

Acculturation drives value divergence.

Acculturation can be defined as the 'process of learning and incorporating the values, beliefs, language, customs and mannerisms of the new country immigrants and their families are living in, including behaviors that affect health such as dietary habits, activity levels and substance use.



For example, if you were asked to discuss the American culture, you might explain that there is a difference between those living on the West Coast versus those living on the East Coast. Perhaps a difference might be in the food that people eat, the clothes that people wear, or the

customs and activities that they participate in.

Perhaps you are asked to discuss the Hispanic or South American culture. In doing so, there are many subcultures such as Mexican, Brazilian, Chilean, Honduran, and so on. There are as many cultures in the world as there are countries, states, and regions!

Understanding the term 'culture' can lead us to more fully understand the terms associated with the theory of acculturation. So what does **acculturation** mean? When individuals or groups of people transition from living a lifestyle of their own culture to moving into a lifestyle of another culture, they must acculturate, or come to adapt the new culture's behaviors, values, customs, and language. The word 'acculturation' is the act of that transition.

Theories of Acculturation

The theory of acculturation can be broken down to include a few different topics; these include learning a new language, immersion, assimilation, and integration. Let's take a look at each of these terms more closely.

Language and immersion can be some of the most important parts of the acculturation process. In fact, social theorist John Schumann proposed that language is the largest factor in successfully acculturating. For example, if you are a Hispanic or South American native and you move to the United States, you would have to learn to speak English in order to fully understand and even feel comfortable living and communicating in the American culture.

As you can imagine, transitioning into a new culture might often require learning a new language. While you can learn a new language by using audio CDs or taking lessons from an instructor, one of the most effective ways to learn a new language is through immersion, or surrounding yourself entirely in a new culture.

A great way to acculturate is to move from your native country into the new country, and live with and learn directly from the natives. When you immerse yourself, you learn first-hand what that new culture is all about. Immersion doesn't only include practicing the language directly with native speakers, but also includes coming to understand the customs, traditions, acceptable behaviors, and so on.

The immersion phase of acculturation can be very challenging and stressful. Why? As you can imagine, growing up and living your own culture is easy; you don't know any different from what you have learned your entire life! However, being open and willing to set aside your own cultural background and beliefs, as well as learn a new language, can come with hesitation, confusion, and can often be time-consuming.

Sometimes the process of acculturation doesn't necessarily include learning a new language but instead includes learning the meaning of certain

words or adjusting to the local dialect. For example, if you were an American native moving to British Columbia, Canada, you could continue to speak English, but would also want to learn the different meanings of words that are associated with the Canadian culture.

In the United States, the term 'bathroom' is used as opposed to the term 'washroom', which is used in British Columbia. The language and word choices spoke by the native people are referred to as the vernacular. Even though Canadians speak English, some of the word choices they use have to be learned by a non-native as part of the acculturation process.

In Great Britain, the bathroom is referred to as the loo. In Australia, a friend or acquaintance is referred to as a mate. As you can see, not only does acculturation include learning a new language or immersing yourself into the culture, it also includes learning the meanings and associations of new words and phrases.

Assimilation involves the accumulation of information about a new culture and resulting in adaptations to match the new culture.

Generating new knowledge about culture might include learning how food is prepared, understanding types of acceptable clothing worn in the new culture, or picking up new habits. A person who fully assimilates has picked up all the habits and traits of their non-native culture.

Conclusion

Enculturation helps mold a person into an acceptable member of society. Culture influences everything that a person does, whether they are aware of it or not. Enculturation is a lifelong process that helps unify people.

Enculturation plays a significant role in disciplining and educating the young generation. For the enrichment of knowledge and technology enculturation is a very important process it helps to get information regarding

universal culture and languages it plays a very important function in the growth and unity of the community.