

Cultural experience reflection paper

Sociology



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Reflection Paper I am an African American who grew up in a poor neighborhood in North Philadelphia. I am currently 31 years old. As an African American, there had been varied experiences during different stages of growth and development. There were challenging experiences in terms of encountering traces of stereotyped beliefs about our culture and how I perceived people from other cultural orientations were observed to be treated in the United States. For one, being raised in a poor community enabled me to realize that there are forces of inequality in social classes and structures based on income level, educational background, and even racial identity. As such, belonging to the African American group developed pre-conceived realizations that, despite open promulgations of equality in access to resources and in availment of human rights, our cultural group within the lower income status had evidently lesser access to economic and financial resources, as well as privileges to pursue academic programs from private institutions. These preconceived inequality served as a source of conflict that contributed to the manner by which one views people from America, especially those classified as ‘Whites’, as domineering and socio-culturally privileged.

A difficult, conflictual experience that I have encountered, as a result of the assumption that Whites are domineering and socio-culturally privileged happened in school as a form of bullying. Some group of students who were Whites would usually tease or play around in a rough manner. The students would sometimes boast of material possessions (ranging from toys, gadgets, and other items in fad) which one does not possess. Implicitly, there was a feeling of enviousness, anxiety, depression, and inner hope that someday, I

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would also possess these things. When I would recall these incidences and narrate what I observed to my parents, particularly to my mother, she would sternly indicate that material possessions of other people should not be a source of enviousness or consternation. Accordingly, I was reminded that these material things could be possessed when one has completed a good education.

From the advice of my mother, I was made aware that despite being raised in a poor neighborhood, there is an opportunity to rise and leave the low income social class. This prompted me to focus more on the positive side of life and not to mind these White students who brag about material possessions. I believed that the concept of applying emotional intelligence was instrumental in attaining a positive outcome. As learned from the textbook entitled *Interpersonal Conflict* by Hocker & Wilmot (2014), emotional intelligence assists in recognition of personal emotions, in conjunction with the feelings of others – and how one manages emotions in various relationships.

In sum, knowing what I know now, I could have outrightly managed the conflict that one felt with the group of White students through assuming a more optimistic stance in life. By focusing on my strengths, as well as my personal, academic, and professional goals, I would have managed the perceived conflict and diverted all forces towards positive endeavors.

Reference

Hocker, J., & Wilmot, W. (2014). *Interpersonal Conflict*. McGraw Hill.