

# Intercultural Partnerships that Foster Cultural Competence among Undergraduate Students

Elizabeth J. Sandell, PhD -- Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN (USA)

## Background/Introduction

- \* Previous analysis suggested students began the course with an ethno-centric minimization orientation toward cultural differences.
- \* Formative assessments showed that students in general had very few relationships with persons from other cultures.
- \* So, a major course revision was made to require experience and reflection in a Cultural Partnership.
- \* When the course went online, the assignment was revised into the Giving Voice Project.

**Table 1: Descriptive and Inferential Statistics for Developmental Orientation at Course Conclusion**

Group	N	M	SD	SE	Diff.	F	df	p
					3.68	0.73	1	0.4
<b>Cultural Partnership / not GVP</b>	77	92.24	16.24	1.85				
US ethnic difference on-campus	9	92.77	14.89	4.96				
International student on-campus	52	91.49	16.53	2.29				
International student on-line	3	97.28	25.11	14.5				
Alaska Native on-line	13	93.68	15.68	4.35				
<b>Giving Voice Project / not CP</b>	25	90.12	13.66	2.73				

## Participants & Setting

- \* All participants were undergraduate students in enrolled in Human Relations in a Multicultural Society (n=102).
- \* Participants were 26% male and 74% female, with an average age of 21 years (range, 18 – 24 years old).
- \* At a mid-sized public university in the Midwest of the United States.
- \* Outcome data for three Spring semesters: 2019, 2020, and 2021.

## Literature Review

- \* Intergroup Contact Theory, Allport (1954), suggests that positive effects of intergroup contact occur in contact situations characterized by four key conditions:
  - o equal status,
  - o cooperation,
  - o common goals, and
  - o support by social and institutional leaders.
- \* Others have applied ICT to intercultural and cross-cultural contacts (Berryman-Fink, 2006; Campbell, 2012; Sakurai et al, 2010).

## Data/Results

- \* SPSS v.5 was used to compare the IDI scores for students with Cultural Partnerships or with the Giving Voice Project.
- \* A complex contrast between the mean Developmental Orientation score of the cultural partnership group (comprised of US ethnic difference, international student on-campus, international student on-line, and Alaska Native on-line) (M = 92.24, SD = 16.24) compared the Giving Voice Project group (M = 90.13, SD = 13.66).
- \* The mean difference was 3.68, 95% CI [-12.23, 4.87], was not a statistically significant difference, p = .40.

## Methodology

- \* Convenience Sample – Undergraduates in 3 semesters of Human Relations in a Multicultural Society at a mid-size Midwest university.
- \* Four groups:
  - (1) on-campus Cultural Partnership with international students;
  - (2) virtual Cultural Partnership with international students;
  - (3) virtual group Cultural Partnership;
  - (4) Giving Voice Project.
- \* Survey Methodology - Intercultural Development Inventory™ online during class time.
- \* Score of interest: IDI Developmental Orientation at conclusion of the course.

## Future Research

- \* Examine if similar results occur with undergraduate students from underrepresented groups.
- \* Examine if similar results occur with different disciplines.
- \* Examine if similar results occur if the Cultural Partnership is more directed and individually matched.
- \* Examine if similar results occur with the Giving Voice Project.

## Cultural Partnerships

Nine hours of contact time required, along with a series of assignments that included establishing the partnership, interviews, common recreational activities, and reflection.

Students in the course earned points for their assignments; international students earned points to qualify for academic scholarships.

Between 2012 and 2019, facilitated by the course instructor and the university's International Center to match class members with international students who were studying on campus.

Spring 2020, some students matched with international students and completed activities online, through Facebook, mobile phone, or other device platform.

Fall 2020 & Spring 2021. One section was matched as a class cohort with a class cohort of Alaska Native students. Two other sections fulfilled a Giving Voice Project.

Giving Voice Project was individually designed to 'give voice' to an issue on behalf of a culture or marginalized group.