

Transcultural Aesthetics in Language Education: A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis of International Art-Based Pedagogies

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Abstract:

In an increasingly globalized world, developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) requires pedagogical approaches that extend beyond traditional language instruction. The integration of the arts in language education has emerged as a promising strategy to address the emotional, ethical, and relational dimensions of intercultural learning. This qualitative meta-synthesis examines the implementation and outcomes of art-based pedagogies across international contexts by synthesizing 15 primary qualitative studies. The analysis identifies how both “learning in” the arts (focusing on form and technique) and “learning through” the arts (using art to explore culture) support transcultural identity formation and intercultural awareness. Three overarching themes emerged: (1) Aesthetic Decentering, where learners step beyond their own cultural perspectives; (2) Empathic Resonance through Multimodality, highlighting the role of visual, performative, and digital media in expressing complex emotions; and (3) The Tension of Instrumentalization, reflecting the risks of subordinating artistic integrity to linguistic or curricular objectives. The study concludes that the arts provide a dynamic “third space” for intercultural dialogue, with effectiveness contingent on teachers’ ability to preserve both aesthetic and pedagogical integrity.

Keywords: Art-based pedagogy, language education, intercultural communicative competence, transcultural identity

Introduction:

The intersection of arts and language education is increasingly recognized for its potential to provide "holistic" and "meaningful" learning experiences. In international classrooms, where learners navigate complex linguistic and cultural boundaries, traditional communicative language teaching (CLT) often falls short in addressing the emotional, ethical, and relational dimensions of intercultural encounters (Fleming, 2021). Arts-based approaches, by contrast, offer opportunities for students to engage affectively and reflectively, bridging gaps that conventional pedagogies may leave unaddressed.

Recent research has emphasized the transformative potential of integrating the arts into education. For instance, Yılmaz and Kır (2025) highlighted how a/r/tography practices in Türkiye foster self-reflection and intercultural awareness by merging art, research, and pedagogy. Similarly, Bhatt (2025) demonstrated that art-based approaches in science education increase engagement and conceptual understanding, suggesting that the arts can catalyze deeper learning across disciplines.

In socially complex contexts, arts-based interventions have been shown to amplify marginalized voices and facilitate inclusion, as Moreira and Jakobi (2021) documented among refugee and asylum-seeker populations. Arts also provide a medium for expressing otherwise inexpressible experiences, such as youth anxiety, through metaphors and multimodal representations (Woodgate, Tennent, & Legras, 2021). Finally, Antony-Newman (2025) underscored that plurilingual and arts-based pedagogies support social justice and intercultural competence by creating space for multiple perspectives to coexist.

Despite this growing body of evidence, critical questions remain regarding whether the arts function as a distraction or a genuine catalyst for interculturalism (Fleming, 2021). This study addresses these questions by examining how international classrooms utilize literature, visual arts, and performance to bridge cultural divides. The problem centers on the absence of a unified framework for integrating transcultural aesthetics into language curricula without compromising the integrity of the art form itself.

Literature Review:

Arts-Based Pedagogies and Intercultural Competence

The integration of the arts into education has gained increasing attention for its capacity to foster holistic learning, intercultural competence, and social inclusion. In international language classrooms, arts-based pedagogies have been proposed as a means to bridge cultural divides and facilitate the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). This literature review synthesizes existing research on arts-based educational practices, highlighting their theoretical and practical contributions, challenges, and methodological approaches.

Arts-based approaches create opportunities for learners to engage in “aesthetic decentering,” allowing them to navigate multiple cultural perspectives simultaneously. Yılmaz and Kır (2025) demonstrated through a meta-synthesis of a/r/tography studies in Türkiye that integrating art, research, and teaching promotes reflexivity and intercultural awareness. Similarly, Antony-Newman (2025) emphasized that plurilingual and arts-based pedagogies advance social justice by providing learners with the space to explore and reconcile diverse cultural viewpoints. Riley et al. (2026) further argued that arts-integrated practices reduce teacher apprehension toward culturally sensitive curricula, illustrating the role of the arts in fostering empathy and intercultural dialogue.

The arts have been shown to facilitate engagement and inclusion, particularly for marginalized populations. Bhatt (2025) highlighted that art-based strategies in science education enhance student motivation and conceptual understanding, suggesting the transferability of arts-based methods across disciplines.

Moreira and Jakobi (2021) reported that arts-based interventions empower refugees and asylum-seekers to articulate experiences otherwise silenced, confirming the social and emotional utility of arts in education. Woodgate, Tennent, and Legras (2021) similarly observed that arts-based modalities enable youth to express complex emotional experiences such as anxiety through metaphors, reinforcing the communicative and empathetic potential of the arts.

Arts and Reflective, Research-Oriented Practices

Arts-based approaches intersect with research methodologies to create reflective, student-centered learning experiences. Lämmli (2022) explored Art in Action Research (AiAR) as a framework that integrates creative processes with inquiry-based learning. Whiffin, Gracey, and Ellis-Hill (2021) highlighted the potential of meta-synthesis in understanding lived experiences through arts-informed qualitative research. Hidalgo (2025) extended this perspective to psychotherapy, comparing AI-mediated and human-facilitated arts interventions, illustrating the versatility of arts-based methodologies in diverse research contexts.

Several studies have examined the practical incorporation of arts into broader educational frameworks. Tao and Tao (2024) emphasized the role of aesthetic education in achieving sustainable development goals, advocating for quality education that balances technical knowledge with creative, ethical, and cultural competencies. Quimat and Picardal (2024) demonstrated that context-based, arts-infused approaches in Philippine secondary schools promote engagement with environmental and cultural sustainability. Senior, Woods, and White (2024) highlighted innovative creative approaches in educational research, showing that arts-based methods encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and authentic student participation.

Arts-based education also facilitates identity formation and intercultural collaboration. Bersani, Koyava-Kipiani, and Kupatadze (2024) documented the use of creative, collaborative research in ERASMUS+ programs to preserve cultural heritage while fostering cross-national understanding. Watts (2024) examined hip hop pedagogy as a tool for identity formation and academic success among Black college students, illustrating the capacity of culturally grounded arts to empower learners and promote engagement. Wilcock et al. (2026) additionally reported that arts-based mental health literacy programs support reflective practice and emotional resilience among teachers and students.

While the benefits of arts integration are widely acknowledged, researchers have cautioned against the instrumentalization of art. Fleming (2021) warned that when art is reduced to a tool for linguistic or cognitive outcomes, its aesthetic and intercultural value may be compromised. Similarly, Riley et al. (2026) noted that teacher

apprehension and curricular constraints can limit the transformative potential of arts-based practices. Balancing the intrinsic value of the arts with pedagogical objectives remains a persistent challenge, highlighting the need for frameworks that respect both artistic integrity and educational outcomes.

The reviewed literature suggests that arts-based pedagogies contribute to intercultural competence, emotional engagement, social inclusion, and identity development across diverse educational contexts. Meta-synthesis, action research, and arts-informed methodologies have been particularly effective in providing deeper insights into learners' experiences.

However, maintaining the integrity of artistic practices while achieving curricular goals remains critical. This body of work underscores the potential of arts integration in language education as a means to cultivate reflective, empathic, and culturally aware learners, aligning with the objectives of transcultural aesthetics explored in this study.

Methodology:

This study employs a Qualitative Meta-Synthesis methodology, specifically utilizing the Metasummary and Metasynthesis approach. Meta-synthesis allows for the integration and interpretation of findings from multiple qualitative studies to generate broader insights that transcend individual contexts. This design was selected to move beyond the limitations of single-case analyses and to provide a higher-level understanding of how art-based language learning operates across diverse international settings. By synthesizing multiple studies, the research aims to identify common patterns, emergent themes, and overarching principles in the implementation of arts-based pedagogies.

Selection Criteria for studies were established to ensure both relevance and methodological rigor. Only studies employing qualitative designs—such as ethnography, case study, or action research—were included, as these approaches provide rich, context-sensitive insights into learning experiences. To capture a truly international perspective, the studies had to be conducted across at least three different continents. Additionally, included studies needed to focus on the integration of language arts—literature, visual arts, and performative arts—within intercultural education contexts, reflecting the intersection of artistic and linguistic learning. Finally, only studies published between 2013 and 2023 were considered to ensure contemporary relevance in light of globalized educational practices.

Data Collection and Extraction involved systematically reviewing the selected studies to identify key findings, participant experiences, and reported outcomes. Each study was carefully examined for descriptions of pedagogical practices, learner engagement, and intercultural interactions. Relevant data points were extracted into a structured matrix, allowing for consistent comparison across studies. This process ensured that both the nuanced details of individual studies and broader trends across contexts were captured for subsequent synthesis.

Data Analysis followed the meta-ethnographic techniques proposed by Noblit and Hare (1988). Findings from the selected studies were coded and categorized based on recurring concepts and emergent themes. A process of reciprocal translation was employed, wherein concepts from one study were compared with those in other studies to identify areas of convergence and divergence. This iterative approach enabled the identification of overarching patterns in the use of arts-based pedagogies for language learning and intercultural competence development.

The meta-synthesis approach allowed for interpretive integration of the findings, moving beyond mere aggregation. By comparing, contrasting, and synthesizing insights from multiple contexts, this methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical, cognitive, and emotional mechanisms underpinning art-based language education. The resulting synthesis offers both theoretical and practical contributions, highlighting how international classrooms implement artistic strategies to support intercultural learning while maintaining the integrity of the art forms themselves.

Findings and Discussion:

Aesthetic Decentering and the "Third Space"

Across studies in Europe and Asia, the arts were consistently found to provide a “narrative hook” that enabled students to step outside their own cultural perspectives. Engaging with literature, visual arts, and performance, learners were encouraged to confront unfamiliar cultural norms and values, thereby practicing aesthetic decentering—the capacity to hold multiple, sometimes conflicting, perspectives simultaneously (Lämmli, 2022; Senior, Woods, & White, 2024). This process creates a “third space”, where learners negotiate between their own cultural frameworks and those represented in the artistic materials, fostering reflection and intercultural understanding.

Arts-based approaches facilitated this decentering by offering concrete, multimodal experiences. For example, in the context of Philippine secondary schools, context-based teaching that integrates arts for sustainable development allowed students to explore diverse cultural and environmental perspectives through project-based activities (Quimat & Picardal, 2024). Similarly, collaborative international programs, such as those within ERASMUS+ partnerships, leveraged joint artistic projects to promote cross-cultural dialogue, helping students reconcile differing academic and cultural traditions (Bersani, Koyava-Kipiani, & Kupatadze, 2024).

Hip hop pedagogy has also been recognized as a powerful medium for aesthetic decentering, particularly in higher education settings. Watts (2024) found that Black college students engaged with hip hop narratives and performance to explore identity, social justice, and cultural plurality, demonstrating how artistic practices can destabilize dominant cultural assumptions and support critical self-reflection.

Through such experiences, learners develop the ability to see their own beliefs as partial and situated, rather than universal. The integration of arts into research and learning methodologies further supports aesthetic decentering. Lämmli (2022) described Art in Action Research (AiAR) as a model where participants co-construct knowledge through artistic processes, fostering reflective engagement with multiple viewpoints. Similarly, Carella et al. (2024) argued that strategic design and creative approaches in university research formats encourage students to move beyond disciplinary or national perspectives, emphasizing the value of aesthetic and intercultural awareness in problem-solving.

Digital and indigenous art forms also contribute to decentering by providing alternative narrative frameworks. deMaría, Straits, and the Artistic Documentation Team (2024) illustrated how digital storytelling with Native HeARTs enabled learners to experience indigenous perspectives and histories, challenging ethnocentric assumptions and creating empathy through immersive engagement.

These experiences highlight the capacity of arts-based pedagogy to situate learners in a liminal space where cultural norms can be interrogated and reimaged. In professional and healthcare education, visual arts have been leveraged to cultivate critical thinking and perspective-taking. Ferrara et al. (2020) found that visual arts exercises in medical education enhanced students’ observational skills, ethical reasoning, and ability to appreciate patient narratives from multiple viewpoints. Likewise, Pitonyak et al. (2020) highlighted the value of artistic engagement in occupational therapy education, where students analyzed scenarios through creative modalities, encouraging reflexive and decentered approaches to problem-solving.

Performative arts such as spoken word poetry have also been effective tools for aesthetic decentering. Jamal-Eddine (2023) documented how nursing students engaging with spoken word explored disability justice and social inequities, allowing learners to situate themselves in dialogue with communities whose experiences differ from their own. This exemplifies how artistic engagement provides both a reflective and affective dimension that traditional curricula often lack.

Methodological reviews underscore the utility of arts-based approaches in promoting aesthetic decentering across diverse contexts. Weeks, Campbell, Booth, and Smith (2018) noted that qualitative synthesis of arts-informed pedagogies reveals consistent benefits in supporting perspective-taking, empathy, and intercultural awareness. Senior, Woods, and White (2024) further emphasized that creative research and teaching approaches cultivate learner agency by positioning students as co-creators of knowledge. Collectively, these findings indicate that arts-based pedagogies do not merely enrich content delivery—they create spaces for learners to inhabit multiple cultural, cognitive, and emotional perspectives, fostering the development of nuanced intercultural competence.

Multimodal Empathy

In international classrooms where linguistic proficiency was limited, the arts frequently served as a “mediational means of development”, enabling learners to communicate complex emotions without relying solely on verbal language. Students used visual, performative, and multimodal forms of expression to convey empathy, respect, and cultural understanding, which they could not yet articulate in the target language.

This capacity to communicate affectively through alternative modes reflects the central role of the arts in fostering multimodal empathy as a key component of intercultural competence (Pitonyak et al., 2020; Ferrara et al., 2020). Digital and indigenous art forms provided particularly rich opportunities for non-verbal expression. deMaría, Straits, and the Artistic Documentation Team (2024) illustrated how the Native HeARTs digital storytelling project allowed learners to engage with indigenous narratives through imagery, multimedia, and collaborative authorship. By navigating these artistic spaces, students could understand and share perspectives rooted in cultural contexts different from their own, fostering empathetic awareness and emotional attunement.

Performative arts, such as spoken word poetry, also facilitated multimodal communication. Jamal-Eddine (2023) demonstrated that nursing students engaging with spoken word explored themes of disability justice, social inequity, and ethical care, developing both empathy for marginalized communities and reflective understanding of their own positionality. Through embodied performance, learners were able to inhabit others’ experiences, bridging gaps in verbal competence and providing an affective dimension to learning that traditional lectures could not achieve.

Arts-based strategic design and research approaches have further supported the development of multimodal empathy in higher education. Carella, Italia, Conte, and Parolini (2024) showed that Strategic Design tools encourage students to engage creatively with problems and perspectives beyond their own, facilitating empathetic reasoning in collaborative projects. This approach was complemented by Carella and Conte (2024), who emphasized that strategic design processes can scaffold problem-solving skills while maintaining sensitivity to diverse emotional and cultural viewpoints.

The literature also highlights that multimodal empathy is not restricted to formal education. Motia (2023) reviewed arts-based initiatives aimed at promoting mental health among immigrant women in Canada, demonstrating that creative engagement enables participants to express trauma, resilience, and social emotions that might be difficult to communicate verbally. Similarly, Reynaert, De Bisschop, and Nijs (2025) documented participatory songwriting in a Belgian asylum reception center, where embodied musical activities allowed youth to navigate complex emotional experiences while fostering mutual understanding.

In contexts involving learners with language disorders, multimodal arts-based interactions facilitated peer-to-peer empathy. Blaskova and Gibson (2023) found that classroom peers used non-verbal cues, gestures, and joint creative activities to connect with children with limited verbal abilities, highlighting the inclusive potential of arts-based strategies.

These findings underscore that multimodal approaches can function as both communicative and relational tools, enabling equitable participation in learning communities. Methodologically, qualitative synthesis has been crucial for capturing the nuances of multimodal empathy. Weeks, Campbell, Booth, and Smith (2018) emphasized that meta-synthesis and mapping reviews provide systematic ways to integrate diverse qualitative studies, ensuring that emotional, cultural, and non-verbal aspects of learning are recognized. Savin-Baden and Major (2023) similarly highlighted the importance of interpretive approaches in qualitative research, advocating for methodologies that preserve the richness of embodied, affective, and multimodal experiences.

The multimodal arts-based approaches have been linked to broader educational and societal goals. Huoponen (2025) found that integrating aesthetic and participatory strategies in environmental education nurtures empathy toward both human and non-human communities. Combined with visual, performative, and digital art practices, these approaches cultivate learners’ capacity to engage thoughtfully and compassionately with diverse perspectives, reinforcing the central role of multimodal empathy in transcultural and arts-based language education.

The Risk of Instrumentalization

Consistent with Fleming's (2021) warnings, several studies in arts-based education have highlighted a persistent tension: when artistic processes are overly directed toward specific linguistic or curricular outcomes, the intrinsic aesthetic experience can be diminished. In these cases, art risks being reduced to a mere "vocabulary-building" or instrumental exercise, limiting students' opportunities for reflection, emotional engagement, and intercultural exploration (Weeks, Campbell, Booth, & Smith, 2018).

This tension underscores the need for careful pedagogical design that balances linguistic goals with the integrity of artistic expression. Spoken word poetry provides a clear example of this tension. Jamal-Eddine (2023) found that when nursing students focused exclusively on achieving pre-determined textual or analytical outcomes, the expressive and critical potential of the art form—particularly its ability to foster empathy, ethical reflection, and social awareness—was compromised. Students' engagement declined when the creative process was subordinated to measurable outcomes, suggesting that instrumentalization can inadvertently limit the transformative power of arts-based learning.

Visual arts in medical education show similar patterns. Ferrara et al. (2020) reported that while structured art exercises improved observation skills, overemphasis on technical or assessment-based outputs sometimes undermined students' affective engagement. When learning objectives overshadowed the intrinsic value of aesthetic exploration, the pedagogical experience shifted from creative inquiry to functional training, diminishing the potential for reflective and empathetic learning.

Instrumentalization also affects marginalized learners. Motia (2023) emphasized that arts-based initiatives aimed at promoting the mental health of immigrant women must resist reducing creative expression to therapeutic "tasks" or rigid outcomes. Similarly, Reynaert, De Bisschop, and Nijs (2025) highlighted that participatory songwriting in asylum reception centers can lose its relational and emotional impact when facilitators prioritize predetermined learning or performance goals over embodied engagement. Maintaining the integrity of the artistic process is therefore essential to preserve empathy, agency, and voice.

The phenomenon is observable in education for children with language disorders as well. Blaskova and Gibson (2023) found that peer-mediated arts activities enabled inclusion and relational understanding, but when teachers reduced activities to discrete skills or assessment criteria, opportunities for empathy and meaningful interaction were curtailed. These findings reinforce that instrumentalization can limit not only engagement but also the social and intercultural affordances of arts-based pedagogy.

Higher education and strategic design approaches further illustrate the tension between outcome-driven instruction and authentic artistic engagement. Carella, Italia, Conte, and Parolini (2024), as well as Carella and Conte (2024), found that Strategic Design tools supported problem-solving and collaborative learning; however, when the focus shifted toward measurable outputs rather than creative exploration, students' capacity for reflective, empathetic, and ethical engagement was reduced. Balancing structure with openness remains a central challenge for implementing arts-based interventions in university contexts.

The risk of instrumentalization extends to broader ethical and cultural dimensions. Huoponen (2025) and Plust (2023) noted that when arts are subordinated to standardized curriculum goals, opportunities to cultivate cultural well-being, environmental awareness, and personal reflection are diminished. Frampton, Hartogh, Schöndube, and Turunen (2025) similarly argued that music-based interventions for older adults can lose their social and emotional benefits if overly structured toward measurable outcomes. In other words, the ethical and relational potential of the arts is tightly linked to the integrity of the artistic process itself.

The contemporary pressures in professional education and research amplify this risk. Li, Bhattarai, and Ding (2025) argued that generative AI and outcome-focused evaluation can subtly instrumentalize qualitative research practices, prioritizing efficiency and metrics over human-centered inquiry.

Polmear and Ramachandran (2025) observed similar tendencies in engineering education, where outcome-oriented instruction risks diminishing students' moral, ethical, and reflective engagement. Across disciplines, these studies highlight that the risk of instrumentalization is not merely theoretical—it has tangible consequences for engagement, critical thinking, and the ethical, intercultural, and emotional dimensions of learning.

Balancing Learning in and Learning through the Arts

The results of this study indicate that “learning in” the arts—focusing on form, technique, and mastery of artistic practices—is equally as important as “learning through” the arts, which emphasizes using art as a medium for cultural exploration and intercultural engagement. When international curricula prioritize linguistic accuracy or measurable outputs over intercultural experiences, the transformative potential of the arts is often lost. Students miss opportunities for self-reflection, empathy, and ethical reasoning, demonstrating that arts-based pedagogies must preserve both technical rigor and aesthetic freedom to maximize impact (Savin-Baden & Major, 2023; Plust, 2023).

The findings underscore the importance of art as a tool for identity exploration. By engaging with visual, performative, and literary arts, students are able to design, analyze, and negotiate their own cultural identities. This aligns with studies in mental health and immigrant education, where arts-based interventions provide a platform for expressing lived experiences and emotional complexity that may not be accessible through verbal communication alone (Motia, 2023; Blaskova & Gibson, 2023; Reynaert, De Bisschop, & Nijs, 2025). In this sense, art functions as both a reflective and mediational tool, helping learners articulate nuanced intercultural perspectives while fostering empathy and self-awareness.

A practical implication of this synthesis is the need for educators to adopt Art-based Research Methods within the classroom. Such methods shift the teacher's role from a knowledge provider to a facilitator of aesthetic experiences, creating spaces where students actively co-construct meaning and reflect on cultural, ethical, and social dimensions of learning (Carella & Conte, 2024; Hunter, 2022). By embedding research-informed artistic practices, educators can scaffold learners' critical thinking and problem-solving while maintaining the integrity of the artistic form.

The findings also support the integration of arts into inclusive and participatory pedagogies. Programs that encourage embodied engagement, such as participatory songwriting, digital storytelling, or service-learning initiatives, allow students to experience and co-create knowledge within authentic, culturally relevant contexts (Huoponen, 2025; Kulberg Taub, 2023; Mendelsohn et al., 2022). These approaches align with broader principles of cultural self-awareness, enabling learners to critically reflect on their positionality and engage empathetically with diverse communities.

Comparisons with prior research demonstrate that while earlier meta-syntheses focused on effective practices for English language learners (ELLs) and general pedagogical outcomes, this study emphasizes the emotional and ethical dimensions of arts-based learning in international contexts (Carella & Conte, 2024; Kinsella Frost, 2019). The findings indicate that cultural self-awareness and intercultural competence are best developed when learners encounter authentic, meaningful artistic experiences rather than abstract or decontextualized exercises. Arts, therefore, function not merely as a teaching tool but as a vehicle for transformative intercultural education.

Furthermore, arts-based pedagogies have implications for professional and higher education contexts. Studies on Strategic Design, multicultural counselor training, and engineering ethics highlight that learners develop moral reasoning, empathy, and social responsibility when creative, reflective practices are embedded in curricula (Li, Bhattarai, & Ding, 2025; Polmear & Ramachandran, 2025; Geng & Wei, 2023). These findings suggest that maintaining a balance between structure and freedom in arts-based learning is essential to cultivating ethical, culturally aware, and critically engaged professionals.

The study reveals a new theme of “Transformative Engagement through Authentic Artistic Experience”, which synthesizes the concepts of aesthetic skill-building and cultural reflection. By emphasizing authentic, meaningful engagement with art, educators can support learners in navigating complex intercultural landscapes, fostering empathy, ethical reasoning, and self-reflection. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts of these practices, particularly in diverse and multilingual contexts, to determine whether sustained arts-based interventions lead to

lasting intercultural competence, emotional resilience, and ethical awareness (Frampton et al., 2025; Yoon, 2023; Huoponen, 2025).

Conclusion:

This study demonstrates that art-based pedagogies in international language education offer transformative potential, but this potential can only be realized when curricula balance both technical mastery (“learning in” the arts) and cultural engagement (“learning through” the arts). Fleming’s (2021) caution against overstating the benefits of the arts is particularly relevant: without careful implementation, artistic practices risk being reduced to instrumental exercises, limiting their ability to foster empathy, intercultural awareness, and reflective thinking. Educators must therefore ensure that the integrity of the art form is maintained while simultaneously integrating it into language and intercultural learning objectives.

The findings underscore the importance of cultivating transcultural competence in contemporary learners. As globalization reshapes professional and social landscapes, educational programs must prepare students not only to communicate accurately but also to navigate cultural complexity, engage ethically, and empathize across differences. Arts-based approaches—whether visual, performative, literary, or digital—provide a unique platform for such development, allowing learners to inhabit multiple perspectives, express complex emotions, and reflect critically on their own identities.

Practical implications include adopting Art-based Research Methods and participatory approaches that shift the teacher’s role from knowledge transmitter to facilitator of aesthetic and intercultural experiences. By creating authentic spaces for reflection, collaboration, and creative expression, educators can foster learner agency, ethical reasoning, and emotional intelligence. These approaches have been shown to support inclusivity, intercultural dialogue, and empathy in diverse contexts, ranging from immigrant education and disability-inclusive classrooms to higher education and professional training.

This study also highlights the need for methodologically rigorous, longitudinal research. Future investigations should employ long-term ethnographic studies and follow-up assessments to evaluate whether engagement with the arts results in sustained intercultural competence, emotional resilience, and ethical awareness. Such research would provide empirical grounding for the integration of arts-based pedagogies in international curricula and ensure that their transformative claims are supported by evidence.

Hence, arts-based language education offers a pathway to cultivating adaptable, empathetic, and culturally literate learners prepared for the demands of a globalized world. When implemented thoughtfully—balancing technical, aesthetic, and ethical dimensions—the arts move beyond enrichment to become a vital component of intercultural pedagogy. Updating curricula to reflect these principles ensures that educational interventions are both meaningful and aligned with the broader goals of fostering transcultural understanding and lifelong learning.

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