

How DMIS was developed

Milton J. Bennett observed all kinds of people who dealt with cross-cultural situations in their own way. During that research, he combined theoretical concepts and people's behaviour patterns (from systematic observations) to develop the DMIS. Each pattern has been reformed as a stage in the DMIS in order to measure how interculturally competent a person actually is.

The article contains many examples in order to understand the difference between all stages in the model. These help the user of the model to measure a more fitting stage the person is in.

Intention of the writer

This goal of the writer was to figure out and describe why certain people can or can't improve at communicating across cultural boundaries.

DMIS can be used to help culture coaches improving their course content and pupils to understand what stage they are in at the moment. In other words, it can be used in teaching and learning about intercultural socialization.

While describing DMIS, he also wanted to point out that learning or accepting another culture is very complicated.

Major items and discussion points

The article largely describes all the DMIS-stages and its characteristics, examples and patterns he collected from (observing) people with cross-cultural situations. The mentioned examples are discussions with those people from the writer's point of view and opinions.

He also wants to address the major difference between ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, as it represents how the person experiences the culture of its own and others.

There is some really good advice for people who are eager teaching, accepting and adapting to different cultures.

My stage in the model

My current stage would technically be Minimization, but on the right track of true Acceptance.

I would (almost) categorize myself in the Acceptance stage, because I'm eager to learn more about other cultures. That's why I recognize and appreciate cultural differences and believe that people with different cultures can reflect on that. Talking about culture can also be a nice topic to start a conversation with other cultured people.

For example, my family and I were travelling in Sri Lanka with a Sri Lankan guide. We've got to see most of the island during that vacation. The nicest thing about that trip was the chance to meet several people on the island and to know more about their history, believes,

habits and language. We even tried to learn some Sinhalese words and got better at pronouncing it while speaking to people.

Sri Lanka is not the only country we've visited that way. We do this every time we're going abroad, like to the United States, France, Belgium, Spain, Czech Republic and many more countries.

What is holding me back from being in the true Acceptance stage is that I not always approve another culture's value. This regards cultural morals and ideals from some political leaders. There are even some cultural values where I even disapprove with. For example gender inequality, discrimination due to sexual orientation and racism occurring in many cultures/countries all over the world.

These negative presumptions are mostly based on vague stories from the Dutch (social) media and friends/family. A strong example is that I believe President Trump is a discriminating and sexist person who makes a bad impression by saying that climate change isn't real and Obamacare should be stopped. He also promised America to build a wall on the Mexican border and they are going to pay for it. Literally every friend and family member thinks Trump is a joke or meme. I have not met President Trump in person and his plans for future America, so my impression about Trump is a 'Minimized' assumption.

Recently we went to America on a road trip and noticed the cultural differences from the Netherlands. The local people there value other beliefs and don't really care at all about climate change. They actually believe that Trump will build that wall and he'll make America great again. This confirms that in American context I make assumptions based on the Minimization stage.

Don't get me wrong, a country and culture is built on many beliefs from over the past years, so that makes cultural progressing very hard. For example in the Netherlands, combating climate change is more valued more than America. However, it feels like we can make the world a better place for everyone when we can solve those big world problems as a country/culture. I think the Netherlands is progressing that very well compared to other countries in the world.

This concludes that the only way to be in a true Acceptance stage is to let go of value relativity and to research what people in that specific culture/country thinks about a specific subject. Don't make presumptions based on vague stories and (social) media.