

Chinese College Students' Intercultural Competence and Culture Learning Through Telecollaboration

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Abstract : Fostering the development of intercultural (communicative) competence (IC) is one way to equip our students with the linguistic and cultural skills to communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, particularly English majors who are most likely to encounter multicultural work environments in the future. The purpose of this study is to compare the English majors' intercultural competence in terms of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects before and after a ten-week telecollaboration program between 23 English majors at a Chinese university and 23 American students enrolled in a Chinese class at an American university, and analyze their development during the program. The results indicate that subjects' cognitive, affective, and behavioral perceptions of IC improved significantly over time. In addition, the program had significant effects on the participants' "Interaction Confidence," "Interaction Engagement," and "Interaction Enjoyment" - three components of intercultural sensitivity - as well as their overall intercultural effectiveness (except for "Message Skills"). With the widespread use of the internet, this type of online cultural exchange has a promising future, as suggested by the findings of the current study.

Keywords : intercultural competence, English majors, computer-mediated communication, telecollaboration

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