

## Enhancing Intercultural Competencies Through Digital Integration in South Africa

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**Abstract :** In higher education, particularly within South African universities engaged in regional and global collaborations, the integration of intercultural competencies into teaching, learning, and assessment is essential for student success. Intercultural competencies and the digital platform are intertwined in the fabric of teaching, learning, and assessments for student success in higher education. These are integral to virtual learning and exchange within higher education, which are expected to develop these competencies. However, this is not always the case because these are not always explicitly integrated into the academic agenda. Despite the prevalence of international students and exchange programmes, there is often a lack of deliberate integration of these competencies into academic agendas, even for South African students from different cultural, ethnic and language groups. This research addresses this gap by examining the impact of infusing intercultural activities into both face-to-face and digital learning platforms. Adopting an intersectional perspective, the study recognizes how social identities interact to shape individuals' self-perceptions and experiences in a university. Methodologically, this study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to assess the effectiveness of integrating intercultural competencies into digital platforms. Surveys administered to students and faculty measure changes in intercultural skills and attitudes before and after the implementation of targeted interventions. In-depth interviews with participants will provide further insights into the qualitative aspects of these changes, including their experiences and perceptions of the integration process. The research evaluates whether the strategic integration of intercultural competencies into digital platforms enhances students' intercultural skills and social justice awareness. The findings provide valuable insights for higher education academics and internationalization practitioners seeking to develop effective strategies for cultivating intercultural competencies among students.

**Keywords :** digital platform, higher education, intercultural competencies, interventions

**Conference Title :** ICHE 2025 : International Conference on Higher Education

**Conference Location :** Istanbul, Türkiye

**Conference Dates :** August 16-17, 2025