

# Intercultural Communicative Competence: Beliefs and Practices of Adult English as a Second Language Instructors

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*Effective and appropriate communication is critical for the successful integration of newcomers in Canada. In this paper, we describe the intercultural communicative competence beliefs and practices of 70 adult English as a second language (ESL) instructors. Responses to an online survey indicated a strong belief in the value of integrating intercultural communicative competence into their instruction; however, instructors' reported classroom practices revealed that culture was addressed in varying degrees and that intercultural communicative competence was not systematically developed. Findings suggest that enhanced instructor education, appropriate materials development, and research investigating the effective pedagogical development of intercultural communicative competence in the language learning classroom are needed.*

*La communication efficace et appropriée est critique pour une intégration réussie des nouveaux arrivants au Canada. Dans cet article, nous décrivons les croyances et les pratiques relatives à la compétence communicative interculturelle de 70 enseignants d'anglais langue seconde aux adultes. D'après leurs réponses à un sondage en ligne, les enseignants croient fermement en la valeur de l'intégration de la compétence communicative interculturelle dans leur pédagogie; toutefois, les commentaires des enseignants portant sur leur pratiques en salle de classe indiquent qu'ils traitent la culture à des degrés variables et qu'ils ne développent pas de la compétence communicative interculturelle systématiquement. Les résultats portent à croire qu'il faudrait offrir une formation accrue aux enseignants, développer du matériel approprié et entreprendre de la recherche traitant du développement efficace de la compétence communicative interculturelle dans les cours de langue.*

Intercultural contact and communication in this globalized era make approaches to understanding and negotiating cultural differences critical for successful interaction. However, the acceptance of, and sensitivity to, cultural differences are neither instinctive nor natural aspects of human behaviour (Bennett, 1998). Rather, cultural differences have the potential to generate conflict, since communicating meaning becomes difficult when there is a lack of a shared language, behavioural patterns, and common values (Bennett, 1993). Therefore, intercultural competence is becoming increasingly relevant across a wide range of disciplines, particularly language education. Byram's (1997) assertion that "teaching for linguistic competence cannot be separated from teaching for intercultural competence" (p. 22) reflects the important relationship between language and culture in English language teaching. It is

essential for instructors to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence for use both within and beyond the English as a second language (ESL) multicultural classroom. The inclusion of intercultural communicative competence in the Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL)(2011) *Adult ESL Curriculum Framework* demonstrates the relevance of this issue for curriculum developers and ESL instructors.

A deeper understanding of the current intercultural communicative competence attitudes and instructional practices of ESL instructors is needed to provide direction for education, professional development, and materials development. Although there is growing recognition of its importance and relevance, the integration of intercultural communicative competence into language instruction has been the subject of limited investigation (Young & Sachdev, 2011). While some researchers have stressed the importance of intercultural communicative competence to promote language learning in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom (e.g., Gobel & Helmke, 2010; Yuen & Grossman, 2009), to date there has been a dearth of intercultural communicative competence research, particularly in the Canadian ESL context. In this study, we explored the beliefs and self-reported intercultural communicative competence knowledge and classroom practices of adult ESL instructors in Alberta using an online survey. The development of intercultural communicative competence for enhanced second language acquisition (SLA) (Byram, 1997; Tsai & Houghton, 2010; Young & Sachdev, 2011) holds great potential, given the multicultural nature of ESL classrooms in Canada. In the following sections, we review concepts of culture, intercultural competence, intercultural communication, and intercultural communicative competence.

## **Culture**

Definitions of culture vary; however, according to Storti (1999), culture represents the shared beliefs, values, and assumptions of a group of people that in turn influence behaviour. Culture manifests itself in both artifacts and behaviour (Byram, 1997), which can be conceptualized as objective and subjective culture, respectively (Bennett, 1998). Objective culture includes cultural institutions and cultural products such as art, literature, music, food, dress, and festivals—the observable features of a particular culture; subjective culture describes features that are not easily visible, such as values and ways of thinking that inform behaviour. In Bennett's (1998) view, "understanding objective culture may create knowledge, but it doesn't necessarily generate competence" (p. 3) in face-to-face cross-cultural interactions. Traditionally, the focus in education has been on static objective culture; however, an understanding of the dynamic nature and subjective features of culture is essential for enhanced intercultural competence.

## **Intercultural Communication**

Effective intercultural communication occurs when meaning is both shared and constructed. Language and culture are deeply connected, in that culture shapes language use and language conveys cultural meanings (Bennett, 1998; Byram, 1997; Jordan, 2002; Kramsch, 1993). Without shared assumptions, values, and beliefs, communication can be difficult or awkward, as interlocutors need to overcome both cognitive and affective barriers (Byram & Feng, 2004; Tsai & Houghton, 2010). Stereotyping, ethnocentrism, prejudice, discrimination, and cultural distance are some of the factors that can contribute to intercultural miscommunication (Bennett, 1998; Sharma, Tam, & Kim, 2009). Durocher (2007) argued that intercultural

communication comprises skills (e.g., cultural adaptation strategies) that are both distinct from, and complementary to, language proficiency. Without these skills, individuals from different cultures will risk misunderstanding one another, even if they are fluent speakers of the same language. An intercultural approach to language teaching supports learners in acquiring cultural skills as they develop proficiency in the traditional four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) (Corbett, 2003). Consequently, a combination of language skills, knowledge, and intercultural communication strategies are necessary for the development of intercultural communicative competence.

## **Intercultural Competence**

Intercultural competence, according to Sharma et al. (2009), is the “ability to think and act in appropriate ways with people from other cultures” (p. 232). This encompasses (a) the capacity to recognize, experience, and cope with cultural differences in intercultural situations and (b) the necessary knowledge of sociocultural contexts to deal with problems that may arise (Gobel & Helmke, 2010; Sharma et al., 2009). It is useful to make a distinction between culture-specific knowledge (knowing about aspects of a particular culture) (Gobel & Helmke, 2010) and culture-general knowledge (learning about the self as a cultural being and recognizing culture value orientations and the impact that culture has on one’s communication, behaviour, and identity). Over time, a number of different cultural value orientations have been proposed as a means of understanding culture in a more general way. These orientations are best understood not as binary distinctions, but as anchors at the extreme ends of each continuum. Seven orientations that represent frequently cited and conceptually accessible cultural values were chosen for inclusion in this study:

1. time – monochronic (time is scarce) vs. polychronic (time is plentiful) (Hall, 1976) ;
2. power – high power distance (hierarchical) vs. low power distance (egalitarian) (Hofstede, 2001);
3. norms of communication – direct (getting to the point at the expense of relationships) vs. indirect (preserving relationships at the expense of information) (Gudykunst, Stewart, & Ting-Toomey, 1985);
4. communication styles – linear (getting straight to the point) vs. circular (obscure, implicit) (Fisher-Yoshida & Geller, 2009);
5. task focus (the priority is getting things done) vs. relationship focus (relationships are the priority) (Adler, 2007);
6. universalism (rules apply to all and are non-negotiable) vs. particularism (rules are flexible, depending on the individual) (Parsons & Shils, 1951); and
7. individualism (emphasis on individual goals) vs. collectivism (emphasis on group goals) (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988).

According to Paige (1996), some of the most common behaviours, attitudes, and values related to intercultural competence are tolerance of ambiguity, cognitive and behavioural flexibility, cultural identity, interpersonal skills, openness to new experience and people, empathy, and respect. Bennett (1998) also recognized cultural self-awareness, non-evaluative perception, cultural adaptation strategies, and cross-cultural empathy as communication

competencies useful in cross-cultural situations. Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) described a six-stage continuum for increasingly sophisticated ways of dealing with cultural differences: denial of differences, defense against differences, minimization of differences, acceptance of differences, adaptation to differences, and integration of differences. Based on the DMIS, Hammer and Bennett (1998) developed the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to measure individuals' intercultural sensitivity.

## **Intercultural Communicative Competence**

For decades, communicative competence has been a key goal of English language education. According to Hymes (1972), communicative competence included not only the grammatical elements, but also the sociocultural features of language. Later models of communicative competence included linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980), and discourse competence (Canale, 1983). The cultural aspects of language learning are components of sociocultural competence. However, Byram (1997) asserted that the term "intercultural communicative competence" more effectively conceptualized the additional knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities that are necessary for successful cross-cultural communication.

While there is extensive literature on intercultural communication and intercultural competence, there is a relative dearth in the area of intercultural communicative competence. Byram (1997) distinguished between intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence: individuals with the former interact successfully in their own language with people from another culture, and those with the latter do so in a second or foreign language. Thus, individuals with intercultural communicative competence may act as mediators between cultures and languages. The term intercultural communicative competence incorporates both an understanding of the nature of communication across cultures and the development of communicative competence. In the *ATESL Adult ESL Curriculum Framework* (ATESL, 2011) intercultural communicative competence is defined as the learners' "ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in English within a culturally diverse society" (S7-4).

In order to work and learn with students from other cultures and linguistic backgrounds in multicultural ESL classrooms, learners need to develop intercultural communicative competence. They must be able to communicate successfully, to interpret and understand other cultural perspectives, and to critically evaluate their own (Byram, 1997); as such, Byram referred to these learners as intercultural speakers. In Young and Sachdev's (2011) study of instructors' beliefs regarding intercultural communicative competence, most teachers felt that the concept of the intercultural speaker was useful in that it situated learners between their own culture and language and those of the target group.

## **Instructors' Intercultural Competence**

Language instructors are the key "brokers" between theories of intercultural competence and their application in the classroom (Young & Sachdev, 2011). Bennett (1993) also emphasized the central role of instructors in intercultural education, and argued that they must understand their own worldviews before being able to assist learners with intercultural development. To date, very little research has investigated instructors' own intercultural competence or their views of intercultural communicative competence and its relation to classroom instruction (Byram &

Feng, 2004; Young & Sachdev, 2011; Young, Sachdev, & Seedhouse, 2009). Language instructors may often be perceived as having a superficial understanding of culture; however, Yuen and Grossman (2009) warn that this will not necessarily develop into a deep understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Young and Sachdev (2011) conducted one of the few studies investigating the intercultural communicative competence views of language instructors. A total of 17 instructors in the US, UK, and France kept diaries over the course of two weeks to record “in-class incidents, which... had a bearing on the applicability of [Byram’s 1997] ICC [intercultural communicative competence] model” (p. 86). The instructors were then asked to participate in focus group discussions. They identified a connection between intercultural communicative competence and the attributes of both successful language learners and language teachers. Over half of the participants in the focus groups reported multiple occurrences (at least twice a day) of incidental intercultural communicative competence teaching opportunities. An additional 105 participants completed a questionnaire exploring their intercultural communicative competence beliefs and practices. Overall, the researchers found a discrepancy between instructors’ expressed intercultural communicative competence beliefs and attitudes and their classroom priorities. The instructors generally felt that an intercultural approach to language teaching was appropriate and could be successful; however, they appeared to be ill equipped or somewhat unwilling to implement an intercultural approach in their own classrooms. They cited a lack of learner interest, curricular support, suitable textbook material, intercultural communicative competence testing materials, and confidence in addressing difficult topics. Interestingly, instructors did not mention professional development in the area of intercultural communicative competence; however, this has been investigated in other studies (see Yuen & Grossman, 2009) and is critical for facilitating syllabus design, materials development, and goal setting applicable to the development of intercultural communicative competence.

### **Developing Instructors’ Intercultural Competence**

Theories of intercultural communication stress the importance of reflection, critical analysis, and comparison, and emphasize that intercultural experience alone is not sufficient for developing competence (Bennett, 1993). Not only do ESL instructors play a role in developing intercultural communicative competence in language learners, but they also need to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become interculturally competent themselves. According to Scarino (2008), with continuous reflection, instructors will be more confident and better able to promote their learners’ social, linguistic, and cultural growth. In a study examining the intercultural sensitivity of EFL practicum student instructors in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Singapore, Yuen and Grossman (2009) found that instructors were not sufficiently prepared to address the cultural diversity of their students. They advocated for teacher education programs to adopt more systematic approaches to intercultural education, a necessary first step for the development of intercultural communicative competence in learners (Bennett, 1998).

### **Developing Learners’ Intercultural Communicative Competence**

Individuals with higher levels of intercultural competence demonstrate a greater ability to learn languages, communicate effectively, and adapt to, and integrate with, other cultures (Byram, 1997; Redmond, 2000). The success of SLA is partly determined by one’s motivation to

communicate and interact with native speakers, positive attitudes towards native speakers, and the ability to adapt to the larger society (MacIntyre, 2007). These characteristics allow learners to modify their perspectives and learning strategies, which may in turn lead not only to the development of intercultural communicative competence but also to greater success in SLA (Tsai & Houghton, 2010). In Young and Sachdev (2011), all instructors recognized the value of developing intercultural communicative competence in learners for more effective language learning. Nearly all of the instructors, however, reported challenges with accessing intercultural communicative competence teaching resources.

## **Resources**

Instructional resources (e.g., textbooks, authentic materials) provide learners with a variety of linguistic and cultural input for learning. Yoshino (1992) found that some instructional materials (e.g., textbooks) represented cultures as homogeneous and stereotypical, despite their complexity and variability. Moreover, such materials may oversimplify and overemphasize differences, creating an inflated distinction between the target culture and others. Although materials are beginning to become more representative of the multicultural nature of society, English language texts are often produced for international markets and do not reflect a range of cultural perspectives (Pulverness, 2003). Since language instruction serves as the primary goal in English language classrooms, cultural awareness may appear only as the contextual backdrop to language tasks, and intercultural objectives are minimized (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

Instructors in Young and Sachdev's (2011) study reported that their classroom materials failed to represent the pluralistic nature of primarily English-speaking societies. In the instructors' materials, learners were generally asked to comment on superficial features of objective culture (e.g., observable behaviours, art, food, dress, festivals) but were not given the opportunity to incorporate their own experiences and knowledge into the learning process. The authors found that the instructors under-utilized available materials for intercultural exploration and that the materials they used were inadequate for addressing the complexity of cultural differences.

Second language instructors should recognize that resources are cultural products developed "within a cultural context, for consumption by others and are imbued with the cultural positionings, identities, assumptions, and worldviews of their creators" (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 83). Instructors need to find ways to use the subject matter presented in language learning textbooks as a departure point for exploring cultural value orientations, to supplement the single perspective presented in texts. Multicultural ESL classes offer opportunities for learners to explore other perspectives, by drawing on their varied cultural experiences. Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) asserted that appropriate resources for developing learners' intercultural communicative competence provide opportunities for actively constructing and noticing aspects of language and culture, making connections to their personal life, culture, or previous learning, interacting socially, reflecting on language and culture, and sharing responsibility for effective communication with people from other cultures. Pulverness (2003) recommended using genres of literature (e.g., historical fiction, second generation, or bicultural experiences) that reflect cultural diversity, displace the readers, and/or cause them to critically evaluate their own cultural identity.

## **Instructional Goals and Practices**

Fundamental to the development of intercultural communicative competence in learners is the recognition of its central role in the language learning process. Kramsch (1993) stated:

Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them. (p. 1)

Pulverness (2003) added that language is shaped by social and historical conditions; therefore, it is value laden and must be taught as such. Learners must be given the necessary resources to identify and interact within the shared frame of reference and cultural context that make language meaningful. Classroom methodology needs to acknowledge the extent to which language expresses cultural meanings. Consequently, cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence should be an integral part of every aspect of the language learning process (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; Pulverness, 2003). Experience alone, while necessary, is insufficient in developing intercultural competence (Byram, 1997; Alred, Byram, & Fleming, 2003; Kramsch, 1993); reflection, analysis, and action are also required. By fostering these behaviours, educators can play an important role in facilitating the development of intercultural communicative competence in language classrooms. Byram, Nichols, and Stevens (2001) outlined four guidelines for developing intercultural competence in the language classroom: (1) learners should develop awareness of cultural similarities and differences by making comparisons between their own and others' cultures; (2) they need to develop skills to analyze and interpret unfamiliar social and cultural information; (3) learners should be encouraged to collect data from beyond the classroom to promote their own intercultural communicative competence development; and (4) they should be exposed to literature that promotes an understanding of "otherness" on both cognitive and affective levels.

Key intercultural topics for the classroom include moving beyond ethnocentrism, developing cultural self-awareness, and promoting appreciation and respect for cultural differences (Bennett, 1998). Taylor (1994) recommended that instructors create supportive and safe learning environments to minimize learner discomfort in dealing with cultural differences. Classroom tasks that incorporate cultural content and encourage discussion of culture will provide further opportunities for oral or written reflection on culture (Lindner, 2010). Knutson (2006) suggested that instructors should place an emphasis on cultural understanding at all levels of language proficiency.

Experiential instructional methods can support critical reflection. One of the primary methods advocated in the literature is the ethnographic approach (Byram, 1997; Pulverness, 2003) as described by Jordan (2002):

Students embark on short exercises in collecting naturally-occurring data and begin to develop habits of critical and reflexive thinking by "starting with the self". The normative value attached to familiar practices and understandings is called into question by a sustained process of "making strange"; in other words, students are encouraged systematically to stand outside the taken-for-granted and describe it afresh as if through the eyes of a cultural outsider. (p. 1)

The pedagogical integration of language and culture has been recommended for many years.

Some guidelines have been provided in curriculum frameworks such as the *ATESL Adult ESL Curriculum Framework* (ATESL, 2011). This document outlined seven standards of learner outcomes: describing/analyzing diversity in Canadian cultures; identifying/describing the significance of cultural images and symbols; recognizing cultural stereotypes; reflecting on learners' cultural adjustment processes; and identifying, analyzing, and comparing/contrasting culturally determined behaviours and values. While the general learning goals of intercultural pedagogy are clear in the literature, there has been limited classroom-based research on its implementation (Durocher, 2007; Gobel & Helmke, 2010; Pulverness, 2003; Scarino, 2008; Young & Sachdev, 2011).

In a study examining instructors' views and practices regarding intercultural communicative competence in the EFL secondary classroom, Gobel and Helmke (2010) found that in order to make lessons more interesting, culture was often used as thematic content rather than as a specific instructional objective. Interculturally inexperienced instructors were more likely to teach objective culture or not to address culture at all, while instructors with intercultural experience focused on making comparisons of subjective aspects (e.g., values and beliefs), encouraging students to share their own ideas and experiences. Instructors often viewed cultural issues that arose in the classroom as problems or limitations, as opposed to opportunities for learning and resources for contextualizing information and enhancing motivation. Those who found intercultural topics challenging to address in class attributed their difficulties to time constraints, lack of knowledge due to insufficient education, inadequate materials and textbooks, little or no support from the curriculum, and/or a hesitancy to deal with controversy or student attitudes.

Although more recently there has been significant interest in the integration of language and culture in the classroom, much of it has focused on expanding theoretical models (e.g., Bennett, 1993, 1998; Byram, 1997), leaving classroom applications largely unexplored (Byram & Feng, 2004; Young & Sachdev, 2011; Young et al., 2009). The perspectives of instructors, who are the direct link between theory and practice, have recently been explored to a limited extent (e.g., Gobel & Helmke, 2010; Young & Sachdev, 2011; Yuen & Grossman, 2009); however, no similar research has been conducted with adult ESL instructors in the Canadian context.

In Canada, a multicultural society with a culturally diverse ESL student population, the development of intercultural communicative competence is a pedagogical goal based on learner needs. Therefore, this study investigated the role of intercultural communicative competence in the ESL classroom and addressed the following research questions:

1. What are adult ESL instructors' perspectives on intercultural communicative competence?
2. What are the perceptions of adult ESL instructors regarding their learners' intercultural communicative competence?
3. What resources do adult ESL instructors use for the development of intercultural communicative competence in learners? To what extent do these resources support intercultural communicative competence?
4. How do adult ESL instructors promote the development of intercultural communicative competence in terms of instructional objectives, content, and activities?

## **Method**



## **Participants**

The participants in this study were 70 members of ATESL. Of these, 49% had a Bachelor's degree, 10% a Diploma, 39% a Master's degree, and 3% a Doctorate degree. Approximately one quarter (26%) of the 43 participants who reported their specialized area of study indicated a background in teaching ESL. The instructors had an average of 12 years of full-time teaching experience (Range: 1-30 years). Of the 66 instructors who responded to the question about the type of ESL class that they taught, close to half (44%) indicated that they were instructors in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)<sup>1</sup> program, 27% taught English for Academic Purposes, 23% taught non-LINC General ESL, 14% were instructors of Occupation-Specific language training, 8% taught English in the Workplace, and 3% were instructors of examination preparation courses (e.g., Test of English as a Foreign Language [TOEFL], International English Language Testing System [IELTS]). The majority of instructors (62%) indicated they were currently teaching ESL learners at the intermediate proficiency level, Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 5-8, (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012), with close to half (42%) teaching beginner (CLB 1-4), 25% teaching advanced (CLB 9-12), and 16% teaching pre-benchmark levels (multiple responses were permitted for those teaching more than one class).

## **Instrument**

A *SurveyMonkey*® online questionnaire (SurveyMonkey Inc., 2014) was designed to investigate cultural pedagogy and the development of intercultural communicative competence in learners (see Appendix). The survey consisted of 44 questions and was divided into five sections: (1) instructors' education and teaching/learning experiences (8 questions); (2) views on their intercultural competence (5 questions); (3) views on developing intercultural communicative competence in learners (12 questions); (4) resources for fostering intercultural communicative competence (4 questions); and (5) methods and practices for the development of intercultural communicative competence (13 questions). Two additional questions addressed resources, as well as further education/support and preferred methods of delivery. Two questions from Young and Sachdev (2011) regarding learners' attitudes towards different cultures were adapted for this survey. Specific intercultural communicative competence terminology and value orientations were defined for participants in relevant sections of the survey. The instrument was initially reviewed by two intercultural experts and two TESL professors, piloted on two separate occasions with ESL instructors, and revised accordingly.

## **Procedures**

A recruitment email sent out on the ATESL listserv invited only those instructors with more than one year of teaching experience to complete an online survey. An electronic consent form was included in the email. The survey was available online for two weeks.

## **Data Analysis**

*SurveyMonkey Select*® (SurveyMonkey Inc., 2014) produced output reporting the number of responses and percentages for each of the questions. Survey responses from 70 participants

were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Responses to the questions were downloaded in a numeric format to an Excel spreadsheet, and the means and standard deviations were calculated for questions using Likert-type scales. The respondents' answers to the open-ended questions were coded, categorized, and quantified.

## Results and Discussion

### Intercultural Instruction

Using a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), instructors rated their knowledge, experience, skills, and confidence to address cultural issues in the multicultural classroom (see Table 1). The majority agreed/strongly agreed that they possessed the required experience, confidence, and knowledge but were not as sure that they had the required skills to address these issues in class. Approximately half of the participants (46%) reported having received specialized intercultural communication education in the form of workshops, conference presentations, and/or university course components; however, these experiences were limited to individual workshops for 52% of these instructors. Only four had completed university coursework focusing on anthropology, cross-cultural communication, or multicultural education; the rest had done individual reading or covered related topics superficially in university coursework.

When asked to estimate the impact of culture on successful communication (low, moderate, or high), 30% of instructors indicated that it had a moderate impact and 70% a high impact. More than 81% responded that language instruction cannot be separated from teaching culture, and almost all instructors (99%) reported that without the requisite intercultural communicative competence skills, individuals might misunderstand one another, even when speaking each other's languages fluently. Furthermore, results indicated that 89% of the instructors believed that awareness of one's first culture develops from consciously comparing it with other cultures. It is evident from instructors' responses to the questions in this section that the respondents perceived culture to be an integral part of communication.

### Instructors' Views on Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence

When asked questions regarding their learners' intercultural communicative competence, using

Table 1

#### *Instructors' Views of own Knowledge, Experience, Skills, and Confidence*

When addressing cultural issues in a multicultural classroom, I feel I have the required:	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean	SD
Experience	0.0	0.0	2.9	70.0	27.1	4.24	0.49
Confidence	0.0	4.4	2.9	61.8	30.9	4.19	0.70
Knowledge	0.0	1.4	7.1	64.3	27.1	4.17	0.61
Skills	0.0	4.3	12.9	60.0	22.9	4.01	0.73

*Note.* Instructors (N = 70). Questionnaire scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree), the majority of respondents (66%) indicated that most of their students were motivated to develop intercultural communicative competence, 16% of instructors were not sure, and 19% disagreed ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = .93$ ). The majority (80%) of instructors reported that fostering multicultural understanding was one of the curriculum goals of their ESL program ( $M = 3.89$ ,  $SD = .93$ ); however, only 68% felt that the development of intercultural communicative competence was a realistic goal for their students ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = .69$ ). When asked about students' perceived interest in learning about culture, the vast majority (96%) reported that students showed an interest in Canadian culture ( $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = .66$ ), although significantly fewer (71%) believed students showed an interest in their fellow classmates' cultures ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = .89$ ). This may be attributed to the high number of LINC instructors who responded to these questions. Learners in LINC programs targeting settlement would likely be more concerned with learning about Canadian culture than about other cultures, in contrast to programs that provide language education for international students who do not plan to stay in Canada upon completion of their studies.

Bennett (1998) stated that intercultural communicative competence has a positive effect on learners' attitudes towards the target culture and is useful in challenging stereotypes and fostering understanding and empathy. With regard to the value of developing intercultural communicative competence in learners, instructors perceived a variety of benefits. The majority of participants (81%) indicated that individuals with higher levels of intercultural communicative competence would be more likely to seek opportunities to interact with native speakers ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = .85$ ), and 96% felt that developing intercultural communicative competence in learners would help make these interactions more successful ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = .63$ ). Over three quarters of instructors (80%) believed that intercultural communicative competence could help students cope with culture shock ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = .75$ ).

When asked if ESL instructors could positively influence learners' attitudes towards people from other cultures over the course of an ESL class, an overwhelming 96% thought this to be the case ( $M = 4.50$ ,  $SD = .68$ ). These findings are consistent with those of Young and Sachdev (2011). With reference to the teaching of intercultural communicative competence, the majority (74%) believed that intercultural communicative competence skills must be taught explicitly ( $M = 3.87$ ,  $SD = .87$ ). This view aligns with the current literature and models of intercultural communicative competence (Bennett, 1998; Byram, 1997). The majority (89%) of instructors, agreed/strongly agreed that there are cultural differences in teachers' and learners' expectations of their respective roles with regard to classroom learning ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = .81$ ). When asked to rank the importance of three factors to the successful integration of intercultural communicative competence into their teaching, instructors ranked time first, resources second, and opportunities for professional development third. Generally, instructors felt that developing intercultural communicative competence in their learners would be beneficial, but that more support for instructors was required.

### **Intercultural Communicative Competence Resources**

Using a 4-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 4 = strongly agree), instructors were asked to evaluate the degree to which teaching materials addressed students' intercultural communicative competence needs and their ability to locate intercultural communicative competence resources. The majority of instructors (73%) indicated that their textbooks did not explicitly deal with aspects of intercultural communicative competence ( $M = 2.20$ ,  $SD = .78$ ).

These findings are consistent with reports by instructors in the EFL context (Young & Sachdev, 2011) and with the views of Pulverness (2003), who asserted that available cultural teaching materials were inadequate for addressing cultural complexities and developing intercultural communicative competence in learners. Over half (59%) of the instructors indicated that they did not know where to find intercultural communicative competence information or resources for use in class ( $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ).

When asked to rank resources used for intercultural communicative competence (1 = most important; 4 = least important), the instructors ( $n = 65$ ) rated knowledgeable colleagues first, followed by books, intercultural websites, and, lastly, research articles. Participants were provided with a list of seven recognized provincial, national, and international intercultural resources and asked to identify which they had used. Eighty per cent had consulted Canadian government resources (e.g., Citizenship and Immigration Canada website), 60% the provincial *ATESL Adult ESL Curriculum Framework* (ATESL, 2011), 52% the NorQuest College Centre for Intercultural Education (NorQuest College, 2014), 10% the University of British Columbia's Continuing Studies Centre for Intercultural Communication (University of British Columbia, 2014), and 10% the Intercultural Communication Institute (2014) website. It appears that fewer instructors are accessing specific intercultural communicative competence resources and that current materials continue to be inadequate for meeting their needs.

### Teaching Practices

Instructors were asked to report their teaching practices using a 4-point scale (1 = never; 2 = seldom; 3 = sometimes; 4 = often). Although the majority (74%) of instructors thought that intercultural communicative competence needed to be taught explicitly, only 27% reported that they did this often (58% sometimes; 9% seldom; 6% never) ( $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ). Two thirds of instructors (68.1%) had reported that intercultural communicative competence was a realistic aim for learners; however, only 21% reported setting intercultural communicative competence teaching objectives often; 30% set them sometimes, 27% seldom, and 22% never ( $M = 2.49$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ). It is possible that these findings are attributable to inadequate intercultural awareness, teacher education, professional development, curriculum, and/or resources related to intercultural communicative competence. A similar disconnect was noted in Young and Sachdev (2011) between the beliefs and attitudes that instructors held towards intercultural communicative competence and their classroom priorities.

An integral part of intercultural communicative competence development is reflection on both one's own and other cultures (Bennett, 1998; Byram, 1997; Tsai & Houghton, 2010). When asked how often they encouraged learners to critically evaluate their first culture, 21% of instructors indicated they did this often, 35% sometimes, 24% seldom, and 20% never ( $M = 2.58$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ). A larger percentage encouraged learners to critically evaluate Canadian culture, with 29% reporting often, 45% sometimes, 19% seldom, and a much lower percentage (8%) indicating never ( $M = 2.94$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ). Few instructors reported developing methods to assess intercultural communicative competence (41% never, 27% seldom, 23% sometimes, 9% often) ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ).

Nearly all of the instructors (93%) were motivated to teach intercultural communicative competence. A number of different practices for teaching culture in the classroom were reported. The most common (86%) was the incorporation of objective Canadian cultural content (symbols, food, music, festivals). Instructors in this study were asked to identify, from a list of

options, the cultural topics that they addressed in their classes and the ways in which they did so. The most common topics included personal space, signs of respect, gender roles, body language, gestures, concepts of time, tone of voice, stereotypes, displays of emotion, and clothes or appearance (see Figure 1).

Cultural topics were most frequently addressed through general class discussions of Canadian cultural norms (88%) and through comparisons of first culture and Canadian norms (88%). A large percentage of instructors also asked learners to share an aspect of their first culture as part of the lesson (82%) and engaged learners in a conscious comparison of their first cultures with Canadian beliefs and values (73%). A smaller percentage of respondents reported addressing differences between student and teacher expectations (68%), encouraging reflection on how culture influences behaviour (67%), and leading discussions regarding cultural conflict in the classroom (65%). Half (50%) of the instructors developed follow-up class activities for cultural issues that arose in class, and 49% discussed them with students individually, perhaps due to the sensitive nature of topics (e.g., personal hygiene).

Key to the development of intercultural communicative competence is an understanding of cultural value orientations (e.g., monochronism/polychronism, high/low power distance, direct/indirect communication styles, circular/linear communication styles, task/relationship focus, universalism/particularism, individualism/collectivism) (Bennett; 1993; Gobel & Helmke, 2010; Storti, 1999). In this survey, instructors ( $n = 64$ ) identified which value orientations they addressed in their ESL classes: 63% selected high/low power distance; 60% circular/linear communication styles; 53% individualism/collectivism; 51% monochronism/polychronism; 47% direct/indirect communication styles; 46% universalism/particularism; and 44% task/relationship focus. It appears that a large percentage of the participants are familiar with, and are incorporating, these concepts into their ESL instruction. However, instruction is likely to be incidental and random if these and other aspects of intercultural communicative competence are not core components of second language curricula, as appears to be the case.

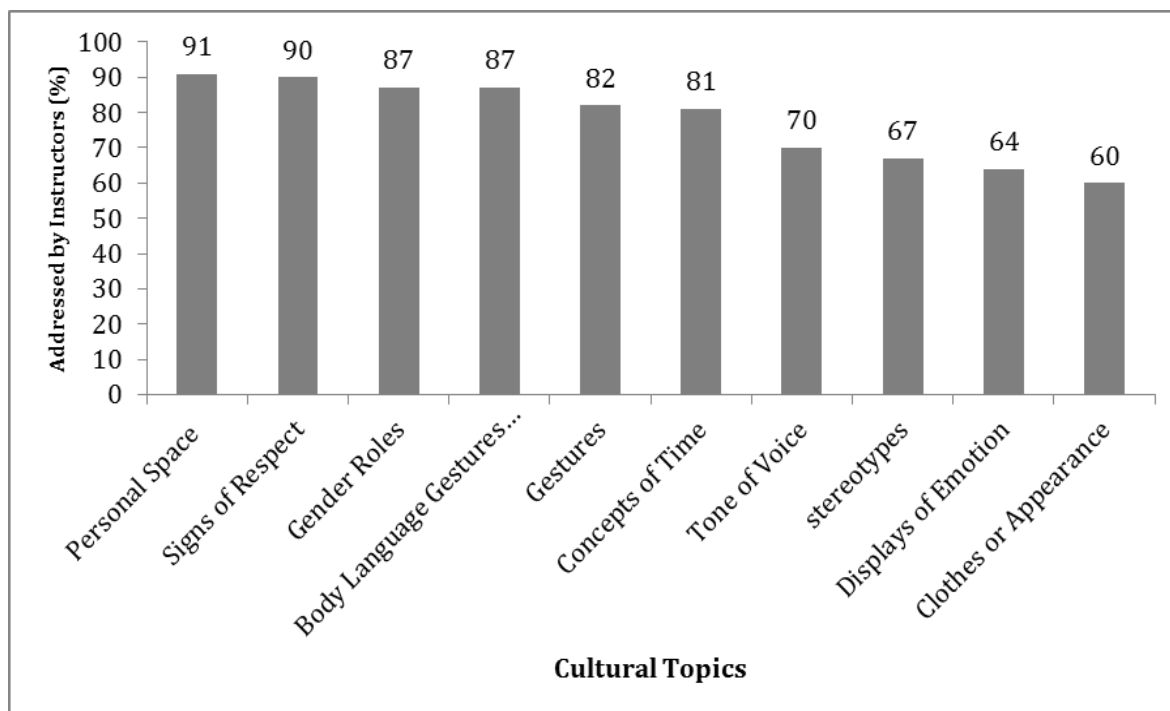


Figure 1. Responses to questionnaire item regarding cultural topics instructors had addressed with their class.

These findings on teacher practices in the Canadian ESL context differ somewhat from those of studies in other contexts, which have shown that instructors generally focus on teaching objective culture and making superficial comparisons between cultures (Durocher, 2007; Gobel & Helmke, 2010; Scarino, 2008; Young & Sachdev, 2011). Despite their motivation to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence, however, instructors in this study did not appear to be doing so on a regular basis, particularly with respect to subjective culture.

### **Professional Development, Support, and Resources**

Instructors were asked to report on further professional development, support, and resources that would enhance their ability to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence. Respondents ( $n = 62$ ) suggested that professional development in intercultural communicative competence could best be provided through ESL programs (74%), at TESL conferences (71%), at ATESL local meetings (57%), through regional workshops (50%), and in university courses (31%). In response to an open-ended question regarding preferences for support and resources, participants ( $n = 37$ ) requested the following: materials incorporating intercultural communicative competence (16%), textbooks with increased Canadian content (14%), and curriculum support (8%).

The instructors in this study believed that culture is an essential component of language learning and that the development of intercultural communicative competence benefits their learners. This is a distinctly different view from earlier studies, in which instructors were reported to consider culture both unimportant and irrelevant for the successful acquisition of a second language (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, Cain, & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996, cited in Young et al., 2009). Differences between our findings and those of other studies may be attributed to the fact that most of the research on instructors' beliefs and practices to date have focused on pre-service or novice instructors (Byram & Feng, 2004; Young et al., 2009) who showed a lack of consciousness about cultural factors. Young et al. (2009) posited that more experienced instructors would approach culture teaching and learning more explicitly in the English language classroom, and this is supported by our findings from participants with a mean of 12 years of full-time teaching experience. The experienced instructors surveyed in both this and Young and Sachdev's (2011) study reported that intercultural communicative competence was an important aim and that culture contributed positively to successful second language communication. While Young and Sachdev (2011) found that instructors in their study (from the US, UK, and France) saw the value in intercultural communicative competence, they were not teaching it explicitly. In contrast, the majority of participants in our Canadian study reported that they provided explicit intercultural communicative competence instruction, although not systematically.

### **Recommendations**

The incorporation of intercultural communicative competence in curriculum frameworks such as the *ATESL Adult ESL Curriculum Framework* (ATESL, 2011) provides evidence that intercultural communicative competence is an essential component in language instruction. ESL instructors in our study were interested in and motivated to teach intercultural communicative competence and they saw it as a valuable aim for their learners. Although 80% of participants stated that fostering multicultural understanding was a goal of their program curriculum, the

systematic development of intercultural communicative competence teaching objectives, lesson plans, and assessment methods was limited, according to responses. Perhaps topics related to intercultural communicative competence were being addressed incidentally as they arose organically in the classroom; however, an explicit, comprehensive approach to teaching intercultural communicative competence is lacking. ESL curricula and commercial textbooks need to include intercultural communicative competence learning objectives to ensure that intercultural competence is a core component of instruction.

Instructors must develop a strong sense of their own cultural identity and critically evaluate their own culture before being able to facilitate the development of intercultural communicative competence in their learners (Bennett, 1998; Knutson, 2006). In order to address cultural differences beyond the superficial level, instructors and learners need to be aware of the distinction between objective culture and the more complex subjective culture (Bennett, 1998). The iceberg is a useful metaphor for depicting aspects of objective and subjective culture (above and below the waterline, respectively). An understanding of Bennett's (1993) DMIS would enhance instructors' recognition and understanding of students' behaviours and their responses to learners' developmental needs. Ethnocentrism, found in the stages of denial and defense, for example, might then be valued as an opportunity for growth, rather than an undesirable attitude (Bennett, Bennett, & Allen, 2003). Cultural value orientations can be used as a foundation for understanding aspects of culture, and activities that enhance learners' skills in critical analysis, reflection, and evaluation of culture will facilitate this process.

Ethnographic approaches to teaching culture are also recommended (Bennett, 1998; Byram, 1997; Byram & Feng, 2004; Jordan, 2002; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). These enable learners to observe, compare, and interpret cultural data collected in a variety of social situations in natural settings (Corbett, 2003). Instructors may also generate class discussions using relational questions such as "What is particularly appealing or unappealing to us [in this situation], and why? What is unexpected or difficult to understand? What might others find strange about our ways of speaking or thinking?" (Knutson, 2006, p. 595).

Because suitable materials for developing intercultural communicative competence are not readily available (Pulverness, 2003; Young & Sachdev, 2011), instructors need to develop the ability to explore cultural similarities and differences within the existing curriculum and resources. This can be done by incorporating learners' own knowledge and experiences, literature about people from different cultures, and information from beyond the classroom. Rather than approaching intercultural communicative competence as a fifth skill, instructors are encouraged to integrate it into their instruction and to teach it explicitly in a systematic way. Culture-general topics (e.g., time, communication style) and critical incidents (examples of cross-cultural misunderstandings) may be used to teach basic skills (Knutson, 2006; NorQuest College, 2014; Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2008). Written or recorded texts, videos, and/or role-plays can provide critical incidents to stimulate discussion of possible solutions for resolving cultural misunderstandings. Rather than viewing learners' cultural differences as problems in the ESL classroom, instructors should instead use them to address intercultural communicative competence; however, more instructional knowledge, skills, experience, and confidence may be necessary to do this effectively.

### **Implications for Professional Development**

The language instructors in this study reported that they generally had moderate to high

proficiency in intercultural communicative competence; however, only half of those surveyed had received any specialized education in intercultural communication. The survey results suggest that instructors are relying largely on the knowledge they have gained through their own experience when addressing cultural issues in the classroom. Although teaching experience in a multicultural classroom contributes to intercultural competence, instructors might also seek opportunities to further develop their own intercultural communicative competence through education, self-reflection, and completion of an inventory such as the IDI to gain insights into their current stage of development. While culture was reportedly addressed to varying degrees in their ESL classes, instructional strategies for developing intercultural communicative competence in learners more deliberately through teaching objectives, learning tasks, and assessment are needed. Both pre-service and in-service instructors would benefit from education in strategies for setting clear intercultural communicative competence learning objectives, accessing and developing intercultural communicative competence materials, integrating intercultural communicative competence in classroom practices, and assessing intercultural communicative competence in learners. Universities, funders, professional organizations, and program administrators need to take greater responsibility for meeting these needs.

### **Limitations**

We acknowledge that most research studies have limitations. Although convenience sampling can lead to the under- or over-representation of particular groups within a sample, those who responded to our survey reported a wide range of experience and education and they taught in a variety of ESL programs, from beginner to advanced proficiency levels. A larger sample, however, may have provided better representation of the population of adult ESL instructors in Alberta. While self-report does not always reflect actual behaviours, the educated participants were willing and able to provide accurate responses, as the survey responses were anonymous. Follow-up focus groups, individual interviews, and/or classroom observations would have allowed for triangulation of the data, confirmation of self-reported behaviours, and exploration of other complex issues (e.g., race, power, and the dynamic nature and subjective features of culture).

### **Conclusion**

Previous studies investigating intercultural communicative competence in the classroom were situated primarily in the EFL context or in other English-speaking countries. In the current study, we examined the beliefs and practices of instructors in an adult ESL context in Canada. Although much of the intercultural communicative competence literature may apply to both EFL and ESL contexts, some key differences exist. In EFL settings, learners usually have a shared first culture and limited access to input from and interaction with speakers of English. In contrast, ESL learners find themselves in an unfamiliar culture and have a wider variety of opportunities for interaction with speakers of English. However, in a multicultural society such as Canada, learners will likely need to interact with people from diverse cultures. This is especially true within the ESL classroom, since the learner population is usually comprised of individuals with a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. While the intercultural communicative competence model is relevant and appropriate in both EFL and ESL contexts,



pedagogical practices must take into account differences in learners' needs and goals, as well as other relevant situational factors.

Although there have been important theoretical developments (e.g., Bennett, 1998; Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993), the integration of intercultural communicative competence in second language instruction is relatively underexplored. A deeper understanding of instructors' views and implementation of particular aspects of intercultural communicative competence would be enhanced by focus group and individual interviews and by classroom observations. Measuring the intercultural sensitivity of both ESL instructors and learners using a validated, reliable instrument, such as the IDI, would be valuable for identifying the intercultural communicative competence needs of each group. Instructional materials to meet these needs could be developed and pilot tested to determine their effectiveness. The findings of the current study suggest that more needs to be done in the way of materials development, instructor education, and classroom-based research to promote the incorporation of intercultural communicative competence into ESL learning and teaching.

### **Acknowledgements**

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### Note

1 Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) is a federally funded program that provides free English language classes to adult newcomers who are not yet Canadian citizens. (<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/goc/linc.shtml>).

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## **Appendix: ICC Questionnaire: Culture in the Adult ESL Classroom**

In this questionnaire culture is defined as the shared assumptions, values, and beliefs of a group of people that result in characteristic behaviours.

A: To begin, you will be asked some information on your teaching education and experience.

A1. Highest level of qualification achieved:

Bachelor's degree:

Specialization: \_\_\_\_\_

Certificate:

Specialization: \_\_\_\_\_

Diploma:

Specialization: \_\_\_\_\_

Master's degree:

Specialization: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctoral degree:

Specialization: \_\_\_\_\_

Other (including studies in progress): \_\_\_\_\_

A2. Have you taken any specialized training in intercultural communication?

\_\_\_ Yes (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ No

A3. What type of ESL program are you currently teaching in? Check all that apply.

\_\_\_ Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC)

\_\_\_ Non-LINC General ESL

\_\_\_ English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

\_\_\_ English in the Workplace (EWP)

\_\_\_ Occupation-specific Language Training (OSLT)

\_\_\_ Exam preparation course (TOEFL/IELTS/CAEL)

\_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

A4. What proficiency level are you currently teaching? Check all that apply.

\_\_\_ Pre-benchmark/Literacy

\_\_\_ Beginner (CLB 1-4)

\_\_\_ Intermediate (CLB 5-8)

\_\_\_ Advanced (CLB 9-12)

A5. Experience teaching adult ESL/EFL learners:

Number of years of full-time experience (min. 20 hrs./wk.): \_\_\_\_\_

B: This section of the questionnaire will ask you about the views you have on your own intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

*Communicative Competence* is the ability to use language accurately and appropriately to accomplish communication goals.

*Intercultural Communicative Competence* (ICC) is the ability to successfully interact with people from another country and/or culture in a second language.

B1. How much of an impact does culture have in successful communication? (Please check one)

- Low impact
- Moderate impact
- High impact

- |  | <i>Strongly Disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Not Sure</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| B2. Teaching for linguistic competence cannot be separated from teaching for intercultural communicative competence.     |                          |                 |                 |              |                       |
| B3. Without ICC skills, individuals may misunderstand one another, even when they speak each other's languages fluently. |                          |                 |                 |              |                       |
| B4. Individuals become more aware of their own culture by consciously comparing their first culture to other cultures.   |                          |                 |                 |              |                       |
| B5. When addressing cultural issues in a multicultural classroom, I feel I have the required:                            |                          |                 |                 |              |                       |
|  |                          | Knowledge       |                 |              |                       |
|  |                          | Experience      |                 |              |                       |
|  |                          | Skills          |                 |              |                       |
|  |                          | Confidence      |                 |              |                       |

C: In the next section you will be asked about the purpose and importance of developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in ESL learners, that is, the ability to interact with people from another country and/or culture in a second language.

- |  | <i>Strongly Disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Not Sure</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| C1. Most of my students are motivated to develop ICC.                  |                          |                 |                 |              |                       |
| C2. For most learners in my class, developing ICC is a realistic goal. |                          |                 |                 |              |                       |

- C3. One of the program curriculum goals in the course that I am currently teaching is to foster multicultural understanding.
- C4. Most learners in my class show an interest in learning about Canadian culture.
- C5. Most learners in my class show an interest in learning about other students' cultures.
- C6. ESL instructors can positively influence learners' attitudes towards people from different cultures over the course of an ESL class.
- C7. Developing ICC in my learners will help them have more successful interactions with Canadians outside of the classroom.
- C8. Individuals with higher levels of ICC are more likely to seek opportunities to interact with native speakers.
- C9. ICC skills need to be explicitly taught.
- C10. Teaching ICC will help learners cope with culture shock.
- C11. There are cultural gaps in the expectations of the roles of both the teacher and the students of how learning should take place in the classroom.
- C12. Rank the following features for their importance in being able to successfully integrate ICC into your teaching.  
1= *most important*; 3= *least important*  
\_\_\_ Time  
\_\_\_ Resources  
\_\_\_ Opportunities for professional development

D: The next section will ask you about resources for fostering the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in the classroom.

- |   | <i>Strongly<br/>Disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly<br/>Agree</i> |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| D1. The textbooks I use in class deal with aspects of intercultural communicative competence. |                              |                 |              |                           |
| D2. I know where to find information on intercultural communicative competence.               |                              |                 |              |                           |

D3. Rank the top 4 resources you use for ICC in terms of their importance. (1 = *most important*; 4 = *least important*)

- \_\_\_\_ Knowledgeable colleagues  
\_\_\_\_ Websites  
\_\_\_\_ Books  
\_\_\_\_ Research articles  
\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

D4. Which of the following resources have you used? (Select all that apply.)

- \_\_\_\_ ATESL Curriculum Framework  
\_\_\_\_ Canadian government resources  
\_\_\_\_ NorQuest Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education  
\_\_\_\_ Bow Valley Centre of Excellence in Immigrant and Intercultural Advancement  
\_\_\_\_ University of British Columbia's Centre for Intercultural Communication  
\_\_\_\_ The Intercultural Communication Institute  
\_\_\_\_ Society of Intercultural Educators, Trainers and Researchers (SIETAR)  
\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

E: The final section will ask you about teaching methods and practices for fostering the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in the classroom.

- |   | <i>Never</i> | <i>Seldom</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Often</i> |
|---|--------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| E1. I explicitly teach ICC.   |              |               |                  |              |
| E2. I encourage learners to critically evaluate their first culture.            |              |               |                  |              |
| E3. I encourage learners to critically evaluate Canadian culture.               |              |               |                  |              |
| E4. I set teaching objectives for intercultural communicative competence.       |              |               |                  |              |
| E5. I develop methods to assess intercultural communicative competence.         |              |               |                  |              |
| E6. I am motivated to teach intercultural communicative competence in my class. |              |               |                  |              |



E7. Which of the following do you do regularly in the classroom? (Check all that apply.)

- Incorporate Canadian cultural content (e.g., cultural symbols, food, festivals, music)
- Address cultural conflict in the classroom through discussion
- Ask learners to share an aspect of their own culture and incorporate it into the lesson
- Engage learners to consciously compare the similarities and differences between their first culture's beliefs and values and Canadian beliefs and values
- Address differences in teacher/student expectations across cultures
- Encourage learners to reflect on how culture influences behaviour in their own and others' lives

E8. ESL classes are often made up of students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Which of the following topics have you addressed with your class? (Check all that apply.)

- Concepts of time
- Personal space
- Stereotypes
- Gender roles
- Displays of emotion
- Tone of voice
- Clothes or appearance
- Signs of respect
- Gestures
- Body language

E9. In general, how did you address them? (Check all that apply.)

- Had one-on-one conversations with individuals.
- Facilitated a class discussion of what is appropriate in Canada.
- Facilitated a class discussion comparing of what is appropriate in students' own and Canadian culture.
- Incorporated cultural issues into a future class activity.

E10. Culture-general frameworks assist in the development of a more sophisticated understanding of cultural differences. The following culture-general frameworks are commonly used in intercultural communicative competence training. Check all those that you have addressed with your class.

- Direct (get to the point at the expense of relationships)/Indirect (preserve relationships at the expense of information) Communication Styles
- Circular (using story and context to give information)/Linear (straight to the point) Communication Styles
- Individualism/Collectivism
- Monochronic (time is scarce)/Polychronic (time is plentiful) orientations to time
- High/Low Power Distance (hierarchical/egalitarian)
- Task (priority is on getting things done)/Relationship (relationships are priority)  Focus
- Universalist (rules apply to all and are non-negotiable)/Particularist (rules are flexible depending on the person)

E11. What further training, support or resources would you like to enhance your ability to develop your learners' ICC?

E12. How could this professional development best be provided? (Check all that apply.)

Professional development in ESL programs

ATESL local meetings

Regional workshops

TESL conferences

University courses

Other (please specify):