

Article response

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Lecturer Essay # Interculturally Competent The article Becoming Interculturally Competent by Milton Bennett (2004) focuses on why people find it easy or difficult in communicating across cultures. The author notes that people become culturally competent as they move from perceiving their culture as being 'central to reality' (ethnocentrism) to a broader view of reality recognizing other views (ethnorelativism). According to the author people become culturally competent when they realize that their culture and beliefs is just one of the views of reality among other viable options. The author observed that a person undergoes three stages of ethnocentric development as they move towards the ethnorelative stage. At the beginning, such people are in denial of cultural difference hence believed that their own culture is the only real one. The second stage is defense, at people at this stage have some knowledge to understand cultural difference and hence see it to be real. Finally, the last stage is minimization in which an individual begins to realize certain elements in his/her culture are universal. People at this stage see similarities. The next level is ethnorelative where a person experiences his/her culture recognizing other cultures as well. Here, there are also three stages of development. The first is acceptance, and this refers to the ability of an individual to understand and appreciate differences in culture. Such people are able to make cultural contrasts. The second stage is adaptation, and people at this stage develop habits and behaviors that are appropriate to that other culture. They not only recognize alternative cultural experiences but develop behavior that is line with the other culture. The final stage is integration, and this is a state in which a person's understanding of self includes his/her movement in and out of other cultures. Therefore, their

identities generally lie between multiple cultures or world views.

Based on this article, I believe I am at the minimization stage under the ethnocentric development. For the time I have been in London, there are two major elements/practices in this culture common to my American culture.

First, there is a similarity in religious beliefs and practices. In my culture, the dominant religion is Christianity, and many believe in God and Jesus Christ.

This is also the case here in London, and this is illustrated by the many churches around. Secondly, in America, education is one of the pillars of our society. Similarly, this appears to be the case here. There are similarities when it comes to the many learning institutions and the high enrolment rates. Another characteristic of people at the minimization stage is their tendency to correct other's behavior to match their beliefs. For my case, for example, I have on many occasions attempted to correct my colleagues here on the pronunciation of certain words to match the American style. This tendency to align my colleagues also applies to areas such as food, type of music and sport among others. One of the thoughts I have had about Britons recently is that their government system in which they have parliaments is wrong and less effective compared to the American congress system. This is also one of the elements that characterize people at the minimization stage where they perceive the failure of the other culture to use their style as a lack of skill. Generally, I am beginning to accept some ideas and values in this culture in order to effectively interact with my colleagues and friends.

Works Cited

Bennett, Milton. " Becoming interculturally competent." In J. S. Wurzel (Ed.)

Toward multiculturalism: A reader in multicultural education, 2004. Newton, MA: Intercultural Resource Corporation.