

Assignment 1

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Psych 420

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9/7/2021

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When deciding which stage of intercultural sensitivity I fell under, I found myself torn between a few options. They all came towards the bottom half of the stages. Specifically, I felt that I identified most with: Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration. I ended up deciding that I most closely relate to integration. This was, in part, due to the handout specifically stating that “these people tend to be bicultural or multicultural” (Bennett 1993). I myself tend to lean towards saying I am bicultural or multicultural as well. This is because my parents were born and raised in Pakistan but came here to America some forty years ago, thus resulting in my being born here in America. So with me being born here and being raised here, naturally I adapted and grew up as a full American. However, I was able to maintain my Pakistani culture even here, thanks to my parents doing such a great job of immersing me into both cultures. Even going to the extent to take me back over there multiple times as a kid, so I got to see and experience the full culture while there in the most impactful and impressionable time of my life.

While reading the article, as I was going through the different stages, I found myself saying “oh okay I am this one”. Then I would get to the next one and think to myself that wait I am this one. It makes sense having finished the handout now though, because it slowly increases in level of acceptance or tolerance, so I most identify with the final one since I, by default, must be accepting in a sense. Adaptation was a tricky one I contemplated. I did not like how it says that one intentionally alters their behavior to fit in because while I understand what they mean, I do not think I do that, knowingly at least. Now depending on the environment at the time, of course you have to alter your behavior to fit in, but this where the integration comes in, because the only reason I feel like this is due to the fact I was born somewhere away from my families culture. So this means of course whenever I was away from home, I would act whatever was

considered normal in public. Not knowing at the time, that I am trying to fit in and this behavior I am partaking in is different than that of my own at home. So, you have to put yourself in someone's shoes that is born in their own cultures country and raised there, but then placed in a new environment, or exposed to something out of the norm for them, THESE are the people who can fall into one of the categories prior, and who have to ACT like they are tolerant of other cultures, if that is the case. It is interesting to think about how just by being born away from your own culture, it makes you automatically more accepting, at least you'd hope this was the case. Because people from your own cultures will judge no matter if they are home or not. My own culture is a testament to that. So even those people would not fall under some of these categories because they are not being very tolerant and accepting.

Some examples my multiculturalism have been recurring themes throughout my life. My parents, again, did a great job of maintaining our culture at home while allowing me to fully immerse myself in the American culture. So, an example of integration I can think of is me wearing our cultural clothes called a Shalwar kameez every Friday to the mosque for prayer. This is certainly not typical American behavior but is the only norm back in our home country. I can say positively, I have not experienced many troubles with this here as well. People have been welcoming and accepting when they see me wearing it. Especially my friends, those are the ones I used to worry what they would think about me when they saw this for the first time. That gave me a lot of confidence as a kid I can remember.

On the other side of the same topic, we can say my parents allowing me to fully immerse myself and participate in organized football growing up was very open minded and adaptive of them. Not many Pakistani people are playing football. This isn't a race or ethnicity thing either, I do not know why this fact exist. It has nothing to do with race though I can tell you because I

enjoyed and did well for myself in terms of football up to and through high school. I did not get past that but that was due to my height, which could be related to my race, but there were American teammates dealing with that size issue too. I was at no disadvantage at the time, I was excelling as much as I wanted to. This shows that my parents, even being born and raised in Pakistan, after many years of living in the west, learned the game of football and even let their kid be the only Pakistani football player probably in the state at the time. That shows my parents are even in the Integration stage which is what I would of guessed anyway due to their long time spent here getting accustomed to life in the west.

This assignment is RIGHT in line with my expectations for the course. It is exactly what I was expecting, honestly. Due to the fact this is a cross cultural class, I figured I would be speaking on my own experiences as a multicultural individual myself. That is one of the reasons I took the class too, the fact I have had such a diverse life, in my eyes at least. I am among the lucky few who gets to go back and fully experience their culture while still being from here in America. I have many life experiences and lessons I want to learn more and expound on from the topics we will cover in this course.

References

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