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A Global Mindset

Growing up in a small, rural town in South Dakota, the phrase of being ‘globally competent’ never once came across my mind throughout my entire childhood. I was constantly surrounded by all white, Catholic individuals who strongly believed in the mentality that their race is superior and other ethnic groups are less influential in this world. Seeing someone of a different race was often unheard of, let alone the possibility of creating a new friendship. It was not until I came to college a couple months ago that I realized how horrible and morally wrong this way of thinking and living was. Being an honor student at Minnesota State University Mankato, I discovered that global citizenship is a competency that I need to develop in order to graduate with honors and become a more rounded student and individual. This was shocking for me since I had previously lived in a closed society and culture, but I realized through several readings and discussions in my honors seminar course that being a global citizen is more than necessary to be a successful, influential leader in today’s diverse world. As I journey through my undergraduate career, I will take part in numerous activities and events that will strength my global mindset and shape me into a more globally competent individual.

Described in the *Honors Student Handbook*, there are three components of the global citizenship competency: self-awareness, knowledge and understanding, and communication. Self-awareness is recognizing one’s own culture and beliefs that influence how he or she perceives those around them. Knowledge and understanding is digging deeper into other cultures by traditional learning and in-person interaction. Lastly, communication is becoming fluent in a second language and understanding its connection to culture (23). As Gupta explains in his book "Contemporary Leadership and Intercultural Competence: Exploring the Cross-Cultural Dynamics within Organizations,” it is critical to develop these skills without judgment, for judgment halts the ability to grow as an individual in a diverse world. Broadening my mindset and growing in each of these components with an open mind will increase my ability to interact with others and be a more compassionate, understanding human being.

To increase my self-awareness and cultural competency skills, I will be an active student by being involved in various activities to increase my global competency. I plan to continue to be an English tutor for international students, which allows me to learn about a different culture by constantly interacting with a diverse individual. I will also attend culture nights when possible, for this a great way to meet others that I normally would never encounter. In the traditional classroom setting, I will take several ethnic and cultural classes to expand my beliefs about various cultures and the connected world we live in today. To personally experience the numerous cultures that exist in the United States, I will go on a service learning trip to the south that will expose me to ideals and beliefs that are different than my own. Experiencing these events will positively impact my perceptions about my own culture and increase my willingness to accept others in the process.

Being fluent in a second language makes an individual more qualified in the workforce and everyday life. As stated by Athanasopoulos in “How the Language You Speak Changes Your View on the World,” being bilingual comes with many benefits, such as better job prospects, a cognitive boost, and protection against mental deterioration. It also provides endless opportunities for one to grow in his or her personal knowledge and experiences. To increase my second language skills, I will continue taking Spanish courses through 201. By doing this, I will traditionally learn how to speak a language through various assignments and tests. Learning the Spanish language and its culture in a deeper way is important to me, so I will become a member of the Spanish Club and watch several movies in Spanish outside of class. Over the next summer, I will be traveling to Costa Rica where I will volunteer in a children’s hospital for two weeks. During this time, I will be staying with a Spanish host family where I will be greatly immersed in the Spanish language and culture. These activities will greatly develop my communication competency skills and increase my awareness of the uniqueness of different cultures.

Our world has faced a dramatic shift of being more culturally diverse and connected through an increasingly multicultural society. I strongly believe that my past of being shut off from the true world has inspired me to be a more engaging student and individual. I desire to be a positive influence by having an open mind and interacting with individuals from various cultures to understand that differences are special and beneficial. By taking part in various events and activities both domestically and internationally, I will have numerous experiences to develop my global mindset and be an influencing individual in today’s global world.

Works Cited

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