COMPARISON OF INTER-CULTURAL COMPETENCY BETWEEN AMERICAN AND RUSSIAN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Elizabeth Lohrenz (Elizabeth Sandell) Government Department, Geography Department, Educational Studies Department, Minnesota State University, Mankato MN 56001

The purpose of this study was to compare the American undergraduate students' cultural competency to that of Russian university students. The analysis of the cultural competency of Russian students acted as a comparison variable in the continued research of cultural competency in the classroom among American undergraduate university students. This research was based on the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, developed by Bennett (1986). The DMIS described six stages of cultural competence: (a) Denial or Unaware; (b) Polarization or Defense; (c) Minimization; (d) Acceptance; (e) Adaptation; and (f) Integration. Based on the DMIS, Hammer and Bennett (1998, 2001) developed the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). Subjects for this study included 26 persons, 18 to 30 years old, who were enrolled in the North-Eastern State University, Magadan, and 26 persons, 18 to 30 years old, who were enrolled in Minnesota State University, Mankato. This study assessed cultural competency with the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998, 2001). The IDI consisted of fifty, Likert-type items that can be answered in 20 to 30 minutes. All students completed the IDI on-line in their first language. The investigators used the group mean scores on developmental scales to evaluate whether any significant indicators of change were observed in these areas of intercultural development. Results indicated statistically significant differences in orientation to cultural diversity between Russian and American undergraduate students.