



Assessing Intercultural Competence through Situational Judgement Tests: Reports from a Course in Japan

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Abstract

Intercultural competence is a central feature of intercultural communication education, as graduates require such abilities in globalized workplaces. Like other university courses, teachers need to assess whether students have acquired effective intercultural skills (i.e., knowledge, skills, and attitudes). Previous research has shown that there is not one holistic way to account for a student's intercultural competence. Instead, researchers have advocated for the use of a variety of measures such as quizzes, interactional tasks, and surveys to determine a student's intercultural development in a classroom context. As a result, in this study, participants' ($n=48$) responses to situational judgement tests are explored. Specifically, participants responded to three workplace videos that depicted intercultural issues. These issues included (1) misperceptions of time, (2) unawareness of appropriate language and communicative behaviour in the workplace, and (3) culturally specific non-verbal communication. Overall, the results showed that participants can articulate an awareness of various intercultural concepts prompted by the videos. Furthermore, participants were able to demonstrate intercultural competence by observing and reflecting on various issues in the workplace. However, the qualitative analysis revealed that participants' reports are often inconsistent and varied in terms of complexity. In addition, grading the assessment is time-consuming and additional rubrics and raters may be required to accurately evaluate student reports. Despite these challenges, the study demonstrates that situational judgement tests are an effective tool for assessing students' intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Using authentic materials can also be a beneficial tool, particularly in culturally homogenous EMI classrooms.

Keywords: Authentic assessment, Classroom practice, EMI, Intercultural education, Qualitative analysis