Human Relations in a Pluralistic Society

Aliaya Epps

Omega Graduate School

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Professor

Dr. Sara Reichard

Assignment #1 – Exercise Submission

1. For each of the following prompts, write a thorough response (2-3 well-developed

paragraphs each with 3 to 4 sentences minimum per paragraph) and cite at least one

scholarly source (per prompt) to support your answer.

a. Briefly describe why human relation skills are needed for multicultural diversity

and inclusion in a pluralistic society.

b. Discuss why understanding your cultural identity is so important?

c. What does it mean to have transcultural competence?

d. Why are situational awareness, context, and unintended consequences

important for leaders to take into account?

e. Describe the four-step cultural differences process listed in the course outline

number 3 and give an example of each.

f. Describe a cultural dilemma you have experienced or witnessed and identify two

areas where cultural knowledge that is different than your own is needed.

Explain.

Human relation skills arms us with the ability to navigate cultural differences and build inclusive communities. Prior to 2025 I would have considered America to be a pluralistic society. For example, I am African American, Iroquois, and Italian. I am also a Christain. I reside in Maryland which is considered to be a more progressive state. There are declared immigrant safe havens, there is a huge population of both Christians and Muslims in my area.

My last job was a cultural metropolis. However while in a school setting we were a melting pot, there were cliques or groups within that metropolis. Because I am mixed I was able to provide a safe space to allow children to feel safe expressing their needs and questions. I have allowed students to talk about how they celebrate holidays, or food- food is always a conversation that transcends differences and is an instant unifier.

As an African American there is a huge part of me that is missing. My ancestors were taken from their motherland, brought to America, bred and scattered like cattle. I can only trace that side of me back three generations. While the Italian side of me can be traced back to Sicily. I have copies of the census paperwork from when my family migrated to America. The positive side of this is that due to the atrocities that I have faced in addition to my ancestors; the black community has a collective consciousness. We have traditions and expectations. In 2025 African Americans are still a minority in America and our rights and humanity constantly questioned. My cultural identity keeps me sane in corporate settings where there aren’t others who look like me.

Understanding my cultural identity gives me the empathy and wherewithal to encourage and appreciate different cultures. It has helped me find the commonalities and celebrate the differences in places like my previous job. I have attended Iftar with some of my students and their families. I was able to break bread and pray with them, understanding I am a mixed Christian and they are Indian Muslims.

I am not entirely sure what it means to have transcultural competence. From what I read, cultural competence is the ability to relate and work effectively in culturally diverse situations. I am not sure that I quite grasp the concept. It could perhaps mean the ability to honor and navigate different cultures in the same setting. An example would be during Ramadan I allow my Muslim students to sleep and fast in my classroom. My other students can continue their assignments. During Ramadan I ask my Muslim students if they are okay before I allow other students to eat in the classroom (which they aren’t really supposed to do anyway). This is definitely a concept I will explore more during the developmental readings.

Situational awareness, context, and unintended consequences are important to take into consideration as a leader for a myriad of reasons. I think is something that should be taught to anyone who will be in a leadership role. It is called intention versus impact. Several years ago we had new white teacher. She was kind, very young, and grew up in a prodimentaly white area. A parent reported her and there had to be a conference with administration, the parents, and the teacher. When I asked the teacher why, she said she referred to her students as “ gremlins”. She explained that was what she called the (white) students she taught during her student teaching. She called them that because they were adorable but mischievous as she student taught at an alternative school. While her explanation made perfect sense I asked if she had seen the movie “ Dear White People?” In the movie one of the black students wrote a paper about how the movie Gremlins was really a horror movie about white suburbans fear of black culture. After that movie it became an unwritten belief in the black community that was true. So for her, a suburban white woman, to come to a diverse school and refer to her mostly black student body as gremlins wasn’t culturally sensitive. Her intention was to bond with her students, her impact was setting the tone that she was racist.

The four step cultural difference process is recognition, respect, reconciliation, and realization. An example of recognition is that I attend a multicultural church. African Americans tend to hold hands when we pray. Our church knows that so depending on the setting the leader will consent to that practice. I have caucasian friends who do not believe in washing meat before cooking it. It seems to be more an African Diaspora practice. When my old roommate and I lived together there was never a situation of malice regarding the opposing ways of food preparation.

I think gracism sums up reconciliation. My home church, Bridgeway, head pastor coined the term gracism. It is his conviction to bridge gaps between culture and mimic heaven on Earth with a myriad of peacefully coexisting believers. Realization is such a fluid concept. I now have a job in finance. I tend to be early for work. I quickly learned that early is the standard for the finance industry. Face to face interactions or telephone calls are preferred. This is a change in culture from teaching where everything was an email. I have social anxiety and despise being on the phone but I have adapted to the culture of making phone calls for a personal interaction with clients as opposed to my preferred emails.

One of the cultural dilemmas I have experienced is coincidentally at church. While our church is founded on and led by cultural diversity there is a noticeable gap in the resources and activities curated for certain cultures.

I think economic cultural differences is an area I could use more expertise. Upper echelon put a heavy emphasis on quality then quantity. There is great thought put into where their resources go. For example they may shop places that have sustainable practices like allowing customers to bring their own travel mugs for coffee as opposed to a chain like Dunkin. Although I am christian my ethnicity plays a huge factor into what attributes of Christianity I prioritize. This is true for other ethnicities as well. Learning how different cultures value and execute the love of God is something I could improve on.

The assignment response starts on the third page.

WORKS CITED