

**Expanding Ethnocentrism: An evaluation of my growth as an Intercultural Communicator and the personal goals to continue to improve these skills.**

Term Paper

COMM B6, Bakersfield College

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MW 1:00

Professor Helen Acosta

## Introduction

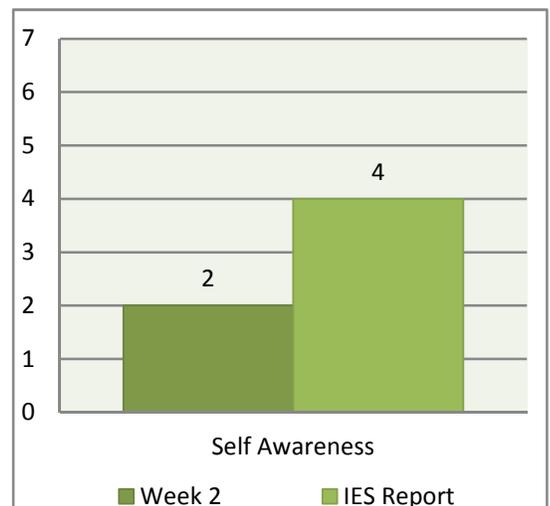
When I enrolled into Intercultural Communication, I was under the impression that we would be learning about how to communicate with different cultures. Although this was a portion of the class, I came to find that I not only learned about different cultures, but I also improved specific personal skills in my life such as self awareness, exploration, and emotional resilience. During the first few weeks of school, we had to talk about our co-cultures and while I was listening to other classmates speak, I gained a sense of self awareness because I realized that everyone in the class has their own individual experiences that you can not see from just looking at them. People shared co cultures from being a part of the LGBTQ to being a part of a sports team. This inspired me to know more about others not only in this class, but in my regular everyday life.

On the Bennett Scale, my lowest score was Integration. My score was low in this area because I do not fully integrate these skills into everyday actions. I believe that the Bennett scales levels are very important ranging from denial to integration. I would like to reach integration in all aspects of my life experiences with different cultures because I think it is important for other people to feel comfortable and safe around me and vice versa. I would like to continue to learn and become more educated about different types of people and continuously see other peoples perspectives on life.

My intercultural communication skills have improved immensely through self awareness, exploration, and emotional resilience from learning about different cultures and meeting people from different walks of life which as given me a broad understanding of different cultures.

## Self Awareness

Self awareness is the level to which you are continuously learning about yourself through personal strengths, weaknesses, interpersonal style, and behavioral tendencies. (IES REPORT) My grasp of this skill was basically nonexistent at the beginning of the semester. Throughout the semester, my self awareness skills have improved due to the different activities we completed such as the 3 writing skills. I was able to see my self awareness through my paper and the differences between myself and others. The IES Report then showed how my skills have improved.



I estimated my Self Awareness level at a 2. Going back to my three writing samples at the beginning of the semester, I said things that show I did not have a great sense of self awareness. "I would never have thought that being female is a minority identity as about half the people in this world are female. Males and females are similar in so many ways." I realize now that there are many reasons for females to be a minority identity and I didn't have the self awareness to realize that.

My self awareness score is one of the highest scores of all of my Intercultural Effectiveness Scores. "I have excellent communication skills and have displayed them in many ways throughout my life especially in high school. I was rally commissioner my junior year and it improved my communication skills tremendously. I am best at pragmatics because I am usually with the social norms of a conversation and know when and what I should say." (CH 6 JOURNAL) I stated this on my Chapter 6 GRTEP Journal and it shows that I was aware of my conversation skills.

In the future, I would like to have the highest level of self awareness because I believe that it is very important to be aware of your personal strengths and values in your life. I would specifically like to improve my skills of self awareness through my weaknesses. It is hard to point out your own weaknesses because this is not something that you like to point out about yourself.

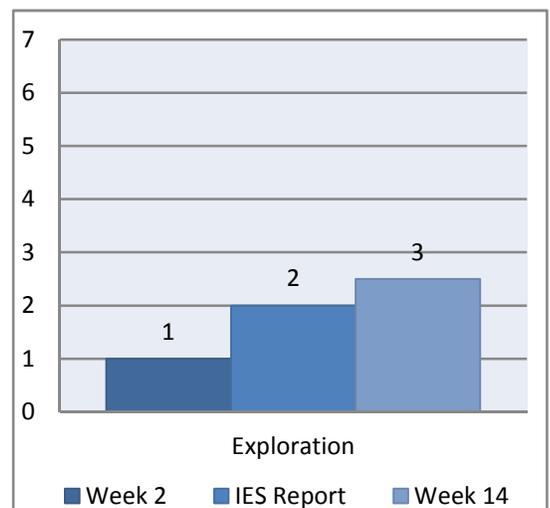
As an intercultural communicator, my development of self awareness has gone from about a score of 2 to a score of 4. My development has improved in many areas and I am now invested in my personal growth and try to reflect on my life and try to improve even more.

### Exploration

Exploration can be seen in many ways. It is the act of actively exploring different cultures by looking at their social norms, ideas, and values and the desire to learn new things about them. It is when you are actively learning about another culture. (IES REPORT) At the beginning of the semester, I had no exploration skills. I was not interested in learning about other cultures and had a habit of keeping with my habits and not doing new things.

My estimated exploration score in week 2 is sadly a score of 1. I have estimated that this is my score because I did not ever

consider myself to be open to people who are different than me. Many of my friends are very similar to



me and I was never seeking out new experiences and meeting new people with different cultural backgrounds. "I think that this advice is good because when you are visiting a different country or even around another culture it is important to act the way they act in that area." This shows my low score of exploration because at the time I was only thinking about my world view, not others and I knew the importance of exploration but was not taking any action.

My exploration score from the IES report disappointed me because I thought that I had grown in my exploration since the beginning of the semester. I have come to find that this process takes time and my score will only improve from here. "It is better because it tells us why and your world is how it works and the basic facts of the world. Culture is a reaction to nature." (CH 3 ACT 2). I think this shows that I have more exploration than I did before and I will continue to seek out new experiences and learn about new cultures.

My estimated score at the end of week 14 has moved to a 2.5 I believe that I have not taken any extreme actions to improve my exploration score, but I have made a commitment to myself to do things to improve my exploration skills. I gave myself an extra .5 because I believe that making the decision to expand my exploration is the first step to growing stronger in my experiences with exploration.

The one specific goal for my future development of the Exploration Skill Set is to become open to new situations. I think that once I am open to new situations the rest will come along with it.

As an intercultural communicator, the area of exploration for me has been a difficult one. I was raised in Bakersfield and have been around the same people my whole life so I never had the chance to explore new cultures. I realize now that that is not an excuse and I have tried to improve these skill sets. In all, my score has improved by about 1.5 and I plan to continue to improve this by actively making decisions to explore new places and meet new people.

### Global Mindset

Global Mindset is the level to which you are interested in learning about people in other cultures. This can be through research or real life interactions. (IES Report). My grasp of the skill set in the beginning of the semester was extremely low. I enjoy reading about other countries on the internet, but that was the only skill that I had of all of the factors in a Global Mindset.

My estimated global mindset score at the beginning of the semester is a 1. I believe this is my score estimate because of my writing in chapter 8, "I think that when they said you've got some

work to do, that shows true to me. I do need to work on my emotional intelligence and that showed in the quiz. That using an empathy training tool will help me. Just because I am not able to read someones face from a picture does not necessarily mean that I can not empathize with them. I think that I might try to feel what others are feeling when they are telling me a story of some sort. I usually do not think about what other people will feel like when I say something. Sometimes what I would like to say just comes out of my mouth." (CH 8 ACT) This shows my low global mindset score because I have a low global mindset.

My IES report showed my score as a 1.5. This is because I did not show any signs of having a global mindset. "When I was taking communications- public speaking, the first speech we had was on how to do something. I decided to do it on how to be a gymnastics coach. I was very proud of myself and my speech because most people do not know how to be a gymnastics coach." (CH 9 Journal) This shows my global mindset because I only was thinking about myself and not others experiences.

At the end of the 14th week I believe that improved my global mindset slightly by taking an action to research about other cultures to get a better understanding of their views.

At one point in my life, I would like to travel the world. With that being said, I will need to improve my global mindset in order to have a successful time doing so. I plan to improve this by exposing myself to other cultures.

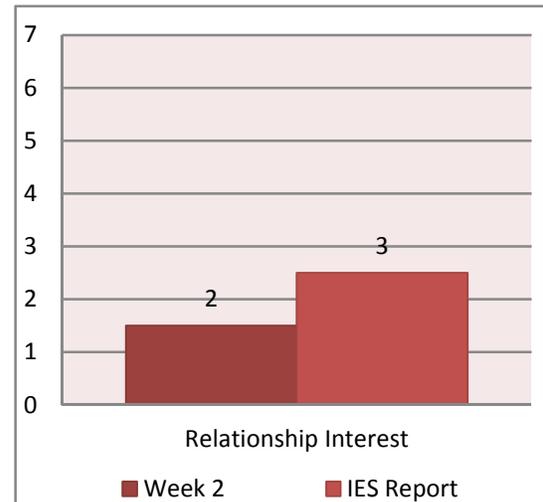


My proactive learning skills for a Global Mindset have not increased by very much this semester. I believe that my global mindset is not at a decline and will only increase as I grow and move away for college after BC.

### Relationship Interest

Relationship Interest is initiating and maintaining relationships with people who are a part of different cultures than you and also includes your ability and need to develop relationships with people from other cultures and walks of life. (IES Report). At the beginning of the semester, my relationship interest was at a 2.5. I have had a few friends through out my life that were from different cultures and it was fun to hear about their life experiences. One of my friends was born in India and moved here in Freshman year and it was awesome to hear about his time adapting to such a different culture.

My estimated relationship score from the beginning of the semester is a 1.5. I believe that I had somewhat of an understanding of relationship even though my skill score was not very high. "I do know that atheist means that you believe in no God and most often don't have spiritual or philosophical beliefs. I understand that if you are atheist that does not make you a horrible person, as God has created us all in hopes of us living a good life." (3 Writing Samples). I wrote this in the beginning of the semester and I believe that it shows that i had a low level of relationship development because I had not even considered being friends with someone who was of the atheist belief.



From the IES report I had a score of 3.5 or Relationship Interest. I believe this is an accurate score because I do not necessarily make a big effort to initiate new relationships with people from other cultures and beliefs, but I am willing to make a friend that is of another culture or belief. ""

I believe that improving my relationship development should be an easy task because I have motivation to do so. It is important to develop relationships with different types of people. I would like to have a score of at least 6 by this time next year.

As an intercultural communicator, I have grown in the area of relational interest. I have grown because I learned about the different ways you can develop in a relationship. I have realized that you should not

always judge a book by its cover and that's the same with people. People should not assume and that is a reason why I was previously having trouble with Relational Interest.

### Positive Regard

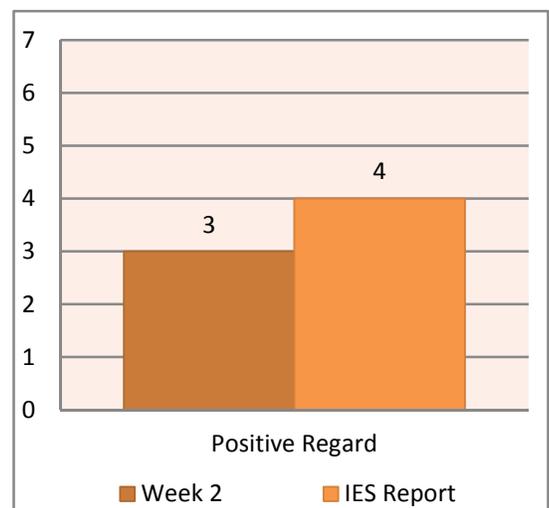
Positive Regard is having natural trust for people and assume that they are good people and generally hardworking. (IES Report). At the beginning of the semester I had a moderate level of positive regard because I usually try to look for the good in people. I like to think that everyone is a good person but this is not always the case for me

My estimated positive regard score in week 2 is a moderate score of 3. I tried my best to look for the positive side to people but sometimes this can be a difficult task. I think that I used to

only have positive regard for people who looked like they were nice people. If someone did not look nice I would not assume that they were a good person and have positive regard. "I understand that if you are atheist that does not make you a horrible person, as God has created us all in hopes of us living a good life." This shows my score of positive regard.

My IES report showed a score of 4. Although I did not make it out of the moderate section, I still found this to be a personal success. "Mythology and stories have huge impacts on our behaviors and perceptions. Without these experiences in our life we would each be very different people." (CH 3 Activity) This shows the validity of this score.

Positive Regard is something that I struggle with, but I have made huge improvements throughout my life. I would like to improve my positive regard enough to reach the high level section. I plan to improve my score by at least 2 points.



As an intercultural communicator, the development of my positive regard has improved greatly and I can not wait to improve even more. Positive regard is not a simple task to master. I have automatic judgments about people and I would like to change the way I think about these things and improve my positive regard greatly.

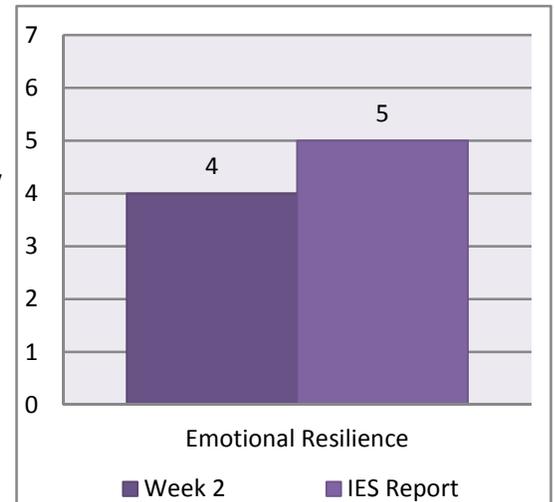
### Emotional Resilience

Emotional Resilience is the capacity of ones emotional strength and stability and the ability to deal with experiences that are emotionally draining. Being able to deal with this and still have the ability to deal with other factors such as relationships and daily interactions are a vital part of emotional resilience. (IES Report). At the beginning of the semester, my grasp of this concept was pretty strong but it has definitely developed even through the semester.

My estimated Emotional Resilience score in the second week of the semester was a 4. I have always been good at staying strong emotionally so I think that I have a moderate score. "Society makes it seem like males are above females, but in my opinion.. we are all the same and it does not bother me that people think that." (3 Writing Samples). When I said this in my 3 writing samples, I think that it shows that I have moderately strong emotional resilience because this does not bother me.

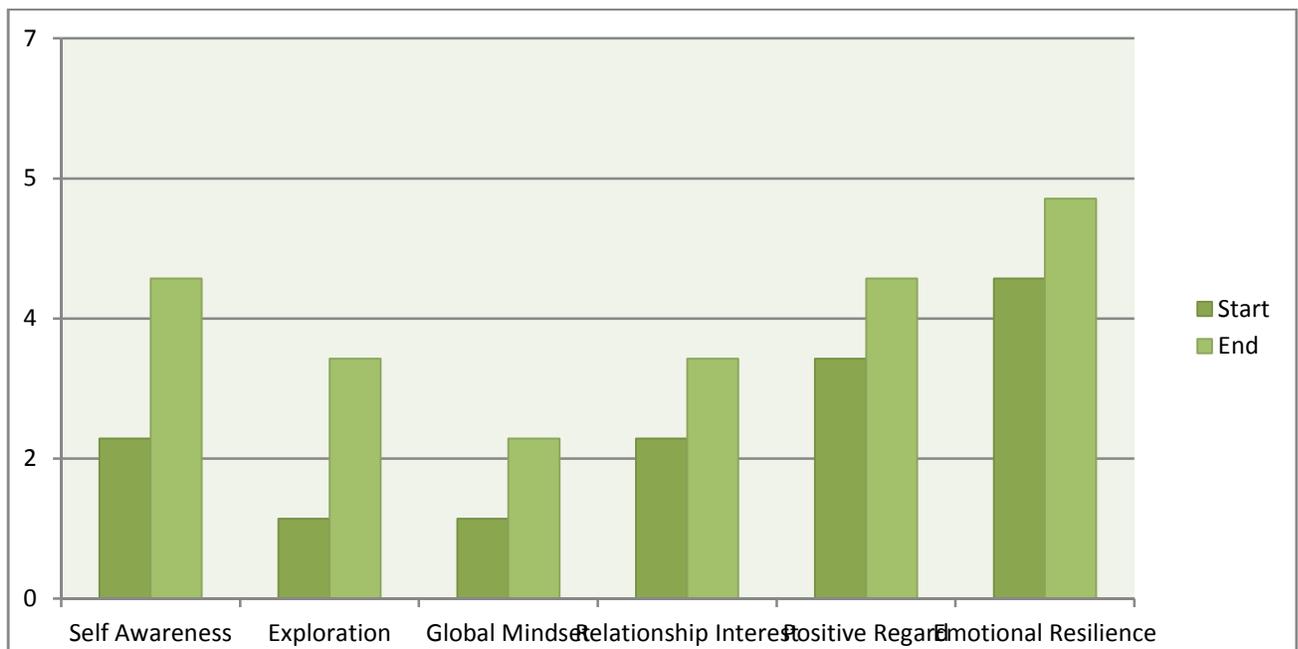
My Emotional Resilience score on the IES report is a 5. Throughout this semester, I have increased the depth of my Emotional Resilience by one point. "I do not like conflict and feel that it can be discouraging and ruin friendships if it is not dealt with correctly and appropriately. I think that there are positive views on conflict as well but I do not necessarily agree with them. Some of these positive views are true such as the fact that conflict can resolve issues that you might have with a person." (Ch 7 Act). This shows validity of the score because it shows that I avoid conflict.

My goal for the future development of my Emotional Resilience is to reach a high level of a 6 or 7 and to be able cope even better with challenging emotional situations. I hope that through my improvement, I am able to learn about other cultures and maintain stable relationships with them.



As an Intercultural communicator, the development as an emotional resilience has helped me with all of the skills that I have been working on developing even further. In summary, my emotional resilience has improved through out the course of this class and I believe that it will continue to develop.

### Conclusion



Over the course of the semester, there has been many factors that have played into my development as an intercultural communicator. I am proud of my growth throughout the class especially in the area of self awareness and emotional resilience.

The top 2 goals that I have for my personal growth in the various skills on the IES skill sets are exploration and a global mindset. I hope that I improve in these skills because they are not only my lowest scores, but I believe that they are extremely important to have these skills developed as an intercultural communicator. It will be very beneficial to my life if I have high scores in all of these areas, but I am mostly concerned with my exploration and global mindset skills.

An amazing experience for me in this class was the group cultural space video assignment. This assignment not only brought me closer to a few of my fellow classmates, but I also gained a deeper understanding of certain cultures. I came to the realization that I did not have certain skills for this such as a global mindset. It is important to put yourself in others shoes in order to relate to their situation and not be judgmental in any way towards their culture.

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