

Becoming Interculturally Competent

How did he develop the DMIS-model?

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity is mainly based on several theory concepts which contain explanations of created patterns through systematic observations. In other words, the world's population is categorized into groups (stages) based on their worldview. Bennett observed many different cultures, tried to understand them and described it with the theoretical concepts.

What are his intentions to develop a model?

By looking at the title, Bennett's trying to bend cultures that are currently living in the wrong DMIS stage into the right stage (from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism). With his model, he's trying to aware people which stage they're in. The next step is changing the target's worldview into a better stage. Bennett's point of view is to lead people from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. The effects of this cultural movement could improve the quality of life.

What are major items in the article?

Definitely, the six stages of the DMIS model.

Ethnocentrism:

1. Denial

Their own culture is the only real one. They don't or don't want to know anything about different cultures.

2. Defense

Their own culture is the best, the most evolved and the best way to live. This leads to competitive behaviour, which can cause racism.

3. Minimization

The culture they live in is considered as universal. They expect similarities in other cultures, which can lead to correcting other people's behaviour.

Ethnorelativism:

4. Acceptance

People at this position accept the existence of culturally different ways of organizing human existence, although they do not necessarily like or agree with every way.

5. Adaptation

Individuals are able to expand their own worldviews to accurately understand other cultures and behave in a variety of culturally appropriate ways.

6. Integration

One's experience of self is expanded to include the movement in and out of different cultural worldviews. So, shifting from culture to culture easily.

My own stage in the DMIS-model

I think that I'm in the 4th stage, which is acceptance. I like to travel, so I've known a lot of different cultures. For instance, I went to south east Asia which is a completely different world if you compare it to our way of living. My first time in Asia was a very interesting experience. At first it was a (culture) shock, then I slowly learned how Asians act and interact with each other. I acted in my own culture which is acceptable for the Asian people. Of course, each country has a different culture.

How can I reach the next step (adaptation)?

- A pre research in way of living in Berlin could be useful. Be aware of how they treat each other. But what mainly is known of the city is that it consists of many different cultures. There are many different nationalities to find in Berlin, but I should be able to figure out how Germans interact with each other.
- Talk with the German (Berlin) students. We're visiting a university and arrange an interview with one of their students. Get to know them, look for signs in their behaviour (like the way of greeting, clothing, gestures) and compare them to mine. Find out what the differences are and try to fit my cultural acts in theirs.
- Observe. Just look around at a busy place, maybe it's central station, a random coffeehouse or a university. Scan their behaviours, personal interactions, clothing. But, also why are they coming to this place? What for are some people meeting? For example, business meetings, dates or alone?

How do I support this evolution with the trip to Berlin?

By following the three examples mentioned above, I could improve my intercultural experience with big steps. I will be trying to adapt myself into the Berlin culture, although I think there's not a whole lot of difference in culture. Of course, that's a prejudice.