

# Encounters with people of different cultures

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Encounters with people of different cultures in their own countries or communities 2 3 4 5 Coping with the customs of host countries or communities, e. g. rules and courtesies that local people observe and may expect me to observe. Encountering the different customs of people from other cultures, e. g. dress, special occasions, etc. Adapting to the rhythm of life in other cultures, e. g. getting used to different meal times etc.

Integrating with the customs or behaviour of host countries, e. g. beginning to use forms of greeting that is very different from my own. Encounters with different cultures in the host university Clarifying areas of uncertainty about university arrangements, e. g. describing what I am used to and asking what happens in the other culture. Adapting to other administrative and academic practices, e. g. using unfamiliar procedures to complete a work task. Coping with different formalities, e. g. learning new ways of showing respect to senior colleagues from other cultures.

Relating to fellow students from other cultures, e. g. learning what they like to talk about during breaks. Being aware of issues to be avoided with a different cultural group, e. g. learning what topics seem to be avoided and what the group's views are likely to be about a current political situation. Building bridges between colleagues of my own culture and those of a different culture, e. g. sensing that someone of my culture has said the wrong thing and explaining the misunderstanding to both sides.

Section 3 A continuing record of intercultural encounters In this section you can record many kinds of intercultural experiences and encounters that you feel have helped you develop your intercultural skills. In each record, describe what happened and how this enabled you to advance your

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knowledge and understanding of - or attitude to - intercultural 'events' (interactions with people from other cultures, etc). Date: 31/09/2012 As soon I arrived at the rented place, I found out that my flatmates were both Spanish and I feared that I would be left apart due to my level of Spanish,.

However, to my surprised they were both very welcoming and even try their best to understand my poor Spanish and were willing to show me around and give me very helpful tips in relation, to transportation, nightlife and food consumption. Place: Pozuelo de Alarcon The suggestions made by flatmates were quite helpful, on the next day I went to order my student travel card which made really easier to travel around Madrid. Their travel system is very similar London travel system which actually work base on the zones you have to move around. However, the store was closed from 12 to 14 o'clock as well as every store around.

Such thing was very strange to me and as my flatmates explained it is common thing in Spain for stores to be close at such time due to their weather conditions is too hot work there for they take a break. It is at that point were I have notice that weather conditions have a huge effect on Spain Culture. Place: Groningen University The team work experience with the guys, gave me the opportunity to improve my communication skills, because we could express one's need, wants and opinion without offending the sensitiveness of the other guys.

In addition, I believe I strengthened my Teambuilding skills, as I was the person who motivated the others. The members recognised that, and I was the point of communication between the others. From this experience I realised how

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much I would like to work for the Human Resources, as I believe to be able to maintain group cooperation and support, and to keep a group updated how it is moving forward to the achievement of the goals. Date: 31/10/2012 On 31/10/12 I had a presentation to be done together with 3 more students. It was me, a Spanish girl, a Romanian guy, and a Dutch guy.

The Dutch guy most of the times we had meeting was quite rude with the other guys. He wanted the work to be done, and he was actually the first not to do it. The day of the presentation, I had a small argument with him. The presentation went well, we scored 7.2. This guy, during the conversation with our coach said that he was the best and that the other guys, us, did not have the competencies to do the presentation. Place: At first, I got really upset and offended, as he should not dare to say these bad things to his team member.

Secondly, I believe he should have told us in a private conversation, as all of us were really embarrassed, and we all thought that what he was saying was not actually true. Finally, I spoke with him and he apologised about what happened with the guys and I. I hope he understood that he should not criticise others, when he is the first person who makes mistakes. Date: 03/11/2012 In these days I was reflecting how the Dutch academic semester works so differently from the English semester. Here, every semester is made from two periods.

In each period there are at least three modules to study, therefore exams, reports, group works and presentations to do. At my university, we only have four modules for semester, whilst here there are at least six for each

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semester. I could see how I improved time management planning and organizational skills. Place: Groningen My skills improved because the amount of work to do was higher than my expectations. In fact, I had to develop goals for my personal achievements, and identify tasks to be accomplished. In addition, I learnt how to prioritise tasks and take responsibilities for the decisions I made.

Based on the above please prepare a SWOT analysis of the stage that you believe are at in terms of cross cultural competence; (i. e. strengths and weaknesses) and where you would like to get to by January. What are the opportunities for enhancing your competence and what are the threats which may thwart your endeavours if left untackled? Studying the first semester of the second year in ESIC located in Madrid, Spain enables me to break down barriers as well as communicate and interact with people from different cultures in ways beyond no lecture room or university hall can.