

My Culture Shock Experience

Back in elementary school things were simple. You got graded based on whether or not you did the work, rather than how well you did it. You went to one classroom every day and got to sit with your friends at lunch. For the most part kids were nice and if they weren't they got in trouble for it. Just the mention of the principal's office scared everyone. For me elementary school was great and I didn't realize how different middle school was going to be. (Especially since everyone was saying it was going to be fine and not to worry about it) I thought I would still get to see my friends every day since we were going to the same school, but things turned out to be very different.

Middle school was culture shock for many reasons for me, first (just like all the anthropologist in the articles we have read) I was in a new place where I had to learn my way around. My middle school building was two stories, a whole floor bigger than my elementary school! I did not know how I would ever find my way around, especially since I had to go to a different room for every class.

In our reading about the Yanomamo, Chagnon does not know the language of the Yanomamo people and has a hard time communicating with them. In my culture shock experience I spoke the same language but I was exposed to parts of it that I was not expecting. In elementary school if you said a curse word you were sent to the principal's office so cussing was something that kids just did not do. When I went to middle school I heard kids cussing all the time. It was very surprising to me; I was not used to that kind of language being used in every sentence! I did not understand why they were not getting in trouble for the things they were saying. The most a teacher would do is say "watch your mouth".

I expected to see my friends every day in middle school, maybe not all but some. I came to realize that was not the case. Everyone had a different schedule and even though we all ate lunch in the cafeteria at the same time students had to sit with their homeroom classes. Similar to Johanna from Nice Girls Don't Talk to Rastas I tried to go against the way things were supposed to be. Since we all ate at the same time I thought, if the teachers did not know I could just go sit with my friends instead of my homeroom class. I was able to do this several times before I was caught and told that I had to sit with my class. I said "what difference does it make? I'll leave with my class" But Mrs. Brooks just said "sorry that's the way it is".

In middle school the grading scale changes, instead of being graded on completion you now get graded on accuracy and whether or not the work is on time. This was culture shock a little bit for me because I did not realize how much a zero or a low grade could impact your overall grade, and once your grade did drop I did not realize how hard it would be to try and bring it back up. I remember getting an interim report for my science class that had around seven hundreds a few zeros and a few low grades. Seeing all those hundreds made it look like my grade would be high but instead the low grades and the zeros had brought my average down to a D. this loosely relates to how Claire had to adjust to how the prostitutes lived and did things. I had to adjust and learn to manage all my assignments.

My culture shock did help me learn about the way things change in our culture. As someone advances in school or in their career they have to be able to adapt to change. Most of the time you are working your way up the ladder and past experiences will help you to be prepared for the challenges and changes you will have to experience in the next stage. In my situation middle school got me ready for high school. In high school I had to deal with even

more people in an even bigger building, several buildings. In middle school there are consequences for not turning in work and late work but they are not as bad as the ones in high school.(and college) Knowing that you are not always going to be in a class with your friends taught me that it is important to always be meeting new people. Middle school may suck but in a way it is kind of creating a learning foundation.