

A Theoretical Model For Developing Ethnocultural Competence Based On The Competence-Based Approach

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Abstract: The competence-based approach has become a dominant paradigm for aligning higher education outcomes with social, cultural, and professional demands. Within this paradigm, ethnocultural competence is increasingly treated not as a peripheral “soft” attribute but as a structured educational outcome that integrates knowledge about cultures, value-based orientations, communicative behaviors, and reflective self-regulation. This article proposes a theoretical model for developing ethnocultural competence in university students based on the competence-based approach. The model is formulated as a structural–functional construct that connects the target, conceptual, content–procedural, and assessment–result blocks into a single logic of educational design. The model is grounded in sociocultural learning theory, multicultural and intercultural education, and contemporary competence theory. A mixed methodological rationale is presented for validating the model through expert appraisal and design-based piloting in real educational environments. The article explains how the model operationalizes ethnocultural competence through measurable indicators, how it can be embedded into curricula via integrative modules and learning tasks, and how formative assessment supports sustainable competence growth. The model’s theoretical contribution lies in clarifying component composition and the mechanism of development under competency-oriented instruction, while its practical contribution lies in offering implementable design principles for higher education institutions operating in culturally diverse contexts.

Keywords: Competence-based approach, ethnocultural competence, higher education, theoretical model, sociocultural learning, multicultural education, formative assessment, educational design.

Introduction: Higher education systems are increasingly operating within contexts characterized by cultural plurality, heightened mobility, and intricate identity negotiation. Universities should get their students ready not only for work but also for being helpful members of multicultural societies. These expectations are especially important when national cultural heritage is a strategic resource for social cohesion and digital communication and global integration are always bringing people from different cultures into contact with each other. In these contexts, ethnocultural competence transcends mere tolerance or superficial familiarity with traditions. Instead, it shows that you can consistently understand ethnocultural meanings, interpret cultural practices, communicate respectfully across cultural boundaries,

and control your own behavior in situations that are sensitive to other cultures.

The competence-based approach provides a methodological framework for converting these extensive socioeducational expectations into clear learning outcomes and measurable indicators. It changes the focus from passing on information to building integrated abilities that include knowledge, skills, values, and thinking about things. However, even though many people agree that ethnocultural competence is important, higher education often doesn't have clear theoretical models that explain how competence is built, what parts should be given more weight, how educational settings should be set up, and how progress should be measured without turning cultural learning into rote memorization or ritualized

"events."

A persistent methodological issue is the disintegration of ethnocultural education into extracurricular activities, discrete lectures, or prescriptive statements. Another problem is that the terms are not clear: "ethnocultural competence" is sometimes used to mean "intercultural competence," sometimes used to mean "civic education," and sometimes used to mean "moral quality" instead of "competence with developmental dynamics." These issues necessitate a theoretical model that aligns with competence-based curriculum design and delineates the internal structure of ethnocultural competence, the mechanisms of its development, and the criteria for evaluation.

The objective of this article is to formulate and substantiate a theoretical model for cultivating ethnocultural competence grounded in the competence-based approach. The goals are to (a) define ethnocultural competence as a cohesive educational outcome with a distinct component structure, (b) suggest a structural-functional model that connects educational objectives, conceptual foundations, learning processes, and assessment, and (c) offer a methodological justification for validating and applying the model in higher education.

This article is focused on ideas and design. The "materials" include theoretical sources from competence theory, sociocultural learning, multicultural and intercultural education, and assessment theory, as well as established frameworks for designing intercultural competence and educational outcomes. The process of building a model follows a logical order that is common in educational modeling: conceptual analysis, operationalization of constructs, system structuring, and planning for validation.

The conceptual analysis phase amalgamates viewpoints that regard competence as a cohesive ability rather than a mere aggregation of distinct skills. This encompasses the pedagogical interpretation of competence as a synthesis of cognitive resources, action strategies, and value-meaning regulation, alongside the sociocultural interpretation of learning as engagement in culturally mediated practices. The theory of multicultural education posits that cultural learning encompasses the acknowledgment of diversity and the critical examination of power dynamics, stereotypes, and identity. Intercultural competence frameworks provide functional terminology for attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to interpretation and interaction, discovery and engagement, and reflective assessment.

The operationalization phase converts ethnocultural

competence into quantifiable metrics appropriate for the formulation of higher education curricula. Operationalization is essential as competence must be manifested through observable performances and consistent dispositions. This article operationalizes ethnocultural competence through observable components in learning tasks, communicative interactions, reflective outputs, and behavioral decisions in culturally intricate contexts.

The system structuring stage creates a model that looks like a bunch of blocks that are all connected to each other. Structural modeling shows how goals, principles, content, teaching tools, and testing all fit together. Functional modeling explains how things develop and what role educational conditions play. The resulting structure is shown as a target block, a conceptual block, a content-procedural block, and an assessment-result block. The model is made to work with curriculum planning that is based on outcomes.

The validation planning phase suggests a mixed-method strategy suitable for educational innovations. Expert appraisal is used to make sure that the idea is clear, that it is culturally sensitive, that it fits with competence-based outcomes, and that it is possible. Design-based research logic is suggested for testing the model in real teaching situations, where learning tasks and assessment tools are improved over time based on evidence. Empirical validation would depend on qualitative data (observations, interviews, reflective narratives, discourse analysis) and quantitative data (rubric-based scoring, pre/post comparisons, reliability checks).

The proposed theoretical model defines ethnocultural competence as a cohesive ability that empowers students to function effectively and ethically in ethnoculturally diverse environments while maintaining respect for their own cultural identity and receptiveness to others. The model is based on the competence-based approach and assumes that developing competence is a process that happens through meaningful activity, reflective mediation, and self-regulation based on feedback.

In competence-based education, competence is generally defined as the capacity to mobilize resources to tackle complex tasks in actual or simulated environments. In the context of ethnocultural learning, this indicates that competence cannot be merely equated with factual knowledge regarding traditions, holidays, or ethnographic traits. This knowledge is essential yet inadequate, as ethnocultural contexts are interpretative and interactive; individuals must decipher cultural significances, assess ethical ramifications, select communicative approaches, and

foresee outcomes.

This article treats ethnocultural competence as a system of parts that work together. The cognitive aspect encompasses organized knowledge regarding ethnoculture, including notions of culture, identity, ethnogenesis, cultural symbols, norms, and communication patterns, along with an understanding of one's own cultural heritage and its regional distinctions. This part also includes critical cultural literacy, which is the ability to tell the difference between reliable cultural information and stereotypes and false information.

The value-axiological component shows how people should act when they interact with people from different cultures. This includes respecting human dignity, recognizing cultural diversity as a social resource, being responsible for what you say and do, and being fair when interpreting cultural differences. This part is very important because competence-based outcomes aren't just about getting things done; they also include moral rules for how to act in complicated social situations.

The behavioral-communicative component encompasses the capacity to engage in both intercultural and intracultural dialogue, select suitable linguistic and nonverbal strategies, navigate misunderstandings, and exhibit cooperative behaviors within culturally diverse groups. It also includes conflict-sensitive communication skills that help stop things from getting worse because of cultural misunderstandings.

The reflective-regulatory part includes being aware of your own thoughts, being able to assess yourself, and being able to change your mind. Reflection is not regarded as a distinct "add-on," but rather as a mechanism that facilitates sustainable competence development. If students don't think about what they're doing, they might act polite in certain situations while still holding on to stereotypes that haven't been challenged, or they might adopt cultural relativism, which means they don't make moral judgments. The reflective part helps with fair evaluation and flexible self-control.

These elements constitute a cohesive framework: knowledge facilitates interpretation, values influence intention, communication skills enable action, and reflection reinforces learning and directs future conduct. The model posits that competence is enhanced when these components are concurrently engaged through educational tasks necessitating cultural awareness, ethical reasoning, communicative efficacy, and reflective evaluation.

The model is structured as four interconnected

components that embody the principles of competence-based educational design.

The target block sets the main educational goal and makes sure that it fits with the needs of the school and society as a whole. The goal is to help students become more ethnoculturally competent by showing that they can understand ethnocultural phenomena, communicate in a way that is respectful of other cultures, and control their behavior and judgments by thinking about them and using ethical reasoning. The target block outlines the expected performances and the general level of independence and transfer that students should have achieved by the end of the program or module, according to competence-based standards.

The conceptual block gives the design principles and theoretical foundations. It combines sociocultural learning theory, which sees learning as taking part in practices that are shaped by culture, with multicultural education, which stresses the importance of recognizing diversity, reducing prejudice, and changing the school environment to make sure everyone feels welcome. The conceptual block is also based on intercultural competence theory, which explains how to have positive attitudes, good interpretive skills, and good interaction strategies. From a competence-based standpoint, the conceptual block establishes principles of outcome orientation, integrativity, contextuality, activity-based learning, and evaluability. Cultural sensitivity and ethical responsibility serve as overarching principles that limit instructional decisions and evaluations.

The content-procedural block explains how educational content, learning activities, and teaching technologies help people become more competent. The model necessitates the integration of ethnocultural learning into the curriculum rather than limiting it to ceremonial occasions. Content is structured around cultural significations and social conventions, rather than discrete "facts." Students interact with cultural texts and practices through interpretative assignments, comparative analysis, and problem scenarios necessitating culturally informed choices. The model's pedagogical technologies are chosen because they can get people to use their skills. Some examples are dialogic teaching, case-based learning, project-based tasks, learning that connects to the community, and writing that makes you think. The focus is on learning situations where students have to figure out what cultural meanings are, find common ground, and explain their choices. These kinds of tasks help people go from recognizing something to using it and passing it on to others.

The assessment-result block lays out the signs, standards, and tools that can be used to track progress and make sure that results are consistent. In competence-based education, assessments must evaluate performance on intricate tasks and facilitate learning, rather than merely certifying outcomes. So, the model puts formative assessment with clear rubrics and feedback loops at the top of the list. Indicators are the same as the parts that were just mentioned. Cognitive indicators pertain to the precision and profundity of cultural interpretation, as well as the capacity to distinguish between descriptive cultural knowledge and stereotypical generalizations. Value-axiological indicators encompass manifestations of respectful reasoning, ethical justification, and acknowledgment of dignity in discourse and decision-making. Dialogic strategies, conflict-sensitive communication, and working together in groups with people from different cultures are all examples of behavioral-communicative indicators. Reflective indicators encompass the caliber of self-assessment, the recognition of biases, and the readiness to amend judgments in light of evidence and discourse.

The model posits that competence evolves through iterative cycles of encounter, interpretation, interaction, and reflection. Encounter means being exposed to cultural meanings through texts, cases, community interactions, or made-up situations. Interpretation is the mental and moral processing of cultural data. Interaction is the stage of performance where people talk to each other, negotiate, or work on a project together. Reflection strengthens learning by connecting experience with conceptual understanding and directing future actions. This cycle, which is based on feedback, leads from a naive understanding of culture to a knowledgeable and ethically sound level of competence.

The model identifies the educational conditions that help people become competent. The first requirement is that the curriculum be integrated, which means that the results of ethnocultural competence are clearly stated and linked across courses and modules. Integration stops ethnocultural learning from being pushed to the side and helps it get more complicated over time.

The second condition is a learning environment that welcomes all students and sees cultural differences as normal and useful for learning. Inclusion encompasses not only representation but also interaction norms, equitable participation, and the prevention of discriminatory communication. The pedagogical stance of teachers is essential, as the development of competence relies on the quality of dialogue and the provision of safe yet challenging learning

environments.

The third condition is that teachers need methodological support, such as task banks, rubrics, and reflective prompts that are in line with competence indicators. Without these tools, assessments often go back to remembering facts, which goes against the goal of competence-based learning.

The fourth condition is formative assessment that is based on evidence and gives students feedback that they can use. Competence grows when students know what is expected of them, get feedback on their work, and are helped to change their plans. So, the model sees assessment as a way for people to grow from the inside, not just a way to measure them from the outside.

This article primarily concentrates on theoretical modeling while also delineating the validation process for the model. An expert evaluation is necessary to assess cultural relevance, conceptual clarity, and conformity with competence-based outcomes. Experts could encompass specialists in pedagogy, cultural studies, psychology, and language/communication. The criteria for evaluation should include how well the parts fit together, how easy it would be to put them into practice in higher education, and how good the proposed indicators are.

Design-based piloting is suitable for empirical validation, as competence development relies on contextual factors and iterative enhancement. A pilot could be executed within a single academic semester via integrated learning modules. Evidence collection would comprise rubric-based evaluation of student performances in culturally intricate tasks, examination of reflective narratives, observation of group dynamics, and interviews with students and teachers. Quantitative comparisons of pre- and post-rubric scores could be augmented by qualitative evidence of alterations in reasoning and communicative strategies. The dependability of assessment instruments necessitates rater training and interrater agreement evaluations.

The model enhances theoretical understanding by elucidating ethnocultural competence as an integrative construct that requires operationalization through observable indicators, and by establishing reflection and formative assessment as primary developmental mechanisms rather than supplementary activities. It is useful in practice because it gives a design logic that can be used in curriculum planning, teaching practice, and assessment systems that are based on competence.

The model also sees risks at the same time. If applied superficially, ethnocultural competence might be diminished to mere symbolic content or normative

rhetoric. If the assessment is not well thought out, students may learn to repeat "correct" statements without really knowing how to do so. The model thus underscores genuine tasks, dialogic interaction, and reflective evidence.

This article has put forward a theoretical framework for cultivating ethnocultural competence grounded in the competence-based approach. Ethnocultural competence is defined as a composite skill comprising cognitive, value-axiological, behavioral-communicative, and reflective-regulatory elements. The model is divided into four parts: target, conceptual, content-procedural, and assessment-result. This makes sure that the goals of the education, the theories behind it, the ways of learning, and the tools for testing are all in line with each other.

The model delineates competence development as iterative cycles of encounter, interpretation, interaction, and reflection, underpinned by formative feedback. To put it into action, the curriculum needs to be integrated, the learning environment needs to be welcoming, teachers need methodological support, and the assessment systems need to measure complex performances instead of just memory. The model is set up for validation through expert evaluation and design-based testing that uses a mix of methods.

The model fills a common gap in higher education by giving a clear competence-based design logic. This gap is the lack of theoretically sound, assessable, and usable frameworks for developing ethnocultural competence. Future research should concentrate on testing the model across various disciplines, enhancing assessment tools, and investigating the long-term impacts on students' professional communication and civic engagement in multicultural settings.

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