or not close, and people from different socio-cultural, regional, socio-economic, or linguistic backgrounds.

Besides, it is reasonable to ask students to think of intercultural encounters they had or had or any situation involving others. Students are encouraged to recall how they felt, what they knew, and what they did, and mark the appropriate box next to each statement. Teachers can suggest that students use the tool on their own or try it out with colleagues or peers in a team. When they have finished, it is time to reflect on the steps they can take to help their development. One can return to the tool at any time and go through it or parts of it to find out what has changed. Effective feedback is timely, constructive, and culturally aware. It should encourage students to reflect on their assumptions, recognize growth areas, and consider alternative perspectives. Peer feedback, when structured, can also deepen intercultural insights and promote empathy. The teacher's role is to focus students on ambiguity tolerance, openness to contacts, flexibility in behavior, emotional stability, motivation to perform, and empathy.

Technology has the potential to bridge gaps and foster empathy and understanding among individuals from different backgrounds. Technology can enhance empathy and understanding in several ways: Online education platforms provide access to various courses and learning materials [4]. These platforms can educate and raise awareness by offering content on cultural diversity, social issues, and perspectives from different communities, promoting empathy and understanding. While technology offers these opportunities, it is essential to approach their use with care and ensure inclusive, ethical, and responsible implementation. Technology alone cannot replace genuine human interaction and understanding, but it can serve as a valuable tool to complement and enhance empathy-building efforts.

Conclusion. Fostering intercultural communicative competence (ICC) requires a holistic and sustained approach to assessment and reflection. A strategic blend of formative and summative tools — such as reflective journals, self-assessments, and simulations — empowers students to track their growth and apply their learning in meaningful, real-world contexts. Culturally sensitive rubrics and scaffolded tasks ensure that progress is measured relatively and clearly over time. Integrating reflective tools invites learners to engage deeply with their own experiences, assumptions, and emotional responses, helping them recognize strengths and areas for development.

Equally important is timely, empathetic, and structured feedback from peers and educators, which fosters metacognitive awareness and encourages openness to diverse perspectives. When implemented ethically and inclusively, technology can further support this journey by broadening access to intercultural experiences and educational resources. Developing ICC is a dynamic, lifelong process that thrives on intentional reflection, supportive guidance, and a commitment to understanding others. We prepare students to navigate and contribute positively to an increasingly interconnected world by equipping them with the tools and mindset for ongoing intercultural growth.

Recommendations. It is important to prepare assessment tools with cultural awareness in mind. Tasks should be accessible and relevant to students from diverse backgrounds. Avoiding ethnocentric assumptions, using inclusive language, and allowing choice in assignments support equity. Educators must recognize cultural influences on communication styles and performance while teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence.

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