



CULTURE SHOCK

No doubt you are busy getting ready for your upcoming study abroad trip.

Getting your passport in order, checking on the status of your student visa, completing your OCASP record...



But I want you to pause for a moment while we talk about "culture shock".



Now you're likely thinking...Me?
Culture shock? Never!

I'm way too open-minded for that.
I've travelled a lot and it's never
happened before...

Besides, I've done my research
and know a fair bit about my
host culture...



Well think again. Culture shock is more extreme than homesickness and can sneak up on the most well-rounded travelers.



Actually it might be better to call it "culture sneak" because it usually doesn't happen in one big swoop...it sneaks up on you over time.



Culture shock (or sneak) is like the culmination of all the things you deal with on a day-to-day basis that are different than in your home culture.



At first, it might seem fun and cool...this is why you went abroad, isn't it?



But consider this...

The food is different...

The language is different...

Setting up a bank account was a nightmare...

It's hard to keep up in class...

The internet is sketchy, and is down more than it's up...

You can't figure out the bus system...
it's never on time.



Nothing is easy...You're always trying to figure something out.

It's exhausting...

Sometimes it's just easier to stay in your room....

You miss home and your friends...

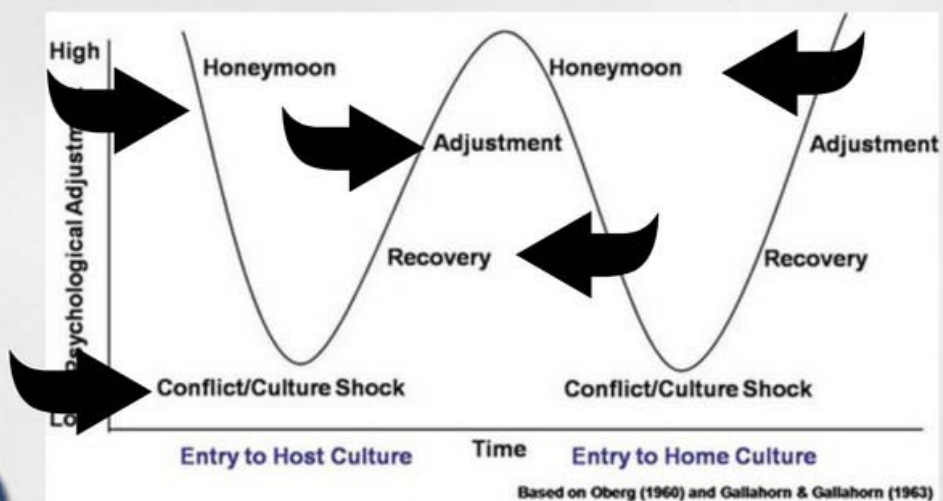


Culture shock is well-documented.

Research shows that most people entering a new culture experience it. Responses can range from mild discomfort to extreme frustration or depression.

They also say that it usually occurs in the first or second month, so it really does creep up on you...

The "W" Curve



Symptoms of Culture Shock

- homesickness (that gets worse not better)
- frustration
- boredom
- feeling isolated and helpless
- withdrawal (spending too much time on your own)
- sleeping too much



Symptoms of Culture Shock

- irritation over minor frustrations
- critical of local customs
- depression or sadness
- the smallest problems seem overwhelming
- and lots more...



Now you may be asking yourselfwell, how do I get past that?

FIRST...Remember that you heard about it here!

SECOND...it's absolutely normal and temporary.

THIRD...once you are aware of it you can do something about it.



Tips for easing the transition:

- Take care of you! Eat well, exercise and get enough sleep!
- Talk to someone about it... your friends, your parents, other international students, someone from your International Student Centre, someone from QUIC...
- Have fun and relax. Join a club or a team. Volunteer!



- Attend all planned social activities. The key here is to build community!

- Be patient...with others and yourself.

- Practice the language and meet the locals!

Remember, reach out for support if you feel you need it!

Hola



Keep a journal...write down your thoughts at the end of the day or week.

This is a great time to reflect on your experience, and a way to measure how far you've come!

And you can read it over years from now and memories will flood back to you...



I hope you liked learning about "culture sneak". Remember to watch for it when you are abroad. To learn even more, check out some of the cool resources we have at the end of the modules.



Up Next...

Coming Home
and Making Sense of
the Experience

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