



## DIDACTIC OPPORTUNITIES OF THE AXIOLOGICAL (VALUES-BASED) APPROACH IN DEVELOPING ETHNOCULTURAL COMPETENCE

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### ABSTRACT

The axiological approach positions values as the core regulator of educational goals, content selection, pedagogical interaction, and assessment. In the context of ethnocultural competence, this approach is especially productive because competent ethnocultural interaction depends not only on cultural knowledge and communication skills but also on ethically grounded orientations such as respect for human dignity, recognition of cultural plurality, and responsibility in representing others. This thesis provides a conceptual analysis of the didactic opportunities of a values-based approach for higher education. It argues that axiological design makes ethnocultural competence teachable and assessable by linking students' identity reflection and moral reasoning with observable dialogic behavior in culturally sensitive situations. The paper proposes a coherent instructional logic in which value internalization is supported by meaning-making tasks, dialogic learning, case-based moral dilemmas, and reflective assessment practices. The analysis shows that the axiological approach can prevent two typical distortions in ethnocultural education: reducing competence to folklore knowledge and reducing tolerance to declarative slogans. Didactic implications include curriculum mapping of value outcomes, creating psychologically safe learning environments for identity exploration, and building formative assessment systems that evaluate not only correctness but ethical justification and communicative appropriateness.

**KEYWORDS:** Axiological approach; values education; ethnocultural competence; tolerance; identity reflection; dialogic pedagogy.

### INTRODUCTION

Ethnocultural competence has become a key educational outcome in higher education because students increasingly learn and work in culturally diverse environments where misunderstanding can escalate into exclusion, conflict, or academic disengagement. While educational programs often introduce ethnocultural topics through historical or folkloric content, students' real difficulties typically occur in interaction, when cultural meanings are ambiguous, emotions are activated, and ethical judgments must be made quickly. This gap between content knowledge and situational action suggests that ethnocultural competence cannot be reduced to information about traditions; it also requires a stable value-based orientation that guides interpretation and behavior.

The axiological approach offers a relevant pedagogical lens because it treats education as a value-oriented practice. In this perspective, values define what is considered meaningful, desirable, and ethically acceptable in learning outcomes and social relations. For ethnocultural competence, values such as respect, justice, empathy, dignity, and recognition of cultural

plurality function as internal regulators that shape how students interpret cultural difference and how they act in communication. When values are absent from didactic design, competence risks becoming either technically informed but ethically indifferent, or morally proclaimed but behaviorally weak. A values-based approach, therefore, can strengthen coherence: cultural knowledge becomes ethically oriented, and tolerance becomes operationalized as communicative and civic responsibility rather than passive acceptance.

This thesis aims to conceptualize the didactic opportunities of the axiological approach in developing ethnocultural competence among students and to articulate pedagogical implications for curriculum design and assessment.

The study uses conceptual analysis and pedagogical modeling. The conceptual analysis clarifies the role of values in ethnocultural competence by synthesizing three complementary traditions. First, intercultural competence frameworks emphasize that effective and appropriate interaction depends on the integration of cognitive resources, attitudes/values, and behavioral skills. Second, value theory in psychology and education treats values as relatively stable criteria that guide evaluation, motivation, and action, which makes them relevant for explaining why students with similar knowledge may behave differently in culturally sensitive situations. Third, multicultural education theory highlights that prejudice reduction and inclusion require not only content additions but systemic reform of learning environments and institutional norms.

Based on this synthesis, a didactic model is constructed with three analytic layers. The target layer defines ethnocultural competence as an integration of interpretive cultural knowledge, value-based orientations, and dialogic behavior. The process layer explains how learning activities foster value internalization through reflection, discussion, and practice in situational tasks. The evidence layer defines how learning outcomes can be observed and assessed through students' reasoning, communication products, and interaction patterns during structured learning scenarios.

The conceptual model identifies several didactic opportunities that become available when axiological principles are treated as the organizing core of ethnocultural education.

First, the axiological approach improves the selection and structuring of curriculum content. Instead of presenting ethnocultural knowledge as a set of detached facts, content is organized around value-laden meanings: how communities express dignity, solidarity, hospitality, responsibility, and mutual respect through norms, rituals, language etiquette, and everyday practices. This re-structuring changes the cognitive task for students: they learn to interpret cultural phenomena as moral-semantic systems rather than as exotic artifacts. As a result, knowledge supports understanding and ethical judgment, reducing the tendency to stereotype or essentialize.

Second, axiological design strengthens the pedagogical process by legitimizing identity reflection as a learning objective rather than a private matter. Ethnocultural competence develops when students can name their own assumptions, recognize the emotional significance of belonging, and distinguish between identity pride and exclusionary superiority. In a values-based classroom, the educator establishes norms of psychological safety and respectful dialogue so that students can explore identity without fear of ridicule or coercion. This environment enables students to shift from rigid, defensive interpretations of difference toward more reflective and ethnorelative meaning-making.



Third, the axiological approach supports dialogic pedagogy as the main didactic mechanism. Values are not transmitted effectively as abstract prescriptions; they are appropriated through argumentation, perspective-taking, and confronting moral dilemmas in context. When students work with culturally sensitive scenarios, they practice ethical justification: they must explain why a communicative choice is respectful, fair, and constructive, not merely whether it is "allowed." Through repeated cycles of dialogue and reflection, values become operationalized as decision criteria that students can apply under uncertainty.

Fourth, axiological didactics strengthens the connection between values and behavior by treating communication as a moral practice. Ethnocultural competence requires behavioral repertoires such as asking clarifying questions, avoiding humiliating generalizations, acknowledging harm, repairing misunderstandings, and negotiating meaning in a way that preserves dignity. The values-based approach provides the normative grounding for these behaviors and clarifies their purpose: they are not politeness techniques but forms of responsible interaction. This framing also prevents superficial performance, because students are expected to align behavior with ethical reasoning and empathy.

The analysis suggests that the axiological approach can address two persistent problems in ethnocultural education. The first problem is "folklorization," where competence is reduced to cultural trivia that does not change interaction patterns. A values-based design reinterprets cultural content as meaning and responsibility, thereby connecting knowledge to action. The second problem is "declarative tolerance," where students can repeat tolerant statements while still engaging in exclusionary communication when identity is threatened. Axiological pedagogy reduces this gap by requiring students to apply values in concrete dilemmas and by cultivating dialogic strategies that translate ethical intent into behavior.

The axiological approach offers strong didactic opportunities for developing ethnocultural competence because it treats values as the integrative core connecting cultural knowledge with ethical judgment and dialogic behavior. By organizing curriculum content around moral-semantic meanings, creating psychologically safe environments for identity reflection, using dialogic and scenario-based learning, and assessing value-behavior alignment, higher education can cultivate ethnocultural competence that is both effective in communication and responsible in ethical terms. The approach supports tolerance without weakening identity, because it frames identity as compatible with dignity, pluralism, and cooperative academic community.

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