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The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States.

The purpose of this study was to determine a definition and appropriate assessment methods of intercultural competence as agreed upon by a panel of nationally-known intercultural experts. This information was validated by a sample of higher education administrators and can be used by administrators in identifying and assessing intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization efforts.

The process and procedures used to develop and validate this information were a 3-round Delphi technique involving the intercultural experts, along with an institutional questionnaire to higher education administrators involved in internationalization efforts.

The Delphi technique is a reiterative, interactive process between [a](#) researcher and a panel of experts, often with the goal of reaching consensus among panelists. Three rounds of questions were communicated to the panel through the use of electronic mail. Experts generated and submitted definitions of intercultural competence, refined those definitions, and reached some agreement on key elements of intercultural competence and appropriate assessment methods. In addition, higher education administrators participated in the final round of the Delphi to indicate their acceptance or rejection of the data developed by the intercultural experts.

Conclusions made from this study include elements of intercultural competence and assessment methods upon which both the intercultural experts and administrators agreed. Primary findings include a preference for a general definition of intercultural competence among both experts and administrators. Furthermore, the definition of intercultural competence continues to evolve as scholars refine the term through on-going research. Both groups agreed it is possible to assess intercultural competence in varying degrees and in so doing, that it is best to use a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to assess intercultural competence, including observation, interviews, and judgment by self and others. Two graphic models of intercultural competence are presented based on the findings of the study.