

Assignment 1: Identifying My Stage of Intercultural Sensitivity

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For the assignment I read *A Developmental Model Of Intercultural Sensitivity* by Milton J. Bennett and have concluded that I am in the stage of “Acceptance of Difference.” Acceptance of Difference states that I accept that cultures have their differences when it comes to values and behaviors of others. I am also able to recognize what they have to offer in comparison to my own culture. I may not always agree with how another culture functions, but I accept that the differences do exist. Rather than showing toxic behavior towards people of different cultures I do not understand, I take a step back and try to understand where they are coming from in a new light.

When referring to my own behavior, I understand and am willing to learn about the differences between my own cultures behaviors and others. This includes interactions I am unfamiliar with when it comes to cultural contexts and how to behave in different cultural situations. In terms of values, I understand that the terms good and bad are subjective to the culture I am trying to understand. Not one set of values is the right way and keeping an open mind keeps me from shutting down the idea that there is a better way to handle a situation rather than just my way of doing something.

I identify with this stage of intercultural sensitivity as I have always yearned for more information about the different cultures around me and when I was in second grade I had to learn fairly quickly how differently my culture behaves compared to others. In second grade, a young boy from Algeria joined my class. Before that point, I did not understand that people acted differently outside of the United States, much less talked differently than we did.

What had hit me the most at such a young age is when he began to cry when we learned about the slave trade. He was very deeply wounded and that day we took a break and learned

about where he was from, and how everyone around him were treated as family no matter the relation, something that doesn't happen as much here in the United States. After that day, the entire class functioned more like a family rather than just a classroom, as children are more likely to adapt changes when they see something wrong. From that age I knew I wanted to understand others cultures, as my own was known for causing so much pain and ignorance.

Since then I have met so many people from different backgrounds, including my step-father who was born in Panama. He took me in as his own and teaches me something new everytime I see him and I am grateful to have someone there who is willing to open up to me about their culture. We don't always see eye to eye on certain values and behaviors, but we are not supposed to as we aren't supposed to be the same. Sometimes things are confusing to understand, but it is good to have an understanding of other cultures so that I am able to compare and contrast the wrongs of my own cultures with others. Having that understanding has made me more open-minded and aware of my own actions and makes me want to be a better person.

This assignment aligns with what I want out of this course in a fairly simple way. I want to be able to understand every person I come across and be someone that they feel comfortable and safe around. When I first went in the field of Psychology, it was with the goal in mind of changing others lives in a positive way, and helping others understand themselves in a better light. I would not be able to do that if I had the mindset that only my culture is the right culture.

By having an understanding of cross-cultural psychology I am able to work with a wide range of people. With being in cross-cultural psychology, I am able to understand the differences between society and culture, especially when it comes to the different cultures that do exist in different societies. All in all, it is a learning experience that will leave me better equipped to handle different situations.

Reference Page

Bennett, M. J. (1993): Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. *Aus: Paige*, RM, 21-71.