

Title: Working at Cross Purposes

Author: Joan E. Sieber, *Planning Ethically Responsible Research: A Guide for Students and Internal Review Boards*, Sage Publications Applied Social Research Methods Series, Volume 31, 1992

Description: A researcher attempts to gather information from Chicano families regarding children's needs. The researcher is unaware that many of the people in the community are not legal residents of the U.S., a fact that may effect respondents answers and the sampling design.

Headings: Special Populations and Cultural Competence; Racial and ethnic minorities; Other special population issues

Case Type: Illustrative

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A researcher sends bilingual research assistants to interview poor Chicano families in Texas about their attitudes toward their children's school. The purpose of her research is to gather information that will help local schools meet the needs of children from families that have recently moved there. Unbeknown to the researcher, many of those interviewed are illegal aliens, who suspect that the research is connected with the U.S. Immigration authorities. They fabricate many of their answers to hide their illegal status here, and they are especially careful to reveal nothing about their children's needs or problems with the school. Others in that community carefully avoid the researcher, thus ruining the random sampling design.