

Reflective report on 'cultural shock'

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Executive Summary

This reflective report encompasses my transition from Nigeria to the Nottingham Trent International College to the Nottingham Trent University. With a focus on personal goals and learning outcomes, this study has found a substantial indication of successful educational efforts. Utilizing the Gibbs (2008) reflective model, the full range of benefits during the transition process is illustrated alongside the lessons that I have learned from this examination. In the end, this report demonstrates the progress, founded on theory that has taken me from an position of uncertainty to one of confidence.

1. Introduction

This report will focus on the culture shock that I have experienced during my transition from Nigeria to the Nottingham Trent International College to my study experience at Nottingham Trent University. Each transition during my educational experience has served to instil a different lesson. This report will outline how these components relate to the NTU graduate attributes that I have studied.

Beginning with an overview of the common issues that many students face this report using the Gibbs (1988) cycle of reflection provides a basis for examining my own experiences. This report will examine the pre departure period and how I approached College and University life as I first came from Nigeria. Following this segment with a reflection on my initial perception during University orientation will allow for a vivid demonstration of my formative efforts on campus. The next section will address why I found

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myself attracted the NTU program as well as my scholastic experiences there. Both my obstacles as well as my successes will be illustrated in order to find the underlying lesson and the best learning experience.

1. 1 Aims and Objectives

This report aims to:

Reflect on the strengths and detriments of my study experience at NTU

Develop an understanding of the contrast between my Nigerian, college and University experience

Create a better understanding of my potential academic opportunities

1. 2 Key Learning Outcomes

I have the transition to University culture has yielded substantial gains in my scholastic goals:

The ability to relate to many separate cultures

A significantly broadened base of academic knowledge

Opportunity to work and excel with material in a top tier environment

Fundamental advances in my professional implementation skills.

My capacity to rely on my skill to overcome issues has grown substantially.

1. 3 Personal Learning Targets

My current work has yielded the opportunity to forge future goals:

Lay the foundation for my doctoral work

Utilize my education to enhance my employment opportunities

Incorporate the latest theory into my curriculum.

Remain on the forefront of development opportunities.

2. Culture Shock

The main body of this report will focus on the individual periods of reflection opportunity before turning to an overall analysis.

2. 1 Pre- Departure Period

2. 1. 1 Description

As I prepared to embrace my time at College I often found myself worried as to the growing responsibilities that my education entailed. Zee and Oudenhoven (2013) describe that the capacity to excel in the intercultural educational situation rests on the student's perception of threat or challenge. Using the A, Affect, B, Behaviour and C, Cognition model their study links emotions such as stability and adaptability to the threat emotion and social initiative and open mindedness to the feelings of challenge. Both of these areas would be much more present in my upcoming college existence. Coming from Nigeria, I had no real concept of what was ahead of me. I knew that I would have to prepare correctly, both mentally physically in order to get the most out of the education opportunity; this was a step that would form a pivotal point in my career. But, to this end I over compensated, seeking to bring much more than I could possibly need. I found that I would be best served by a re-evaluation of priorities and a calm, collected approach (Zee et al, 2013).

2. 1. 2 Feelings

This period of getting ready before term was nerve-racking. Alongside the basic documentation and study accessories, the unknown element of the

intercultural opportunities served to create a lot of angst. Different outcomes played over and over in my head. As Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012) illustrate in their study, the single biggest beneficial trait that I could bring into this new setting would be my positive ethical stance. There are few things more universally valued than the capacity to be honest and fair to each and all of my fellow students. The capacity to alienate one another due to any single cultural factor must be avoided in order to advance the underlying goal of education (Ting-Toomey et al, 2012). With the ability to incorporate a broadening spectrum of intercultural values it is essential to incorporate honesty into every element.

2. 1. 3 Evaluation

This period before leaving for college was good for me. Alongside the nerves and constant planning, I found myself quite enjoying the potential opportunities. As Chen, Lin, and Sawangpattanakul (2011) describe, the amount of cultural intelligence or CQ that a person possesses the more likely for a smooth transition into the multi-cultural environment. In this case, even though I was a native of Nigeria, my education to date had prepared me for many of the educational leaps that I was about to experience. However, the sheer size of the opportunities easily overwhelms those available in Nigeria. This makes each one of choices seem more important than the next. Utilizing my prior preparation allowed me to make the most of my time as well as lower my personal stress level, making the entire process smoother (Chen et al, 2012).

2. 1. 4 Analysis

My personal feelings of being prepared are obviously at odds with my internal perception. Even with my prior understanding and preparation, there was still the very strong compunction to bring, buy, or read anything and everything in order to be prepared. The Ting-Toomey et al (2012) study describing the value of confidence stood out as the single most poignant piece of information: rely on knowledge to guide me. I found myself with less baggage and more confidence.

2. 1. 5 Conclusion

I found that I must rely more on myself and my own growing experience in order to be the best student I could be (Chen et al, 2012). This basic cornerstone of my education has led me to embrace the unknown and seek to find the best of everything.

2. 1. 6 Action Plan

The single biggest lesson from this period was that as a student I must not over think the situation. To be over prepared can be as bad as being under prepared (Chen et al, 2012). As my opportunities to incorporate new experiences arrive I will be better prepared to approach new situations.

2. 2 Induction and Orientation

2. 2. 1 Description

As prepared as I expected myself to be given my efforts, I was surprised by the sheer number of inter cultural opportunities available. The Trent College level, while substantial, does not offer the world class potential that the University level does, and the rigorous standards and case load reflected this. The very first emotion that I had upon stepping foot on campus was one

of being uncertain. As Hofstede (2011) illustrated, the tendency to avoid uncertainty stems from the desire to avoid threat. With so very many experiences available, which should I avoid and which to make a priority? Would I find a better academic path given the new opportunities? Blake, Claudio and Taylor (2009) document the presence of heightened stress and poor performance in the presence of many options. The multitude of decisions that I had to make that first day created a dilemma for me during my initial experiences at Trent University.

2. 2. 2 Feelings

As I entered school that term it was very much like reverse culture shock (Allison, Davis-Berman and Berman, 2011). I went from being relaxed and in charge of my educational experience into a state of the unknown quantity. I would be these first few days that would serve to determine much of the trajectory of the University efforts. Therefore the best option is not to isolate myself from the group, but embrace the multi-cultural opportunities as additional components of my education (Allison et al, 2011). There was a hearty mix of trepidation, anticipation and panic as I began term.

2. 2. 3 Evaluation

This initial experience is something that I will carry with me for the rest of my days. As Trowler and Trowler (2010) there should be no hesitation to student engagement. My fears were rooted more in the potential for the unknown rather than any real factual experience. Therefore the decisions placed before, that at the time seemed so diverse and overwhelming, were in fact ordinary fare.

2. 2. 4 Analysis

There is a basic uncertainty that was clear in my action and feeling during that initial period. The risk of isolation or over immersion was equally present making it necessary to make careful decisions (Tosutti, Esses and Hagar, 2012). I found myself with the ability to balance my priorities and make the necessary adjustments in order to make the most of the University. College level education was much more focused on the preparation for University as opposed to finding roots in real world operation as I found at NTU.

2. 2. 5 Conclusion

Much like my pre-departure period, I learned that my own experiences and education are the best instruments to turn to in times of stress or decision making. As the Chen et al (2011) illustrated the CQ that a person possesses adds to the capacity for me to attain my scholastic goals.

2. 2. 6 Action Plan

Unlike my time at Trent College any similar event in the future will see me prepared, but not overly so. Confident, yet excited for the prospects and perhaps most all, certain that I can accomplish the goal given the scope of my skill (Chen et al, 2011).

2. 3 Academic Study

2. 3. 1 Description

Chief among my reasons for choosing NTU was the proximity and reputation of the school. The very strong ethical considerations in place serve to enhance the educational choices available to me (Ting-Toomey et al, 2012). Alongside the opportunity presented at the College level that added preparation for advancement, the choice was made easy for me. Yet, the <https://assignbuster.com/reflective-report-on-cultural-shock/>

process of evaluation and expected performance had climbed considerably from the college level. This more any other factor proved to provide the largest culture shock. With such a high demand from the students around the world, I had to do well to maintain my place (Ward, Bochner and Furnham, 2013). In my effort to keep pace and even excel, I found myself having trouble processing and learning as effectively as I had at the College level.

2. 3. 2 Feelings

Trompenaar describes a very effective model of cross cultural management that I found very helpful (Marx, 2011). I felt as if I did not have grasp on the way things worked at the University level. I had to understand that cultures differ due to orientation, and that the University level was significantly separate from the college experience (Marx, 2011). It was this feeling that led me to the decision that I must not allow my urges to impact my actions because every action was of critical importance at this stage.

My motivation was key to my performance (Marx, 2011)

2. 3. 3 Evaluation

This period of study profited me tremendously. It was the recognition of ineffectiveness alongside the capacity to adapt that provided me the foundation for building a successful scholastic career (Marx, 2011).

2. 3. 4 Analysis

My approach to my studies was tempered by my lack of experience and confidence in my ability. My tendency to be too specific and compartmentalize did not work anymore and I found myself adrift in terms of study habits (Marx, 2011). Once more, it was my knowledge of relevant

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theory that allowed for my transition from a place of frustration into a capacity for learning.

2. 3. 5 Conclusion

I found that flexibility was more important than my traditional framework during this period (Marx, 2011). The University culture demanded more than my previous experience that caused me to have to adapt to the situation at hand.

2. 3. 6 Action Plan

Faced with this same learning block I would employ classify my priority is and determine the best step forward. The main dimensions in a cross cultural situation are orientation, task approach and communication, using these I will be able to analyse any scenario (Marx, 2011)

3. NTU Graduate Attributes

This section links my learning experiences with the NTU graduate attributes as outlined below.

3. 1 Attributes Analysis

3. 1. 1 Intellectual Ability

As I left Trent College, I was confident in my professional skills yet, I was very much aware that I had much more to learn. As the Hofstede Model ably illustrates, the degree of aggregation is equal to the stress level (Hofstede, 2011). To this end I find that my ability to think independently and grasp the University level work has expanded alongside my level of experience. It is my curiosity and drives to learn that serves to propel me along the University ladder. As Trompenaar and Hampen-Turner (2011) argue, the <https://assignbuster.com/reflective-report-on-cultural-shock/>

need to allow the creativity to flow freely enables a well-rounded and comprehensive education.

3. 1. 2 Information, Communication and Organisational Skills

My experience at the college level served to provide a vital foundation for my entry into the university. This skill, anticipated at my college, allowed me the confidence to begin to utilize the full range of knowledge that I was learning. As Furnham (2010) describes, it is not only the approach to a subject but the manner of its implementation that determines its full potential. My University education was providing me with the advanced skills to make well founded educational decisions. As Chen et al (2011) argued my personality allowed incorporating my lessons into my personal life, thereby enhancing and smoothing both.

3. 1. 3 Global Citizenship

From such an isolated environment to the open campus of NTU, I have found the educational experience has significantly broadened my horizons. Hofstede (2011) stresses the need to not be isolated from the group, and my ability to work within the educational structure provided as given me a growing appreciation of the fellow students from the around the world that have many of the same goals and desires that I do. I have learned that it will be my experience that provides me with the tools to be an effective leader in the inter culture environment of today's business world (Chen, 2011).

4. Conclusion

This report has examined the impact that culture shock has had on my educational and study experience since my transition from Nigeria, to the

Trent College, to the campus of NTU. At each stage of the learning experience a new set of challenges was set before me and I was able to use my growing base of knowledge to address these issues.

Coming out of Nigeria a primary factor was my lack of confidence and my tendency to avoid confrontation or the perception of academic threat. This attitude only served to limit my options, and that was no way to proceed. I had to face my lack of knowledge and yet forge ahead to address the decisions that had to be made. This experience taught me to reach out and embrace the flexibility that must come with the inter-cultural experience. I found that if I did not remain rigid in my expectations, my time at University could be very rewarding.

The transition from the College level to University was as profound as my initial transition from Nigeria to College. I found that instead of focusing on the next academic step, the University opened up the entire horizon. This was the biggest shock of all for me.

I have found many of the NTU attributes not only essential but critical during my time here. I need the skill to improve my professional potential, my time at University has shown me that the competition will be tough in every sector of the globe and I must be prepared. My technological expertise has grown boundlessly after given access to the assets on campus, providing even further incentive to learn and excel.

NTU has educated me greatly in the area of Global citizenship. My work with those around me, from so many diverse places, only serves to enhance the

opportunities present. Every new idea and concept has the potential to be met with a unique and interesting idea from a different angle.

The aim of this report was to reflect on the strengths and detriments of my study experience. I feel that this exercise has allowed me to better understand the elements such as creativity and inclusiveness that is necessary to excel in this emerging global society. On every level, this study has allowed me to form a better understanding of the isolated Nigerian experience, to the targeted College life and the final opening of boundless University potential. Each step has come through the expansion of my personal and academic experience. This allows me to process and understand the many cultural opportunities. Further, each of these elements combines to give me a far better idea of my scholastic potential: I have the ability to progress as far as my own ambition will take me.

As I continue to build on my academic foundation, every step brings me closer to my end goal of achieving my doctoral degree in the field of business. This would allow me to utilize my full education to the very best business advantage. In order to do this I will continue to work to learn the very latest and most relevant theory, coupled with a sound foundation, in order to create the opportunity to find a lifelong career.

In the end, this report has helped me to see that it is only the amount of confidence in myself and my abilities that limit my potential.

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