Interview with Dominic Mukumbila
Country of origin: Zambia
Telephone number: 3460

Intercultural Encounter Paper

In my interpersonal communications class we had a class discussion about how cultural differences effect interpersonal communication. We have been asked to interview an international student or an American minority. After receiving a list of international students on campus, one name seemed to stick out to me the most. His name is Dominic Mukumbila. I have known Dominic since last year, my freshman year, when he and I both participated on the Monmouth College men’s soccer team. Dominic was a great candidate to interview. In this interview I was able to receive some background information. I was also able to apply some of this information into some concepts from class. I set up an interview time and was able to really learn about Dominic.

My first experience with Dominic was last year when I was a freshman here at Monmouth College. My first week here I participated in soccer tryouts and these 40 guys quickly became friends of mine especially for me being a freshman. This is when I first met Dominic. Soccer was one of several things that Dominic and I had in common. It was from this day that I began to learn
more about him. Dominic is a 20 year old student here at Monmouth College.

Dominic is from Zambia which is a small country in Southern Africa. Dominic plans on graduating from Monmouth College with a degree in international business.

I asked Dominic how education has played an important role on his life. He said that in Zambia there are similar education guidelines as there are here in the United States. Many encounters with students here on campus always want to know how he learned to speak English so well. He explained how since he is from some other country that he would not be able to speak English very good.

This is a typical stereotype that many people use against him. Because he was educated in international schools, he has become very familiar with the use of English. Another stereotype he encounters is the way of life in Zambia. He stated that many people think that Zambia is a poor or uncivilized country and would be totally different from the United States, but he explained that in a lot of ways we have similarities. He specifically said that many people want to know if he grew up in a hut for a house and he has to explain how this is just a stereotype. Because of his English and communication skills many people are still shocked that he is from another country.

Another question I asked him is if he felt comfortable being an international student here on campus and why did he choose Monmouth College
for his education. He told me that his father was in Ohio for work and his brother and sister attended Monmouth as well. Because they both attended here it was easy for Dominic to fit in. He came to Monmouth College because he wanted to participate in the game of soccer and because Monmouth College has a great financial program that would help him pay for his education. When his brother and sister attended school here he came to visit a few times and began to like the campus and the possibilities to graduate with a major of international business.

I enjoyed asking him what some differences between Zambia and the United States. He first mentioned how soccer is much more popular in Zambia and cannot even compare to its popularity here. He was telling me that all the baseball new with the Cubs possibly making it to the World Series did not really mean anything to him because he only experienced baseball here in America. He said that many people assume that I like American sports such as football, baseball and basketball, but in Zambia there is very little popularity in these sports. This is an example of assumption of similarities.

Another fun question I asked Dominic was what would be the first thing I would notice about his culture if I went to Zambia for a vacation or went home with him. He told me that I would most likely notice the people. He explained how you cannot make friends with someone as easily there as you can here. He
mentioned that it would take time to become friends with people from his
country whereas Americans communicate openly with each other. After talking
to Dominic I would feel more comfortable about going to Zambia to visit friends
or relatives of his. After talking to Dominic, I lost several of my stereotypes and
was able to see his better as a person.

I showed Dominic the worksheet titled “Development of Intercultural
Sensitivity.” I asked him to look at it and of which of the stages he felt he would
consider himself. After he studied the worksheet he told me that he would fit
comfortably in the Ethnorelative Stages and more specifically the Acceptance
stage. He says that he enjoyed recognizing and exploring cultural differences.
This is also another reason why he feels that he in so interested in International
business for a major to graduate with. He has been able to accept our culture just
as much as others and intends on learning about more cultures with his major.

After an hour interview with Dominic I was able to connect to him in a
very personal way besides seeing him on campus and every night at soccer
practice. This assignment has completely changed the way I want to meet
people. I have learned not to make prejudgments of others and to take time to
find out who someone is. I was able to apply many concepts from class and most
importantly build a strong relationship with a fellow student here at Monmouth
College.