



CONFERENCE ARTICLE

METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING ETHNOCULTURAL COMPETENCE BASED ON CASE STUDIES (SITUATIONAL TASKS)

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ABSTRACT

Case studies (situational tasks) can develop ethnocultural competence because they require students to interpret cultural meanings, justify ethical choices, and communicate in uncertainty rather than reproduce cultural facts. This thesis proposes a methodology for higher education that uses a sequenced case bank, facilitated dialogue, and triangulated assessment aligned to knowledge, value orientation, and behavior. The approach is designed to strengthen ethnorelative interpretation, reduce threat-based judgments, and expand students' repertoires for clarification and de-escalation in culturally sensitive situations.

KEYWORDS

Ethnocultural competence; case study method; situational tasks; intercultural learning; higher education.

INTRODUCTION

University students collaborate across ethnocultural differences in classrooms and field practice. Misunderstandings in these settings often arise from stereotypes, misattribution of intent, and limited dialogue strategies, not from open hostility. Intercultural competence research describes competent interaction as effective and appropriate behavior supported by coordinated development of knowledge, attitudes/values, and skills [2–3]. Ethnocultural competence focuses this coordination on ethnocultural identity, symbols, norms, and tolerance as an ethical commitment [1]. The purpose of this thesis is to outline a teachable and assessable methodology for developing ethnocultural competence through case studies.

The methodology follows a process logic in which competence grows through repeated cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation [4]. Each cycle is implemented as a case session that begins with individual interpretation and ends with an action-oriented communication plan. Cases are constructed from typical student experiences such as group projects, classroom dialogue, and practicum interactions. Following case-study design logic, scenarios preserve context while focusing on a dilemma that demands a justified decision [8]. Ambiguity is maintained through incomplete information and competing explanations, so students must identify what evidence is missing before judging. Cultural representation is handled responsibly by avoiding exoticization, showing within-group diversity, and connecting practices to context, consistent with multicultural education principles [5]. For instructional validity, each case is mapped to a learning outcome and includes a decision point where alternative responses produce different relational consequences.

Implementation depends on facilitation. Students submit a short pre-discussion reading that separates observations from assumptions and proposes alternative explanations. In

moderated dialogue, the teacher maintains equal participation, redirects categorical claims toward evidence-based reasoning, and supports perspective-taking through prompts that explore meaning, status, and emotion. Reflection is consolidated through brief post-session narratives linking decisions to dignity, respect, and tolerance [1]. Cases are sequenced from everyday misunderstandings to conflicts involving institutional rules and identity-sensitive language. Cooperative tasks are designed with shared goals and institutional support, conditions associated with improved intergroup attitudes [6].

Assessment triangulates evidence. Knowledge is measured through interpretive prompts that require explaining meanings and formulating clarifying questions. Values are assessed through dilemma justifications, paying attention to perceived threat and intergroup anxiety mechanisms [7]. Behavior is assessed through role-played dialogues or written messages produced for the case, rated with rubrics for clarity, empathy, conflict management, and appropriateness. Reliability is strengthened through shared rubrics, exemplar anchors, and brief rater calibration; validity is supported by combining performance results with reflective artifacts and teacher observation. After each case, students receive criterion-referenced feedback that points to the next dialogue move to practice, and a short pre/post case set can be used to estimate growth across the course.

The framework links case design, facilitation, and assessment to specific ethnocultural competence outcomes. It predicts improved discrimination between evidence and assumption, weaker reliance on stereotypes, and greater willingness to seek contextual information before evaluating others' actions. It also anticipates stronger ethical orientation toward inclusion and reduced endorsement of exclusionary solutions under ambiguity. In observable behavior, students are expected to demonstrate more frequent clarification requests and more respectful repair moves, leading to interaction that is more

effective and context-appropriate.

The case-study approach is valuable because it treats ethnocultural competence as situated judgment, where meaning-making, values, and communication interact. Unlike fact-focused instruction, cases allow students to rehearse ethically grounded action under realistic constraints and to recognize how perceived threat can distort interpretation [7]. The approach is also sensitive to risk: without facilitation, discussions can reproduce stereotypes or reward dominance. Therefore, instructor preparation in dialogic moderation and bias awareness is necessary, and assessment should reward inquiry and respectful communication rather than conformity to a single viewpoint. The methodology supports tolerance without weakening identity by framing cultural belonging as compatible with shared academic goals and dignified dialogue.

A case-based methodology provides a coherent route to develop ethnocultural competence because situational tasks integrate interpretation, values, and communicative action. The framework can guide course design and assessment in higher education, and it should be tested empirically with longitudinal evidence of change.

References

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