

Culture Teaching Approaches and Intercultural Communicative Competence Development in China College English Education: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is increasingly recognized as a key competence in Chinese higher education, making it an essential component of global citizenship. Culture-based teaching is widely regarded as an important pathway for fostering ICC in College English education; however, research on its implementation and effectiveness remains limited. This study addresses this gap by conducting a systematic literature review following PRISMA guidelines. A total of 959 records were initially identified from Scopus, ERIC, and WOS. After screening and eligibility assessment, 15 studies published between 2021 and 2025 were included for analysis. The findings reveal that culture-based teaching approaches, such as culture comparison, task-based learning, and technology-enhanced practices (e.g. telecollaboration) play a positive role in promoting students' intercultural awareness, communicative skills, and critical cultural reflection. However, these approaches are often constrained by four key challenges, including the marginalized ICC in curriculum design, limited teacher preparedness and practical guidance, learners' low engagement and intercultural awareness, and insufficient technological support. In addition, the review highlights a predominance of quantitative and mixed-methods research designs, with a strong reliance on self-reported data and limited use of longitudinal and performance-based approaches. These findings provide practical implications for improving ICC-oriented teaching and suggest directions for future research.

Keywords: Chinese College English, Higher Education, Intercultural Communicative Competence, Systematic Literature Review, Teaching Approaches

1. Introduction

Due to the growing importance of sustainable development at the global level, the United Nations (UN) introduced its 2030 Agenda, which includes the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed at promoting social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Among these, Goal 4 Quality Education aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UN General Assembly, 2015), including the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). This goal emphasizes not only access to education but also the development of key competencies necessary for individuals to participate effectively in a globalized world. One of these competencies is ICC, which enables individuals to communicate appropriately and effectively across cultural contexts. Without such competence, any misunderstandings, miscommunication, and cultural conflicts are more likely to occur, as individuals may lack the ability to interpret and respond appropriately to cultural differences (Singh, 2020; Sarwari et al., 2024). Therefore, ICC is essential for fostering mutual understanding, respect for diversity, and effective global collaboration in an increasingly globalized world (Sarwari et al., 2024; Khan, 2024). Target 4.7 in SDG 4 which refers to the goal that learners should acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development by 2030, including global citizenship, appreciation of cultural diversity, and intercultural understanding, further highlights the need for learners to acquire knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development, including global citizenship, cultural diversity, and intercultural understanding (UN General Assembly, 2015). Thus, education should strike a balance between knowledge, skills, and the cultivation of “capacity for intercultural understanding and empathy” (Ngo, 2025, p. 115). This emphasis on a balanced and holistic approach for ICC teaching is also reflected in policies issued by China's Ministry of Education (MOE). For instance, the *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium-Term and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)* highlights the importance of fostering intercultural communication abilities and enabling students to better understand different countries and cultures (NPC, 2010).

Despite the growing importance of ICC in the present context, its integration into College English courses in the Chinese context remains underexplored. Existing studies indicate that ICC development in Chinese College English education is still largely confined to theoretical discussions, with limited systematic integration into classroom practice and insufficient opportunities for experiential intercultural engagement (Feng, 2009; Gao, 2014; Hu, 2012; Liu, 2019; Chen & Zheng 2019; Wu, 2010; Zhou, 2023). In China, there also remains a lack

of well-defined criteria and curricular guidance for ICC development within the MOE framework (Sun, 2016; Zhuang & Zhu, 2021). The College English Curriculum Requirements (CECR) do not clearly specify the components of intercultural teaching (Han, 2020), creating a gap in both theoretical foundations and practical implementation (Gu & Zhao, 2021). This systemic ambiguity often results in “cultural teaching fragmentation” where ICC is treated as an optional add-on rather than a core learning objective (Zhang, 2012; Xiao et al., 2013). Effective ICC requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural understanding, empathy, and critical thinking (Fantini, 2009; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Past studies on ICC have primarily focused on its conceptualisation (Arasaratnam, 2015; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), its assessment methods (Griffith et al., 2016; Müller et al., 2020; Luo & Chan, 2022), and an evaluation of its effectiveness (Zhang & Zhou, 2023). In fact, there is more attention given on examining challenges faced by Chinese students in ICC (Yang et al., 2023) and factors influencing its development in higher education contexts (Song & Sahid, 2025). Despite these growing research efforts, few considered how ICC is pedagogically operationalised within College English classrooms, particularly in terms of specific culture teaching approaches and their role in fostering ICC development, especially in China context. As a result, there remains a lack of systematic synthesis on instructional practices and pedagogical frameworks in Chinese College English education. To address this gap, the primary objective of this study is to review existing research on culture teaching approaches in Chinese College English education. To achieve these objectives, the study is guided by four research questions:

- 1) What culture teaching approaches have been applied in Chinese College English education?
- 2) How do different teaching approaches contribute to the development of intercultural communicative competence?
- 3) What challenges have been identified in current ICC teaching practices?
- 4) What research methods and designs have been commonly used in studies on culture teaching and ICC development in Chinese College English education?

2. Methodology

This systematic review employed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (2020) to ensure transparency and methodological rigor. In the planning stage, the research questions, objectives, and inclusion criteria were defined, focusing on cultural teaching approaches and the development of ICC in Chinese college English education between 2021 and 2025. A comprehensive search was conducted across three major databases: Scopus ($n = 63$), ERIC ($n = 738$), and Web of Science ($n = 158$). The study selection process followed the PRISMA framework (2020), where 4 stages are followed: Identification, Screening, Eligibility, and Inclusion (Mengist, Soromessa, & Legese, 2020; Yusuf et al., 2022), which ensures a systematic and transparent selection process through clearly defined criteria and structured database searches (Sierra-Correa & Kintz, 2015). The detailed screening and selection procedures are presented in Figure 1.

2.1 Data Selection and Search Strategy

An exhaustive search of related and relevant literature was conducted using three major academic databases: Scopus, ERIC, and Web of Science (WoS). Scopus was selected for its comprehensive coverage of international peer-reviewed journals, which guarantees selection and evaluation of contents (Elsevier, 2023; Falagas et al., 2008). ERIC, which is a specialized digital library for educational research, is widely acknowledged as a key resource for accessing high-quality studies in the field of education (U.S. Department of Education, 2023). WoS was included due to its rigorous indexing standards, high-quality multidisciplinary coverage, and its recognition as a leading citation database (Clarivate, 2023; Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). The PICOS (Population/ participants, intervention/interest, context, outcomes, study design) framework was applied to formulate review questions that addressed a gap in the existing research while remaining sufficiently delimited to reduce potential bias (Amir-Behghadami & Janati 2020). This review included any quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods study focusing on intercultural competence and culture teaching approaches. Included studies had to meet the following criteria: (1) primary research (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods) published as peer-reviewed journal articles; (2) within the scope of social sciences, particularly education and linguistic; (3) written in English; (4) published in open-access journals in their final publication stage; (5) the research background related to China; (6) published between 2021 and 2025; (7) Chinese college students as participants; (8) focusing on Chinese college students' intercultural competence development and culture teaching approaches.

To retrieve relevant studies, the search strategy employed Boolean operators in its careful construction of keyword strings. Key words such as “intercultural competence”, “culture teaching”, “College English”, “Chinese college students”, and their synonyms, were combined with Boolean operators (e.g., AND, OR) to refine the search queries and to expand or narrow the scope of the results where appropriate. The search strings were adapted for all three databases to maximize coverage and ensure consistency with the objectives of this systematic review as detailed in Table 1.

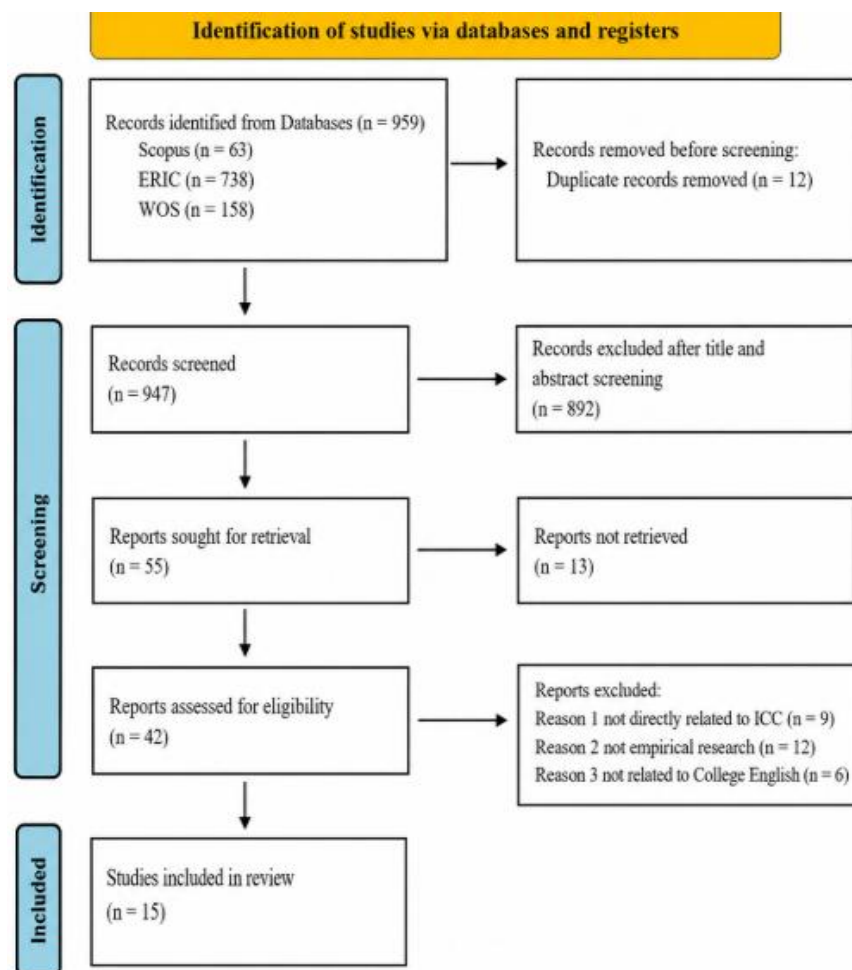


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart adapted from Page et al. (2021)

Table 1. Search string used

Database	Search strings	Limitations
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (intercultural AND competence) AND PUBYEAR > 2020 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "SOCI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "ARTS")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Higher Education") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Intercultural Competence") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Intercultural Communicative Competence") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "English As A Foreign Language (EFL)") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "English As A Foreign Language") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "EFL Context")) AND (LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "China"))	Years:2021–2025; Subject Areas: Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities; Document type: Article; Language: English; Countries: CHINA
ERIC	("intercultural competence" OR "intercultural communicative competence") AND ("College English" OR "EFL" OR "English as a Foreign Language") AND ("China" OR "Chinese higher education")	Years: 2021–2025; Peer-reviewed only; Language: English Countries: CHINA
WoS	(((((TS = "intercultural communicative competence") OR (TS = ICC)) OR (TS = "intercultural competence")) AND (((TS = "culture teaching") OR (TS = "cultural teaching")) OR (TS = "culture instruction")) OR (TS = "cultural instruction")) OR (TS = "culture integration")) AND (((TS = "college English") OR (TS = "EFL") OR (TS = "English as a foreign language")) AND ((TS = China) OR (TS = Chinese)))	Years: 2021–2025; Peer-reviewed only; Language: English Research areas: Education and Educational Research, Linguistics, and Social Sciences (Other Topics). Countries: CHINA

2.2 Screening

In total, the initial search retrieved 959 records with Scopus identifying 63 articles, ERIC retrieving 738 articles, and WOS identifying 158 articles. These records were then exported into EndNote to identify and remove duplicate entries. Screening is a critical stage in the PRISMA framework, as it ensures studies can meet the inclusion criteria, to enhance the validity and reliability of the review process (Moher et al., 2009; Page et al., 2021). The inclusion and exclusion criteria applied in this study are presented in Table 2. All the initial retrieved articles were then added into Endnote to identify duplicated records. A total of 959 records were initially identified from the selected databases. After removing 12 duplicate records, 947 records remained for the screening stage. The first phase of the selection was conducted by a dual- reviewer blind screening approach, researchers independently screened the search results by examining both the titles and abstracts based on the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, any discrepancy between reviewers were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached. As a result, 42 papers were available for full-text eligibility assessment.

Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Population	Chinese college students; College English teachers in China when directly related to culture teaching and ICC development	Participants in primary or secondary education, or on students/teachers outside Chinese higher education
Focus	Studies addressing culture teaching approaches and their influence on the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in College English education in China	Studies unrelated to culture teaching or ICC (e.g., purely linguistic or test-oriented studies without cultural components)
Time span	2021-2025	Studies published outside the time frame
Language	Publications in English or Chinese	Publications in other languages
Type of article	Journal articles	Book series, books, Book chapters, conference proceedings
Study design	Empirical studies (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods); systematic reviews directly related to ICC in College English	Opinion pieces, editorials, book reviews, or studies lacking empirical or systematic evidence

2.3 Eligibility

Following the title-and-abstract screening stage, full-text copies of all potentially relevant papers were obtained for eligibility assessment and managed through the EndNote. The full-text screening phase was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines (2020) (Page et al., 2021). The records selected from the screening stage were randomly distributed to reviewers, each full text was read against the quality criteria to decide whether the paper would be included in the final review. EndNote and Microsoft Excel were used during this phase to register decisions regarding inclusion or exclusion, enabling systematic documentation and enhancing the validity of the review process (Ouzzani et al., 2016).

Quality appraisal of the evidence is considered a fundamental stage of systematic reviews (Long, French, & Brooks, 2020). Therefore, all studies that met the eligibility criteria underwent critical appraisal to evaluate their methodological quality, credibility, and potential risk of bias. The appraisal process was guided by the relevant Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklists in Table 3, which were selected according to the methodological design of each included study (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme, 2018). The appraisal criteria focused on the clarity of research aims, appropriateness of the methodology, sampling strategy, data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations, and transparency of reporting.

Table 3. Checklist for the assessment of the quality and the reliability of the studies

Assessment Dimension	Key Questions	Option (Y/P/N)	Comments & Evidence
A. Topic & Context Relevance	1.Core Focus: Does the study address culture teaching or intercultural competence as a primary research focus rather than a peripheral topic?	Y / P / N	
	2. Context Relevance: Is the study explicitly set within the context of Chinese college English education?	Y / P / N	
B. Conceptual & Theoretical Framework	3.Does the study provide clear definitions or operationalizations of its key concepts (e.g., “culture,” “intercultural competence”)?	Y / P / N	
	4. Theoretical Framework: Does it employ or propose a clear theoretical framework for culture teaching or intercultural competence development?	Y / P / N	
C. Culture Teaching Approaches	5. Method Description: Does it specifically describe one or more culture teaching approaches/methods?	Y / P / N	
	6. Implementation Clarity: Does the study provide sufficient detail on how the intervention/approach was implemented?	Y / P / N	
	7.Innovation/Relevance: Is the approach innovative or tailored to the Chinese cultural/educational context?	Y / P / N	
D. Intercultural	8. Competence Definition: Does the study specify the particular	Y / P / N	

Competence Assessment	dimensions of intercultural competence it aims to foster or assess?	
	9. Assessment Method: Does it report on the methods/tools used to assess the effectiveness of ICC development?	Y / P / N
	10. Evidence of Effectiveness: Does it provide evidence for the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of the teaching approach?	Y / P / N
E. Research Rigor & Value	11. Method Appropriateness: Is the research design appropriate for investigating its stated research questions?	Y / P / N
	12. Implication Value: Do the findings offer valuable implications for teaching practice, curriculum design, or teacher development?	Y / P / N
Decision:	Include	Exclude
A brief justification for the decision:		

Legend: Y = Yes (the criterion is fully met); P = Partial (the criterion is partially met or unclear); N = No (the criterion is not met).

To ensure the reliability and consistency of the review process, two reviewers independently conducted the full-text screening, data extraction, and quality appraisal. Any discrepancies were discussed and resolved through consensus, and a third reviewer was consulted when necessary, following recommended practices in the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions (Version 6.5). Microsoft Excel was used to record inclusion and exclusion decisions, reasons for exclusion, and extracted researches information. All extracted data were systematically organized to facilitate analysis and synthesis, including author(s), year of publication, research context, participants, research design, culture teaching approach, ICC dimension addressed, data collection methods, major findings, and reported limitations. The outcomes of the quality appraisal informed the interpretation of findings, ensuring that conclusions were drawn cautiously and in accordance with the strength and limitations of the available evidence.

2.4 Inclusion

A total of 959 records were identified through database searching. Following the duplicate removal, 947 records were screened at the title-and-abstract level. Subsequently, 55 articles were retrieved for full-text review, with 42 assessed for eligibility. Ultimately, 15 studies met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final analysis. The findings are presented in the following sections in relation to answer four research questions.

3. Findings

The findings reveal a notable gap in how ICC is developed through culture teaching approaches in Chinese College English education. By synthesizing the included studies, this review provides an overview of teaching approaches, their contributions to ICC development, and the challenges identified in current practice. Thematic analysis is used to synthesize recurring patterns related to culture teaching approaches, ICC development, and challenges in implementation; descriptive analysis is used to present methodological characteristics of included studies, including research design, data collection methods, and participant contexts.

RQ1. What culture- teaching approaches have been applied in Chinese College English education?

A variety of approaches to teaching culture have been identified in these articles, ranging from traditional techniques such as cultural capsules and clusters (Taylor & Sorensen, 1961; Meade & Morain, 1973) to more contemporary frameworks including authentic materials and virtual exchange programs (Finkelstein & Soffer-Vital, 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). These approaches have laid the foundation for subsequent pedagogical developments. On this basis, current teaching approaches employed to foster ICC in Chinese College English education can be broadly categorized into two complementary orientations rather than mutually exclusive orientations: technology-enhanced and culturally-grounded teaching approaches (see in the Appendix 1).

First, technology-enhanced teaching approaches, which are mainly characterized by learner-centered and employ experiential pedagogical principles, indicating a prominent trend in ICC teaching (Li et al., 2023; Sun, 2025; Yang et al., 2023; Shen, 2021). These approaches incorporate digital tools and online platforms, such as synchronous classes, blogs, online forums, mobile-assisted exchanges, and AI-enabled COIL, into ICC teaching to facilitate authentic intercultural engagement (Li et al., 2023; Shen, 2021; Taskiran, 2023; Sun, 2025). Rather than depend on teacher explanation in class, students can engage ICC activities through real-time interaction, cross-cultural collaboration, and multimodal learning environments, supported by structured pedagogical scaffolding, project-based learning, and task-based interaction activities (Yang et al., 2023; Li et al., 2025). As student can expose to relatively authentic ICC environment, interact with classmates from various backgrounds, negotiate meaning, and finish group projects, theses specific teaching activities primarily enhance students' cultural knowledge, intercultural communication abilities, and skills of exploration and interaction. For instance, telecollaboration facilitates cross-cultural exchange that helps students learn about themselves and others (Yang & Samat, 2023), while AI-enabled COIL fosters collaborative intercultural learning that improves attitudes, communication skills, and cultural consciousness (Sun, 2025). Students can deeply engage in multimodal circumstances where they can observe and analyze cultural behaviors, immersive virtual environments, which can help them improve cultural comprehension (Shadiev et al., 2025).

By contrast, culturally-grounded teaching approaches are pedagogically integrated approaches that remain important within the teaching and learning process (Holmes et al., 2022; Fang, 2022; Nam et al., 2023; Liao & Li, 2023; Feng et al., 2025). These techniques integrate language and culture across cognitive, affective, behavioral, and skills-based dimensions, through task-based learning, experiential learning, and reflective activities to conduct ICC teaching in College English class (Holmes et al., 2022; Fang, 2022; Nam et al., 2023). In addition, context-sensitive instruction that incorporates local cultural values are also emphasized (Fang, 2022; Feng et al., 2025). Such

approaches not only aim to develop cultural awareness but also address learners' psychological factors, such as mindset, confidence and adaptability, which influence their engagement in ICC (Feng et al., 2025). Reflective practices, including the use of critical incidents, further support the development of higher-order intercultural abilities, such as interpretation, negotiation of meaning, and symbolic competence (Liao, 2024; Shen, 2021).

In general, technology-enhanced teaching approaches and culturally grounded pedagogical approaches can contribute to students' ICC development but in different ways. In order to support students' development of cultural knowledge, intercultural communication skills, and abilities of discovery and interaction, technology-enhanced techniques primarily increase student' motivation for intercultural communication and interaction (Sun, 2025; Yang & Samat, 2023). On the other hand, according to Liao (2023) and Qian (2023), culturally grounded approaches lay more emphasis on interpretation, reflection, and cultural meaning-making, which are deeply contribute to develop students' critical cultural awareness, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, and understanding of oneself and others. Therefore, although culturally based approaches offer deeper cultural reflection, technology-enhanced alternatives give wider intercultural access to participate ICC activities.

RQ 2: How do different teaching approaches contribute to the development of intercultural communicative competence?

ICC is widely regarded as a key outcome of internationalization in higher education, since it equips students with the ability to engage effectively with diverse cultural perspectives and practices (Deardorff, 2006). ICC is conceptualised as a set of attitudes, knowledge and skills inseparable for modern professionals and citizens who work or live in multicultural contexts to interact appropriately and effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds (Byram 2020; Deardorff 2006; Spitzberg & Changnon 2009). These dimensions are considered essential for evaluating an individual's cultural sensitivity and capacity to adapt different intercultural situations (Deardorff, 2006; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Peng & Wu, 2016; Fantini, 2020). This review reveals past studies how these teaching approaches contribute to students' ICC development which aligns with Byram's ICC framework (2008), which pay more attention to learners' indigenous cultural identity, therefore, as a vital pedagogical scaffolding to cultivate students' ICC development in Chinese higher education.

Furthermore, English as a lingua franca has become a major medium through which speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds communicate with others in global contexts (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011). From this perspective, English is no longer belongs to native-speaker cultures, but functions as a shared communicative resource for negotiating meaning, identity, and cultural understanding across contexts (Baker, 2015; Fang, 2022). This goal is also consistent with *the College English Teaching Guidelines (2020 Edition)*, which provides an important basis for Chinese universities to design College English curricula, teaching practices, and assessment, and emphasizes the role of College English in developing students' language use and intercultural communication competence (National College Foreign Language Teaching Advisory Committee, 2020), which supported by recent studies showing that knowledge of Chinese language and culture, local cultural identity, mindset, and intercultural awareness play important roles in Chinese learners' ICC development (Feng et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2023; Peng & Wu, 2016). Therefore, in the Chinese context, ICC should be understood as a context-sensitive competence that enables learners to participate in global dialogue while maintaining cultural awareness and local cultural identity.

These findings suggest that Chinese college students' ICC development mainly developed from three interconnected dimensions, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral (Feng et al., 2025; Liao & Li, 2023; Li et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023; Sun, 2025; Yang & Samat, 2023). In terms of the cognitive dimension, reviewed studies emphasize the use of diverse teaching approaches and instructional activities to facilitate students' understanding of diverse cultures, including both self and other cultural knowledge, such as cultural norms, values, and practices in both local and global contexts (Li et al., 2023; Sun, 2025; Liu et al., 2025). Meanwhile, cultivating their ability to compare cultures and interpret cultural meanings critically (Fang, 2022; Shadiev et al., 2025).

The affective dimension is primarily fostered through interactive, experiential, and reflective teaching approaches, which can create opportunities for learners to engage with different cultural activities. For example, activities such as intercultural exchanges, reflective journaling, and collaborative tasks encourage learners to develop openness, empathy, and tolerance attitude toward different cultures. These interaction- and reflection-based activities can help reduce students' anxiety and enhance intercultural understanding of diverse cultures to participate in intercultural communication (Taskiran, 2023; Nam et al., 2023; Feng et al., 2025). Moreover, In the Chinese context, this affective dimension is also linked to learners' mindset, confidence, and motivation, which influence their sustained participation in intercultural communication (Feng et al., 2025).

The behavioral and skills dimension is mainly developed through task-based, English corners, interaction-driven, and experiential learning approaches, which provide learners with authentic opportunities to practice intercultural communication skills. Activities such as online interaction, telecollaboration, and project-based tasks enable students to develop communicative skills, oral skills, and the capacity to interpret culture meaning across cultural contexts (Shen, 2021; Yang et al., 2023; Nam et al., 2023; Li et al., 2025). These approaches emphasize active participation and real-time communication, thereby enhancing learners' ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in an intercultural context.

In addition, intercultural awareness and critical cultural consciousness are promoted through reflective and critical pedagogical approaches, such as the use of critical incidents, comparative cultural analysis, and reflective discussion, which can encourage learners to reflect their cultural beliefs, recognize similarities and differences, and develop critical perspectives on cultural generalizations (Holmes et al., 2022;

Liao, 2024). Through guided reflection and analytical tasks, learners are able to reconstruct their understanding of culture and develop deeper intercultural awareness, which is essential for meaningful intercultural communication.

These findings suggest that ICC development is a multidimensional and dynamic process, in which different teaching approaches contribute to student' ICC development. While most approaches effectively address knowledge, attitudes, and skills, deeper dimensions such as critical awareness and symbolic competence are more likely to be fostered through reflective and experiential learning, which highlights the need for a balanced pedagogical design that integrates cognitive, affective, and critical components of intercultural learning.

RQ 3: What challenges have been identified in current ICC teaching practices?

Table 4. Challenges of Current ICC Teaching Practice

Dimension	Challenges	References
Pedagogical	Insufficient instructional design	Li et al. (2023); Liao & Li (2023); Shadiev et al. (2025); Shen (2021); (2024); Li et al. (2025)
	Marginalization of ICC	Liao(2024); Shen (2021); Qian (2024)
	Lack of structured guidance in informal learning (e.g., English Corner);	Nam et al. (2023)
	Traditional methods ineffective	Li et al. (2023); Shadiev et al. (2025);Fang (2022); Qian (2024)
	Lack of teaching models	Liao & Li (2023); Shen (2021);Qian (2024)
	Poor interaction design	Shadiev et al. (2025); Taskiran (2023); Li et al. (2025)
	Outdated materials; No ICC curriculum	Fang (2022); Qian (2024)
Teacher	Theory–practice gap	Liao & Li (2023); Qian (2024)
	Low intercultural competence	Jin (2021); Fang (2022)
	Fragmented teaching	Liao & Li (2023); Fang (2022)
	Cultural and linguistic power imbalance between teachers and students	Nam et al. (2023)
	Role transition difficulty	Liao & Li (2023);
	Limited intercultural knowledge	Fang (2022);Qian (2024)
Learner	Low awareness	Feng et al. (2025); Nam et al. (2023); Fang (2022)
	Psychological barriers	Feng et al. (2025); Taskiran (2023);
	Low motivation	Taskiran (2023); Yang & Samat (2023); Fang (2022)
	Uneven skills	Li et al. (2023); Yang & Samat (2023); Nam et al. (2023)
	Low autonomy	Shen (2021); Nam et al. (2023);Qian (2024); Li et al. (2025)
	Low cultural knowledge	Feng et al. (2025); Nam et al. (2023);Qian (2024)
	Language limits ICC	Feng et al. (2025);
	Weak pragmatic competence	Nam et al. (2023)
	Low technology support	Li et al. (2023); Shadiev et al. (2025); Taskiran (2023)
	High technology dependence	Taskiran (2023); Yang & Samat (2023)
Technological	Platform complexity	Shen (2021)
	Lack immersion; unstable tech (VR); learning burden; digital divide; unclear AI role	Liu et al. (2025); Shadiev et al. (2025); Sun (2025)

Although ICC has received increasing attention in recent research, the synthesis indicates that challenges in current teaching practices can be broadly categorized into pedagogical, teacher-related, learner-related, and technological dimensions (see in Table 4). From a pedagogical perspective, insufficient instructional design remains a central issue, along with the marginalization of intercultural objectives within language-focused curricula (Shen, 2021; Li et al., 2023; Liao & Li, 2023; Qian, 2024). The lack of structured teaching models and reliance on traditional, knowledge-transmission approaches further lead to fragmented practices and limited effectiveness in developing ICC beyond cultural knowledge, particularly in relation to intercultural attitudes, skill, and awareness (Fang, 2022; Shadiev et al., 2025). Although informal learning activities may support ICC teaching, their impact is often constrained by the absence of systematic guidance (Nam et al., 2023).

Teacher-related challenges also play a significant role, particularly the gap between theoretical understanding and teaching practice, as well as teachers limited intercultural competence and difficulties in adopting facilitators to support students' learning (Fang, 2022; Liao & Li, 2023; Qian, 2024). In addition, imbalances in classroom dynamics may restrict meaningful interaction (Nam et al., 2023). From the learner perspective, low intercultural awareness, psychological barriers, and limited motivation and autonomy hinder engagement in ICC development (Yang & Samat, 2023; Taskiran, 2023; Feng et al., 2025), while uneven skills and insufficient language proficiency further constrain effective communication (Li et al., 2023; Nam et al., 2023). Technological factors add another layer of complexity, as limited support, platform complexity, and overreliance on digital tools may reduce effectiveness (Shen, 2021; Taskiran, 2023; Shadiev et al., 2025). Issues such as lack of immersion, unstable conditions, and the digital divide further limit equitable access and meaningful participation in intercultural learning (Liu et al., 2025; Sun, 2025).

RQ 4: What research methods and designs have been commonly used in studies on culture teaching and ICC development in Chinese College English education?

Table 5. Frequencies of Research Designs and Data Collection Methods

Category	Type	Frequency
Research Design	Mixed -methods	6
	Qualitative	5
	Quantitative	3
	Action research	1
Data Collection Methods	Interview	12
	Questionnaire	10
	Reflective journal	6
	Observation	4
	Others (Filed notes, Teaching documents, video, photos, focus group interview)	4
	Test (pre-post)	2

An analysis of the frequencies of research designs and data collection methods across the 15 studies reveals a predominant use of mixed-methods and qualitative approaches, along with data collection mainly unitized interviews and questionnaires, as presented in table 5. This review indicates a clear preference for mixed-methods (40%), while 33.33% researches employed qualitative approaches, with only 3 studies adopting quantitative design (20%) among the 15 studies. This distribution reflects the complex and multidimensional nature of ICC, which requires both in-depth contextual understanding and, in some cases, complementary quantitative validation (Liao & Li, 2023; Feng et al., 2025; Shadiev et al., 2025).

These designs also reveal methodological characteristics; qualitative approaches are widely employed due to their suitability for exploring participants' perceptions and intercultural experiences. In particular, interviews, including semi-structured, focus group interviews and classroom observations are the most frequently used in data collection methods (Fang, 2022; Qian, 2024). Therefore, a range of qualitative data sources, such as field notes, reflective journals, teaching documents, and multimedia records (e.g., photos and video clips), are used to capture rich contextual and interactional data (Holmes et al., 2022; Nam et al., 2023; Liao & Li, 2023). However, their findings are often context -specific and difficult to generalize (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Fang, 2022; Holmes et al., 2022; Nam et al., 2023; Qian, 2024). In contrast, quantitative approaches remain limited, with questionnaire surveys as the primary method for data collection (Li et al., 2025). These studies tend to focus on examining relationships among variables rather than capturing the dynamic and context-dependent processes of ICC development. Conducting quantitative research lies in larger samples and statistical analysis, but their reliance on self-reported questionnaires may limit the depth of interpretation. Mixed-method studies typically combine questionnaires with interviews or reflective data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of ICC development (Yang & Samat, 2023; Liu et al., 2025; Sun, 2025). This triangulation enhances the robustness of findings by addressing the multidimensional nature of intercultural learning (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Although the included studies cannot directly comparable due to its differences in participants, instruments, intervention designs, and learning contexts. However, the intervention-based studies offered useful evidence for examining how various types of pedagogical practices contributed to ICC development. Across these studies, ICC development was examined through structured pedagogical interventions, including online ICC training, telecollaboration, SVVR-supported learning, and AI-enabled COIL. However, the findings suggest that intervention duration alone cannot adequately explain learning outcomes (Shen, 2021; Shadiev et al., 2025; Sun, 2025; Yang & Abdul Samat, 2023). Six weeks telecollaboration project and eight weeks online ICC training model also reported positive changes in learners' ICC, the improvements mainly exposed in knowledge and skills dimensions (Shen, 2021; Yang & Abdul Samat, 2023). By contrast, longer and more systematically structured interventions, such as the ten-week SVVR programme and the twelve-week AI-enabled COIL programme, reported stronger effects on higher-order ICC dimensions, including attitudes, awareness, intercultural communication skills, and intercultural consciousness (Shadiev et al., 2025; Sun, 2025). In general, these findings suggest that deeper ICC development depends not only on intervention duration, but also on the quality of pedagogical design, such as sustained interaction, instructional scaffolding, technological mediation, and structured reflection appear as the key conditions for developing higher-order ICC dimensions.

Besides, learner own contexts are methodologically important and these contextual differences further affect the development of ICC. Reviewed studies involved different participant groups, including English majors, non-English majors, general university students, Chinese EFL teachers, and students in elite language universities (Liao & Li, 2023; Nam et al., 2023; Qian, 2023; Sun, 2025; Yang & Abdul Samat, 2023), which imply that learners' language proficiency, prior intercultural exposure, institutional resources, and access to international communication opportunities may shape learners' ICC development.

4. Discussion

This section discusses the findings through perspectives of two ICC frameworks: Byram's (2014) model of intercultural communicative competence and Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence. Byram (2014) conceptualises ICC as a multidimensional construct involving attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. Deardorff (2006) further emphasizes that intercultural competence develops through an ongoing process beginning with openness and respect, progressing through knowledge and skills, and leading to intercultural outcomes. These frameworks help explain how ICC is developed through various approaches and these approaches how to contribute to students' ICC development, to identify the

challenges associated with integrating ICC into College English education, and the methodological trends in existing ICC research in Chinese College English education.

The findings indicate a gradual shift in cultural teaching approaches in Chinese College English education from traditional knowledge-based models toward more interactive, experiential, and technology-enhanced pedagogies (Qian, 2024; Fang, 2022; Liao & Li, 2023). This trend reflects a broader reconceptualization of culture as a dynamic process of meaning-making and intercultural engagement rather than static knowledge (Holmes et al., 2022; Liao, 2024), aligning with Byram (2014) and Deardorff's (2006) framework which emphasizes shifting to from mere cultural knowledge (*savoir*) to dynamic intercultural attitudes (*savoir être*). In particular, the increasing use of technology-enhanced approaches, such as telecollaboration and AI-supported learning, has expanded opportunities for authentic intercultural interaction beyond the classroom (Li et al., 2023; Shen, 2021; Taskiran, 2023; Sun, 2025). According to Byram (2014), these digital platforms serve as vital spaces for developing the skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*); however, their effectiveness depends on appropriate pedagogical design, including structured tasks and guided interaction (Taskiran, 2023; Yang & Samat, 2023), which are essential to interpret external interaction to Deardorff's "desired internal outcomes" (empathy and cognitive flexibility). Meanwhile, experiential and interaction-based approaches remain essential for promoting deeper-level intercultural understanding, while the growing integration of local cultural content reflects a shift toward more context-sensitive and balanced pedagogy (Liao, 2024; Holmes et al., 2022; Nam et al., 2023; Qian, 2024). Overall, these approaches are increasingly integrated in practice, highlighting the importance of aligning technology, interaction, and reflection within coherent instructional design to support all dimensions of ICC development effectively (Li et al., 2023; Liao & Li, 2023; Sun, 2025; Shen, 2021).

Synthesizing these studies reveals that different teaching approaches contribute to ICC development in complementary ways, reflecting its multidimensional nature. These approaches target different dimensions, such as knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness – coordinating with Byram's (2014) distinct Savoirs (knowledge, skills, attitudes, and critical awareness)- and collectively support students' ICC development. Interaction-based and technology-enhanced approaches, including online intercultural exchange, telecollaborative learning, and AI-supported interaction, play a central role in promoting learners' skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*) by providing authentic opportunities for students to engage in intercultural interaction (Li et al., 2023; Taskiran, 2023; Sun, 2025). However, their effectiveness depends on the quality of interaction and the extent of pedagogical scaffolding. In contrast, experiential and reflective approaches are particularly effective in fostering deeper levels of ICC, particularly critical cultural awareness (*savoirs' engager*) and the skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), as they encourage learners to reflect on intercultural experiences (Liao, 2024; Holmes et al., 2022). In addition, culturally grounded and interaction-based teaching practices contribute to learners' affective development by reducing anxiety and enhancing confidence and respect toward cultural diversity (Feng et al., 2025; Nam et al., 2023; Fang, 2022). Furthermore, the integration of local cultural content further strengthens students' cultural identity and their ability to articulate local meanings in intercultural communication (Qian, 2024; Fang, 2022). Overall, the findings suggest that no single approach is sufficient; instead, integrated pedagogical designs that combine interaction, reflection, and cultural contextualization are more effective in improving the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of ICC. At the same time, technology-enhanced approaches may introduce challenges such as increased cognitive load and digital inequality, highlighting the need for comprehensive pedagogical alignment and balanced implementation.

Findings show that challenges in current ICC teaching are multifaceted, encompassing pedagogical, teacher-related, learner-related, and technological dimensions. From a pedagogical perspective, the continued dominance of language-centered instruction and the marginalization of intercultural components indicate a lack of coherent instructional design and teaching syllabus, resulting in fragmented practices that constrain systematic ICC development (Li et al., 2023; Liao & Li, 2023; Shen, 2021; Qian, 2024). From teachers' perspective, a prominent theory-practice gap, limited intercultural competence, and insufficient pedagogical knowledge hinder effective ICC implementation, further reinforced by traditional linguistics-oriented practices (Liao & Li, 2023; Fang, 2022; Nam et al., 2023). Learner-related challenges, including low intercultural awareness, psychological barriers, limited motivation, and insufficient language proficiency, also restrict meaningful participation in intercultural communication, highlighting the importance of affective readiness and learner agency in activating Deardorff's "requisite attitudes" and Byram's *savoir être* (Feng et al., 2025; Taskiran, 2023; Yang & Samat, 2023). Meanwhile, although digital technologies and AI create new opportunities for intercultural interaction, their effectiveness is constrained by technical limitations, platform complexity, overreliance on technology, and issues such as cognitive load and the digital divide (Shadiev et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025; Sun, 2025). All these findings suggest that ICC teaching challenges are rooted not only in individual or technical factors but also in broader structural and pedagogical conditions, underscoring the need for integrated approaches that align curriculum design, teacher development, learner support, and technology use to effectively support ICC teaching in Chinese college English education.

A prominent trend in ICC research within Chinese College English education is the widespread use of mixed-methods and qualitative designs, with relatively limited reliance on purely quantitative approaches (Liao & Li, 2023; Shadiev et al., 2025; Yang & Samat, 2023; Sun, 2025). Reflecting an increasing recognition of the need to capture the complexity of ICC development through methodological triangulation. Qualitative approaches are frequently employed to explore learners' intercultural experiences and meaning-making processes (Feng et al., 2025; Taskiran, 2023; Nam et al., 2023; Qian, 2024), while quantitative studies tend to focus on examining relationships among variables and learning outcomes (Li et al., 2025). In terms of data collection, questionnaires and interviews are the most commonly used instruments, often combined to enhance validity, while reflective journals and contextualized data sources such as observations and multimedia records

provide additional insights into learners' cognitive and affective development (Shen, 2021; Liao, 2024; Holmes et al., 2022). However, the findings reveal several methodological limitations, including an overreliance on questionnaire for self-reported data, limited use of longitudinal and observational designs, and insufficient integration of qualitative and quantitative data, which typically reflects static cultural knowledge (*savoir*) rather than the dynamic, behavioral outcomes of interaction skills (*savoir apprendre/faire*) defined by Deardorff and Byram (Li et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2025; Shen, 2021). These issues suggest that, despite increasing methodological diversity, the integration of approaches remains underdeveloped. Future research should adopt more balanced and integrative designs, expanding both the depth and breadth of inquiry by incorporating longitudinal methods, informative assessment, and deeper qualitative investigation, in order to more comprehensively capture the dynamic, process-oriented evolution of ICC as conceptualized in Byram's (2014) and Deardorff's (2006) models.

5. Conclusion

Reviewed findings of these studies suggests a gradual movement from knowledge-based culture teaching toward more interactive, experiential, reflective, and technology-enhanced approaches. Interpreted findings through established ICC frameworks, particularly Byram's (2014) multidimensional model and Deardorff's (2006) process-oriented model, these approaches appear to support different dimensions of ICC, including intercultural knowledge, interactional skills, interpretive competence, awareness, and learner engagement (Byram, 2014; Deardorff, 2006).

The synthesis indicates that technology-enhanced approaches, such as telecollaboration, online intercultural exchange, AI-enabled COIL, and virtual learning environments, may expand opportunities for intercultural interaction beyond the physical classroom (Shadiev et al., 2025; Shen, 2021; Sun, 2025; Taskiran, 2023; Yang & Abdul Samat, 2023). Experiential and reflective approaches, including critical incidents, interpretive tasks, and reflective journals, appear to support deeper intercultural learning by encouraging students to examine cultural meanings, compare perspectives, and reflect on intercultural experiences (Holmes et al., 2022; Liao, 2024). In addition, the integration of Chinese local cultural content possibly strengthen learners' cultural self-awareness and their ability to express Chinese cultural meanings in English (Fang, 2022; Nam et al., 2023; Qian, 2024). However, the evidence also suggests that ICC dimensions are not equally developed across existing studies. While intercultural knowledge, communication skills, confidence, and engagement are frequently reported, sustained development in attitudes and critical cultural awareness remains less systematically demonstrated. Besides, this review also identifies several persistent challenges in ICC teaching. These include fragmented integration of culture into language instruction, limited instructional design, insufficient teacher preparation, learner-related constraints, and uneven use of technology (Fang, 2022; Liao & Li, 2023; Qian, 2024; Shadiev et al., 2025; Sun, 2025). These challenges suggest that ICC development cannot be achieved through isolated cultural activities or technological tools alone. Instead, effective ICC teaching requires coherent alignment among curriculum objectives, classroom tasks, intercultural interaction, reflective activities, assessment methods, and teacher support.

The findings have practical implications for curriculum designer, teacher development, and technology use in teaching. For curriculum designer, ICC should be embedded as an explicit learning objective in College English courses rather than treated as an occasional cultural supplement. Teaching activities should be aligned with key ICC dimensions, including knowledge, attitudes, interpretive skills, interactional skills, and critical cultural awareness. In teaching practice, culture teaching should include not only the introduction of cultural facts, but also structured comparison, interpretation, reflection, and opportunities for students to articulate Chinese cultural meanings in English. Assessment should also move beyond self-reported competence and include reflective journals, intercultural portfolios, project-based tasks, and performance-based activities. For teacher development, the review suggests the need for more systematic professional training in both ICC theory and pedagogical implementation. Teachers need professional support in translating ICC frameworks into teachable classroom practices, including intercultural task design, reflective discussion, integration of local and target cultural content, and assessment of students' intercultural learning. Collaborative lesson planning, peer observation, and teaching workshops may help teachers move from fragmented culture teaching toward more coherent ICC-oriented instruction. For technology use teaching, digital tools should be adopted as useful pedagogical resources. Telecollaboration, AI-supported learning, and VR-based environments may provide valuable opportunities for intercultural engagement, but their effectiveness depends on clear learning goals, learner preparation, structured interaction, technological accessibility, and post-task reflection. Therefore, technology-enhanced ICC activities should be carefully designed to support meaningful intercultural learning rather than merely increasing digital exposure.

This review has several limitations. First, it was limited to three databases, namely Scopus, ERIC, and Web of Science, and included only English-language studies published between 2021 and 2025. Relevant Chinese-language studies, dissertations, conference papers, and other forms of literature have been excluded. Second, the review was based on a relatively small number of included studies, and the findings were influenced by variations in research design, sample size, participant groups, intervention duration, data collection methods, and reporting quality. Third, many included studies relied heavily on self-reported questionnaires or interview data, which may not fully capture learners' actual intercultural performance or long-term ICC development. Finally, because the review focused specifically on Chinese College English education, the findings should be applied to other educational, linguistic, or cultural contexts with caution.

Future research should address these limitations through more rigorous and context-sensitive designs. Future reviews could expand the evidence base by including Chinese-language databases, grey literature, and a wider range of publication types. Empirical studies should make greater use of longitudinal designs to examine whether reported ICC gains are sustained over time. More classroom observation, discourse analysis, portfolio assessment, and performance-based assessment are also needed to capture how ICC is enacted in real communicative and pedagogical contexts. In addition, future studies should compare different learner groups, institutional settings, course

types, and proficiency levels to clarify how contextual conditions shape ICC development. Where the evidence base becomes sufficiently large and methodologically comparable, future reviews may also consider deeper cross-study synthesis or meta-analysis to strengthen the analytical depth and methodological rigour of ICC research in Chinese College English education.

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Author contributions

Hongyan Liao was responsible for the conceptualization of the study, literature search, data screening, data extraction, data analysis, and drafting of the manuscript.

Dr. Hanita was responsible for research design and revising

DR. Ainil was responsible for manuscript revising.

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Declaration of the Use of AI

During the preparation of this manuscript, ChatGPT (GPT-5.5 Thinking, OpenAI) and Grammarly were used solely for language-related support, including grammar checking, translation, and language polishing. These tools were not used to generate the research ideas, design the study, collect or analyse data, interpret the findings, or produce the academic arguments of the manuscript. All AI-assisted outputs were carefully reviewed, revised, and verified by the authors, who take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the manuscript.

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Appendix 1

Culture Teaching Approaches

Reference	Teaching approaches	Specific Instructional Activities	ICC Outcomes
Li et al. (2023)	On line teaching (Web2.0)	Online intercultural communication; task-based activities; digital tool use	Possess an open communication attitude, a high level of intercultural communication knowledge, and essential intercultural communication skills
Liao & Li(2023)	Intercultural integrated teaching	Topic-based discussion; reflective learning; task-based interaction	Improve student's language skills Be more confident to express themselves Find more interesting materials Cultivate students' cultural sensitivity and tolerance
Feng et al. (2025)	ICC-informed teaching	Combine language practice with reducing psychological barriers Foster adaptive cultural mindset through reflection on misunderstandings Integrate Chinese cultural values (e.g., guanxi, face) into learning tasks Facilitate direct intercultural interaction (e.g., foreign instructors, English Corner)	Engage more actively with people from different cultures; An open-minded and respectful attitude toward cultural differences Reduced anxiety leads to greater tolerance and appreciation of cultural differences
Sun (2025)	AI-enabled Collaborative Online International Learning.	Implement AI-enabled COIL virtual collaborative projects Facilitate cross-national teamwork with Malaysian peers Use AI tools to support task completion and communication	Intercultural Consciousness:From "cultural blindness" to nuanced sensitivity. Proactive adaptation and strategic problem-solving. From stereotypes to open-mindedness. Immersive acquisition of deep cultural insights.
Shadiev et al., 2025	Immersive & experiential learning	VR-based learning; collaborative tasks; reflective activities	Comprehend deeper cultural meanings and establish cultural connections, intercultural skills are enhanced Enhance information assimilation and intercultural knowledge acquisition Ability to compare home and target cultures Critical awareness of cultural generalization Adapt behavior in intercultural contexts
Yang et.al (2023)	Online Telecollaborative Learning with a Task-Based Design	Online interaction; discussion; reflective journaling	Learn to respect; improve English skills; Reflective Self-Cultural Knowledge,absorb some new cultural knowledge; Use AI tools to show politeness and try not to offend them Turned culture shock into cultural understanding
Liao (2024)	Critical intercultural incident	Document past critical intercultural incidents Read and analyze incidents Discuss incidents in groups Reflect on and interpret incidents Use incidents to foster symbolic competence	Be more confident to address intercultural conflict and challenges; Diverse Intercultural Perspectives; Reflective Self-reconstruction

Taskiran,A. (2023).	Online Intercultural Exchange	Students engaged in real-time intercultural communication with foreign peers Used mobile/online platforms for interaction Focused on authentic communication tasks Shared cultural perspectives and experiences Participated in discussion-based exchanges	Showing empathy, respect Understanding each other Realizing similarities Helps eliminate misinformation Helps increase cultural awareness Enhances communication skills with foreigners Realizing similarities and differences
Holmes et al. (2022)	Experiential teaching	Reflective learning Dialogic learning Task-based activities	ICC development is a dynamic process ; Enhances students' communication skills, but more importantly, fosters their critical cultural awareness.
Shen, L. (2021)	Online ICC training model	Multimodal learning; online interaction; reflective tasks	Foster openness and intercultural sensitivity Acquire cultural and contextual understanding Interact and mediating in online intercultural contexts Reflect on and evaluating cultural differences Engage in online intercultural communication
Liu et al. (2025)	Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE)	Self-directed learning; digital content engagement	Acquire intercultural knowledge of English Develop openness and curiosity Enhance ability to understand cultural differences foster competence for successful intercultural communication Leverage knowledge of Chinese language and culture Highlight role of intercultural awareness in ICC
Fang (2022)	Textbook-driven cultural teaching approach; Comparative culture teaching approach; Supplementary-material-supported teaching approach	comparative cultural analysis tasks classroom-based intercultural discussion learner-generated cultural sharing integration of local cultural content textbook-driven culture instruction	Develop openness to cultural differences; Acquire knowledge of different cultures; Understand cultural norms and practices; Reflect on cultural assumptions and biases Engage in authentic intercultural communication.
Nam et al. (2023)	English corner ((informal, extracurricular)	cultural events and social activities such as basic language training, films, and lessons on customs Thematic intercultural discussions; Cultural exchange & sharing; Speaking practice (oral English articulation)	Foster intercultural openness; Enhance cultural knowledge of both local and global contexts; Develop essential skills for interpreting and relating cultural differences
Qian (2024)	Lecture-based; Comparison and contrast	Audio, video clips and photos, questions and answers (Q&A);discussion or debate, oral presentation, role plays and dubbing	Develop awareness; show openness; respect diversity; reflect on identity; Acquire knowledge; understand contexts; interpret meanings; Communicate effectively; compare cultures; negotiate meaning
Li et al. (2025)	Interaction-based intercultural learning / Meaningful intercultural engagement / Depth-oriented intercultural interaction	Intercultural communication tasks; meaning-focused interaction; reflective intercultural journal; collaborative intercultural tasks; sustained intercultural engagement	Foster openness toward cultural diversity; Develop cultural knowledge; Enhance intercultural communication skills; Promote critical cultural awareness