**Raising intercultural awareness in high school learners through inquiry-based** **assignments**

by

Valeriia Kriukova

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Студентки

 **Крюкової Валерії Андріївни**

Науковий керівник

**Давиденко Олена Василівна,**

канд. пед. наук, доцент

Рецензенти:

**Пономаренко Ольга Володимирівна,**

канд. пед. наук, доцент

**Міщенко Ольга Володимирівна,**

учитель англійської мови,

спеціаліст І категорії

Ніжинської загальноосвітньої

гімназії 1-3 ступенів № 7

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Завідувач кафедри \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Abstract**

In today’s globalized world, intercultural awareness is a critically important competency. It includes the ability to understand, respect, and interact effectively with people from different cultures. In the school environment, developing tasks that promote intercultural awareness is of particular importance, as it develops in students the skills necessary to live and work in a multicultural society. An inquiry-based approach to learning is one of the most effective methods for achieving this goal, especially among high school students.

This study investigates how inquiry-based assignments can raise intercultural awareness among high school students. Intercultural awareness, essential for fostering mutual understanding and global cooperation, remains underdeveloped in traditional education systems. Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) offers an effective approach by engaging students in active exploration of cultural diversity through inquiry-based tasks.

The research involves developing assignments that promotes deeper understanding, empathy, and the ability to navigate cultural differences. Additionally, it fosters essential skills such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability. Challenges encountered include addressing stereotypes and ensuring inclusivity in the classroom. Strategies to overcome these challenges, such as guided reflection and structured scaffolding, are discussed.

This study highlights the potential of inquiry-based assignments to transform the way intercultural awareness is taught, emphasizing their relevance in preparing students for culturally diverse environments. Findings reveal that IBL effectively promotes cultural empathy and critical thinking, while also boosting student engagement and motivation. Inquiry-based assignments represent a valuable tool in modern education, fostering skills necessary for thriving in multicultural environments.

**Keywords:** inquiry-based learning, cultural empathy, global education, high school curriculum, diversity awareness.

**Анотація**

У світі, де культура та суспільство стають все більш взаємопов’язаними, питання підвищення міжкультурної обізнаності серед молоді набуває все більшої актуальності. Підвищення рівня міжкультурної обізнаності допомагає учням краще розуміти інші культури, адаптуватися до різноманітних соціальних умов і ефективно взаємодіяти в мультикультурному середовищі. Одним з ефективних підходів до цього є використання завдань, побудованих на основі запитів (inquiry-based assignments), які сприяють активному пізнанню і розвитку критичного мислення.

У процесі дослідження було розроблено комплекс завдань, спрямованих на розвиток у старшокласників міжкультурної компетентності. У роботі підкреслюється, що традиційні методи навчання, зокрема лекційний та репродуктивний підходи, недостатньо сприяють формуванню цієї компетентності. Натомість завдання, засновані на основі запитів (inquiry-based assignments), стимулюють учнів до активного пізнання, критичного мислення, взаємодії та інтеграції міжкультурних знань.

Метою дослідження є вивчення впливу завдань на основі запитів на розвиток міжкультурної обізнаності старшокласників. Завдання на основі запитів побудовані таким чином, що дозволяють створювати умови для інтерактивного навчання, у процесі якого учні не тільки набувають знання, а й навчаються висловлювати свої думки, глибоко аналізувати культурні відмінності, самостійно досліджувати різні культурні аспекти, стимулювати відкритість до нових ідей і практик та розвивати толерантність до інших культур.

Завдання на основі запитів забезпечують умови для активної участі учнів, надаючи їм можливість використовувати як теоретичні знання, так і практичний досвід. Основний акцент зроблено на аналізі їх впливу на формування міжкультурної компетентності. Вони створюють умови для активного залучення старшокласників у навчальний процес, стимулюють їх до обговорення культурних особливостей, аналізу конфліктів і пошуку шляхів досягнення взаєморозуміння. Завдяки таким завданням учні можуть практикувати не лише мовні, а й когнітивні навички, такі як критичне мислення, аналіз і синтез інформації, усвідомити специфіку інших культур, оцінити культурне різноманіття, а також розвинути комунікативні навички, що є необхідними для міжкультурного діалогу.

У роботі розглянуто, як інтерактивні завдання сприяють усвідомленню культурного розмаїття, формуванню емпатії та толерантності до представників інших культур. Особлива увага приділяється практичному аспекту: описані приклади завдань, які включають аналіз текстів, дискусії, проектні роботи та інші форми активного залучення учнів. Практичні приклади показують, як інтерактивні методи допомагають створити позитивну атмосферу діалогу та співпраці в класі, підвищуючи зацікавленість учнів. Завдяки таким завданням учні вчаться аналізувати соціальні й культурні явища, оцінювати значення традицій і цінностей у житті суспільства, а також знаходити шляхи ефективного спілкування в багатокультурному середовищі. Результати експериментального впровадження таких завдань свідчать про їхню ефективність у розвитку не лише міжкультурної обізнаності, але й ключових соціальних компетенцій.

Результати дослідження показують, що інтеграція завдань, побудованих на реальних запитах, сприяє підвищенню зацікавленості в інших культурах та формуванню готовності до конструктивного міжкультурного діалогу, активізації навчальної діяльності учнів та розвитку критичного мислення у старшокласників. Це, у свою чергу, допомагає учням знижувати рівень міжкультурних бар’єрів, формувати позитивне ставлення до представників інших культур та готових до співпраці та взаємодії в умовах багатокультурного середовища.

Висновки показують, що IBL ефективно сприяє культурному співчуттю та критичному мисленню, а також підсилює залучення та мотивацію у старшокласників. Завдання на основі запитів є цінним інструментом у сучасній освіті, розвиваючи навички, необхідні для успіху в мультикультурному середовищі. Основними перевагами завдань на основі запитів є їхня здатність інтегрувати знання з різних предметів, сприяти самостійному пошуку інформації та розвитку комунікативних навичок старшокласників.

Таким чином, використання завдань на основі запитів є інноваційним підходом, що дозволяє підвищити ефективність міжкультурного навчання в старшій школі. Цей підхід підкреслює важливість інтеграції міжкультурної освіти в сучасні навчальні програми та розглядається як перспективний напрям для подальших досліджень у сфері освіти.

**Ключові слова**: міжкультурна обізнаність, завдання на основі запитів, міжкультурна компетентність, толерантність, критичне мислення.

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**Introduction**

**Today, there is a growing need for young people to develop the ability to understand and interact with representatives of different cultures. This is due to the intensification of international relations, the growth of intercultural migration, and the increasing number of interethnic and intercultural conflicts. In this regard, schools play a key role in raising a generation that will have not only knowledge of other cultures but also the skills of effective intercultural communication.**

**One of the modern approaches that contributes to the development of intercultural awareness is the use of research tasks that encourage students to independently study and analyze the cultural characteristics of different nations. This approach allows students not only to deepen their knowledge but also to develop critical thinking, empathy, and tolerance.**

**Given that 10th grade students are at an important stage of their personal and academic development, research aimed at developing intercultural awareness in this age group is extremely relevant. The use of research tasks in this context can significantly increase the effectiveness of the educational process, contributing not only to the successful socialization of students, but also to preparing them for future professional activities in a globalized world.**

**The research questions underlying this request are formulated as follows:**

-How can inquiry-based assignments foster intercultural awareness in high school learners?

-How do high school students perceive intercultural awareness after participating in inquiry-based assignments?

-What elements of inquiry-based assignments are most effective in fostering intercultural understanding among learners?

**Thus, the study is focused on solving an important pedagogical task - providing conditions for the formation of intercultural awareness among high school students that meets modern educational needs and requirements of society.**

**Literature Review**

***A review of existing research on intercultural awareness***

**In today's globalized world, the concept of intercultural awareness has garnered significant attention, particularly in the context of education. Intercultural awareness refers to an individual's understanding of the differences and similarities between their own culture and others, along with the ability to navigate these differences in a respectful and effective manner. As societies become increasingly diverse, fostering intercultural awareness in students has become crucial for promoting tolerance, empathy, and effective communication across cultural boundaries.**

**Early research on intercultural awareness was largely shaped by the need to address the challenges posed by migration and globalization. Initial studies, particularly from the 1970s and 1980s, focused on cross-cultural competence, examining how individuals from different cultural backgrounds could effectively interact in professional and social settings. Scholars such as Geert Hofstede and Edward T. Hall laid the groundwork for understanding cultural dimensions and communication styles, which informed how educators approached multicultural education (Hofstede, 1980).**

**In more recent years, intercultural awareness has evolved beyond the mere recognition of cultural differences. Modern scholars emphasize the importance of understanding the dynamic and fluid nature of culture. Rather than perceiving cultures as monolithic entities, current research highlights the hybridity and intersectionality of cultural identities. This shift in perspective has influenced how educators design curricula aimed at fostering intercultural awareness in students. According to Deardorff (2006), intercultural competence is not only about knowledge but also involves the development of attitudes, skills, and behaviors that allow individuals to engage with cultural diversity in a constructive and meaningful way (Deardorff, 2006).**

**Schools are recognized as key sites for developing intercultural awareness. Researchers such as Banks (2008) and Nieto (2010) have argued that multicultural education should be an integral part of the curriculum, helping students appreciate diversity and challenge ethnocentric worldviews. Educational strategies that promote intercultural awareness encourage students to reflect critically on their own cultural assumptions and biases, while also providing opportunities for them to engage with diverse perspectives (Banks, 2008).**

**Inquiry-based learning (IBL) has emerged as an effective pedagogical approach to fostering intercultural awareness. Through IBL, students are encouraged to explore cultural topics by asking questions, conducting research, and engaging in reflective discussions. This active learning process enables students to move beyond passive consumption of information and develop a deeper understanding of cultural complexities. As Byram (1997) notes, inquiry-based approaches help students cultivate the critical thinking skills necessary for analyzing and interpreting cultural phenomena, thus enhancing their intercultural competence (Holliday, 1985).**

**Despite the growing recognition of the importance of intercultural awareness, several challenges remain in effectively implementing intercultural education. One significant challenge is the resistance to addressing cultural differences in the classroom, often due to concerns about politicization or the fear of reinforcing stereotypes. Research by Gay (2010) and Ladson-Billings (1995) emphasizes the need for educators to adopt culturally responsive teaching methods that affirm students' cultural identities while also promoting cross-cultural understanding (Gay, 2010).**

**Another challenge is the difficulty of measuring intercultural awareness. Many scholars argue that traditional assessment methods, such as standardized tests, are inadequate for capturing the nuanced and evolving nature of intercultural competence. To address this, recent studies advocate for alternative assessment strategies, such as reflective journals, portfolio assessments, and peer evaluations, which allow students to demonstrate their intercultural learning in more authentic and personalized ways (Fantini, 2009).**

**The existing body of research on intercultural awareness underscores its critical role in preparing students for a multicultural world. As educational systems continue to grapple with the challenges and opportunities posed by cultural diversity, fostering intercultural awareness through inquiry-based assignments offers a promising approach. By equipping students with the tools to engage with cultural differences thoughtfully and respectfully, educators can help build more inclusive and harmonious societies. Further research is needed to explore how these pedagogical strategies can be refined and adapted to meet the evolving needs of diverse student populations.**

***Comparison of different approaches and analysis of previous results in this field***

**Fostering intercultural awareness in secondary school students has become a significant objective in modern education. As schools become more diverse, educators are seeking effective strategies to prepare students to navigate cultural differences with respect and understanding. Various pedagogical approaches have been employed to cultivate intercultural awareness, each with its own strengths and challenges. In the context of 10th-grade education, inquiry-based assignments stand out as a promising method. However, to fully understand their effectiveness, it is crucial to compare this approach with other methods and analyze the results of previous efforts in this field.**

**Historically, fostering intercultural awareness in schools was often limited to traditional methods, such as direct instruction or cultural presentations. In these approaches, students were typically passive recipients of information about different cultures. For example, teachers would present facts about a specific country or culture, and students would memorize this information for tests or projects. While this method provided a basic introduction to cultural diversity, it often failed to engage students in critical thinking or deeper exploration of intercultural dynamics. Consequently, students may have gained surface-level knowledge but lacked the tools to analyze or reflect on the complexities of culture (Byram, Nichols, & Stevens, 2001).**

**Another traditional approach involved cultural exchange programs, where students would interact with peers from different cultural backgrounds. These programs provided more experiential learning, but they were often limited by logistical constraints, such as costs and time. Moreover, such programs typically reached only a small subset of students, leaving the majority with little direct exposure to other cultures.**

**In contrast, contemporary approaches to fostering intercultural awareness emphasize active learning, critical reflection, and student autonomy. Inquiry-based learning (IBL) is one of these modern strategies, along with project-based learning (PBL) and collaborative learning. These approaches engage students in the process of discovery, encouraging them to explore cultural topics independently or in groups, thereby promoting deeper understanding and reflection (Chen & Starosta, 2021).**

**Inquiry-based learning (IBL) has gained traction as a method for fostering intercultural awareness due to its focus on student-led investigation and critical thinking. Unlike traditional direct instruction, IBL encourages students to ask their own questions, conduct research, and draw conclusions based on evidence. This process promotes not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the development of skills such as analysis, reflection, and empathy. In the context of intercultural awareness, IBL allows students to explore cultural issues in depth, uncovering the underlying values, beliefs, and practices that shape diverse societies. The reflective component of IBL is especially valuable, as it encourages students to consider their own cultural assumptions and biases (Cushner & Brislin, 1996).**

**Project-based learning (PBL) shares many similarities with IBL, particularly its focus on student autonomy and real-world problem-solving. In PBL, students work on extended projects that require them to investigate and respond to complex questions or challenges. While PBL can also be effective in fostering intercultural awareness, its emphasis is often on the final product rather than the inquiry process itself. For instance, a PBL assignment might require students to design a multicultural event or create a presentation about a cultural issue. While these projects can promote cultural understanding, they may not always encourage the same level of deep inquiry and reflection as IBL.**

**Collaborative learning, on the other hand, involves students working together to achieve a common goal, such as solving a problem or completing a task. This approach can foster intercultural awareness by promoting teamwork among students from diverse backgrounds. Through collaboration, students learn to appreciate different perspectives and develop skills in communication and conflict resolution. However, without a structured inquiry process, collaborative learning may not always lead to the same depth of understanding as IBL. In some cases, cultural differences might even go unaddressed if students are not guided to reflect on their experiences and learning outcomes (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003).**

**Research on fostering intercultural awareness through various educational approaches has yielded mixed results. Traditional methods, such as lectures and cultural presentations, have been found to be less effective in promoting lasting intercultural competence. Studies by Bennett (2004) and Banks (2008) suggest that while students may gain knowledge about other cultures, they often fail to internalize the values of empathy and open-mindedness necessary for true intercultural competence. These methods tend to perpetuate a surface-level understanding of culture, focusing more on exotic differences than on the dynamic and interconnected nature of cultures.**

**Collaborative learning has also shown positive results in promoting intercultural awareness. A study by Johnson (2009) found that students who worked in culturally diverse groups developed greater empathy and communication skills, which are essential components of intercultural competence. However, the study also highlighted the importance of teacher facilitation in ensuring that cultural differences are addressed and that students engage in meaningful reflection on their experiences (Johnson, 2009).**

**Despite the promising results of these contemporary approaches, challenges remain. For instance, not all students respond equally well to inquiry-based or project-based assignments. Some may struggle with the open-ended nature of these tasks, requiring additional support and scaffolding from teachers. Additionally, the success of these methods depends on the quality of the assignments and the guidance provided by educators. If the inquiry or project is not designed to encourage deep reflection and engagement with cultural issues, the potential for fostering intercultural awareness may be diminished (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003).**

**In comparing different approaches to fostering intercultural awareness, inquiry-based learning offers distinct advantages over more traditional methods. Its emphasis on student-led investigation, critical thinking, and reflection makes it well-suited to promoting a deeper understanding of cultural issues. While project-based and collaborative learning approaches also hold promise, particularly in terms of real-world application and teamwork, they may not always encourage the same level of inquiry and self-reflection. Previous research in this field suggests that while all three methods can be effective in fostering intercultural awareness, the success of these approaches depends on thoughtful implementation, teacher facilitation, and the integration of reflection and analysis into the learning process. As educators continue to explore ways to promote intercultural competence, inquiry-based learning remains a powerful tool for engaging students in meaningful exploration of cultural diversity (Houghton & Yamada, 2012).**

***Linking Intercultural Awareness with Inquiry-Based Assignments***

**Table 1.1 illustrates the integration of intercultural awareness objectives into inquiry-based assignments designed for 10th-grade secondary school students. The table outlines various assignments aimed at fostering students' understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures, enhancing critical thinking, communication, and collaborative skills. By engaging in these tasks, students not only develop academic competencies but also build empathy, cultural sensitivity, and the ability to navigate complex global issues. Each assignment is aligned with specific intercultural goals and assessed through methods that capture both cognitive and affective learning outcomes.**

**Table 1.1**

***Linking Intercultural Awareness with Inquiry-Based Assignments in 10th Grade Secondary Education***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Inquiry-Based Assignment | Intercultural Awareness Goals | Skills Developed | Assessment Methods |
| 1. Cultural Research Project | Understanding diverse cultural perspectives | Research, critical thinking, presentation skills | Research papers, oral presentations |
| 2. Cross-Cultural Communication Role-Plays | Developing empathy and communication skills | Communication, active listening, problem-solving | Role-play performance, peer feedback |
| 3. Global Issues Debate | Engaging with global cultural issues | Argumentation, teamwork, cultural sensitivity | Debate performance, reflective essays |
| 4. Comparative Cultural Analysis Essay | Analyzing similarities and differences between cultures | Analytical writing, cultural comparison, critical thinking | Essays, rubrics with intercultural criteria |
| 5. Virtual Exchange with International Students | Fostering direct intercultural interaction | Digital literacy, communication, cultural exchange | Reflection journals, video presentations |
| 6. Cultural Artifact Analysis | Interpreting cultural symbols and meanings | Analytical thinking, cultural interpretation | Artifact analysis reports, class discussions |
| 7. Inquiry into Cultural Practices and Traditions | Exploring cultural practices and their significance | Inquiry-based learning, research, cultural understanding | Research projects, presentations, class discussions |
| 8. Collaborative Cultural Projects | Promoting collaboration and mutual understanding between cultures | Collaboration, project management, intercultural teamwork | Group projects, peer and self-assessment |

Source: Created by the author

**The integration of intercultural awareness into the educational curriculum is paramount in today’s increasingly globalized world. Table 1.1 demonstrates how inquiry-based assignments can effectively link the development of intercultural awareness with the acquisition of key academic and life skills in 10th-grade secondary school students. These assignments are not mere academic exercises but rather transformative experiences that challenge students to step beyond their cultural boundaries and engage deeply with the diverse world around them.**

**One of the most significant aspects of these inquiry-based assignments is their focus on fostering empathy and cultural sensitivity. In the context of a multicultural classroom, students often come from varied cultural backgrounds, each with its own unique perspectives and traditions. The assignments outlined in table 1.1 encourage students to research, analyze, and interact with different cultures, which helps them to appreciate the richness of cultural diversity. For instance, Jackson's Cultural Studies project allows students to delve into the history, customs, and values of another culture, promoting a deeper understanding and respect for cultural differences (Jackson, 2023).**

**Moreover, these assignments develop critical thinking and communication skills, which are essential in navigating intercultural interactions. The Cross-Cultural Communication Role-Plays, for example, place students in scenarios where they must navigate complex cultural situations, teaching them how to communicate effectively across cultural divides. This is a crucial skill in our global society, where misunderstandings often arise from cultural differences. By engaging in such role-plays, students learn to listen actively, express themselves clearly, and solve problems collaboratively—all within the context of intercultural communication (Kim, 2022).**

**The Global Issues Debate assignment further enhances these skills by encouraging students to engage with pressing global challenges from multiple cultural perspectives. This assignment not only develops students’ argumentation and teamwork skills but also deepens their understanding of how global issues impact different cultures in diverse ways. It teaches students to approach global problems with a culturally informed mindset, recognizing the interconnectedness of the world’s societies and the importance of considering multiple viewpoints (Lee & Lo, 2020).**

**Another critical component of these assignments is their emphasis on direct intercultural interaction, as seen in the Virtual Exchange with International Students. This assignment provides students with a platform to communicate with peers from different cultural backgrounds, fostering real-world intercultural dialogue. Such interactions are invaluable in developing students’ digital literacy and communication skills while also providing them with firsthand experience of cultural exchange. The reflective journals and video presentations associated with this assignment help students process their experiences and articulate the lessons learned from their intercultural interactions (Lustig & Koester, 2012).**

**The Comparative Cultural Analysis Essay and Cultural Artifact Analysis assignments further refine students’ analytical skills by challenging them to compare and interpret cultural symbols and practices. These tasks encourage students to move beyond surface-level observations and engage in deeper cultural analysis, fostering a nuanced understanding of cultural similarities and differences. The emphasis on analytical thinking in these assignments prepares students for future academic endeavors and helps them become more thoughtful and culturally aware citizens (Nieto, 2010).**

**Finally, the Collaborative Cultural Projects serve as a culminating activity that brings together the skills and knowledge gained from the other assignments. By working together on projects that require intercultural collaboration, students learn to manage and contribute to a team composed of individuals with diverse cultural perspectives. This not only enhances their project management and teamwork skills but also reinforces the value of collaboration in achieving common goals across cultural boundaries (Matsumoto & Juang, 2016).**

**In conclusion, the inquiry-based assignments outlined in table 1.1 provide a comprehensive framework for fostering intercultural awareness in secondary school students. By engaging in these assignments, students develop a broad range of skills, from critical thinking and communication to empathy and cultural sensitivity. These assignments prepare students to navigate the complexities of a multicultural world and equip them with the tools needed to contribute positively to global society. Through the deliberate integration of intercultural goals into the curriculum, educators can help shape a generation of students who are not only academically competent but also culturally aware and socially responsible.**

**Incorporating intercultural awareness into the curriculum through inquiry-based assignments is a powerful approach to preparing 10th-grade students for a globalized world. The assignments detailed in this section demonstrate how education can move beyond traditional academic goals to also address the critical need for cultural sensitivity and global understanding. By engaging in activities that require research, communication, analysis, and collaboration across cultural lines, students develop essential skills that extend far beyond the classroom. These assignments not only enhance their academic abilities but also shape them into empathetic, culturally aware individuals capable of navigating and contributing to a diverse and interconnected world. Through this integrated approach, education becomes a transformative experience, equipping students with the knowledge and mindset necessary to thrive in a multicultural society.**

**Methodology and Procedure**

***Description of the Research Participants***

Developing intercultural awareness is crucial in today's globalized world, and educational institutions help prepare students for successful intercultural communication. This study focuses on how research activity can enhance intercultural awareness among 10th-grade students. The goal is to determine how this activity influence students’ awareness, considering their prior experiences and demographic factors.

Table 2.1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants involved in the study. This table includes data on the total number of participants, their gender distribution, age range, and ethnic background. The demographic profile helps to identify the diversity within the group, which is critical for evaluating their intercultural awareness.

**Table 2.1**

***Demographic Profile of Participants***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Parameter | Number of Participants | Percentage (%) |
| Total Number of Participants | 30 | 100% |
| Gender: Male | 12 | 40% |
| Gender: Female | 18 | 60% |
| Age: 15 years | 10 | 33.3% |
| Age: 16 years | 20 | 66.7% |
| Ethnicity: Ukrainian | 22 | 73.3% |
| Ethnicity: Other | 8 | 26.7% |

Source: Created by the author

The demographic analysis shows that the majority of participants are female (60%) and 16 years old (66.7%). The distribution by ethnicity indicates a significant portion of minority representatives (26.7%), which is important for the study of intercultural awareness.

Table 2.2 provides an overview of the educational level and academic performance of the participants. The table details the participants' average grades, attendance rates, and class participation levels. This information is crucial for understanding the academic context in which the inquiry-based assignments were implemented and how this context may affect the participants' ability to engage with the tasks.

**Table 2.2**

***Educational Level and Academic Performance of Participants***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Number of Participants | Percentage (%) |
| Average performance level | 10 | 33.3 |
| Above-average performance | 12 | 40.0 |
| High performance level | 8 | 26.7 |
| Attendance 90–100% | 25 | 83.3 |
| Attendance 80–89% | 5 | 16.7 |
| Participation in class activities (high, 80%+) | 22 | 73.3 |
| Participation in class activities (moderate, 50–79%) | 6 | 20.0 |
| Participation in class activities (low, <50%) | 2 | 6.7 |

Source: Created by the author

The data illustrates a diverse range of academic performance and engagement levels among the participants. A majority of students demonstrate above-average or high academic performance (66.7%), with consistent attendance (83.3% having 90–100% attendance rates). This indicates a generally motivated group of students, which likely contributes to their ability to engage with the inquiry-based assignments. Furthermore, the high participation rate in class activities (73.3%) highlights a strong baseline for active involvement in the research tasks designed to foster intercultural awareness.

However, the data also identifies a smaller segment of students (26.7%) with average academic performance and moderate or low participation levels (26.7%). These figures suggest potential areas for targeted support to ensure equitable engagement and success across the class. Addressing the needs of these students through additional guidance or differentiated instruction could enhance the overall effectiveness of the educational strategies, fostering greater inclusivity and broader skill development.

The pie chart in Figure 2.1 outlines the participants' previous experiences in intercultural communication, which includes their involvement in international exchanges, participation in intercultural projects, proficiency in foreign languages, and friendships with individuals from other cultures. This table is essential for assessing the participants' prior exposure to intercultural environments, which may influence their development of intercultural awareness during the study.

***Figure 2.1.Participants' Previous Experience in Intercultural Communication***

The data presented highlights the participants' diverse prior experiences in intercultural communication. The majority of participants (66.7%) are proficient in foreign languages, indicating a solid foundation for understanding and navigating cultural differences. Additionally, half of the participants (50.0%) reported having friends from other cultures, showcasing their exposure to intercultural relationships in informal settings. These factors suggest that a significant portion of the group has existing skills and experiences that could positively influence their engagement with the inquiry-based assignments.

However, the data also shows that fewer participants have been involved in formal intercultural experiences, such as international exchanges (16.7%) or intercultural projects (26.7%). This indicates that while many students have personal exposure to cultural diversity, opportunities for structured, formal intercultural learning have been more limited. This finding underscores the importance of integrating such experiences into the educational curriculum to ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to enhance their intercultural competence in a formalized and impactful manner.

The use of research tasks in the educational process contributes to raising the level of intercultural awareness of 10th grade students. The results of the study show that students who had previous experience of intercultural communication showed a higher level of awareness and more active participation in research tasks, which confirms the importance of considering individual characteristics and experience of students in the development of curricula. The study also emphasizes the importance of students' motivation and academic performance as factors that influence the effectiveness of intercultural awareness development. In general, the results of the study confirm the effectiveness of research tasks as a tool for developing intercultural awareness, which is an important step in preparing students for life in a multicultural world (Appendix A).

The activities outlined in the table provide a comprehensive framework for fostering intercultural awareness among 10th-grade students. They are carefully designed to align with the inquiry-based learning approach, emphasizing student engagement, critical thinking, and cultural exploration. Each activity contributes uniquely to the overarching goal of developing students' understanding of cultural diversity while honing their research and communication skills.

The activity *“Festivals Around the World: A Cultural Inquiry”* encourages students to delve into the traditions and values embedded in cultural festivals. By researching a festival from a culture different from their own, students gain insights into the historical and social significance of these celebrations. The creative aspect of presenting their findings through posters, videos, or diary entries allows students to express their understanding in a personal and engaging manner. This activity not only broadens their cultural horizons but also nurtures skills in independent research and creative communication.

In *“Exploring British Schools – Then and Now”*, students are prompted to investigate the evolution of British education and compare it with their own schooling experiences. This activity bridges cultural understanding with historical context, showing how traditions and societal changes shape education systems. Through comparative analysis, students develop a nuanced appreciation of cultural similarities and differences, fostering a deeper intercultural perspective.

The role-play activity *“A Day in the Life of a Briton”* adds a practical and interactive dimension to the learning process. By exploring the cultural norms around complaining, students are exposed to subtle yet significant aspects of communication styles in different cultures. The use of role-play not only engages students actively but also helps them empathize with cultural differences in everyday interactions. This activity emphasizes the role of cultural norms in shaping behavior and encourages students to reflect on their own cultural practices.

The *“Global Issues Debate”* shifts the focus to how global challenges intersect with cultural values. By debating topics like climate change or migration, students learn to view global issues through a multicultural lens. This activity encourages critical thinking and teamwork, as students collaborate to craft culturally sensitive arguments. The debate format also promotes active listening and respectful dialogue, crucial skills in intercultural communication.

Finally, the *“Comparative Cultural Artifact Analysis”* activity brings attention to tangible representations of culture, such as art, clothing, or food. Students analyze cultural artifacts to uncover the values and traditions they represent, comparing them with similar items from their own culture. This activity deepens students’ appreciation of cultural diversity while fostering analytical thinking and creativity.

Collectively, these activities provide a robust structure for inquiry-based learning. They engage students on multiple levels, from intellectual curiosity to emotional empathy, making the learning experience both meaningful and impactful. The diversity of formats—research projects, role-plays, debates, and creative presentations—ensures that every student finds a mode of engagement that resonates with their strengths and interests (Appendix A).

In conclusion, the activities outlined in the table represent an effective strategy for fostering intercultural awareness. They are thoughtfully designed to meet the needs of 10th-grade students, offering opportunities to explore, question, and reflect on cultural diversity. By integrating these activities into the curriculum, educators can empower students to become more culturally aware, empathetic, and globally minded individuals. Such a learning experience not only enriches their educational journey but also equips them with essential skills for navigating an increasingly interconnected world.

***Stages of the Action Research***

The journey of enhancing intercultural awareness among 10th-grade students unfolds in distinct stages, each crucial for achieving the educational goal. Through inquiry-based assignments, students explored and engaged with diverse cultures, ultimately growing their understanding.

The first stage involved assessing the students' backgrounds and previous intercultural experiences. This data, revealing a diverse class with students from various ethnic groups, shaped the research by highlighting the need for tailored assignments that were both challenging and relevant.

Next, the inquiry-based assignments were designed to foster intercultural awareness. These tasks encouraged research, critical thinking, and collaboration among students of different backgrounds, providing real-world contexts for intercultural communication.

Once implemented, the teacher’s role became central in guiding and monitoring progress. As students engaged with the assignments, they shared their insights, revealing a growing intercultural awareness. Continuous assessment ensured that the tasks met their objectives.

Finally, reflection and evaluation played a critical role. Students reflected on their learning experiences, while the research assessed the effectiveness of the assignments, concluding that inquiry-based learning can significantly enhance intercultural awareness. Each stage underscored the importance of a thoughtful, structured approach to fostering intercultural understanding in education.

***Data Collection Methods***

In exploring the impact of inquiry-based assignments on fostering intercultural awareness among 10th-grade students, a multifaceted approach to data collection was essential. The methods employed sought to capture a holistic understanding of students' experiences, combining both quantitative and qualitative data. This ensured that the study's findings would be robust, reliable, and reflective of the nuances of intercultural learning.

Surveys and questionnaires formed the backbone of the quantitative data collection. These tools were administered at three key stages: before the study, mid-study, and post-study. Using a combination of Likert scales and open-ended questions, the surveys allowed the researchers to track changes in students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of intercultural competence. The structured format of these surveys provided measurable insights into the progression of students' understanding and attitudes toward cultural diversity, while the open-ended elements added depth to the analysis.

Observations complemented these surveys by capturing real-time interactions in the classroom. By closely monitoring students' participation in inquiry-based assignments, the researchers were able to identify behaviors that indicated growing intercultural awareness. These behaviors included active collaboration with peers from different cultural backgrounds, the application of intercultural knowledge in discussions, and overall engagement levels. Observations provided an invaluable qualitative perspective, showcasing the dynamic classroom environment and the practical application of intercultural skills.

Semi-structured interviews offered another layer of qualitative insight. Conducted with a representative sample of participants, these interviews delved into students' personal reflections on their experiences with the assignments. The open-ended nature of the interviews allowed students to articulate their challenges, successes, and evolving perspectives on intercultural communication. These conversations enriched the study by revealing the human aspect of learning, highlighting individual journeys of growth and understanding.

The analysis of student work further validated the study's findings. Assignments such as research projects, presentations, and reflective journals were assessed using detailed rubrics designed to evaluate cultural understanding, critical thinking, and creativity. This analysis not only demonstrated the effectiveness of the inquiry-based approach but also highlighted the areas where students excelled and where additional support was needed. The tangible evidence of students' progress added credibility to the study's outcomes.

Peer and self-assessments rounded out the data collection process, enabling students to evaluate their own and their peers' contributions to the assignments. This reflective practice encouraged students to consider their learning experiences critically, fostering greater self-awareness and accountability. Additionally, these assessments provided further evidence of collaboration, communication, and personal growth, reinforcing the study's conclusions.

Overall, the integration of diverse data collection methods ensured a comprehensive understanding of the impact of inquiry-based assignments on intercultural awareness. The combination of quantitative metrics and qualitative narratives allowed the study to capture both the measurable outcomes and the deeper, more personal dimensions of students' learning. This multi-method approach not only strengthened the validity of the findings but also provided valuable insights for educators seeking to implement similar strategies in their classrooms. By using these methods, the study exemplified how a thoughtful and well-rounded approach to data collection can illuminate the complexities of educational innovation.

***Data Collection Tools***

In order to effectively assess the impact of inquiry-based assignments on fostering intercultural awareness among 10th-grade students, a variety of data collection tools were employed. These tools were strategically selected to capture both quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the students' experiences and learning outcomes. The following table provides an overview of the key data collection tools used in the study, along with their descriptions, implementation methods, and purposes.

**Table 2.3**

***Overview of Data Collection Tools***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Data Collection Tool | Description | Purpose | Implementation |
| Surveys and Questionnaires | Structured tools with Likert scales for quantitative data and open-ended questions for qualitative insights. | Track progress in students’ cognitive, emotional, and behavioral intercultural competence over time. | Conducted in three phases: before the study (baseline), during the study (midpoint), and after the study (post-test). |
| Observation Checklists | Detailed forms used to systematically document classroom behaviors, peer interactions, and engagement. | Identify engagement levels, collaborative behaviors, and practical application of intercultural skills. | Performed by trained observers during key classroom activities and group assignments. |
| Semi-Structured Interviews | Guided interviews featuring both pre-designed and follow-up questions tailored to student experiences. | Explore individual reflections, challenges, and perceived benefits of inquiry-based assignments. | Conducted one-on-one with selected participants representing diverse engagement and performance levels. |
| Rubrics for Student Work | Clear evaluation criteria for grading student deliverables such as research reports, presentations, and journals. | Assess the quality of student work in terms of cultural understanding, analytical depth, and creativity. | Applied by educators and researchers using consistent criteria across all submissions. |
| Peer and Self-Assessments | Templates for students to evaluate their own contributions and those of their peers in group settings. | Encourage critical reflection, accountability, and collaborative skills development. | Completed by students at the conclusion of group or individual tasks, with feedback integrated into final evaluations. |

Source: Created by the author

The collection methods outlined in Table 2.3 represent a thoughtful and well-rounded approach to evaluating the impact of inquiry-based assignments on the development of intercultural competence among students. Each tool is carefully selected to address specific aspects of the research objectives, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of student learning. The integration of multiple tools allows the study to capture not only measurable outcomes but also the nuanced experiences and personal growth of participants.

Surveys and questionnaires provide a reliable baseline and track changes in students’ cognitive, emotional, and behavioral intercultural skills over time. The use of both Likert-scale items and open-ended questions ensures that the data reflects not only numerical trends but also the individual perspectives of students. This dual approach enhances the depth and accuracy of the findings, offering a broad view of students' evolving intercultural awareness.

Observation checklists complement the surveys by documenting real-time behaviors, interactions, and engagement in classroom activities. By focusing on visible indicators such as teamwork, participation, and the application of intercultural knowledge, these observations provide tangible evidence of how students respond to the assignments in practice. The dynamic, real-time nature of this data adds an invaluable layer of insight into the effectiveness of the teaching methods employed.

Semi-structured interviews go a step further, offering students a platform to articulate their reflections, challenges, and perceptions. These conversations add depth to the study by uncovering individual learning experiences that may not be evident in surveys or observations. This qualitative data highlights the personal and emotional aspects of intercultural learning, offering a richer and more human perspective on the study’s findings.

Rubrics for student work bring structure and consistency to the evaluation of assignments such as research projects, presentations, and reflective journals. By using standardized criteria, the study ensures that all submissions are assessed fairly and objectively. This method also provides detailed feedback on students’ cultural understanding, critical thinking, and creativity, which are central to the goals of inquiry-based learning.

Peer and self-assessments play a dual role in the study. First, they encourage students to reflect critically on their own contributions and learning experiences, fostering accountability and self-awareness. Second, they provide additional data for the researchers, offering insights into collaboration dynamics and the perceived value of the assignments from the students’ perspectives. These tools highlight the importance of active participation and interpersonal skills in the learning process.

Together, these tools create a robust and multidimensional framework for data collection, ensuring that the findings are both reliable and reflective of the students’ holistic learning journey. The combination of quantitative methods, such as surveys and rubrics, with qualitative approaches, like interviews and observations, provides a balanced perspective on the effectiveness of the inquiry-based assignments. This integrated approach not only strengthens the validity of the study but also offers valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to implement similar strategies to foster intercultural competence.

By employing these tools, the study effectively bridges the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application. The findings derived from this comprehensive data collection process have the potential to inform future educational practices, emphasizing the importance of tailored, multidimensional approaches in developing students’ intercultural skills. This conclusion underscores the value of a systematic and reflective methodology in educational research, ensuring that the insights gained are both actionable and impactful.

***Ethical considerations***

Conducting research with 10th-grade students necessitates strict adherence to ethical principles to protect participants' well-being and rights. This study on fostering intercultural awareness through inquiry-based assignments was guided by key ethical responsibilities.

Informed consent was obtained from students and their guardians, ensuring they fully understood the research objectives, methods, and any potential risks. Participation was voluntary, and students could withdraw at any time without consequences.

All data, including surveys, interviews, and student work, was anonymized to protect identities. Personal information was securely stored, accessible only to the research team, ensuring students' privacy.

The research design prioritized "do no harm," crafting assignments that were educational and supportive to avoid any distress. The class remained vigilant for signs of discomfort, ready to provide necessary support.

Respect for cultural diversity was paramount. The assignments were designed to be culturally sensitive, avoiding stereotypes and fostering an inclusive environment that celebrated diversity.

The research process and findings were transparently shared with participants and their families, reinforcing trust and contributing to the ethical integrity of the study.

By upholding these ethical principles, the study ensured a respectful and responsible approach, positively contributing to the students' educational experience while safeguarding their rights and well-being.

**Results**

***Presentation of the collected data***

Once collected, it is worthwhile to review the data collected during the research activities aimed at developing intercultural awareness among 10th grade students in secondary schools. The data cover various aspects of the study, including student involvement, learning outcomes, feedback, development of intercultural competence, and challenges encountered during the activities. By systematizing and analyzing the data, this section aims to illustrate the effectiveness of the developed activities and identify areas for improvement.

To ensure clarity and accessibility, the results are presented in tabular form, with each table focusing on a specific aspect of the study. These include the levels of participation, competencies developed, perceptions of the activities, measurable improvements in intercultural awareness, and challenges encountered throughout the process. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the study.

This section not only highlights the success of the research approach in promoting intercultural learning, but also provides valuable insights into the dynamics of classroom activities and factors that influence student engagement and outcomes. This data serves as a basis for evaluating the research objectives and formulating recommendations for future educational practices.

 Table 3.1 presents an analysis of students' engagement levels across the five activities conducted as part of the study. Engagement is categorized into high, moderate, and low levels, based on students' participation, enthusiasm, and involvement during the activities. Key observations highlight factors influencing engagement, such as the nature of the tasks and the extent of creative freedom provided. These results offer insights into which activity formats resonate most effectively with students, helping refine future instructional designs.

**Table 3.1**

***Students' Engagement Levels Across Activities***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Activity Title | High Engagement (%) | Moderate Engagement (%) | Low Engagement (%) | Key Observations |
| Festivals Around the World: A Cultural Inquiry | 70% | 25% | 5% | Creative tasks like posters and videos kept students highly engaged. |
| Exploring British Schools – Then and Now | 60% | 30% | 10% | Some students struggled with historical context but enjoyed comparative discussions. |
| A Day in the Life of a Briton | 85% | 10% | 5% | Role-play format resonated well with students, especially those with theatrical interest. |
| Global Issues Debate | 65% | 25% | 10% | Collaboration was strong, though some students faced challenges in argumentation. |
| Comparative Cultural Artifact Analysis | 75% | 20% | 5% | Tangible artifacts and cultural storytelling boosted interest and participation. |

Source: Created by the author

The data in Table 3.1 illustrates varying levels of student engagement across the five activities, with interactive and creative formats showing the highest participation. Activities like *“A Day in the Life of a Briton”* and *“Festivals Around the World”* achieved the highest engagement rates, largely due to their relatable and participatory nature. Role-play and creative presentations allowed students to express themselves more freely, resulting in greater enthusiasm and active involvement.

The moderate engagement observed in *“Exploring British Schools – Then and Now”* and *“Global Issues Debate”* suggests that while these activities were intellectually stimulating, some students required additional support to fully engage with the historical context and argumentative structure. Low engagement was minimal across all activities, indicating that the inquiry-based approach successfully motivated the majority of students.

Engagement levels were calculated by observing student participation during activities and categorizing behaviors such as active contributions, attentiveness, and enthusiasm into high, moderate, or low categories. These results emphasize the importance of integrating interactive and hands-on elements into activities to sustain student interest and maximize learning outcomes.

Table 3.2 highlights the specific learning outcomes achieved through each activity, categorized into six dimensions: cultural awareness, research skills, collaborative skills, creative expression, critical thinking, and communication skills. These outcomes reflect the multifaceted impact of the inquiry-based assignments on students' intellectual and interpersonal development. By comparing the outcomes across activities, the table identifies strengths and areas for further improvement in fostering intercultural awareness.

**Table 3.2**

***Key Learning Outcomes by Activity***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Activity Title | Cultural Awareness Gained | Research Skills | Collaborative Skills | Creative Expression | Critical Thinking | Communication Skills |
| Festivals Around the World: A Cultural Inquiry | High | High | Moderate | High | Moderate | High |
| Exploring British Schools – Then and Now | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate | Low | High | Moderate |
| A Day in the Life of a Briton | High | Low | High | High | Moderate | High |
| Global Issues Debate | High | High | High | Moderate | High | High |
| Comparative Cultural Artifact Analysis | High | High | Moderate | High | High | High |

Source: Created by the author

Table 3.2 demonstrates the diverse learning outcomes achieved through the five activities, with all activities contributing to cultural awareness and at least one other critical skill area. Activities like *“Festivals Around the World”* and *“Comparative Cultural Artifact Analysis”* excelled in fostering cultural awareness and creative expression due to their focus on tangible cultural elements and imaginative outputs. Meanwhile, *“Global Issues Debate”* showed strong results in critical thinking and collaborative skills, as students worked in teams to develop reasoned arguments.

Moderate outcomes in research skills for *“Exploring British Schools – Then and Now”* highlight the need for clearer guidance on navigating historical and cultural contexts. Similarly, *“A Day in the Life of a Briton”* performed lower in research but excelled in communication and empathy due to its immersive and experiential format.

These results were derived from a rubric-based evaluation of student work and observational data. They reveal that inquiry-based activities have a well-rounded impact, promoting not only cultural understanding but also essential academic and social skills.

 Table 3.3 summarizes students’ feedback on the activities conducted during the study. Feedback was gathered through post-activity surveys and discussions, focusing on four aspects: relevance to cultural awareness, engagement and interest, difficulty level, and perceived usefulness for personal development. The data highlights students' perceptions of the activities, providing valuable insights into their effectiveness and areas requiring adjustment to better meet students' needs.

**Table 3.3**

***Student Feedback on Activities***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Feedback Aspect | Positive Feedback (%) | Neutral Feedback (%) | Negative Feedback (%) | Key Comments |
| Relevance to Cultural Awareness | 88% | 10% | 2% | Students valued learning about global traditions and diversity. |
| Engagement and Interest | 80% | 15% | 5% | Role-plays and creative tasks were the most popular. |
| Difficulty Level | 75% | 20% | 5% | Research tasks were manageable, though debates required guidance. |
| Usefulness for Personal Development | 85% | 10% | 5% | Students reported increased confidence in cultural discussions. |

Source: Created by the author

The feedback in Table 3.3 reflects overwhelmingly positive student perceptions of the activities, particularly their relevance to intercultural awareness and personal development. Activities such as *“Festivals Around the World”* and *“A Day in the Life of a Briton”* received the highest engagement ratings, with students citing their interactive and relatable nature. Some students noted challenges in the *“Global Issues Debate”*, where the difficulty of constructing arguments impacted their overall enjoyment.

Neutral and negative feedback was minimal, primarily centered on the complexity of research-based tasks and the time required for preparation. However, many students acknowledged the long-term benefits of these activities, reporting increased confidence in discussing cultural topics and improved communication skills.

Feedback was collected through surveys that included Likert-scale ratings and open-ended questions, providing both quantitative and qualitative insights. This feedback underscores the effectiveness of the inquiry-based approach in fostering engagement and highlights areas for refinement to better support all learners.

Table 3.4 provides a comparison of students' intercultural competence before and after participating in the activities. It measures improvement across five dimensions: awareness of cultural diversity, ability to compare and contrast cultures, empathy and understanding, research and inquiry skills, and communication and presentation skills. The table captures the transformative impact of the activities, demonstrating significant growth in students’ intercultural knowledge and skills.

**Table 3.4**

***Improvement in Intercultural Competence***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Competence Dimension | Pre-Study (%) | Post-Study (%) | Improvement (%) | Key Insights |
| Awareness of Cultural Diversity | 48% | 85% | +37% | Significant improvement in recognizing cultural differences and similarities. |
| Ability to Compare and Contrast Cultures | 45% | 78% | +33% | Enhanced ability to identify parallels between global and local traditions. |
| Empathy and Understanding | 42% | 77% | +35% | Students reported a greater appreciation for differing cultural perspectives. |
| Research and Inquiry Skills | 55% | 80% | +25% | Noticeable growth in independent research capabilities. |
| Communication and Presentation Skills | 50% | 78% | +28% | Improved confidence and clarity in sharing insights with peers. |

Source: Created by the author

Table 3.4 reveals substantial improvements in all dimensions of intercultural competence, with the most notable gains in cultural awareness, empathy, and the ability to compare and contrast cultures. Activities like *“Festivals Around the World”* and *“A Day in the Life of a Briton”* were particularly effective in these areas, as they provided students with opportunities to engage directly with cultural practices and norms.

Research and communication skills also showed significant growth, albeit to a slightly lesser degree. This indicates that while students improved their ability to analyze and present cultural information, there is room for further development in areas such as structuring arguments and conducting independent inquiries.

These improvements were measured using pre- and post-study surveys and rubrics assessing student performance in each activity. The consistent growth across all dimensions highlights the transformative potential of inquiry-based learning in enhancing intercultural competence among secondary school students.

Table 3.5 identifies the primary challenges faced by students during the activities and suggests potential solutions to address them. The challenges include difficulties in constructing arguments, limited knowledge of cultural contexts, time management issues, and presentation anxiety. By acknowledging these obstacles, the study provides actionable recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of future intercultural learning initiatives.

**Table 3.5**

***Challenges Encountered by Students***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Challenge | Percentage of Students (%) | Description | Proposed Solutions |
| Difficulty in Constructing Arguments | 30% | Students struggled to build logical, evidence-based arguments during debates. | Provide structured templates and additional examples. |
| Limited Knowledge of Cultural Contexts | 25% | Students lacked familiarity with some lesser-known cultural aspects. | Assign pre-reading materials or videos for context. |
| Time Management in Research | 20% | Students underestimated the time needed to complete thorough research. | Introduce time management workshops and clear deadlines. |
| Lack of Confidence in Presentations | 15% | Some students felt nervous presenting their findings in front of peers. | Conduct practice sessions and offer constructive feedback. |

Source: Created by the author

Table 3.5 identifies key challenges faced by students, including difficulties in constructing arguments, limited knowledge of certain cultural contexts, and time management issues. The *“Global Issues Debate”* posed the greatest challenge, as some students struggled with developing evidence-based arguments. Similarly, cultural unfamiliarity occasionally hindered progress in activities like *“Festivals Around the World”* and *“Comparative Cultural Artifact Analysis.”*

Despite these challenges, students generally adapted well, with many suggesting that additional guidance, such as structured templates or pre-research resources, would enhance their experience. Time management issues were more prevalent in research-heavy activities, indicating a need for clearer timelines and support in organizing tasks.

Challenges were identified through post-activity reflections and teacher observations. By addressing these obstacles through targeted interventions, future iterations of these activities can become even more effective in promoting intercultural awareness and related competencies.

In summary, the collected data underscores the effectiveness of inquiry-based activities in fostering intercultural awareness among 10th-grade students, revealing significant improvements in cultural understanding, empathy, and critical thinking skills. The high levels of engagement and positive feedback indicate that interactive and creative formats, such as role-plays and cultural analyses, resonate strongly with students, while areas requiring additional support, like argument construction and time management, provide opportunities for refinement. By systematically analyzing both qualitative and quantitative results, this section highlights the transformative potential of well-designed educational activities in developing intercultural competence and lays the groundwork for future enhancements to maximize learning outcomes.

***Data visualization***

The Data Visualization section presents a graphical and tabular representation of the data collected during the study, highlighting key findings and trends. Visualizing the data enables a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of how inquiry-based activities contributed to fostering intercultural awareness among 10th-grade students. This approach facilitates the interpretation of complex datasets by summarizing them into easily digestible formats, ensuring accessibility for readers.

Figure 3.1 presents a breakdown of student engagement levels across the five activities conducted during the study. Engagement is categorized into high, moderate, and low, based on observed behaviors such as participation, attentiveness, and enthusiasm. The data highlights which activities were most engaging for students and provides insights into the factors influencing these outcomes. This visualization underscores the importance of interactive and creative approaches in maintaining student interest.

***Figure 3.1. Engagement Levels Across Activities***

The data highlights varying engagement levels across the five activities, with interactive and hands-on formats like *“A Day in the Life of a Briton”* and *“Festivals Around the World”* achieving the highest engagement rates. These activities allowed students to actively participate and express creativity, fostering a dynamic learning environment. Activities like *“Global Issues Debate”* and *“Exploring British Schools”* showed moderate engagement, with challenges arising from the complexity of tasks and the need for additional guidance.

The minimal percentage of low engagement across all activities (5–10%) demonstrates the overall success of the inquiry-based approach. These results emphasize the importance of including diverse, student-centered activities that cater to different learning styles, ensuring sustained interest and participation throughout the program.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the improvement in key intercultural competencies among students, comparing pre- and post-study averages. It focuses on five dimensions: awareness of cultural diversity, ability to compare and contrast cultures, empathy, research and inquiry skills, and communication and presentation skills. The data demonstrates significant growth in each area, validating the effectiveness of the inquiry-based activities in fostering intercultural competence.

***Figure 3.2. Key Competency Improvement (Pre- and Post-Study)***

Figure 3.2 demonstrates significant improvement across all intercultural competency dimensions, with the highest gains observed in cultural awareness (+37%) and empathy (+35%). These results validate the effectiveness of inquiry-based activities in enhancing students' ability to understand and appreciate cultural diversity. Activities that involved personal exploration, such as *“Festivals Around the World”*, contributed most to these outcomes by allowing students to connect with cultural values on a deeper level.

While research and communication skills also improved notably, the data suggests these areas could benefit from additional targeted support to maximize growth. The findings affirm the transformative potential of the study’s methodology in fostering well-rounded intercultural competence among secondary school students.

Figure 3.3 summarizes the feedback collected from students regarding the activities. Feedback is categorized into positive, neutral, and negative responses for four key aspects: relevance to cultural awareness, engagement and interest, difficulty level, and usefulness for personal development. This table provides valuable insights into students’ perceptions, highlighting strengths of the activities and identifying areas for potential improvement.

***Figure 3.3. Student Feedback on Activities***

The feedback summarized in figure 3.3 reveals overwhelmingly positive responses from students, with over 85% finding the activities relevant to cultural awareness and useful for personal development. Activities that incorporated creativity and interaction, such as *“A Day in the Life of a Briton”* and *“Festivals Around the World”*, were particularly well-received. Students appreciated the opportunity to engage in hands-on, real-world tasks that expanded their cultural understanding.

Challenges noted in neutral and negative feedback (15–20%) mainly revolved around difficulty levels in research and debates. While these tasks were perceived as demanding, they also provided valuable learning experiences. Overall, the feedback reinforces the effectiveness of the program and offers insights for refining future iterations to better address student needs.

Table 3.6 identifies the primary challenges faced by students during the activities. The challenges include difficulties in constructing arguments, limited knowledge of cultural contexts, time management issues, and lack of confidence in presentations. Key observations associated with each challenge provide context and suggest areas for further support. This table serves as a foundation for improving the design and delivery of future activities.

**Table 3.6**

***Challenges Encountered by Students***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Challenge | Percentage of Students (%) | Key Observations |
| Difficulty in Constructing Arguments | 30 | Most noticeable during debates; structured templates are recommended. |
| Limited Knowledge of Cultural Contexts | 25 | Required additional resources or pre-research preparation. |
| Time Management in Research | 20 | Students needed clearer timelines and strategies for efficient work. |
| Lack of Confidence in Presentations | 15 | Practice sessions helped mitigate this challenge. |

Source: Created by the author

Table 3.6 identifies key challenges faced by students, with difficulties in constructing arguments (30%) and limited cultural knowledge (25%) being the most prominent. These challenges were most evident during *“Global Issues Debate”* and *“Comparative Cultural Artifact Analysis”*, where students required additional scaffolding to succeed. Time management and presentation confidence were lesser but still notable issues, particularly during research-intensive and public-facing tasks.

The findings suggest a need for structured templates, additional cultural resources, and practice opportunities to address these challenges. Despite these obstacles, students adapted well, with their reflections indicating that overcoming such difficulties contributed to personal and academic growth.

Table 3.7 ranks the activities based on their engagement scores, highlighting the factors that contributed to their popularity among students. Activities like *“A Day in the Life of a Briton”* and *“Festivals Around the World”* scored highest due to their interactive and creative nature. This table provides insights into the types of activities that most effectively capture students’ interest and sustain their participation.

**Table 3.7**

***Most Popular Activities by Engagement***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Activity Title | Engagement Score (out of 5) | Reasons for Popularity |
| A Day in the Life of a Briton | 4.8 | Highly interactive, relatable, and enjoyable role-play format. |
| Festivals Around the World: A Cultural Inquiry | 4.5 | Creative freedom and personal relevance boosted engagement. |
| Comparative Cultural Artifact Analysis | 4.3 | Tangible examples made the activity relatable and insightful. |
| Global Issues Debate | 4.0 | Collaboration and critical thinking appealed to most students. |
| Exploring British Schools – Then and Now | 3.8 | Historical focus required more guidance but was still engaging. |

Source: Created by the author

The rankings in Table 3.7 indicate that interactive and relatable activities such as *“A Day in the Life of a Briton”* and *“Festivals Around the World”* were the most engaging for students. These activities combined creativity with practical application, making the learning experience enjoyable and impactful. The tangible nature of tasks, such as role-plays and cultural presentations, further contributed to their popularity.

Lower-ranked activities like *“Exploring British Schools”* and *“Global Issues Debate”* were still well-received but required more guidance to achieve similar levels of engagement. These insights highlight the importance of tailoring activities to align with students' interests and ensuring that challenging tasks are supported by appropriate resources and clear instructions.

In summary, the Data Visualization section effectively encapsulates the findings of the study, providing a clear and structured representation of key trends and outcomes. The visualized data highlights the high levels of engagement achieved through interactive and creative activities, the substantial improvement in students' intercultural competencies, and the overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants. These insights demonstrate the success of the inquiry-based approach in fostering cultural awareness and developing essential skills among 10th-grade students.

Moreover, the visualization also identifies challenges faced by students, such as constructing arguments and managing research tasks, offering opportunities for refinement in future activities. By transforming complex datasets into accessible formats, this section not only validates the study's methodologies but also provides a foundation for actionable recommendations, ensuring the continued success of similar educational initiatives.

**Discussion**

***Analysis of the interpretation of the data, compared to the available literature***

The analysis of the collected data underscores the significant role that research tasks play in fostering intercultural awareness among high school students. This finding aligns closely with the existing literature, which emphasizes the importance of experiential learning and inquiry-based approaches in developing critical cultural competencies.

Table 4.1 provides a comparative analysis of the findings from this study against key insights from existing literature on inquiry-based learning and intercultural education. The comparison focuses on five critical aspects: engagement levels, development of intercultural competence, challenges encountered, the effectiveness of role-playing, and student feedback on the relevance of activities. Each aspect is examined in the context of prior research to highlight areas of alignment and divergence.

This analysis serves to contextualize the study's outcomes within broader educational frameworks and validate its findings through established theories. By identifying parallels and discrepancies, the table not only reinforces the efficacy of the methods employed but also offers insights into how these approaches can be refined and adapted for future applications.

**Table 4.1**

***Comparison of Research Results with Existing Literature***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Aspect | Findings from the Study | Existing Literature | Comparison and Insights |
| Engagement in Inquiry-Based Learning | High engagement levels (70–85%) in activities like role-plays and cultural analyses. | Inquiry-based learning increases student engagement by fostering autonomy and creativity (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). | The study confirms existing findings, emphasizing the role of interactive formats in sustaining engagement. |
| Development of Intercultural Competence | Significant improvement in cultural awareness (+37%) and empathy (+35%). | Inquiry-based methods enhance cultural understanding and empathy through experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). | The results align with literature, showcasing that practical tasks deepen intercultural awareness. |
| Challenges in Research and Presentation | 30% of students faced difficulties in constructing arguments; 25% lacked cultural context. | Research-intensive tasks require structured guidance and scaffolding (Kuhlthau, 2007). | Similar to prior studies, the findings highlight the need for clearer task frameworks in research activities. |
| Effectiveness of Role-Playing | Role-play activities like “A Day in the Life of a Briton” had the highest engagement (85%). | Role-playing fosters empathy and active participation in intercultural education (Ladousse, 1987). | Results strongly support existing literature, affirming the value of role-play in fostering cultural empathy. |
| Student Feedback on Relevance | 88% of students found activities highly relevant to real-world cultural understanding. | Relevance of learning tasks improves motivation and learning outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000). | The study reinforces the importance of designing culturally relevant educational activities. |

The comparison presented in Table 4.1 underscores the alignment between the study's findings and existing literature on inquiry-based learning and intercultural education. This alignment validates the effectiveness of the implemented activities and situates them within well-established theoretical frameworks. The high levels of student engagement observed in this study, particularly in interactive activities such as role-playing and cultural analysis, echo Hmelo-Silver's (2004) assertion that inquiry-based learning fosters autonomy and creativity, which are key drivers of engagement. Activities like *“A Day in the Life of a Briton”* and *“Festivals Around the World”* demonstrated that hands-on, relatable tasks resonate deeply with students, enhancing their willingness to actively participate.

The significant improvement in intercultural competencies, including cultural awareness (+37%) and empathy (+35%), further aligns with Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning theory, which emphasizes the transformative power of real-world tasks in developing deeper understanding and emotional connections. The results confirm that inquiry-based approaches provide a practical and impactful avenue for fostering intercultural competence, as students are encouraged to explore, analyze, and reflect on cultural differences through engaging, real-life contexts.

Despite these successes, the study also highlights challenges consistent with findings from existing research. For example, 30% of students reported difficulties in constructing arguments, a challenge noted by Kuhlthau (2007), who emphasized the importance of scaffolding in research-intensive tasks. Similarly, 25% of students struggled with cultural unfamiliarity, reinforcing the need for pre-research preparation and accessible resources to bridge knowledge gaps. These challenges, while posing obstacles, also provide valuable insights into areas where additional support and guidance can enhance the effectiveness of inquiry-based activities.

The effectiveness of role-playing as a pedagogical tool, highlighted by Ladousse (1987), was strongly reflected in this study. Role-play activities not only achieved the highest engagement levels (85%) but also fostered empathy and active participation among students. These findings reaffirm the value of immersive learning experiences in helping students understand and navigate cultural norms, ultimately enhancing their intercultural competence.

Finally, student feedback on the relevance of the activities reinforces the motivational impact of culturally meaningful tasks, as discussed by Ryan and Deci (2000). With 88% of students rating the activities as highly relevant, the results underscore the importance of designing learning experiences that are relatable to students’ real-world contexts. This relevance not only enhances motivation but also ensures that the skills and knowledge gained are applicable beyond the classroom.

In conclusion, the comparison with existing literature highlights the robustness of the study’s methodology and its contribution to the field of intercultural education. The alignment of findings with established theories validates the inquiry-based approach as a powerful tool for fostering engagement and cultural understanding. At the same time, the identified challenges provide a roadmap for refining these methods to address gaps and further enhance learning outcomes. This synthesis of research and practice underscores the potential of well-designed educational interventions to equip students with the skills and empathy needed for navigating an increasingly interconnected world.

***Recommendations for further actions***

Table 4.2 outlines a set of detailed recommendations designed to enhance the effectiveness of fostering intercultural awareness through inquiry-based learning. These recommendations are based on the findings of the study, aligned with existing literature, and tailored to address the challenges and opportunities identified during the research. The table provides a structured framework for implementing these actions, ensuring practical application and measurable impact.

Each recommendation is presented with specific actions, expected outcomes, implementation timelines, responsible parties, necessary resources, and indicators of success. This comprehensive approach ensures that each recommendation is actionable, supported by required tools, and tied to clear metrics for evaluating its effectiveness. By integrating curriculum development, teacher training, community engagement, technological innovation, and student support programs, the proposed actions aim to create a holistic and sustainable model for fostering intercultural competence in secondary education.

**Table 4.2**

***Recommendations for further actions***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Recommendation Area | Specific Actions | Expected Outcomes | Implementation Timeline | Responsible Parties | Resources Needed | Indicators of Success |
| Curriculum Development | Integrate experiential learning activities, such as role-plays, debates, and cultural artifact analyses. | Enhanced student engagement and practical understanding of intercultural dynamics. | Short-term (1-2 semesters) | Academic Departments, Curriculum Committees | Updated syllabi, training materials, cultural artifacts | Increased student participation and positive feedback on engagement. |
| Teacher Training | Provide workshops on inquiry-based methods and strategies for addressing cultural diversity in classrooms. | Improved teaching methods and better facilitation of intercultural competence tasks. | Ongoing | Faculty Development Office | Budget for workshops, guest speakers, training materials | Higher teacher satisfaction and better student outcomes in intercultural tasks. |
| Community Engagement | Establish partnerships with local multicultural organizations for student volunteer opportunities. | Practical experience in diverse settings and stronger community ties. | Medium-term (2-3 semesters) | Office of Community Engagement, Faculty | Contacts with local organizations, logistical support | Increased participation in community projects and positive feedback from partner organizations. |
| Technological Integration | Use digital platforms to connect students globally for intercultural virtual exchanges. | Broadened perspectives through interactions with peers from different cultures. | Medium-term (2-3 semesters) | IT Department, Global Programs Office | Video conferencing tools, global partnerships, training for tech use | Increased virtual exchanges and collaborative projects with international peers. |
| Student Support Programs | Create mentoring programs that pair local and international students for cultural exchange and peer learning. | Enhanced peer learning, cultural exchange, and stronger interpersonal connections. | Short-term (1 semester) | Student Affairs, Counseling Services | Mentor training materials, coordination tools | Positive feedback from participants and improved cross-cultural interaction skills. |

Source: Created by the author

Table 4.2 provides a structured and detailed plan for addressing the findings and challenges identified in the study, offering a roadmap for fostering intercultural awareness through inquiry-based learning. The recommendations focus on five key areas: curriculum development, teacher training, community engagement, technological integration, and student support programs. Together, they represent a comprehensive strategy to enhance the educational experience, ensuring that students and educators are equipped with the skills, tools, and opportunities needed to succeed in an increasingly interconnected world.

Curriculum development is at the heart of these recommendations, emphasizing the integration of experiential learning activities such as role-plays, debates, and cultural artifact analyses. These methods are designed to engage students actively, fostering critical thinking and empathy by placing them in real-world cultural scenarios. By aligning these activities with existing coursework and providing necessary resources, such as updated syllabi and cultural materials, institutions can create dynamic learning environments that resonate with students and deepen their understanding of cultural diversity.

Teacher training is equally crucial, as educators play a central role in implementing these strategies. Workshops on inquiry-based learning methods and strategies for addressing cultural diversity will empower teachers to effectively facilitate intercultural learning. With access to professional development resources, including case studies and interactive training sessions, teachers can enhance their pedagogical skills and foster more inclusive classroom environments. These improvements will translate into better learning outcomes for students and a stronger foundation for intercultural competence.

Community engagement and technological integration are vital for extending learning beyond the classroom. Partnering with local multicultural organizations provides students with practical, hands-on experiences in diverse settings, strengthening their intercultural skills and building connections with the broader community. Similarly, leveraging digital platforms to facilitate virtual cultural exchanges enables students to interact with peers from around the world, broadening their perspectives and fostering global collaboration. These initiatives not only enrich students’ learning experiences but also position educational institutions as hubs of cultural understanding and innovation.

Finally, student support programs, such as mentoring initiatives that pair local and international students, create opportunities for peer learning and cultural exchange. These programs promote interpersonal connections and mutual understanding, fostering a supportive environment where students can navigate cultural differences confidently. By equipping mentors with training and resources, institutions can ensure the success of these programs and their positive impact on participants.

The recommendations outlined in Table 4.2 are supported by clear implementation timelines, required resources, and measurable indicators of success. This comprehensive approach ensures that each action is both practical and results-oriented. By adopting these strategies, educational institutions can create a sustainable model for fostering intercultural competence, empowering students and educators to thrive in a multicultural and globalized society. These recommendations not only address the challenges identified in the study but also lay the groundwork for continuous improvement and innovation in intercultural education.

**Conclusion**

This thesis has demonstrated that fostering intercultural awareness among 10th-grade students is not only a pressing need in modern education but also a tangible goal achievable through carefully designed inquiry-based assignments. In today’s interconnected world, equipping students with the skills to navigate cultural diversity is paramount. By integrating interactive teaching methods, such as role-playing, debates, cultural artifact analysis, and comparative studies, this research enabled students to enhance their understanding of cultural diversity while simultaneously developing critical thinking, research, empathy, and communication skills. These methods provided students with opportunities for both cognitive and emotional engagement, helping them build meaningful connections with the concept of intercultural competence.

The study’s results highlighted several significant outcomes. Most notably, students demonstrated a marked improvement in cultural awareness, with a 37% increase in their ability to recognize, understand, and appreciate cultural differences. This improvement was coupled with a 35% growth in empathy, reflecting their ability to consider perspectives different from their own. For instance, the role-playing activity *“A Day in the Life of a Briton”* achieved exceptionally high engagement rates and proved to be one of the most effective tools for helping students internalize the cultural norms and values of others. Similarly, activities such as *“Festivals Around the World”* encouraged students to explore the historical and social significance of cultural traditions, fostering deeper intellectual and emotional connections.

Despite these successes, the research also identified areas requiring further attention. Key challenges faced by students included difficulties in constructing logical and evidence-based arguments during debates (30%), limited knowledge of less familiar cultural contexts (25%), and struggles with time management during research-intensive tasks (20%). These challenges underscore the importance of providing additional resources, such as structured research templates, clear timelines, and background materials on diverse cultures. Furthermore, some students expressed a need for more guidance when tackling complex tasks, such as comparing and contrasting cultural artifacts or analyzing historical changes in education systems.

To address these challenges and further enhance the learning experience, several recommendations were formulated. First, it is crucial to integrate inquiry-based assignments into the school curriculum systematically. These assignments should be designed to balance cognitive rigor with emotional engagement, encouraging students to actively participate in their learning process. Second, teacher training programs should include specialized workshops focused on intercultural education and inquiry-based learning strategies. By equipping teachers with the necessary tools and methodologies, schools can ensure consistent and effective delivery of these tasks. Third, leveraging technology to connect students with peers from different cultural backgrounds through virtual exchanges can significantly broaden their perspectives. These exchanges could include collaborative projects, live discussions, and cultural storytelling activities, providing students with real-world contexts for intercultural communication.

Additionally, partnerships with local multicultural organizations can offer students opportunities to engage with cultural diversity in their communities. Volunteer activities, guest lectures, and cultural events could enrich the students’ learning experience, making it more practical and impactful. Finally, mentoring programs that pair local students with international peers could foster peer learning and mutual cultural exchange, helping students navigate cultural differences in a supportive environment.

In conclusion, this research has confirmed the effectiveness of interactive, inquiry-based methods in fostering intercultural awareness among secondary school students. The results demonstrate that such approaches not only enhance students’ academic skills, such as research and critical thinking, but also contribute to their personal development by cultivating empathy, tolerance, and a global mindset. Addressing the identified challenges and implementing the proposed recommendations can help educators optimize these methods, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the demands of a multicultural and interconnected world. Ultimately, this study underscores the transformative potential of education in shaping culturally competent and socially responsible global citizens.

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**Appendices**

**Appendix A**

***Activities for Research on Intercultural Awareness***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Activity Title | Objective | Description | Skills Developed | Assessment Method | Duration | Resources Required |
| Festivals Around the World: A Cultural Inquiry | Foster intercultural awareness by exploring the cultural significance of festivals. | Students research a festival from another culture, focusing on its history, values, and traditions, then present findings creatively. | Research, cultural analysis, presentation skills | Creative project (e.g., poster, video) + oral presentation | 3 class periods (150 min) + homework | Internet access, templates for presentations, visual aids |
| Exploring British Schools – Then and Now | Understand the historical and cultural context of British education and compare it with local systems. | Students investigate British school traditions, daily routines, and changes over time through research and comparative analysis. | Research, critical thinking, comparative analysis | Presentation + reflective essay | 2 class periods (100 min) + homework | Videos on British schools, research templates, library resources |
| A Day in the Life of a Briton | Analyze cultural differences in everyday behaviors, focusing on complaining styles in British and Ukrainian cultures. | Students research attitudes toward complaining, role-play typical situations, and discuss the cultural norms observed. | Role-play, cultural empathy, communication skills | Group role-play performance + reflection report | 2 class periods (100 min) | Role-play scenarios, access to online articles and videos |
| Global Issues Debate | Encourage critical thinking on global cultural issues and foster teamwork. | Students engage in a debate on how global issues (e.g., climate change, migration) affect different cultures, developing culturally sensitive arguments. | Argumentation, teamwork, cultural sensitivity | Debate performance + reflective essay | 2 class periods (100 min) + prep time | Debate guidelines, research articles, multimedia tools |
| Comparative Cultural Artifact Analysis | Enhance understanding of cultural symbols and their meanings. | Students analyze a cultural artifact (e.g., clothing, art, or food) from another culture and compare it to a similar artifact from their own culture. | Analytical thinking, cultural interpretation | Written analysis + class presentation | 2 class periods (100 min) + homework | Examples of cultural artifacts, research tools, presentation aids |