Education Research and Perspectives
An international journal

Volume 52, 2025, Pages 1-40

Rethinking Intercultural Competence (IC): A Co-Constructed Approach to Developing and Assessing IC in Virtual Exchange

Amy B McHugh†

The National Centre for Cultural Competence, The University of Sydney

This article critically examines how intercultural competence (IC) is developed and evaluated, particularly in the context of virtual exchange (VE). It considers how prevailing applications of IC models often underemphasize the relational, dynamic, and co-constructed nature of intercultural learning in VE. Drawing on recent empirical research from VE contexts (McHugh, 2024), the article highlights how peer feedback and collaborative meaning-making can strengthen existing approaches to IC development and evaluation. Grounded in social constructionist theory, the article proposes a conceptual pedagogical framework that situates IC development and assessment in VE within processes of co-construction, relational accountability, and peer-informed evaluation. The article concludes by outlining practical implications for teaching and learning, while also identifying how this approach might support more inclusive and responsive IC practices in virtual environments.

Introduction

Over the past half century, the academic field of intercultural communication (ICOM), a discipline that examines how people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds communicate, negotiate meaning, and navigate power, has undergone significant shifts in its philosophical foundations. Although the field originated in the United States, its theories and practices now inform research and pedagogy

†Address for correspondence: National Centre for Cultural Competence, Room L2.05 The Quadrangle (A14), The University of Sydney NSW 2006, Australia.
Email: amy.mchugh@sydney.edu.au

across global higher education. ICOMs origins in the U.S. Foreign Service Institute (FSI) reveal a foundational tension: while anthropologists such as Edward T. Hall aimed to cultivate nuanced, interpretive understandings of culture, the diplomats they trained sought prescriptive, practical rules for effective cross-cultural engagement (Moon, 1996). Under political and institutional pressures, this pragmatic orientation gradually overshadowed Hall's interpretive ambitions, contributing to a reductive alignment of "culture" with nation-states and a turn toward behavior-predictive frameworks rather than relational, contextual understandings of human interaction. By the mid-1990s, critical intercultural communication scholars challenged this positivist legacy, arguing for approaches that attend to power, hegemony, history, and socioeconomic conditions (e.g., Collier et al., 2001; Drzewiecka, 2002; Halualani, 1998; Nakayama & Martin, 1999). This critical turn expanded the field's capacity to respond to global challenges such as inequality, migration, climate change, and resource distribution (Croucher et al., 2015) and underscored that intercultural engagement is not merely a technical skill but a socially and ethically consequential practice.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) increasingly position themselves within this global landscape by preparing graduates who can navigate intercultural complexities. Internationalization efforts, defined as developing the capacity to function in international and intercultural contexts (de Wit, 2002), have traditionally emphasized physical mobility. Yet study-abroad opportunities, while valuable, are often inaccessible and inequitable (Institute of International Education, 2023). This has prompted a shift toward "internationalization at home" (IaH), the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the curriculum for all students, regardless of mobility (Beelen & Jones, 2015). Collaborative Online International Learning Virtual Exchanges (COILVEs) represent a key IaH strategy, offering students technology-mediated opportunities to interact across borders while developing intercultural competence (IC), understood here as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff,

2006, p. 247).

Even so, IC itself remains the subject of ongoing scholarly debate regarding its definition, scope, and appropriate methods of development and evaluation. Terms such as intercultural competence, intercultural awareness, and intercultural effectiveness are often used interchangeably, yet differ in emphasis. Intercultural competence is retained here as an umbrella concept because of its ubiquity in the literature and its centrality to higher education policy and practice. However, prevailing approaches to developing and accessing IC, particularly within COILVEs, tend to conceptualize competence as an individual achievement, frequently assessed through self-report instruments (Griffith et al., 2016). Such approaches risk obscuring the relational, negotiated, and dynamic nature of intercultural encounters.

This article addresses this gap by proposing a conceptual and pedagogical shift: reconceptualizing IC as a co-constructed and situated achievement, developed through explicit negotiation and sustained relational work rather than individual self-improvement alone. I suggest that meaningful IC development may require not only internal learning but also the collaborative construction of shared norms, expectations, and communicative practices. Two interrelated constructs help ground this shift. First, peer feedback can offer insight into how one is experienced by others, which is an important dimension of competence that self-assessment alone may not fully capture. Second, social constructionist theory provides a lens for understanding IC as something jointly created, contextually emergent, and contingent upon the perspectives of all interlocutors. Taken together, these concepts provide the basis for a conceptual reframing of IC that is intended to open further empirical and pedagogical inquiry rather than close debate.

Foregrounding this relational orientation also responds to broader ethical calls within the field. Guilherme's (2020) concept of intercultural responsibility emphasizes solidarity, critical cooperation, and reciprocal accountability across cultural, linguistic, epistemic, and ethical differences. This paper draws on intercultural responsibility as a guiding orientation, suggesting that co-construction and peer feedback may serve as pedagogical practices through which such an ethos can be enacted

within higher education.

Accordingly, this paper proceeds as follows. I first review key IC models, identifying their strengths and limitations, particularly regarding their limited attention to relationality and to how learners are perceived by others. I then introduce peer feedback and social constructionism as theoretical and practical resources for reframing IC evaluation. Finally, drawing on empirical insights from COILVEs, I outline a conceptual pedagogical framework that integrates co-creation of IC and peer feedback into teaching practice, and consider how this framework might inform strategies for educators seeking to cultivate intercultural responsibility in virtual and hybrid learning environments.

Key Models of Intercultural Competence

Given its widespread use in research, policy, and practice, intercultural competence serves as a pragmatic umbrella term in this manuscript, providing a common reference point from which to advance a more situated, co-constructed, and responsibility-oriented reconceptualization. A wide range of IC models have been developed over the past several decades, and scholars such as Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009) and Griffith et al. (2016) categorize these into five main types: compositional, co-orientational, developmental, adaptational, and causal process. Each offers distinct perspectives on how IC is understood and evaluated.

Compositional models, exemplified by Deardorff's Pyramid Model of IC (2006) and Ting-Toomey & Kurogi's (1998) Facework-Based Model of IC, offer frameworks for evaluating fundamental IC components like knowledge, skills, and attitudes. While these models provide clarity around what constitutes competence, they often fall short in explaining how competence should be qualified or assessed in real-world interactions.

Co-orientational models, including those by Fantini (1995) and Byram (1997), stress the importance of shared understanding for achieving mutual goals. As one of the few models which promotes the idea of

shared understanding as a requirement for IC, Kupka et al.'s (2007) Rainbow Model emphasizes the ongoing co-creation of an 'interculture,' where "if the interculture is mutually perceived as satisfactory, progressive, and identity affirming, the highest level of ICC can be achieved by the communicators" (p.25). However, while the model is grounded in six theoretical concepts, it does not fully address how communicators might collaboratively define what IC means within a given context. It also risks implying that appropriateness can be self-determined, rather than mutually negotiated.

Developmental models, such as Bennett's (2012) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and King & Baxter Magolda's (2005) Intercultural Maturity Model (IMM), suggest a progression from ethnocentric to ethnorelative perspectives over time. Yet, recent studies challenge the assumption that exposure to cultural differences inevitably enhances IC (McHugh, 2024). These models have also been critiqued for their essentialist perspectives (Lopez-Rocha, 2018) and limitations in addressing contextual factors such as race, ethnicity, and social class (Punti & Dingel, 2021).

Adaptational models, including Berry et al.'s (1989) attitude acculturation model and Gallois et al.'s (1988) communication accommodation theory (CAT), focus on how individuals adjust to cultural differences. However, their applicability in online or virtual exchanges is limited. In such contexts, interlocutors typically remain within their home cultures, complicating the traditional host–guest binary these models rely on. As communication increasingly takes place across fluid and shifting digital environments, the foundational assumptions of adaptational models become less tenable.

Causal path models, particularly Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of IC, have received sustained scholarly attention and are widely used in higher education contexts. These models are often applied in ways that suggest IC development follows a relatively linear progression, whereby the acquisition of particular attitudes, knowledges, and skills is assumed to lead to effective and appropriate intercultural outcomes. While such applications provide a useful structure for teaching and assessment, they can inadvertently narrow how competence is interpreted and evaluated

in practice. Deardorff's model, for example, was constructed through consensus among 23 intercultural scholars in the early 2000s, raising questions about whose perspectives were included, and whose were not. As McHugh (2024) notes, what is recognized as IC behavior may differ across participants who all have diverse and intersectional positionalities, underscoring the need for pedagogical approaches that invite learners to co-construct how competence is understood and enacted within specific interactions.

A consistent criterion for competence across these various model types is the demonstration of appropriate and effective communication. While "effective" can be considered from an individual's point of view, "appropriate" can only be determined by those whom we communicate with (Deardorff, 2020). This underscores the importance of incorporating the perspectives of interlocutors into IC assessment.

Moreover, many models assume that once an individual has fulfilled the various criteria outlined in the model, they can be labeled, or self-identify, as 'interculturally competent'. However, research has identified that while individuals may be perceived as competent by some, they may simultaneously be perceived as incompetent by others in the same context (McHugh, 2024). The arrows and circular nature of Deardorff's process model suggests that the development process is ongoing, however there are no signposts to suggest that one should inquire with the 'other' as to the appropriateness of the interaction. As denoted by Peng and Dervin (2023), "Interactions between individuals are unpredictable and fluid (Bauman, 2000; Dervin, 2011) and we cannot always prepare for "appropriate" and "effective" intercultural communication (Dervin, 2022)" (p.107).

In the following section, I introduce peer feedback and social constructionism as two interrelated constructs that may help advance the development and evaluation of IC. Together, they offer a conceptual basis for moving beyond individual, linear models toward more relational, co-constructed understandings of competence in intercultural contexts.

Beyond the Self: Toward Relational Models of Intercultural Competence

The need for this conceptual shift arises from the predominance of positivist epistemologies underpinning many of the IC models and assessment methodologies. These models often essentialize culture and presume the existence of a singular, immutable reality: that of the individual's opinion or perspective of their own IC, which "inhibits our appreciation for the extent to which the validity of self-knowledge is a dynamic and ongoing collective accomplishment rather than a strictly private personal assessment" (Weinberg, 2014, p.101-102). In this sense, an overreliance on self-assessment tools and a comparative approach to culture(s) has limited scholars' ability to capture the full complexity and nuance of IC (Martin, 2015).

To date, my inquiry has not uncovered a model that specifically incorporates "the other's" perspective into the conceptualization and assessment/evaluation of IC, despite the fundamental premise of intercultural communication and interaction revolving around engagement with "others". Co-orientational models of IC are one of the few model types which explicitly acknowledge the presence of at least two individuals within the communication and IC process. The models acknowledge that people come from various backgrounds and understandings and thus would need to have a base level of agreement to have successful communication, though coming together to co-construct that base level is not identified specifically (i.e. Kupka et al., 2007). Rathje's (2007) cohesion-based view of intercultural interaction aligns with my own conception, as it postulates that individuals from different "human groups" will come together to create a third culture (Casmir, 1993) which in turn will create "familiarity and thus cohesion amongst the individuals involved, allowing them to pursue their interactional goals" (Rathje, 2007, p.264). Though Rathje's research was conducted in the international corporate setting, their findings and proposed model have applicability in the COILVE space, as students come to COILVEs as interlocutors in their own country (typically) and therefore may not see the need to adapt or acculturate to their team members' ways of

knowing, being, and doing. Therefore, the creation of a third culture (or third space in the online realm) may be a useful way of thinking about these interactions, as there is no clear 'host' culture in the online space.

The overarching objective of ICOM, and communication in its broader context, is to establish connections and foster the construction of 'shared meaning' (Bennett, 2013). Hence, the notion that IC can be adequately gauged solely through subjective self-assessments or self-reflections regarding perceived intercultural competence after an interaction appears limited. While the incorporation of multiple assessment methods such as portfolios (which facilitate opportunities for critical self-reflection and skill building over time [Griffith et al., 2016]) and evaluations conducted by 'experts' or 'outsiders' contributes to a more comprehensive and discerning evaluation of one's IC, it is essential to recognize that "competent intercultural communication is not something one does but rather something that one is *perceived to be"* (Koester & Lustig, 2015, p. 20; emphasis added). I would extend this notion by suggesting that competent ICOM may be better understood in terms of how individuals are perceived and experienced *by those with whom they are engaging*, rather than by external observers. In the following section, I introduce peer assessment/feedback and suggest that it could be incorporated into the IC assessment/evaluation process.

Peer assessment/feedback

As a pedagogical approach, peer assessment/feedback has been part of the academic milieu for nearly three centuries (Topping, 2009). The utility of this method lies in its potential to provide students with more immediate feedback on their understanding and progress in a given domain, as well as alleviate some of the load experienced by educators who like to provide students with more timely and meaningful feedback. Peer assessment can also function as a teaching and learning tool, allowing students to become the teacher of a topic they are more comfortable with, and providing students a space to learn with and from each other without a focus on earning grades (Reinholz, 2016). Peer assessment can also support self-assessment by providing an opportunity

for students to reflect more accurately on their own learning (Dochy et al.1999).

In the following section, I explain why a shift from using the term 'assessment' to using the term 'evaluation' is preferable (Weaver & Cotrell, 1986), define and outline the purpose of peer feedback, provide a rationale for its use in the IC evaluation process, and outline benefits and challenges to using peer feedback in the IC evaluation process.

Shifting the focus from assessment to evaluation

While a variety of challenges exist for educators regarding the use of assessment in higher education (i.e. teacher load; lack of student interest in formative tasks; inequitable and inconsistent grading which relies on teachers' qualitative judgments, etc.), educators need to be thoughtful and intentional when it comes to 'assessing' IC. As a construct which requires time and reflection to develop, we need to ask ourselves, what is the purpose of 'assessing' IC? Who benefits from being labelled as IC (Collier, 2015)? What does being deemed 'IC' provide for individuals both personally and professionally? Borghetti (2017) also invites us to consider the ethical nature of assessing students' IC and recommends that perhaps we could do away with assessment of it altogether, conveying "a crucial, indirect message to students, namely that not everything must be proved and assessed to be valuable" (p. 10). This suggests that, instead of focusing on formally assessing students' IC (where they might be judged as either 'passing' or 'failing'), we might shift towards inviting students to evaluate and provide feedback to one another, which will aid them in their ongoing growth and development along this lifelong journey.

In the preceding sections of this paper, I have employed the terms 'assessment/feedback' or 'assessment/evaluation' as assessment is the commonly utilized term in the literature pertaining to self- and peer-review. In the sections that follow, I have opted to depart from the concept of assessment, as it implies assigning a grade at the conclusion. In the case of IC development, it may be more useful for students to perceive it as a transformative learning process (Taylor, 1994) rather than

something they must 'achieve' to succeed in the classroom. By emphasizing the use of peer feedback aimed at evaluating one's IC development, there is no concept of 'pass' or 'fail'; rather, it is about learning with and from their peers about how they can be successful in the current context and interaction(s), allowing students to carry lessons from each micro-level interaction into the broader IC development that may be taking place on the timescale of their lifespan (i.e., their IC journey).

Definition(s) and purpose of peer feedback

Since its inception in the 1700s, peer feedback has served various purposes, including helping students to learn with and from their peers, to help train transferable life skills, and to develop and practice self-regulation (Topping, 2009). According to Topping (2009), peer assessment is defined as "an arrangement for learners to consider and specify the level, value, or quality of a product or performance of other equal-status learners...it takes the form of feedback, face-to-face or otherwise, often reciprocally among the assessors and assessed" (p. 20-21). In this sense, peer feedback has been used to either evaluate outcomes (Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000) or to support learning (Stefani, 1998). For the purposes of this paper, I draw primarily on literature that falls into the second category of supporting learning (formative), as IC is a process and a journey that may require ongoing support for development.

Rationale for including peer feedback in the IC evaluation process

Peer feedback may play a significant role in the evaluation of IC as it offers valuable insights into how individuals are perceived and experienced by their peers. Such insights may be valuable to the continuous process of developing IC, which is recognized as an ongoing journey of learning and development. According to Luft and Ingham's (1955) Johari window model, aspects of our behavior and communication may be visible to others during interactions even when

they remain outside our own awareness. This concept may be applicable to COILVEs, where individuals might believe they are demonstrating IC despite others not experiencing them as such. Therefore, seeking feedback from peers could be an effective method for gaining insight into how one is perceived – to be shown a mirror in relation to our 'areas of unawareness'. In addition, receiving feedback from peers may help honor the intersectionality and embodied experiences of individuals (Bennett & Castiglioni, 2004), thus preventing the adoption of an essentialist viewpoint that assumes individuals from specific backgrounds inherently behave or understand concepts in predetermined ways. However, it is crucial to recognize that such feedback may not be universally relevant. In other words, how one person perceives your actions and performance in a particular context does not guarantee that others from a similar background will share the same perception(s). This further suggests the value of integrating peer feedback into the IC development process; our identities and positionalities shape how we are perceived and experienced by others. Thus, to support more competent engagement, it may be important to actively solicit feedback from each person we engage with. Furthermore, it is important for individuals to remain open to such feedback, as there exists a nuanced distinction between interpreting the remarks of others as personal criticisms and understanding them as reflections of their current perception of our behavior or demeanor. Depending on interlocutors' positionalities, the ways they experience one another could vary greatly, underscoring the value of individuals participating in training and engaging in critical self-reflection practices to unpack and make sense of these interpretations. Such endeavors aid in fostering greater awareness of one's own identities, positionalities, preferences, and the social influences that shape them.

Benefits and *challenges to the peer feedback approach*

Incorporating peer feedback into the evaluation of IC presents both advantages and challenges. Challenges might include the reluctance of students to provide 'harsh' feedback to their peers for fear of offending, hurting feelings, receiving potential negative responses, or the impact of power relations on the way one receives/perceives the information. Another challenge may lie in students flat out refusing to provide

feedback on their peers' performance. This may occur because they do not wish to engage in the process, because they do not feel it is their job to 'evaluate' another student (Weaver & Cottrell, 1986), or because they do not see themselves as a person in a position to assess another person's IC (Luo & Chan, 2023). Knowing they will be reviewed by their peers might also tempt students to 'act' or 'perform' in an interculturally competent manner, which may or may not mean that the student has experienced any desired internal outcomes such as being more adaptable, ethnorelative, and empathic. It is a risk, as with all 'assessment' which does not rely on a set of 'correct answers', that students will simply say or do what they think the instructor and their peers want to pass the course.

On the other hand, there are several potential benefits to integrating peer feedback into the evaluation of IC. Firstly, students are invited to collaboratively create criteria for the feedback process, potentially providing students with greater agency in their learning experiences, which Krapp (2005) determined as one of three essential requirements for well-being and psychological growth. Secondly, it offers students an opportunity to gain insights into how they are perceived and experienced by others, potentially revealing aspects that were previously unnoticed or invisible to them. These alternative perspectives may provide learners with further 'evidence' on which to critically self-reflect. The process of critical self-reflection invites learners to consider their positionality within broader social and institutional contexts, identify previously unnoticed assumptions, confront challenging questions, issues, and conflicts (Fook & Gardner, 2007). Key to this process is undertaking a concerted effort to unpack and examine one's socialization and how it impacts the ways in which we engage with and are engaged by others. This includes uncovering the dynamics of power and privilege across contexts as it enables us to better understand, challenge, and address systemic inequalities and injustices. Overall, promoting critical self-reflection may encourage more thinking and action around contributing to a more equitable and inclusive society.

Evidence supporting peer feedback integration

To date, very few empirical studies on COILVEs and IC development have incorporated peer feedback in the evaluation process. However, a recent study by Zheng et al. (2022) incorporated peer feedback as part of a COILVE study abroad course. Students in China and the US engaged in a COILVE project before the US students travelled to China to present the work they completed with their Chinese team members. As the course topic was related to doing business in China, the authors were interested in garnering feedback from the Chinese students about the US students' performance using a survey based on Deardorff's process model of IC (2006). Additional methods of assessment were used to help provide a more holistic picture of students' learning, including e-portfolios to document and demonstrate their learning, a pre/post-test (Intercultural Effectiveness Scale, The Kozai Group – Bird et al., 2002), and a post-experience self-assessment based on Deardorff's process model (2006). Students were also asked to provide examples of competence/incompetence for self- and peer-evaluations. Results indicated that the US students felt they had improved their IC overall, and the Chinese students agreed, albeit in different areas (i.e. US students felt they had improved the most in having a global mindset, which the Chinese students did not rate as highly). While no further detail was provided regarding whether the Chinese students shared their feedback with their US peers or whether the feedback was used to determine a US students overall IC, this study points to the possibility of integrating peer feedback into the IC evaluation process.

In their research on students' evaluative judgment, Luo (2023) proposed that students exhibited hesitancy in offering concrete assessments of themselves and peers due to their conditioning within an educational system where the educator has traditionally held the role of authoritative figure, wielding power over aspects such as evaluation and grades. Despite the increasing adoption of self- and peer-assessment methodologies, these practices have often been subjected to teacher validation, diminishing students' agency in directing their own learning process (Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000). Advocating for the integration of peer feedback in the evaluation of IC may require separating this process from teacher validation, as teacher validation may sit uneasily

with the premise that IC revolves around the perception of and embodied feeling about interactions with another person (Bennett & Castiglioni, 2004). In this way, formative feedback processes must be separated from course grades.

McHugh (In press) incorporated the use of peer feedback at the conclusion of a COILVE between students from the US and Mexico. Scaffolded collaborative work was completed from September-November 2022 and students were invited to complete a pre/post self-assessment as well as provide post-peer feedback. This study found that most students rated themselves as having improved their IC after participating in the COILVE, and indicated they experienced their peers as IC. However, two students who were in a group together rated themselves as IC but rated one another incompetent. Values coding of the data revealed that the two participants had seemingly 'similar' values, attitudes, and beliefs, however their perceptions of one another's' IC did not align, and each person felt they had been disrespected throughout the COILVE project. This case illustrates the potential importance of soliciting peer feedback when evaluating IC, since how we see ourselves and how others experience us may be at odds. This study also points to the need for students participating in COILVEs (and those engaging more broadly in intercultural encounters) to co-construct what IC means and looks like to them in the 'third space'. This leads to the following discussion of social constructionism and the case for including the co-construction of IC into COILVE pedagogies (and more broadly in the computer mediated space) as well as our theorizing of IC assessment.

Social constructionism

The need to devise equitable and enduring responses to the world's most complex challenges extends beyond the superficial satisfaction derived from engaging in intercultural interactions. Rather, it requires a candid examination of the societal inequities perpetuated by systems of white supremacy and colonization. Central to this endeavor may be the explicit articulation and critical examination of power dynamics, inviting individuals who are often marginalized in both physical and virtual

spaces to co-create communicative practices and candidly share their preferences and lived experiences in intercultural contexts, thereby shaping the collaborative reality with their interlocutors.

One way of approaching this goal is to bring social constructionist theory, or the notion that "all realities…are realities, regularities, or bodies of knowledge that are *constructed within societies by means of social processes*" (Stam, 2014, p.761, emphasis in original) more explicitly into pedagogy. With its roots in sociology (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), social constructionism has made an impact in other disciplines including psychology (i.e., Harré, 1983; Gergen, 1985) and education (i.e., Apple, 1993; Danziger, 1997). A variety of positions on what constitutes social constructionism exist, which itself reflects the contested and dynamic nature of social constructionism; that reality is inter-subjectively created, and we 'know' what is 'real' based on our engagement with others, our cultures, our histories, and the social contexts we participate in.

Social constructionism is often conflated with constructivism[1] as the terms appear to be similar or interchangeable. However, while constructivism in the education context focuses on the cognitive construction of knowledge by the individual in context, social constructionism underscores the importance of social interaction and collaboration in learning, viewing knowledge as actively co-constructed and negotiated through interactions with others in context. Social constructionism has been adopted and applied in education settings because of its focus on "the collective generation of meaning as shaped by conventions of language and other social processes" (Schwandt, 1998, p.240), rather than individual cognition via group engagement. I consider COILVEs to be one example of this application, where two or more teachers from geographically distinct locations collaboratively design a course using computer-mediated tools, enabling their students to work together to generate a collaborative project. As IC is often a key learning outcome in COILVEs, educators could create space for students to co-construct shared understandings and guidelines for what IC looks like in their collaborative context.

[1] See, for example, Dewey, Vygotsky, Piaget, and Bruner

Professor Milton Bennett has written extensively about the nexus between ICOM and constructivism (2004, 2012, 2013, 2017, 2020), positing "that intercultural experience does not occur automatically from being in the vicinity of cross-cultural events. People must be prepared to make something of the events—ideally, to attribute to events the meaning typical in the other culture" (2017, p.3). Bennett's theorizing provides an alternative discourse in the field of ICOM, namely, that studying groups of people to predict and/or control their future behaviors may be challenging because each person has their own experiences and ways of knowing, being and doing which will impact the way(s) they engage with and understand the world around them. Bennett (2017) mentions 'constructionism' as being "the social application of constructivism" (p.6), and states that "In communication, it is the coordination of expectation that allows intentions to be more or less matched with interpretations" (p.6). Bennett rightly points to empathy as a pathway toward understanding the expectations of others, which is a vital step in intercultural development. My view builds on this by suggesting the benefits of more explicitly involving one another in the co-creation of expectations. This relational focus can offer deeper insight into what will be regarded as appropriate in specific contexts, allowing for more nuanced adjustments in behavior. Bennett's contributions provide a useful foundation for understanding how constructivist approaches inform meaning-making in intercultural assessment. Building on this, a social constructionist lens further highlights the role of one another in co-constructing meaning through interaction, drawing attention to the relational dynamics that shape intercultural exchanges.

As noted by Weinberg (2019) "social constructionists tend to stress the diverse meanings social actors confer upon their experiences" (p.3), which makes it an important addition to any model of IC. If interlocutors hope to experience others as IC and to be experienced as IC, it may be important for interlocutors to co-construct the meaning of IC at the start of any prolonged engagement or exchange. Social constructionism also lends support to the notion of incorporating peer feedback into the evaluation of IC to help keep individuals accountable to the ideals of IC which have been co-constructed. The way we see ourselves may not be

the way others see or experience us, so to have feedback from peers regarding their experience of us could help individuals begin to make sense of how others see and experience us, with a view to using that knowledge to critically self-reflect on our assumptions, biases, and actions.

As identified by Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009), IC has often been associated with an individual and the traits they possess or could learn to be "effective". As well, "many models assume a partner, but most define skills and knowledge as possessed by the individual, thereby locating the competence in the individual's possession or level of these competencies" (Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009, p. 44). While the evaluation of IC has often focused on the interaction itself, few approaches have explicitly indicated the importance of interactants co-constructing a preferred way of engaging at the beginning of the engagement. This aligns with my proposal to integrate the co-construction of IC into established frameworks, recognizing that IC is not a trait individuals possess independently or that resides in them as an enduring personal quality. Instead, IC may hold greater meaning when individuals are recognized and experienced by others as such. Otherwise, it risks becoming a superficial exercise in encountering different cultures without fostering genuine learning or achieving desired internal and external outcomes (Deardorff, 2006).

Intercultural Competence as a Co-constructed and Situated Achievement (ICCCSA)

Building on the preceding discussion, this section advances two related shifts in how IC may be understood and evaluated: expanding IC models to account more explicitly for interlocutors' role in co-constructing ideas of 'competence' through sustained engagement, and incorporating peer evaluation more centrally into IC assessment. It then proposes a conceptual pedagogical model that integrates these shifts, offering a step-by-step illustration of how this reframing might be taken up in practice.

IC Model

While some of the IC models reviewed above denote the existence of another human in an interaction, none specifically delineate the need for individuals to come together to co-construct their ideal IC at the start of a prolonged engagement. Researchers have explored the potential path or sequence an intercultural pair may take to co-construct intercultural learning or interculturality during an interaction (i.e., Borghetti et al., 2015; Schaefer, 2021), but to my knowledge, no research has been conducted where the theoretical model invites interlocutors to co-construct their ideal IC as one of the first points of engagement.

A key aspect of co-construction is dialogue which "entails critical thinking and aims to reveal assumptions and biases, so they can be re-evaluated" (Helm, 2016, p.153). Engaging in dialogue allows students to have agency in the learning process and encourages them to construct rather than accept what the teachers have provided. However, encouraging students to engage in such personal and potentially conflict-inducing dialogue can be challenging. O'Dowd (2016) notes that, in fact, more challenging issues are often avoided in intercultural dialogue for fear of offending or for making one's own culture look bad. This, Ware (2005) found, can lead to 'missed opportunities' for learning and engaging on a deeper level. To address students' concerns and to ensure they feel comfortable and safe to discuss challenging topics, I propose educators introduce and co-construct principles for creating safer and more trustworthy virtual intercultural spaces.

Subsequently, I suggest that IC models could be adapted to include interlocutors coming together at the outset of a sustained engagement to co-construct an initial shared understanding of what IC might look like in that context. Persons A and B (or more, in group settings) would work through the model together, discussing, for example, what 'respect' means to each of them and how they might recognize when it is being enacted. Rather than prescribing fixed meanings, students would be encouraged to engage with the dimensions of the model by identifying what they perceive as enabling or constraining "appropriate and effective" communication and behavior within that particular interaction.

This co-construction of IC from the outset could set the scene for students to be more mindful of their own actions and interactions, critically self-reflecting throughout the interaction and noting and attending to points of tension or conflict that arise.

IC evaluation recommendations

To shift IC evaluation toward how interlocutors are experienced by others, rather than relying primarily on how they perceive themselves, evaluation processes could incorporate peer feedback more centrally. This might be enacted in several ways, ideally with some degree of modelling, scaffolding, and fading by instructors (Falchikov, 2007). Feedback could be invited during the interaction, drawing on what students co-constructed at the outset, so that participants have opportunities to adjust or extend their communicative practices as the interaction unfolds. Alternatively, students could be invited to provide feedback at the end of the interaction, offering examples of moments in which their peer(s) were experienced as more or less interculturally competent. As Boud (1995) noted, when self- and peer-feedback are used, students need to be involved in the process of creating the criteria for evaluation as well as the evaluation itself. Boud identified several conditions for successful self-assessment, and these may also be useful when considering how peer feedback might be incorporated into IC evaluation process:

- A clear rationale: what are the purposes of this particular activity?
- Explicit procedures—students need to know what is expected of them.
- Reassurance of a safe environment in which they can be honest about their own [and others'] performance without the fear that they will expose information which can be used against them [or others].
- Confidence that other students will do likewise, and that cheating or collusion will be detected and discouraged (Boud, 1995, p.182).

The following section introduces a proposed pedagogical model informed by social constructionism. The model is offered as one possible way of supporting deeper intercultural learning and engagement in COILVE contexts, and as a potential starting point for educators interested in students' IC development across a range of teaching and learning situations.

Pedagogical model

In the following section, I bring together the two preceding recommendations to outline a proposed pedagogical model (Figure 1) that educators could consider using to support students' IC before, during, and after a sustained interaction with others. The model is offered as one possible way of enacting the conceptual shifts discussed above. It is also important to note that educators seeking to embed IC into a course and/or assessment process would likely need to undertake prior learning and reflective work themselves. Who educators are, and how they engage with students in these spaces, shapes the conditions for learning in important ways. At a minimum, this might involve preparatory work[2] and ongoing reflection on positionality, underlying assumptions and intentions, and current teaching practices. In the discussion that follows, I relate the model to COILVEs as my primary teaching and learning context, as my own empirical research and pedagogical experience are grounded there. The model also assumes that students have opted into the process, as motivation is a key aspect to being on the IC journey.

Approximately two to three weeks prior to an exchange, educators on both sides of the exchange should introduce students to the project and invite those intending to participate in the COILVE to complete a set of preparatory activities. These might include: a) self-awareness and identity exploration (for example, using McWebb et al.'s [2022] self-

[2] A good starting point is Amy Lee's (2017) *Teaching Interculturally: A Framework for Integrating Disciplinary Knowledge and Intercultural Development.*

awareness and identity wheel activity and associated questions), b) an unpacking of one's socialization into their culture(s) (for example using DiAngelo's (2016) questions around our social identities; pg. 38-39), and c) responding to guided questions which promote critical self-reflection (Fook & Gardner, 2007) with regard to the forthcoming interaction (see Appendix A for a sample). Responses to this pre-work could be stored in an e-portfolio as the first aspect of the students' IC evaluation, requiring individual and/or group debriefing with educators after each submission. Once this is complete, students might also be invited to undertake a self-evaluation of their IC (note: if using Deardorff's IC Process Model [2006] as a basis for evaluation, teachers could utilize Deardorff's Intercultural Competence: Self-Reflection Questionnaire; 2012, p. 50). At this stage, where students or educators feel that a student may not yet be ready to participate in the interaction, an alternative pathway could be made available, particularly given that many COILVEs sit within credit-bearing courses).

For students who do go on to participate in the COILVE, they might first be invited to review individually the model or framework of IC you have chosen to use, and to write some thoughts around how they understand each aspect of the model, for example 'respect', 'openness', and a 'tolerance for ambiguity'. What would those things look like in practice for them? What do they expect from others? How do they *know* someone is listening or relating to them? What would they deem 'disrespectful' in the virtual team space? As students move through the model, they could reflect on the pre-work they completed to help them think through each dimension in more situated ways.

The next stage of the model involves students from different contexts coming together in the online space. At the outset, students might be placed into groups based on some pre-determined criteria (i.e. preference for the same/similar topic; preference for meeting times; similar project interests, etc.). This may help to create more favorable conditions for initial connection and collaboration[3].

[3] For guidance on the best practices for successful COILVEs, I recommend reading *The Guide to COIL Virtual Exchange: Implementing, Growing, and Sustaining Collaborative Online International Learning* edited by Jon Rubin

Once teams have had a chance to 'break the ice', the next step could involve students and educators co-constructing a set of overarching principles intending to support a 'safer' and more accountable space for the exchange. For example, educators might offer a small number of principles to begin the conversation[4] and then invite students to add others that they feel would strengthen the space. Teams might choose either to work with these shared principles or to adapt and extend them for their own team. From there, teams could begin co-constructing their understanding of what IC would involve in their particular interaction. This would likely require discussion and negotiation, and educators may need to support or moderate these conversations to ensure they remain productive. Once teams have reached some agreement on expectations and ways of working together, these could be documented in a team charter or similar form to support accountability across the group.

The next phase of the model involves students working together as a team, with regular check-ins to help ensure that agreed expectations and being upheld and that participants continue to feel supported within the co-created (third) space. Where miscommunication, conflict, or uneven participation emerges, students might first be encouraged to address these issues within the group, drawing on the principles and agreements established earlier. If difficulties persist, educators may need to facilitate further discussion about possible ways forward. In some cases, an opt-out pathway or reconfiguration of the group may be necessary. Any such decision would need to be made in consultation with the educators involved and with appropriate consideration of fairness to all parties. Students who withdraw from the group activity could then complete an alternative individual assessment. Including an opt-out possibility may be important for preserving student agency and equity, particularly

and Sarah Guth (2022), as well as empirical literature and case studies to guide your practice.

[4] For example, 'We will all agree to listen actively', 'We will all agree to give everyone a chance to speak without unnecessary pressure', 'We will all agree to speak for ourselves using "I" statements and not share others' lived experiences', etc.

where external pressures or unmet needs make participation in the interaction difficult.

As the project progresses, students could be invited to respond to bi-weekly reflective prompts about different aspects of the COILVE. These might include whether meetings felt productive, how students are defining and recognizing challenge, and whether assumptions they initially held have since been unsettled. These reflections could be stored in an e-portfolio and later drawn on to help students make sense of their broader IC development. During this time, students might also be encouraged to check in regularly with one another regarding the extent to which their co-constructed agreements are being upheld. Where difficulties cannot be resolved within the team, educators may need to facilitate a conversation about possible next steps.

Towards the end of the interaction, students might be invited to provide peer feedback on each of their COILVE team members. One possible approach would be to adapt Deardorff's (2012) reflective questionnaire so that peers, rather than the self, become the focus of evaluation (see Appendix B for an example). Students could be invited to offer examples of how each team member was experienced in relation to appropriateness and effectiveness across different domains, along with an overall reflection on how that person was encountered within the COILVE. Providing students with the option to submit feedback anonymously may support greater candor, although this would need to be balanced against contextual and ethical considerations. Feedback could then be collated and returned to each student as material for further reflection. This may also create an opportunity for students to complete a post-interaction self-assessment and compare their own perceptions with those of their peers.

After the COILVE concludes, students could be invited to complete a final critical self-reflection on both the exchange and the feedback received from peers. This might encourage them to consider what went well and why, what did not go well and why, and why self- and peer-evaluations aligned or diverged. In the model, this speaks to the final question: now what? Before entering a future interaction, students would be encouraged to consider how what they have learned about themselves

and others might inform their subsequent intercultural engagements.

Implications for practice

In this paper I have argued for the need to rethink how models of IC are operationalized, particularly in relation to how IC is envisioned and assessed in COILVEs. In response, I have outlined a pedagogical model that brings peer feedback more explicitly into processes of IC development and evaluation. Taken together, these propositions suggest several possible implications for practice, including a shift away from viewing IC primarily as an individual attribute to be attained and toward understanding it as something co-constructed and situationally achieved. Understood in this way, IC may offer a stronger basis for engaging with the kind of intercultural responsibility described by Guilherme (2020). The pedagogical shifts outlined here could therefore be read as one possible attempt to translate that orientation into educational practice, by foregrounding co-construction and peer feedback as ways of preparing students to engage across difference through shared responsibility, reciprocal cooperation, and the collective work of sustaining a more just and liveable world.

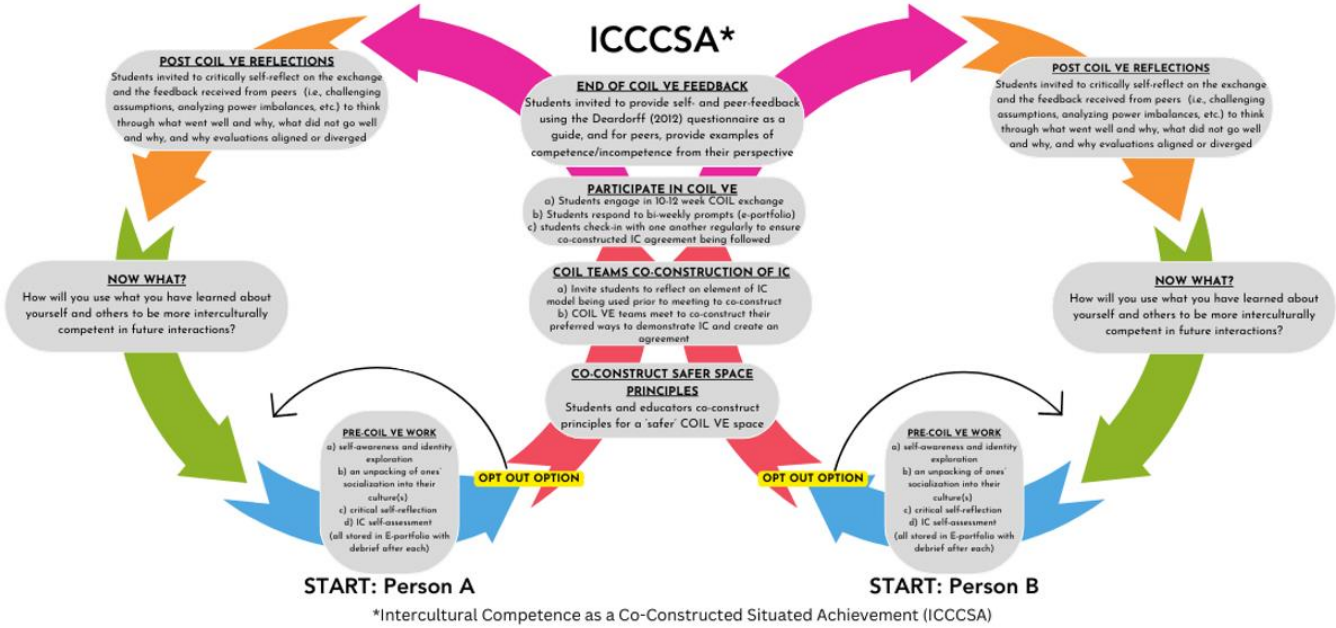

Figure 1: Proposed pedagogical model to strive for ICCCSA – Intercultural competence as a co-constructed situated achievement

Where IC in COILVEs has often been approached as an individual achievement, intercultural responsibility instead positions students and educators as co-stewards of the interactional space. In this sense, the proposed ICCCSA framework places greater emphasis on shared expectations, peer accountability, and collective well-being; dimensions of intercultural engagement that may be less visible when IC is framed primarily as an individual capability.

Another implication of attempting to enact the ICCCSA model in practice is that some students may not yet be ready to participate in a COILVE or other intercultural exchange. If, after completing the preparatory work, a student appears reluctant or not yet ready to engage, educators may need to consider alternative pathways that can support continued learning without requiring participation in the exchange itself. Such an approach may help minimize harm to both the student and others, while still recognizing IC development as an ongoing process rather than a threshold that must be immediately crossed.

Finally, inviting students to co-create what IC means within a particular COILVE context may help make more explicit how and why they are adapting in that space. As Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009) noted, "the same behavior or skill may be perceived as competent in one context but not another or one perceiver but not another, and thus no particular skill or ability is likely ever to be universally 'competent'" (p. 6). Because COILVEs take place online, with students remaining physically located in their home contexts and often never meeting in person, it may be especially difficult to determine which norms should guide interaction. As Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009) further observe, "If both are adapting, it seems possible that both interactants become chameleons without a clear target pattern to which to adapt" (p. 35). Inviting students instead to co-construct what IC will look like in their shared virtual space may provide a clearer basis for negotiating expectations and working together in ways that are mutually accountable and contextually meaningful.

Future Directions and Research Agenda

Future empirical studies could examine the usefulness of the proposed pedagogical model for taking a more holistic, co-constructed and situated approach to the development and evaluation of IC. Research across a range of contexts, participants ages, educational levels, and formal or informal learning environments may help clarify where the model is most useful, where its limitations lie, and what refinements may be needed in both theory and practice. Further inquiry might also explore how different forms of peer feedback shape students' experiences of intercultural learning and evaluation.

While not a direct focus of this paper, another fruitful area for investigation concerns how students are perceived in mediated spaces in ways that may be read as more or less "competent" (i.e. cameras on/off, turn-taking practices, or leaving space for others to speak), and how such interpretations intersect with broader questions of equity and access to technology.

While some degree of discomfort may be expected, and may even be necessary for growth (Boler, 1999), future research could usefully examine what makes COILVEs feel safer and more accountable for students, so that challenging encounters remain generative rather than harmful or paralyzing.

The diversity both within and across cultural groups also remains underexamined in IC and COILVE research. Ongoing studies continue to analyze data through the lens of "national cultures" (i.e. Australian, Mexican, German, Japanese, etc.), often overlooking the complexity of individual identities and positionalities, as highlighted by Crenshaw (1989) and Collins (2019), as well as their dynamic and situated nature. This risks reproducing simplified cultural narratives while failing to account for the layered experiences that shape how individuals participate in intercultural encounters. Greater attention to intersectionality therefore remains an important direction for future research.

Conclusion

The conceptual and pedagogical approach outlined in this article is grounded in pedagogical concerns and informed by my perceptions and interpretative analysis of the feedback provided by students engaged in a particular COILVE, which I co-facilitated. As such, the propositions and model presented here are necessarily context-specific and are not intended to be treated as readily generalizable. Rather, they are offered as a theoretically grounded starting point for rethinking how IC might be enacted and evaluated in more relational, co-constructed, and situated ways. It is also important to acknowledge that the ideas advanced here may challenge the existing assumptions, habits, and comfort zones of both educators and students. Even so, for interculturalists seeking to contribute to a more equitable and socially just world, this may offer one possible basis for further experimentation, adaptation, and empirical inquiry across diverse contexts.

As higher education institutions continue to engage with internationalization, and with internationalization at home initiatives in particular, greater attention is needed to how such work is operationalized ethically and responsibly. Simply introducing COILVEs as a means of providing an international experience or improving intercultural competence does not in itself ensure meaningful intercultural learning. COILVEs are not, and should not be treated as, a panacea for the challenges such initiatives seek to address. However, when approached with greater attention to co-construction, peer feedback, and contextual responsiveness, they may offer one avenue through which students and educators can engage those challenges more reflectively and collaboratively.

Author

Dr Amy McHugh is an Academic Facilitator at the National Centre for Cultural Competence at the University of Sydney, where her interdisciplinary research explores (inter)cultural competence as it

intersects with intercultural communication, social justice, online learning, critical pedagogies, and culturally responsive curriculum design. Her key thematic areas include investigating the development of intercultural and cultural competence through reflective, dialogic, and experiential learning; exploring the pedagogical strategies required to engage ethically and effectively with cultural diversity; and leveraging artificial intelligence to support in the development of (inter)cultural competence.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to acknowledge the Darug people of the Eora Nation, traditional custodians of the land where I live, work, and raise my family. I pay my respects to Elders past and present, and to the knowledge held within Aboriginal Custodianship of Country.

As an immigrant and someone who benefits from unearned privilege, I acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. This always was and always will be Aboriginal land. This isn't just a formality, but a reminder of the long-standing histories, knowledges, and sovereignties that shape this place and of my place within it.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my COILVE colleagues, Professor Mary Meinecke and Dr. Zhi Jones. Their support and willingness to open our collaboration up for my research was much appreciated. I could not have completed this work without them, and I hope this work will help to make ours and others COILVEs even more effective in improving intercultural and global competence.

References

Apple, M. (1993). *Official knowledge*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Beelen, J., & Jones, E. (2015). Redefining internationalization at home. In A. Curai, L. Matei, R. Pricopie, J. Salmi, & P. Scott (Eds.), *The European higher education area: Between critical reflections and future policies* (pp. 67–80). Springer.

Bennett, M. J. (2004). Becoming interculturally competent. In J. S. Wurzel (Ed.), *Toward multiculturalism: A reader in multicultural education*. Intercultural Resource Corporation.

Bennett, M. J. (2012). Paradigmatic assumptions and a developmental approach intercultural to learning. In M. V. Berg, R. M. Paige, & K. H. Lou (Eds.), *Student learning abroad what our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it* (pp. 90-114). Taylor & Francis Group.

Bennett, M. J. (2013). Constructivism, Intercultural. In C. Cortes (Ed.), *Multicultural America: A multimedia encyclopedia*. Sage.

Bennett, M. J. (2017). Constructivist approach to intercultural communication In Y. Y. Kim (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication*. Wiley.

Bennett, M. J. (2020). A constructivist approach to assessing intercultural communication competence. In G. Rings & S. Rasinger (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Communication* (pp. 521-535). Cambridge University Press.

Bennett, M. J., & Castiglioni, I. (2004). Embodied ethnocentrism and the feeling of culture: A key to training for intercultural competence. In D. Landis, M. Bennett, & J. Bennett (Eds.), *Handbook of Intercultural Training* (pp. 249–264). Sage.

Bennett, J. M. (2013). Intercultural Competence: Vital Perspectives for Diversity and Inclusion. In B. M. Ferdman & B. R. Deane (Eds.), *Diversity at Work: The Practice of Inclusion.* John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge.* Doubleday.

Berry, J. W., Kim, U., Power, S., Young, M., & Bujaki, M. (1989). Acculturation Attitudes in Plural Societies. *Applied Psychology*, *38*(2), 185-206.

Bird, A., Stevens, M. J., Mendenhall, M. E., & Oddou, G. (2002). *The global competencies inventory*. The Kozai Group, Inc.

Boler, M. (1999). *Feeling power: Emotions and education*. Routledge.

Borghetti, C. (2017). Is there really a need for assessing intercultural competence? Some ethical issues. *Journal of Intercultural*

Communication, 17(2), 1-15. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v17i2.736

Borghetti, C., Beaven, A., & Pugliese, R. (2015). Interactions among future study abroad students: Exploring potential intercultural learning sequences. *Intercultural Education, 26*(1), 31-48. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2015.993515

Boud, D. (1995). *Enhancing learning through self-assessment*. Kogan Page.

Byram, M. (1997), *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.

Carbaugh, D. (2015). Intercultural communication as a situated, culturally complex, interactional achievement. *Russian Journal of Linguistics, 4*, 33-42.

Casmir, F. L. (1993). Third-culture building: A paradigm shift for international and intercultural communication. In S. Deetz (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 16* (pp. 407-428). Routledge.

Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (2003). Asian approaches to human communication: A dialogue. *Intercultural Communication Studies, 12* (4), 1-15.

Collier, M. J. (2015). Intercultural communication competence: Continuing challenges and critical directions. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 48*, 9-11.

Collier, M. J., Hegde, R. S., Lee, W. S., Nakayama, T. K., & Yep, G. A. (2001). Dialogue on the edges: Ferment in communication and culture. In M. J. Collier (Ed.), *International and Intercultural Communication Annual 24: Transforming communication about culture: Critical new directions* (pp. 219-280). Sage.

Collins, P. H. (2019). *Intersectionality as critical social theory*. Duke University Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). *Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics.* University of Chicago Legal Forum (1).

Croucher, S. M., Sommier, M., & Rahmani, D. (2015). Intercultural communication: Where we've been, where we're going, issues we face. *Communication Research and Practice, 1*(1), 71-87. https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2015.1042422

Danziger, K. (1997). The varieties of social constructionism. *Theory & Psychology, 7*, 399–416.

de Wit, H. (2002). *Internationalization of higher education in the United States of America and Europe: A historical, comparative, and conceptual analysis.* Greenwood Press.

Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization. *Journal Studies in International Education, 10*(3), 241-266. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002

Deardorff, D.K. (2012). Framework: Intercultural Competence Model. In K. Berardo & D.K. Deardorff (Eds.), *Building cultural competence: Innovative activities and models* (pp.45-52). Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Deardorff, D. K. (2017). The big picture of intercultural competence assessment. In D. K. Deardorff & L. A. Arasaratnam-Smith (Eds.), *Intercultural competence in higher education: International approaches, assessment and application* (pp. 124-133). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315529257-11

Deardorff, D. K. (2020). Defining, developing and assessing intercultural competence. In G. Rings & S. Rasinger (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Communication* (pp. 493-503). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/9781108555067.036

Deardorff, D. K. (2022). Assessing intercultural learning outcomes in COIL courses. In J. Rubin, S. Guth, S. Doscher, C. Prior, & H. d. Wit (Eds.), *The Guide to COIL Virtual Exchange: Implementing, Growing, and Sustaining Collaborative Online International Learning* (pp. 287-297). Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Dervin, F. (2011). A plea for change in research on intercultural discourses: A 'liquid' approach to the study of the acculturation of Chinese students. *Journal of multicultural discourses*, *6*(1), 37-52.

DiAngelo, R. (2016). *What does it mean to be white? Developing white racial literacy.* Peter Lang.

Dochy, F., Segers, M., & Sluijsmans, D. (1999). The use of self-, peer and co-assessment in higher education: A review. *Studies in Higher Education, 24*(3), 331-350. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079912331379935

Drzewiecka, J. A. (2002). Reinventing and contesting identities in constitutive disclosures: Between diaspora and its others. *Communication Quarterly, 50*,1-23.

Falchikov, N. (2007). The place of peers in learning and assessment. In D. Boud & N. Falchikov (Eds.), *Rethinking assessment in higher education: Learning for the longer term* (pp. 128-143). Routledge.

Falchikov, N., & Goldfinch, J. (2000). Student Peer Assessment in Higher Education: A Meta-analysis Comparing Peer and Teacher Marks. *Review of Educational Research 70* (3): 287–322.

Fantini, A.E. (1995). Language, culture, and world view: Exploring the nexus. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 19,* 143-153.

Fantini, A. E. (2009). Assessing intercultural competence: Issues and tools In D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (pp. 456-476). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Fantini, A. E. (2020). Reconceptualizing intercultural communicative competence: A multinational perspective. *Research in comparative and international education, 15*(1), 52-61. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499920901948

Fook, J., & Gardner, F. (2007). *Practising Critical Reflection* (1st ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.

Gallois, C., Franklyn-Stokes, A., Giles, H., & Coupland, N. (1988). Communication accommodation in intercultural encounters. In Y.Y. Kim (Ed.), *Theories in intercultural communication* (pp. 157-185). Sage.

Gergen, K. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist, 40*, 266–275.

Griffith, R. L., Wolfeld, L., Armon, B. K., Rios, J., & Liu, O. L. (2016). Assessing intercultural competence in higher education: Existing research and future directions. *ETS Research Report*

Series, 2 (ETS RR–16-25), 1-44. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/ets2.12112

Guilherme, M. (2020). Intercultural responsibility: Critical inter-epistemic dialog and equity for sustainable development. In W. Leal Filho, A. M. Azul, L. Brandli, A. Lange Salvia, & T. Wall (Eds.), *Partnerships for the Goals* (pp. 1-12). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71067-9_75-1

Halualani, R. T. (1998). Seeing through the screen: The struggle of culture. In J.N. Martin, T.K. Nakayama, & L.A. Flores (Eds.), *Readings in cultural contexts* (pp.264-275). Mayfield.

Halualani, R. T., Mendoza, S. L., & Drzewiecka, J. A. (2009). "Critical" Junctures in Intercultural Communication Studies: A Review. *The review of communication, 9*(1), 17-35. https://doi.org/10.1080/15358590802169504

Harré, R. (1983). *Personal being: A theory for individual psychology*. Oxford, England: Blackwell.

Helm, F. (2016). Facilitated dialogue in online intercultural exchange. In R. O'Dowd and T. Lewis (Eds), *Online Intercultural Exchange: Policy, Pedagogy, Practice* (pp.150-172). Routledge.

Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture and organizations. *International Studies of Management & Organization, 10*(4), 15-41.

Holliday, A. (1999). Small cultures. *Applied Linguistics, 20*(2), 237-264.

Institute for International Education. (2023). U.S. study abroad for academic credit trends, 1989/90-2021/22. *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange.* Retrieved from www.opendoordata.org

King, P.M. & Baxter Magolda, M.B. (2005). A developmental model of intercultural maturity. *Journal of College Student Development, 46*, 571-592.

Koester, J., & Lustig, M. W. (2015). Intercultural communication competence: Theory, measurement, and application. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 48*, 20-21. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.006

Krapp, A. (2005). Basic needs and the development of interest and intrinsic motivational orientations. *Learning and Instruction, 15*, 381–395.

Kroeber, A. L., & Kluckhohn, C. (1952). Culture: a critical review of concepts and definitions. *Papers. Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University, 47*(1), viii, 223.

Kupka, B., Everett, A., & Wildermuth, S. (2007). The rainbow model of intercultural communication competence: A review and extension of existing research. *Intercultural Communication Studies, 16*(2), 18-36.

Lee, A., Poch, R. K., O'Brien, M. K., & Solheim, C. (2017). *Teaching interculturally: A framework for integrating disciplinary knowledge and intercultural development*. Stylus Publishing.

Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (1990). Notes in the history of intercultural communication: The Foreign Service institute and the mandate for intercultural training. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech, 76*(3), 262-281. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335639009383919

López-Rocha, S. Y. (2018). Development of critical intercultural communicative competence and employability in work abroad programs: A UK perspective. In *The Routledge Handbook of Study Abroad Research and Practice* (pp. 359-372). Routledge.

Luft, J. & Ingham, H. (1955). The Johari window, a graphic model of interpersonal awareness. *Proceedings of the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development*. University of California, Los Angeles.

Luo, J. 駱. (2023). Conceptualising and developing evaluative judgement of holistic competencies: A focus on intercultural competence in engineering education. (Thesis). University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong SAR.].

Luo, J., & Chan, C. K. Y. (2023). Exploring the process of evaluative judgement: the case of engineering students judging intercultural competence. *Assessment and evaluation in higher education, 48*(7), 951-965. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2022.2155611

Martin, J. N. (2015). Revisiting intercultural communication competence: Where to go from here. *International Journal of*

Intercultural Relations, 48, 6-8. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.008

McHugh, A.B. (2024). *Learning From Student Perceptions and Peer Feedback in a Virtual Exchange: Reconceptualizing Intercultural Competence as ICCCSA – Intercultural Competence as a Co-Constructed and Situated Achievement* (Publication Number 31297947) [Ph.D., State University of New York at Buffalo]. United States -- New York. https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/learning-student-perceptions-peer-feedback/docview/3068671698/se-2?accountid=30812

McHugh, A.B. (In press). Exploring the incorporation of peer assessment of intercultural competence in a collaborative online international learning virtual exchange (COILVE). *Journal of Virtual Exchange.*

McWebb, C., López-Rocha, S., & Arévalo-Guerrero, E. (2022). *Advancing Intercultural Competence for Global Learners*. Press Books. https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/interculturalcompetence/

Moon, D. G. (1996). Concepts of "culture": Implications for intercultural communication research. *Communication Quarterly*, *44*(1), 70-84.

Nakayama, T. K., & Martin, J. N. (1999). *Whiteness: The communication of social identity*. SAGE Publications.

O'Dowd, R. (2016). Learning from the past and looking to the future of online intercultural exchange. In *Online Intercultural Exchange* (pp. 273-294). Routledge.

Orbe, M. P. (1997). *Constructing co-cultural theory: An explication of culture, power, and communication*. Sage Publications.

Peng, J., & Dervin, F. (2023). "I start to doubt myself when I am watching this": Moments of think-aloud reflexivity about interculturality in a virtual exchange project. *Intercultural Communication Education*, *6*(3), 92–111. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.29140/ice.v6n3.1010

Pinto, S. (2018). Intercultural competence in higher education: academics' perspectives. *On the Horizon, 26*(2), 137-147.

Punti, G., & Dingel, M. (2021). Rethinking race, ethnicity, and the assessment of intercultural competence in higher education. *Education Sciences, 11*(110).

Rathje, S. (2007). Intercultural competence: The status and future of a controversial concept. *Language and intercultural communication, 7*(4), 254-266.

Reinholz, D. (2016). The assessment cycle: a model for learning through peer assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 41*(2), 301-315. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2015.1008982

Rubin, J. (2021, November 4). *Introduction to COIL Virtual Exchange [Presentation]*. Universidad de Mendoza, Argentina.

Schaefer, R. (2021). The co-construction of interculturality through an ecological perspective in teletandem activities. *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada, 21*, 1-30.

Schwandt, T. A. (1998). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues* (pp. 221-259). SAGE Publications, Ltd.

Spitzberg, B. H., & Chagnon, G. (2009). Conceptualizing intercultural competence. In D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (pp. 2-52). SAGE.

Stam, H. J. (2014). Social constructionism. In D. C. Phillips (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Educational Theory and Philosophy* (pp. 761-764). SAGE

Stefani, L. A. J. (1998). Assessment in partnership with learners. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 23*(4), 339-350. https://doi.org/10.1080/0260293980230402

Taylor, E. W. (1994). Intercultural competency: A transformative learning process. *Adult Education Quarterly, 44*(3), 154-174. https://doi.org/10.1177/074171369404400303

Ting-Toomey, S. & Kurogi, A. (1998). Facework competence in intercultural conflict; An updated face-negotiation theory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 22*, 187-225.

Topping, K. J. (2009). Peer Assessment. *Theory Into Practice, 48*(1), 20-27.

Ware, P. (2005). 'Missed' Communication in Online Communication: Tensions in a German-American Telecollaboration. *Language Learning & Technology*, *9*(2), 64-89.

Weaver, R. L., & Cotrell, H. W. (1986). Peer evaluation: A case study. *Innovative Higher Education*, *11*(1), 25-39. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01100106

Weinberg, D. (2014). The social construction of self-knowledge. In *Contemporary Social Constructionism* (pp. 101-112). Temple University Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14btbsd.9

Weinberg, D. (2019). Varieties of social constructionism In P. Atkinson, S. Delamont, A. Cernat, J. W. Sakshaug, & R. A. Williams (Eds.), *SAGE Research Methods Foundations*. SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526421036777744

Zheng, L., Westerhaus-Renfrow, C., Lin, S., & Yang, Y. (2022). Assessing intercultural competence in the digital world: Evidence from virtual exchange experience in a study abroad program. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, *34*(4), 418-441. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v34i4.614

Appendix A - Example critical self-reflection questions for pre-COILVE

1. What is your culture? How do you express your culture(s)?
2. How do you identify yourself to others (to yourself, your family, friends, wider society)? Why do you identify in that way?
3. What are your values? Why do you think you hold those values? How do you know you hold those values? How do your values 'come to life' when you interact with others?
4. As we prepare to connect and collaborate with students in another country, what are you most excited about? Why? What are you most concerned about? Why?
5. Do you think the social, historical, economic histories and contemporary realities of our country and the country we about to engage with will impact your interactions with the students? How? In what ways?

Appendix B- Peer-evaluation questionnaire example (adapted from Deardorff, 2012)

Now that you've thought about your own intercultural competence, please think about your COIL team members and their intercultural competence during the project. Using the same list of items, please rate each of your COIL team members intercultural competence using the scale below:

1=poor, 2=below average, 3=average, 4=high, 5=very high

Please also include an example of how a team member demonstrated (or not) each item.

(This questionnaire is based on the intercultural competence model developed by Deardorff, 2004, "Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization," by D.K. Deardorff, 2006, Journal of Studies in International Education, 10 (3), 241-266.)

1. Displayed respect and valued other cultures
   Example:
2. Displayed openness to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures
   Example:
3. Displayed tolerance for ambiguity
   Example:
4. Displayed flexibility in using appropriate communication styles and behaviors, in intercultural situations
   Example:
5. Displayed curiosity and discovery
   Example:
6. Seemed to withhold judgment
   Example:
7. Displayed cultural self-awareness/understanding
   Example:
8. Worked to understand others' worldviews
   Example:
9. Seemed to have culture-specific knowledge
   Example:
10. Seemed to demonstrate sociolinguistic awareness
    Example:
11. Displayed skills to listen, observe and interpret
    Example:
12. Displayed skills to analyze, evaluate, and relate
    Example:
13. Displayed empathy and treated others as they want would like to be treated
    Example:
14. Displayed adaptability to different communication styles/behaviors, to new cultural environments
    Example:
15. Demonstrated appropriate and effective communication in intercultural settings
    Example: