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ⁱ This handout was developed for use with the University of California PRIME summer research abroad program. It was included in “Culture in the Lab: A Model for Undergraduate STEM Research,” presented at the 2014 Forum on Education Abroad Conference in San Diego, CA.

Challenges and Intensity Factors in Coming Home

R. Michael Paige originally developed a list of cultural circumstances that have been proven to have a strong psychological impact upon individuals participating in cross-cultural educational experiences. He called them "intensity factors" because they can heighten the psychological intensity of the adjustment process. In this list, Bruce La Brack addresses why the same intensity factors appear to be equally influential and applicable *during the return home*, particularly for individuals coming back from international educational exchanges.

1. The degree of **cultural difference** between the home culture and the host culture is likely to be a source of discomfort to the degree that the value systems, level of economic development, and behavioral standards of the host country were significantly divergent from home. Coming back to the United States from England or Chile will be different from returning from an island Pacific culture, India, China, or Africa. The greater the cultural, political, economic, social, and religious contrasts between the home and host countries, the greater the likelihood of reverse culture shock.
2. The degree of **cultural immersion** (or cultural isolation) the students experienced while overseas will play a major role in their positive or negative evaluation of their time abroad and impact significantly upon how they view their return. Although there is great variation, in general, the greater the success students have had in appropriately fitting into another culture, the more difficulty they have in coming home.

More accurately, the physical act of coming home for an individual who had made deep friendships abroad and participated fully in the community is much harder than a sojourner whose overseas stay was less intense or more isolated. The irony is that great success in adaptation overseas may be followed by a much lengthier and rocky period of readjustment at home.

3. Contrast between an individual's **status** in the host country and status at home can have a large influence on how he or she views the return. Related to this factor is the degree to which students were "visible" or "invisible" in the host country and how they evaluated either state. The loss of being "special" abroad can be offset by the comfort of returning to familiar people and places, but it can also be perceived as a profound loss.
4. Those students with **prior intercultural experience**, including reentry, are likely to be better able to cope with the transition experience of coming home, while the first-time returnee may exhibit a wide range of reactions during readjustment. Although this is generally true, it is possible to have no reverse culture shock returning from a first stay abroad but suffer severely from it after a subsequent sojourn.
5. A significant variable in reentry is the **motivation for returning**. A forced return can lead to resentment (issues of power and control also play a role here). If you returned home for academic, medical, or financial reasons before you were ready, there can be feelings of dislocation, unfinished business, failure, and loss. A voluntary early return due

to inability to adjust while overseas can have similar impacts. Successful overseas sojourners will see the return as completion, opportunity, and reunion. A reluctant returnee is likely to be at least temporarily dysfunctional.

6. The question of the **expectations** of the returnee (closely linked to #5 above) is complicated by the degree to which those expectations are realistic or idealized. Whether they were realistic or not, if the expectations are not met, it will strongly impact the reentry process.
7. Just as men and women can have significantly different overseas experiences that can be attributed in part to the attitudes towards sex, **gender**, and social roles in the host country, coming home can have differential impacts upon men and women. US-American men and women both frequently mention that life abroad had aspects related to gender that they appreciated and wished were part of their culture, but many stated just the opposite.
8. In general, the older (assuming maturity) you are and the higher your **level of education** or professional status, the greater the chance that your overseas experience will be satisfactory and the reentry less troublesome.
9. In general, the longer the **period of being away from home**, the greater chance that the return will have some unexpected and disconcerting consequences.
10. In general, the greater the **degree to which “home” has changed** (physically, socially, politically, economically, or psychologically-divorce, death, separation, a move) the greater the adjustment required during reentry.
11. In general, the degree to which students returning from abroad feel that they have ways to maintain, apply, increase, and **benefit from the skills and information** they gained while abroad, the greater and more integrative their return home will be.
12. In general, the return adjustment is positively or negatively influenced by the presence or absence of a strong and **supportive network** of family and friends. Appreciation and recognition are important to returnees, particularly in the early stages of return.

Positive Long-Term Outcomes

Study abroad is almost always a “value added” experience in a job search. Choose the statements below that you feel apply to your experience abroad. Then think about how to present these new skills and attitudes to a potential employer in a way that makes you stand out from other candidates. Try to translate these “covert competencies” into resume language.

Example:

Intercultural/communication skills

- I have a greater capacity to accept differences in others and to tolerate other people’s actions and ideas that may be vastly different from my own.
- I am more knowledgeable about another culture and lifestyle.
- I have improved my ability to communicate with people in a second language.
- I have a greater ability to empathize (i.e., to sense how an event appears and feels to someone else).
- I understand that there are many ways to accomplish the same task and that those approaches are only “different,” not necessarily better or worse.
- I have learned to improve interpersonal communication through increased abilities in listening well, speaking clearly, and paying attention to nonverbal cues.
- I have more curiosity about, and respect for, new ideas.
- I am more flexible and able to adjust to changes in others.
- I am more tolerant of ambiguous situations, that is, of situations that are confusing and open to differing interpretations.
- I realize why stereotypes can be so harmful and hurtful, both to others and myself.
- I have learned how to recognize when I have made a cross-cultural mistake and can use culturally appropriate language and measures to repair any damage.
- I understand and appreciate how much educational systems can differ across cultures.
- I have a greater willingness to take on roles and tasks to which I am unaccustomed.
- I can adapt and cope in vastly different settings.
- I am more able to accept as valid others values and lifestyles.
- I think more critically: I am more discriminating and skeptical, particularly of stereotypes.
- I have generally improved my observation skills.
- I realize the importance of time to be alone to think.
- I find myself regularly reflecting about the overseas experience and its meaning for me.
- I am confident that I can meet and make friends abroad.
- I have an increased motivation to go abroad again.

World view

- I understand better another country’s role in world affairs.
- I have a better understanding of how and why political policy differs abroad.
- I have the ability to see situations and issues from more than one perspective.
- I understand more clearly how US-Americans and the United States are viewed overseas.
- I see the world as more interconnected than ever before.

- ❑ I value human diversity and respect others from a variety of backgrounds different from my own.
- ❑ I have greater sympathy for the struggles of international students and immigrants as a result of my experience.
- ❑ I have a deeper understanding of the common problems and issues that confront all human beings on this planet.
- ❑ I have greater awareness of political, economic, and social events occurring around the world.
- ❑ I seek out international news and want to know what is going on in the world more than ever before.
- ❑ I am aware that cultural changes can have unexpected consequences.

Personal capabilities

- ❑ I understand more fully my own strengths and weaknesses.
- ❑ I feel more confident in undertaking new travels or projects.
- ❑ I can accept failures and shortcomings in myself more easily.
- ❑ I am more confident and assertive when facing new situations.
- ❑ I have become a more patient person.
- ❑ I am more willing to share my thoughts and feelings with others, and to be open when others wish to share theirs with me.
- ❑ I am less afraid of making mistakes or being laughed at than I used to be.
- ❑ I can see myself more objectively (i.e., I see my own day-to-day problems in a broader, more realistic context).
- ❑ I have increased my perseverance and self-discipline.
- ❑ I can "analyze" a social situation more quickly than before (i.e., figure out what is going on and react appropriately).
- ❑ I am more deeply committed to an idea, cause, or goal.
- ❑ I have the ability to create personal peace and satisfaction in my life.
- ❑ I have a greater sense of responsibility for other people.
- ❑ I am more able to express deep emotions freely.
- ❑ I am more able to ask for and receive help from others.
- ❑ I have increased my capacity to experiment and take risks.
- ❑ I have a clearer notion of what I wish to do with my life.
- ❑ I am more aware of opportunities in life that are open to me.
- ❑ I feel greater respect and appreciation for my natural family.
- ❑ I am more independent in my relations with family and friends.
- ❑ I can accept the shortcomings of my family members in an understanding way.
- ❑ I think that I need fewer friends but deeper (more intimate and more trusting) friendships.
- ❑ I am more aware of the way I use and structure time.
- ❑ I am interested in, and capable of, making long-range plans.
- ❑ I am more determined to develop fully my skills and talents, especially those recently gained through overseas living.
- ❑ I feel a greater need to have diverse experiences and friends.
- ❑ I feel that being abroad helped clarify my goals and values.
- ❑ I am more likely to do things spontaneously (i.e., to do things without undue concern about possible consequences or any advanced planning).

- ❑ I am more capable of solving life's day-to-day problems and accomplishing necessary tasks.
- ❑ I can set more realistic priorities, both short-term and long-term, for myself.
- ❑ I am more confident about the decisions I make.
- ❑ I have a greater appreciation for what I have.
- ❑ I have the ability to make clear personal choices and goals for my life rather than complying with what others expect and want from me.
- ❑ I have learned to place a lower value on material things.
- ❑ I want to be able to use my skills in future work and can articulate what those are to a prospective employer.

Own culture

- ❑ I see my own cultural values more clearly and understand how and why they differ from others.
- ❑ I can evaluate advantages and disadvantages of my own culture and society more objectively (i.e., from the perspective of an outsider).
- ❑ I am sensitive to subtle features of my own culture that I had never seen before.
- ❑ I have both a greater appreciation for US-American culture and a clearer critical sense of its limitations and problems.
- ❑ I have a deeper understanding of (if not necessarily commitment to) the values and lifestyle of my native community.
- ❑ I appreciate US-American efficiency, but miss the different pace of life abroad.

* Excerpted from *What's Up With Culture 2.4.1* < <http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>> from version adapted and expanded by Dr. Bruce La Brack for inclusion as an exercise in the "What's Up with Culture?" website resource. Original Source: *The AFS Student Study Guide* published by the AFS International/Intercultural Programs (Washington, D. C., 1979), as reprinted in: Clyde N. Austin, ed., *Cross-Cultural Reentry: A Book of Readings* (Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press, 1986), pgs. 273-27. Used with permission from American Field Service International, New York.

Concept of Self: Individualist or Collectivistⁱ

Individualist—

The individual identifies primarily with self, with the needs of the individual being satisfied before those of the group. Looking after and taking care of oneself, being self-sufficient, guarantees the well-being of the group. Independence and self-reliance are greatly stressed and valued. In general, people tend to distance themselves psychologically and emotionally from each other. One may choose to join groups, but group membership is not essential to one's identity or success. Individualist characteristics are often associated with men and people in urban settings.

Collectivist—

One's identity is, in large part, a function of one's membership and role in a group, e.g., the family or work team. The survival and success of the group ensures the well-being of the individual, so that by considering the needs and feelings of others, one protects oneself. Harmony and the interdependence of group members are stressed and valued. Group members are relatively close psychologically and emotionally, but distant toward nongroup members. Collectivist characteristics are often associated with women and people in rural settings.

Exercise:

Look at the list of characteristics and behaviors given below. If you decide the statement is more likely to apply to people living in an individualist culture, write "I" in the underlined blank space; if you think it is characteristic of a collectivist culture, write "C."

1. ____ People answer the phone by giving the name of the organization.
2. ____ People give cocktail parties.
3. ____ Inter-group rivalry is strong.
4. ____ Employee-of-the-year awards are offered.
5. ____ People adhere to tradition.
6. ____ People are promoted based on production and results.
7. ____ Contracts in business are used frequently.
8. ____ There is a need for autonomy.
9. ____ People change jobs frequently.
10. ____ People believe that conflict clears the air.
11. ____ There is a need for affiliation.
12. ____ Short-term relationships are common.

13. ____ It's okay to stand out.
14. ____ Face-saving is important.
15. ____ It's common for mothers to ask their preschoolers what they want to wear each day.
16. ____ Self-help books are popular.
17. ____ Decisions are made by consensus.
18. ____ The language has one word for mother's brother, another for father's brother.
19. ____ Marriages are arranged.
20. ____ People have potluck dinners.

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Context of Cultures: High and Lowⁱ

Edward T. Hall was an anthropologist who made early discoveries of key cultural factors. In particular he is known for his high and low context cultural factors.

High context

In a high-context culture, there are many contextual elements that help people to understand the rules. As a result, much is taken for granted. This can be very confusing for person who does not understand the 'unwritten rules' of the culture.

Low context

In a low-context culture, very little is taken for granted. Whilst this means that more explanation is needed, it also means there is less chance of misunderstanding particularly when visitors are present.

Contrasting the two

French contracts tend to be short (in physical length, not time duration) as much of the information is available within the high-context French culture. American content, on the other hand, is low-context and so contracts tend to be longer in order to explain the detail.

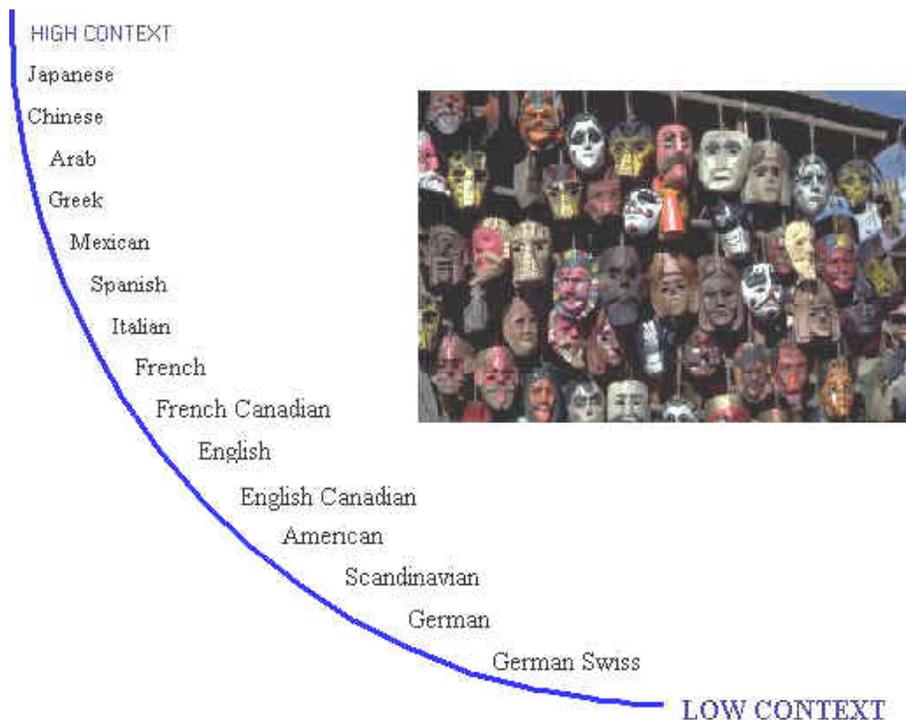
Highly mobile environments where people come and go need lower-context culture. With a stable population, however, a higher context culture may develop.

Excerpted from http://changingminds.org/explanations/culture/hall_culture.htm

High Context	Low Context
Association <ul style="list-style-type: none">Relationships depend on trust, build up slowly, are stable. One distinguishes between people inside and people outside one's circle.How things get done depends on relationships with people and attention to group process.One's identity is rooted in groups (family, culture, work).Social structure and authority are centralized; responsibility is at the top. Person at top works for the good of the group.	Association <ul style="list-style-type: none">Relationships begin and end quickly. Many people can be inside one's circle; circle's boundary is not clear.Things get done by following procedures and paying attention to the goal.One's identity is rooted in oneself and one's accomplishments.Social structure is decentralized; responsibility goes further down (is not concentrated at the top).
Interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none">High use of nonverbal elements; voice tone, facial expression, gestures, and eye movement carry significant parts of conversation.Verbal message is implicit; context (situation, people, nonverbal elements) is more important than words.Verbal message is indirect; one talks around the point and embellishes it.Communication is seen as an art form—a way of engaging someone.Disagreement is personalized. One is sensitive to conflict expressed in another's nonverbal communication. Conflict either must be solved before work can progress or must be avoided because it is personally threatening.	Interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none">Low use of nonverbal elements. Message is carried more by words than by nonverbal means.Verbal message is explicit. Context is less important than words.Verbal message is direct; one spells things out exactly.Communication is seen as a way of exchanging information, ideas, and opinions.Disagreement is depersonalized. One withdraws from conflict with another and gets on with the task. Focus is on rational solutions, not personal ones. One can be explicit about another's bothersome behavior.

<p>Territoriality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Space is communal; people stand close to each other, share the same space. 	<p>Territoriality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Space is compartmentalized and privately owned; privacy is important, so people are farther apart.
<p>Temporality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everything has its own time. Time is not easily scheduled; needs of people may interfere with keeping to a set time. What is important is that activity gets done. Change is slow. Things are rooted in the past, slow to change, and stable. Time is a process; it belongs to others and to nature. 	<p>Temporality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Things are scheduled to be done at particular times, one thing at a time. What is important is that activity is done efficiently. Change is fast. One can make change and see immediate results. Time is a commodity to be spent or saved. One's time is one's own.
<p>Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge is embedded in the situation; things are connected, synthesized, and global. Multiple sources of information are used. Thinking is deductive, proceeds from general to specific. Learning occurs by first observing others as they model or demonstrate and then practicing. Groups are preferred for learning and problem solving. Accuracy is valued. How well something is learned is important. 	<p>Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reality is fragmented and compartmentalized. One source of information is used to develop knowledge. Thinking is inductive, proceeds from specific to general. Focus is on detail. Learning occurs by following explicit directions and explanations of others. An individual orientation is preferred for learning and problem solving. Speed is valued. How efficiently something is learned is important.

To illustrate how cultures fall along the context continuum, here is a chart that includes some cultures that have been studied.



Excerpted from *What's Up With Culture* 1.4.6 <http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

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*Skills That Make a Difference*ⁱ

Some people seem to take to another culture more naturally than others. And some foreign cultures seem to be easier for Americans to adjust to than others. But there are certain skills or traits which you may have-or, with a little effort, develop-which will facilitate your rapid adjustment.

Before going on, jot down in the space below some of the skills-they are usually attitudes, ways of responding, and styles of behaving-which you might think to be most helpful in the overseas adjustment process.

NOTES:

Here are the skills that our experience has shown to be the most important:

- TOLERANCE FOR AMBIGUITY
- LOW GOAL/TASK ORIENTATION
- OPEN-MINDEDNESS
- NON-JUDGEMENTALNESS
- EMPATHY
- COMMUNICATIVENESS
- FLEXIBILITY; ADAPTABILITY
- CURIOSITY
- SENSE OF HUMOR
- WARMTH IN HUMAN RELATIONS
- MOTIVATION
- SELF-RELIANCE
- STRONG SENSE OF SELF
- TOLERANCE FOR DIFFERENCES
- PERCEPTIVENESS
- ABILITY TO FAIL

Circle the traits you think are the *most* important (or guess what our choices are - it'll be no surprise that we're going to tell you) and star the traits that you're currently good at.

Source: Survival Kit for Overseas Living, Third ed., by L. Robert Kohls, 1996

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The Four Levels of Cultural Awarenessⁱ

As you go through the cycle of adjustment, your awareness of the host country culture naturally increases. This awareness tends to progress through a series of levels, described below.

I. Unconscious incompetence

This has also been called the state of blissful ignorance. At this stage, you are unaware of cultural differences. It does not occur to you that you may be making cultural mistakes or that you may be misinterpreting much of the behavior going on around you. You have no reason not to trust your instincts.

II. Conscious incompetence

You now realize that differences exist between the way you and the local people behave, though you understand very little about what these differences are, how numerous they might be, or how deep they might go. You know there's a problem here, but you're not sure about the size of it. You're not so sure of your instincts anymore, and you realize that there are some things you don't understand. You may start to worry about how hard it's going to be to figure these people out.

III. Conscious competence

You know cultural differences exist, you know what some of these differences are, and you try to adjust your own behavior accordingly. It doesn't come naturally yet—you have to make a conscious effort to behave in culturally appropriate ways—but you are much more aware of how your behavior is coming across to the local people. You are in the process of replacing old instincts with new ones. You know now that you will be able to figure these people out if you can remain objective.

IV. Unconscious competence

You no longer have to think about what you're doing in order to do the right thing. Culturally appropriate behavior is now second nature to you; you can trust your instincts because they have been reconditioned by the new culture. It takes little effort now for you to be culturally sensitive.*

*This paradigm is based on work by William Howell.

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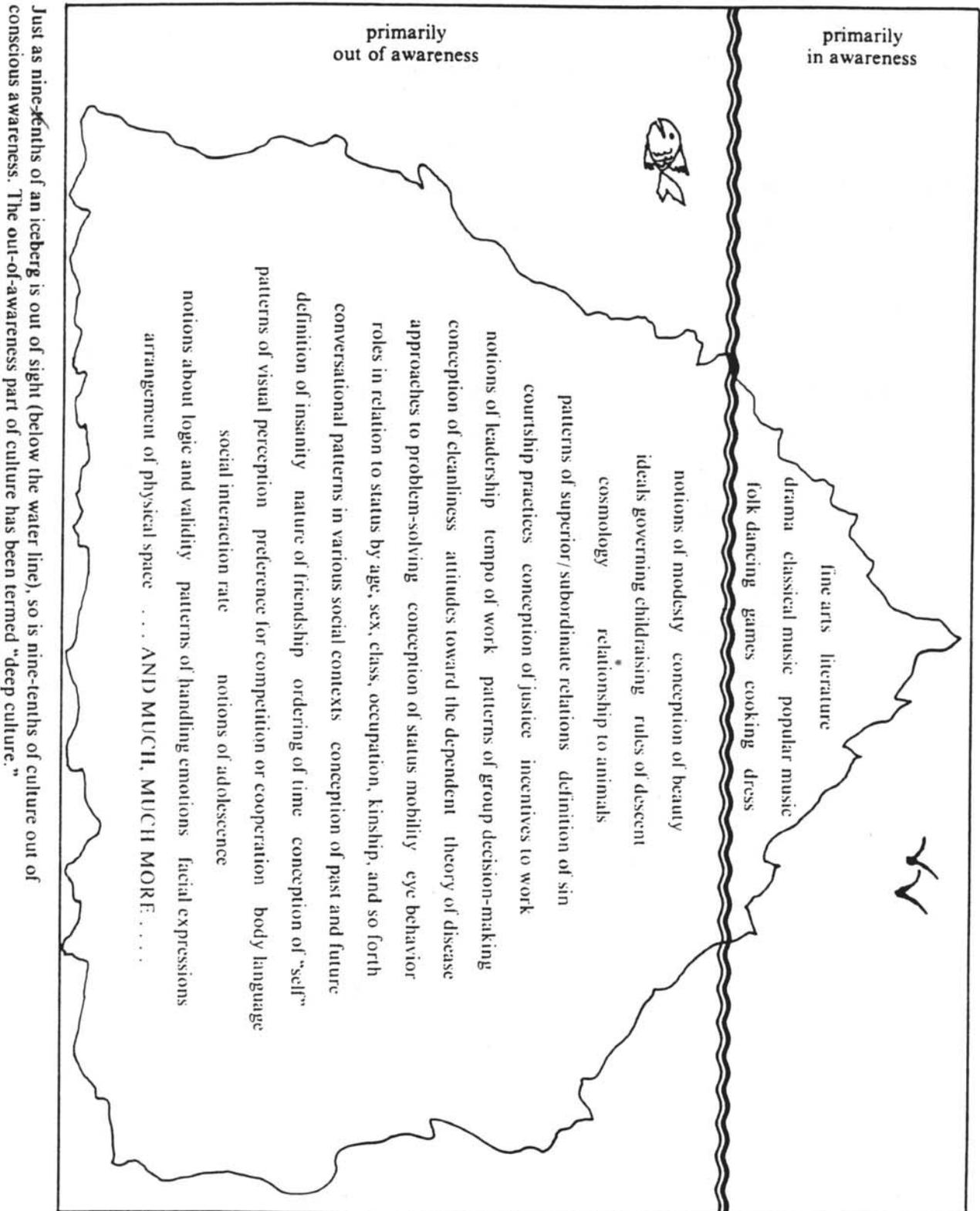


Figure 1: The iceberg conception of the nature of culture

Just as nine-tenths of an iceberg is out of sight (below the water line), so is nine-tenths of culture out of conscious awareness. The out-of-awareness part of culture has been termed "deep culture."

Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Key Termsⁱ

Six stages in the development of intercultural sensitivity:

Ethnocentric = assumption that the worldview of one's own culture is central to all reality

1. *Denial*: sees no real differences among people from different cultures
2. *Polarization*: a) *Defense*: differences considered threatening to one's self-esteem and identity.
b) *Reversal* is opposite reaction when a different culture is assumed to be superior to one's own.
3. *Minimization*: over-generalizes similarities between self and other

Ethnorelative = assumption that one's own culture is one among many and that particular behavior can only be understood within a cultural context

4. *Acceptance*: acknowledgment that identifying significant cultural differences is crucial to understanding human interaction
5. *Adaptation*: proactive effort to use intercultural skills to maximize relationships with people from other cultures
6. *Integration*: effort to combine disparate aspects of one's cultural identity into a new whole

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In the Mind of the Beholder (Observe-Interpret-Evaluate)ⁱ

From What's Up with Culture 1.3.2

<http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

Another way to understand why making cultural distinctions is useful in figuring out "what something means" in another culture, is to acknowledge that what we call "reality" may have more than one meaning or interpretation, often vastly different. Most human beings have a tendency to believe that what they see is "real," and assume anyone observing or experiencing the same situation would "naturally" describe, react to, or characterize the event in the same way they do.

Anthropologists call this propensity "naive realism," or the belief that everyone sees the world in the same way you do. A corollary is that most human beings also assume that there is only one reasonable way to look at the world. However, psychologists and interculturalists have shown that the world rarely looks the same to everyone, and that the culture you are raised in will strongly influence how you will view even the most simple behavior.

The Mind of the Beholder Exercise that follows will help you see how this works in everyday situations. It will also give you some idea of how seemingly ordinary activities can have very different meanings depending on whether you are the person who does the behavior or the person who observes (and judges) the behavior.

In this activity, you are being asked to consider the phenomenon of perception. We all believe that we observe reality, things as they are, but what actually happens is that the mind interprets what the eyes see and gives it meaning. It is only at this point, when meaning is assigned, that we can truly say we have seen something. In other words, what we see is as much in the mind as it is in reality.

If you consider that the mind of a person from one culture is going to be different in many ways from the mind of a person from another culture, then you have the explanation for that most fundamental of all cross-cultural problems: the fact that two people look upon the same reality, the same example of behavior, and see two entirely different things.

Any behavior observed across the cultural divide, therefore, has to be interpreted in two ways:

- the meaning given to it by the person who does the action
- the meaning given to it by the person who observes the action

Only when these two meanings are the same do we have successful communication, successful in the sense that the meaning that was intended by the doer is the one that was understood by the observer.

In the Mind of the Beholder Exercise

Part One

In the first part of this exercise, read the description of the eight instances of behavior given below and write down your immediate response to or interpretation of that behavior in terms of your own cultural values, beliefs, or perception. The first one has been done for you.

1. A person comes to a meeting half an hour after the stated starting time.

This person is late and should at least apologize or give an explanation.

2. Someone kicks a dog.
3. At the end of a meal, people belch audibly.

4. Someone makes the OK gesture at you.
5. A woman carries a heavy pile of wood on her back while her husband walks in front of her carrying nothing.
6. A male guest helps a hostess carry dirty dishes into the kitchen.
7. A young man and young woman are kissing each other while seated on a park bench.
8. While taking an exam, a student copies from the paper of another student.

Let's go to the second part of the exercise ...

In this second part of the activity, you are asked to imagine how these same eight behaviors would be perceived or interpreted by someone from a culture different from your own. (The particular cultural difference is described in each case.) Read each behavior and the description of the culture, and then write in the space provided how you think a person from such a culture would interpret that behavior.

1. A person comes to a meeting half an hour after the stated starting time. How would this act be interpreted:
 - by someone from a culture where people always arrive half an hour after the stated starting time?
 - by someone from a culture where meetings never start until at least an hour after the stated time?
2. Someone kicks a dog. How would this act be interpreted:
 - by someone from a country where dogs always carry disease?
 - by someone from a country where most dogs are wild and vicious?
3. At the end of a meal, people belch audibly. How would this be interpreted:
 - by someone from a culture where belching is the normal way to compliment the cook?
4. Someone makes the OK gesture at you. How would this be interpreted:
 - by someone in whose culture this gesture is obscene?
 - by someone in whose culture this gesture has romantic connotations?
5. A woman carries a heavy pile of wood on her back while her husband walks in front of her carrying nothing. How would this be interpreted:
 - by someone from a culture where carrying wood is never done by men?
6. A male guest helps a hostess carry dirty dishes into the kitchen. How would this act be interpreted:
 - by someone from a culture where men never clean up after a meal?
 - by the hostess from that same culture?
7. A young man and young woman are kissing each other while seated on a park bench. How would this act be interpreted:
 - by someone from a culture where men and women never touch in public?

8. While taking an exam, a student copies from the paper of another student. How would this act be interpreted:
- by someone from a culture where exams are not fair and are designed to eliminate students at various stages of the educational system?
 - by someone from a culture where it is shameful not to help your friend if you can do so?

DISCUSSION

In the first set of answers you were asked to give your immediate reactions to the scenarios. We assume you did so and that they likely reflected your US-American culture to some extent. For example, your response to #4, "Someone makes an OK gesture to you," probably was that they were trying to tell you something like "things were going well" or that they were all right. That gesture works for most US-Americans. However, if you used that gesture in much of Latin America or other places in the world, it would have distinctly different meanings, mostly of a sexual or aggressive nature. The only reason it "works" for us is that it has the same meaning for the person who does the action as it does for the person who observes it. If the meaning being inferred changes then communication breaks down, often badly.

When you filled out the second part of the exercise, which specified certain differences as they were perceived or interpreted by someone in another culture, it became clearer why the same action can be construed as having radically different "meanings." This is what makes some aspects of crossing cultural boundaries so tricky. Overseas, an apparently innocent remark or careless gesture on your part can occasionally result in a breakdown of communication, a misperception of your intent, and a negative impression—or possibly all three when you don't understand the other culture's norms!

For instance, in another culture burping (which adults always told you was gross) might turn out to be a regular part of post-meal etiquette and it might be considered a breach of manners and impolite not to!

To avoid making unnecessary mistakes, it is useful to remember, as the second part of the exercise shows, that seemingly simple everyday events may be interpreted quite differently when observed by people from different cultures. So, while you are a guest in another country you should take special care not to make snap judgments about people and situations before you know the background and examine the reasons why they might be behaving and reacting differently than you normally would. Once you can see another (or multiple) reason for a specific human cultural behavior, you will be on your way to being able to interact and communicate more effectively with the local population.

ⁱ This handout was developed for use with the University of California PRIME summer research abroad program. It was included in "Culture in the Lab: A Model for Undergraduate STEM Research," presented at the 2014 Forum on Education Abroad Conference in San Diego, CA.

Cultural Simulation - "Insiders and Outsiders"

Instructions: (10-15 minutes game time)

Ask for a specific number of male and female volunteers to step outside the room (one pair per group inside the room). Inside the room, form groups of about 10-15 with at least 2 males per group.

Send outsiders out. Explanation to outsiders:

The insiders are part of a fictional culture. They have 2 cultural norms. Your task, as a pair, is to discover what the norms are by:

A) Observing and asking yes or no questions only.

B) Asking questions directly to a specific person (don't address a question to the entire group at once).

When you think you've figured out a norm go to a facilitator and ask them if it's right. The key is to ask lots of questions.

Explain "cultural norms" to insiders:

1) A man can only answer a man and a woman can only answer a woman.

2) If the person asking a question is smiling the answer must be yes, if the person asking a question is not smiling or is frowning the answer must be no.

Give a number of examples so that insiders can practice the norms.

Bring outsiders back in

Allow 10-15 minutes for interaction. If your group figures out the norms keep it to yourself until the game is over.

Discussion within group led by facilitator(s) - see below.

INSIDERS-OUTSIDERS DISCUSSION

Have a participant identify the 2 norms. **Tell everyone not to mention the norms to others because we have more Living Abroad Orientations left.**

Ask the foreigners/outsideers:

- How did you feel? (frustrated, annoyed, confused, unsure) **Write answers on board.**
- What did you think of how your host culture treated/thought of you? (helpful, cold, liked to see you suffer) **Write answers on board.**
- How do you think you would have felt as an insider? (relaxed, less confused, etc.)

Ask insiders:

- What did you think of the foreigners? (felt sorry for them?) **Write answers on board.**
- How do you feel about how you treated them? (tried to help, wanted them to suffer)
- How do you think you would have felt as an outsider? (confused, annoyed, anxious)

Whole group discussion.

The assignment in this exercise was to learn about your host culture by attempting to communicate with the natives.

Ask:

- 1) What was not realistic? [Insiders can only answer yes or no.]
- 2) What was realistic?

Realistic:

- 1) The feelings of frustration, isolation, etc. that the outsiders experienced. (Point to lists on board).

Get returnee confirmation.

- 2) That something other than the actual, verifiable truth would be a culturally appropriate answer.
 - Korea example: “Yes” to maintain the “han.”
 - France example: When offered food the first time, “No, thank you.” But accept on the second or third time. The host must continue to ask.
 - U.S. example: “I’ll call you.” “Let’s get together soon.”

Ask: Given that the culture itself may make it difficult to understand the culture, what might you do **to learn about your host culture while you are there**, and learn how to communicate competently within your host culture?

- Look beyond verbal communication to non-verbal clues.
- Observe everything, carefully; learn from what others do.

- Talk with other "outsiders." What have they learned?
- Find a cultural insider who will help you make sense of the host culture and explain the elusive cultural norms and expectations - especially someone who has spent time outside of that host country.

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5/22/03

Revised

PRIME Pre-departure Cultural Orientation 5/18/13ⁱ

Agenda

1. Icebreaker – Sharing previous travels
2. The Iceberg Conception of the Nature of Culture (Go Global! p. 1)
3. The Four Levels of Cultural Awareness (What's Up With Culture 1.7.2)
4. In the Mind of the Beholder (What's Up With Culture 1.3.2)
5. Insiders and Outsiders Activity
6. Skills that Make a Difference (Go Global! p. 3)

-BREAK-

7. Concept of Self: Individualist or Collectivist (What's Up With Culture 1.3.4)
8. Context of Cultures: High and Low (What's Up With Culture 1.4.6)
9. Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) discussion
10. Pre-departure Career Plan
11. Reading Assignment
12. Critical Incidents small group discussion (PRIME Critical Incidents handout)
13. Evaluation
14. Logistics and final directions for dinner

Handouts

The Four Levels of Cultural Awareness
Skills That Make a Difference
Concept of Self: Individualist or Collectivist
IDI Key Terms
Pre-departure Career Plan
PRIME Critical Incidents
Evaluation

Books

CultureShock! New Zealand: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette by Peter Oettli (Oct. 2009)
CultureShock! Taiwan: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette by Chris Bates and Ling-Li Bates (Feb. 2009)
Fair Go for All: Australian and American Interactions by George W. Renwick
With Respect to the Japanese: Going to Work in Japan by John Condon and Tomoko Masumotoⁱⁱ

Resources

Go Global! Resources for your Experience Abroad
http://icenter.ucsd.edu/_files/pao/pre-departure/oap/Go_Global.PDF
What's Up With Culture
<http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>
Intercultural Development Inventory
<http://www.idiinventory.com/>
Lonely Planet
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>
The World Factbook
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
World Travel 101 Workshop Handouts
http://icenter.ucsd.edu/_files/pao/WorldTravel101Handouts.pdf

ⁱ This handout was developed for use with the University of California PRIME summer research abroad program. It was included in "Culture in the Lab: A Model for Undergraduate STEM Research," presented at the 2014 Forum on Education Abroad Conference in San Diego, CA.

PRIME Re-entry Meeting 10/5/2013ⁱ

Agenda

1. Show and tell
2. Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)
3. Challenges and Intensity Factors in Coming Home (What's Up With Culture 2.3.1)
4. Break
5. PRIME poster presentations
6. Highlighting you PRIME experience (elevator speech, resume, c.v.)
7. Making the most of your remaining time at UCSD
8. Logistical arrangements for dinner

Handouts:

Intercultural Development Inventory: Pre and Post IDI
Challenges and Intensity Factors
Resume Worksheet
C.V. Resource
Programs Abroad Office Returnee Newsletter
Major Advising Pages

Resources:

What's Up With Culture

<http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

Programs Abroad Office Returnee Information and Resources

<http://icenter.ucsd.edu/pao/returnees/index.html>

Linked-In

<http://www.linkedin.com>

Undergraduate Research Portal

<http://urp.ucsd.edu>

Lessons from Abroad Conference Saturday Feb. 22, 2014 at USD

<http://www.lessonsfromabroad.org/sandiego/>

Career Services Center

<http://career.ucsd.edu/>

PRIME Re-entry Meeting 10/5/2013

Presenter Agenda

Culture

1. Show and tell (Tonia and Jim)
2. Intercultural Development Inventory - IDI (Jim)
3. Challenges and Intensity Factors in Coming Home (What's Up With Culture 2.3.1) (Tonia)
4. Break

Professional Development

5. PRIME poster presentations and grant discussion (Jason and Peter)
 - Poster session (Jason)
 - Abstracts and grants (Peter)
 - Two audiences- peers and the public
6. Highlighting you PRIME experience to prepare for the future (Tonia and Jim)
 - Elevator speech
 - (Goal, Skills, research exp, key accomplishments, eager to learn, commitment)
 - Resume
 - C.V. – How is it different from a resume?
 - Linked In
 - PRIME Facebook site (ask permission to use their quotes)
7. Making the most of your remaining time at UCSD (Tonia and Jim)
 - Re-entry activities on campus
 - Study abroad (MAPS, flyers, brochures)
 - Research abroad
 - Research at UCSD (undergraduate research portal) <http://urp.ucsd.edu>
 - Lessons from Abroad Conference on Sat. Feb 22, 2014 USD
<http://www.lessonsfromabroad.org/sandiego/>
 - Career Services Center
 - Study Abroad Fair on Monday October 28th Price Center Ballroom West
8. Logistical arrangements for dinner

Handouts

Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)
Challenges and Intensity Factors

Resume Worksheet
Programs Abroad Office Returnee Newsletter
Major Advising Pages

Resources:

What's Up With Culture

<http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

Programs Abroad Office Returnee Information and Resources

<http://icenter.ucsd.edu/pao/returnees/index.html>

Linked-In

<http://www.linkedin.com>

Undergraduate Research Portal

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Fall 2013 Returnee Newsletter



Welcome Home! The Programs Abroad Office (PAO) warmly welcomes you back to UCSD. We hope that you had a positive and life changing experience abroad, and that you are excited to inspire other UCSD students to follow in your footsteps. Here are some opportunities where you can stay connected to your recent journey abroad and share your international experiences with others at UCSD.

Upcoming Fall 2013 Returnee events:

- Fri, Oct. 4 - International Mixer w/ I-House - Great Hall (4:30 pm) - Join international students and residents of I-House for an entertaining evening at Great Hall. Meet students from around the world, share stories, enjoy light refreshments and entertainment, and stay to win prizes. Event sponsored by PAO, ISPO, and I-House.
- Wed, Oct. 9 - **PAO Welcome Back Dinner & Mixer** - International Center (4:30 pm - sign-in, t-shirt pick-up, and info fair; 5:00 pm - Keynote speaker) - Come enjoy **FREE food and T-shirts**, catch up with fellow returnees, learn about upcoming returnee events, and encourage prospective participants to go abroad! - RSVP now at: <http://bit.ly/WelcomeBackFall2013>
- Fri, Oct. 11 - Final extended deadline to apply for STARS (STudy Abroad Returnees) program - a great way to share your study abroad experience with prospective applicants! Apply now at: <http://bit.ly/ucsdstars>
- Tues, Oct. 22 - Teach English in Japan with JET info session - IC Lounge (1:30 pm)
- Mon, Oct. 28 - **PAO EXPO fair** - Price Center Ballroom West (11am - 3pm) - sign up to volunteer during Welcome Back Dinner or stay tuned for invite!
- Wed, Oct. 30 - PAO Returnee T-Shirt Day & Facebook Photo Contest - take a photo of yourself wearing your Returnee T-shirt on campus, post it to the PAO facebook page and win prizes!
- Wed, Oct. 30 - **Returnee Mixer** - Pub Trivia Night - Porter's Pub (6:00 pm)
- Tues, Nov. 12 - IEW "Learning Lunch": Study Abroad Returnee Panel & Mixer - IC Lounge (12 noon)
- Tues, Nov. 12-15 - International Education Week (IEW) <http://iew.ucsd.edu/calendar/index.html>
- Thurs, Nov. 14 - "Translating Study Abroad into your Job Search" info session - Career Services Center, Horizons Room (11:30 am)

More returnee resources & opportunities:

Online:

- Check out the PAO Returnee webpage <http://icenter.ucsd.edu/pao/returnees/index.html>
- Like the PAO Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/UCSDpao>

At the Programs Abroad Office (PAO):

- Pick up a FREE Returnee Events magnet at the PAO front desk (available Week 2)
- Talk to a PAO advisor to share your study abroad experiences at an Info Session or Pre-Departure Orientation, or become a PAO liaison for your Major, Minor or College

Student Clubs:

- Get involved with the EAP Club at UCSD <https://www.facebook.com/groups/eapucsd/>
- Join the International Club <http://icenter.ucsd.edu/ispo/programs/i-club.html>

International Center Programs:

- Receive FREE intramural team registration by forming an international team <http://icenter.ucsd.edu/ispo/programs/intramural.html>
- Teach an international student in the English Tutor Program http://icenter.ucsd.edu/ispo/programs/eia_main/index.html
- Enjoy global cuisine at the International Center Friday Café <http://icenter.ucsd.edu/about/programs-events/icafe.html>

Positive Long-Term Outcomesⁱ

Study abroad is almost always a “value added” experience in a job search. Choose the statements below that you feel apply to your experience abroad. Then think about how to present these new skills and attitudes to a potential employer in a way that makes you stand out from other candidates. Try to translate these “covert competencies” into resume language.

Example:

Intercultural/communication skills

- I have a greater capacity to accept differences in others and to tolerate other people's actions and ideas that may be vastly different from my own.
- I am more knowledgeable about another culture and lifestyle.
- I have improved my ability to communicate with people in a second language.
- I have a greater ability to empathize (i.e., to sense how an event appears and feels to someone else).
- I understand that there are many ways to accomplish the same task and that those approaches are only “different,” not necessarily better or worse.
- I have learned to improve interpersonal communication through increased abilities in listening well, speaking clearly, and paying attention to nonverbal cues.
- I have more curiosity about, and respect for, new ideas.
- I am more flexible and able to adjust to changes in others.
- I am more tolerant of ambiguous situations, that is, of situations that are confusing and open to differing interpretations.
- I realize why stereotypes can be so harmful and hurtful, both to others and myself.
- I have learned how to recognize when I have made a cross-cultural mistake and can use culturally appropriate language and measures to repair any damage.
- I understand and appreciate how much educational systems can differ across cultures.
- I have a greater willingness to take on roles and tasks to which I am unaccustomed.
- I can adapt and cope in vastly different settings.
- I am more able to accept as valid others values and lifestyles.
- I think more critically: I am more discriminating and skeptical, particularly of stereotypes.
- I have generally improved my observation skills.
- I realize the importance of time to be alone to think.
- I find myself regularly reflecting about the overseas experience and its meaning for me.
- I am confident that I can meet and make friends abroad.
- I have an increased motivation to go abroad again.

World view

- I understand better another country's role in world affairs.
- I have a better understanding of how and why political policy differs abroad.
- I have the ability to see situations and issues from more than one perspective.
- I understand more clearly how US-Americans and the United States are viewed overseas.
- I see the world as more interconnected than ever before.

- ❑ I value human diversity and respect others from a variety of backgrounds different from my own.
- ❑ I have greater sympathy for the struggles of international students and immigrants as a result of my experience.
- ❑ I have a deeper understanding of the common problems and issues that confront all human beings on this planet.
- ❑ I have greater awareness of political, economic, and social events occurring around the world.
- ❑ I seek out international news and want to know what is going on in the world more than ever before.
- ❑ I am aware that cultural changes can have unexpected consequences.

Personal capabilities

- ❑ I understand more fully my own strengths and weaknesses.
- ❑ I feel more confident in undertaking new travels or projects.
- ❑ I can accept failures and shortcomings in myself more easily.
- ❑ I am more confident and assertive when facing new situations.
- ❑ I have become a more patient person.
- ❑ I am more willing to share my thoughts and feelings with others, and to be open when others wish to share theirs with me.
- ❑ I am less afraid of making mistakes or being laughed at than I used to be.
- ❑ I can see myself more objectively (i.e., I see my own day-to-day problems in a broader, more realistic context).
- ❑ I have increased my perseverance and self-discipline.
- ❑ I can "analyze" a social situation more quickly than before (i.e., figure out what is going on and react appropriately).
- ❑ I am more deeply committed to an idea, cause, or goal.
- ❑ I have the ability to create personal peace and satisfaction in my life.
- ❑ I have a greater sense of responsibility for other people.
- ❑ I am more able to express deep emotions freely.
- ❑ I am more able to ask for and receive help from others.
- ❑ I have increased my capacity to experiment and take risks.
- ❑ I have a clearer notion of what I wish to do with my life.
- ❑ I am more aware of opportunities in life that are open to me.
- ❑ I feel greater respect and appreciation for my natural family.
- ❑ I am more independent in my relations with family and friends.
- ❑ I can accept the shortcomings of my family members in an understanding way.
- ❑ I think that I need fewer friends but deeper (more intimate and more trusting) friendships.
- ❑ I am more aware of the way I use and structure time.
- ❑ I am interested in, and capable of, making long-range plans.
- ❑ I am more determined to develop fully my skills and talents, especially those recently gained through overseas living.
- ❑ I feel a greater need to have diverse experiences and friends.
- ❑ I feel that being abroad helped clarify my goals and values.
- ❑ I am more likely to do things spontaneously (i.e., to do things without undue concern about possible consequences or any advanced planning).

- ❑ I am more capable of solving life's day-to-day problems and accomplishing necessary tasks.
- ❑ I can set more realistic priorities, both short-term and long-term, for myself.
- ❑ I am more confident about the decisions I make.
- ❑ I have a greater appreciation for what I have.
- ❑ I have the ability to make clear personal choices and goals for my life rather than complying with what others expect and want from me.
- ❑ I have learned to place a lower value on material things.
- ❑ I want to be able to use my skills in future work and can articulate what those are to a prospective employer.

Own culture

- ❑ I see my own cultural values more clearly and understand how and why they differ from others.
- ❑ I can evaluate advantages and disadvantages of my own culture and society more objectively (i.e., from the perspective of an outsider).
- ❑ I am sensitive to subtle features of my own culture that I had never seen before.
- ❑ I have both a greater appreciation for US-American culture and a clearer critical sense of its limitations and problems.
- ❑ I have a deeper understanding of (if not necessarily commitment to) the values and lifestyle of my native community.
- ❑ I appreciate US-American efficiency, but miss the different pace of life abroad.

Adapted and expanded from: The AFS Student Study Guide published by the AFS International/Intercultural Programs (Washington, D. D., 1979), reprinted in: Clyde N. Austin, ed., Cross-Cultural Reentry: A Book of Readings (Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press, 1986), pgs. 273-27.

Excerpted from What's Up With Culture 2.4.1 <http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

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Resume Building and Graduate School Statement of Purpose Worksheetⁱ

A. **Descriptors:** Write down a list of statements that describe your experience abroad. Start with action verbs such as “lived,” “attended,” “researched,” “wrote,” “traveled,” “handled,” etc.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

B. **Skills:** Write down some of the skills that you feel you have acquired through your international experience.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

C. **Qualities:** Write down some qualities (e.g. personal characteristics) that you developed/enhanced through your experience abroad.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

D. **Examples:** Write down some experiences that you had while abroad that demonstrate the skills/qualities listed above.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

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