



Using An Interview Assignment Can Promote Intercultural Competence in Criminal Justice Students

What is this Research About?

Intercultural competence refers to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations. Intercultural competence is especially important for students interested in pursuing a career in criminal justice. A lack of intercultural competence in criminal justice professionals can lead to the deterioration of community relations, particularly in relation to trust and empathy. In this study, researchers investigated whether interview-based assignments could help students develop intercultural competence.

What did the Researchers Do?

The researchers studied the effectiveness of three interview assignments in a Criminal Justice course. Students were required to conduct three interviews over the course of the semester and write a reflection paper about each interview. For the first interview, students interviewed an individual of different spiritual or religious background about their beliefs, habits, and traditions. For the second interview, students interviewed someone from a different cultural background about differences in non-verbal communication, focusing on gestures and body language. The third interview focused on microaggressions and the interviewee's experiences. The researchers used a validated rubric to score the students' reflection papers based on the degree to which the students' writing demonstrated intercultural competence.

What did the Researchers Find?

The researchers found that students appeared to show growth in intercultural skills such as empathy and active listening, through their reflective papers. Students also indicated that they felt that they had developed increased intercultural awareness through the interview assignments. The researchers concluded that the interview assignment is an effective method for increasing students' intercultural competence in a criminal justice course.

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Snapshot

A synopsis of a scholarship of teaching and learning journal article

➔ How to Implement this Research in Your Classroom

An interview-based assignment can allow for students to gain insight into the many nuances of different cultures. This research demonstrates that an interview assignment, where students interview someone with a different cultural background and reflect in writing on the interview, can help students develop intercultural knowledge and skills. One important aspect of the assignment was an in-class debriefing session facilitated by the instructor, where students discuss the elements of intercultural competence. This type of assignment may be useful in Criminology, Sociology, or Criminal Justice courses.

➔ Citation

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➔ Keywords

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Snapshot Writer: Jared Rambaran



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