

# Culture shock



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

HUE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES CROSS “ CULTURAL COMMUNICATION CLASS 2 “ GROUP 5 TOPIC: “ CULTURE SHOCK “ HUE, MARCH 2011. Definition and some causes of culture shock : When you move to a new place, you have to face a lot of changes. It is natural difficulty to adjust to a new culture. That is culture shock. “ Culture shock is the feeling of confusion and disorientation people experience when confronted with a large number of new unfamiliar people and situations “. (Gary Althen, 2003, p.

266). There are many causes of culture shock. Your environment – your surroundings, for example, has a very big effect on your appearance as well as behavior. When you go to a new place, such as a new country or even a new city, you often enter a culture that is different from the one you left.

Sometimes your culture and the new culture are similar. Other times, they can be very different, and even contradictory. Another cause is that the differences between cultures can make you very difficult to adjust to the new surroundings.

You may encounter unfamiliar clothes, weather, and food as well as different people, schools, and values, etc. II. Some problems in culture shock The first problem is language. Sometimes, people can speak new language well when coming to a new country. They think that they can adjust easier and have no difficulty because “ the newcomers only imagine the similarity between the two cultures “ (H. Th. M. Hu, 2001, p.

55), and deny all differences. However, they can have some problems in non-verbal communication. Other people cannot speak new language fluently.

They have difficulties in communicating and sharing their feeling with people around them. Therefore, they cannot carry out any activities, such as buying foods, doing job, etc. Another problem is employment. It is difficult to find a suitable job in a new country because people evaluate you not only certificate but also your real ability.

Besides, you also have some problems in working habits or working method. For example, in Vietnam, you work with many people and then the leader gives comment or congratulation to the whole group without only you. However, American people emphasize ??? I???, your ability, so the leader gives comment or congratulation to only you. If you do not know it, you will shock when you are criticized or received bad comments. In addition, eating habits are also important for you. You do not know many kinds of foods in a new country. For example, in Vietnam, most of foods are cooked with suitable flavor.

Nevertheless, in Japan, most kinds of food are raw and fresh. This makes you have difficulty in eating them. Also, way of eating in a new country is different from your country. In Vietnam, if you are invited to go to restaurant, you can eat without paying money because the inviter will pay for that meal.

However, in America, after eating, everyone will share money fairly together. Besides, in Vietnam, you can use chopsticks to eat but in other countries you have to knives, forks to eat, etc. Language, employment, eating habits are some main problems in culture shock that you surely have when coming in a new country. Besides, you can confront other problems such as: housing, transportation, viewpoints, etc. III. Your feeling towards culture shock: At

first, people are very excited about their move because they will learn a lot of interesting things outside their familiar everyday life. In fact, it is not similar as they think, so how do they feel? First of all, people feel very sad and disappointed because it is very different from their image about a new life.

As the result, they eat, drink and sleep too much to forget everything. At that time, they are extremely homesick, so they want to come back home with their parents and old friends immediately. Perhaps because of the different behavior and language, they do not like contacting with other people around them. Therefore, they feel very lonely. Another way is that they feel left out and misunderstood. For example, there are many various festivals in a foreign country, so they do not know what it is and how to take part in.

Besides, when living in another country, they will develop negative and simplistic views of the new culture. I give you an example to illustrate this point. Kissing in France means that you say hello and goodbye to family and friends, even strangers. On the other hand, in our country it is not true.

The last way is that they do not have ability to work and study well as well as solve small problems because they feel very tired and cannot focus on them. In different situations, people express their own different feelings. IV. Some tips to cope culture shock: The differences between cultures can make us very difficult to adjust to the new surroundings.

You may encounter unfamiliar clothes, weather, and food as well as different people, schools, and values. It can be very unsettling to deal with the differences. However, you will overcome difficult period at the beginning if you acquaint with some following tips in order to cope with cultural shock.

First of all, you should understand simply that a normal experience may in itself be helpful.

Besides, keeping in touch with your close friend, family is always necessary. There are several means of communication you may use such as telephone, letter, fax, email. You should spend many hours in the Internet chatting with your friend at home. There is a Japanese student studying at America said that: ??? I contacted with my Japanese friend, including one who had lived in London.

She could understand my feelings.... Taking to friends helps me to get through period??? (Mark Chandler, UK student life. Retrieved March 20, 2011 from <http://ukstudentlife.com>). This evidence can prove that ideas will make you feel more comfortable when living in a new milieu.

Another way will support of you easier is that making friend with international friends from your own culture or from others when you are at abroad. That Japanese student had taken part in a short course of calligraphy. She said that ??? It is a good idea to take an adult education course, which gives you an opportunity to mix with local people??? (Mark Chandler, UK student life. Retrieved March 20, 2011 from <http://ukstudentlife.com>). They will understand what you are feeling, if possible, make friends with the local students, you can learn more about each others culture. Also, if you take care of yourself not nutritional enough, this will have influence on your mood. Therefore, it is useful for you to find a supplier of familiar food such as fruits, vegetables, milk, fishes.

.. You ought to eat a healthy and balance diet. Moreover, your life will be easy to adapt more when having familiar things around you that have personal meaning such as photographs. In addition, you will reduce your stress by doing regular exercises every day with a lot of sports such as swimming, skipping and so on. A fit body makes you feel more confident when communicating with everyone.

Being a student, it is convenient for you to use the university or college services with professional and experienced staff, for example, the health service, the counseling service, the international office or hall wardens will provide a friendliness and enthusiastic help. In particular, the orientation program offered by most universities and colleges can be a valuable way to meet people and find out things that can help you. Linking with a faith community will put you in touch with a familiar setting such as church, mosque...

An important tip is that you should maintain a balance between two cultural patterns of behavior and belief. Above all, you should change your personality to adapt successfully to another country. The problems and ways of overcoming culture shocks are never exactly the same, but the pattern is usually similar. It is important to emphasize that culture shock is entirely normal, usually unavoidable, and not a sign that you have made a mistake or you will not manage. In fact there are very positive aspects of culture shock. You can learn a lot of significant experience and are more aware of aspects of your own culture as well as the new culture you have entered. It will give you valuable skills that will serve you in many ways now and in the future

and which will be part of the benefit of an international education  
( International students and culture shock.

Retrieved March 18 from [http:// ukcisa. org. uk](http://ukcisa.org.uk) ). SOURCES: Gary Althen,  
2003, p. 266H? Th? M? H? u, Cross-cultural communication , 2001, p. 55Mark  
Chandler, UK student life. Retrieved March 20, 2011 from [http: //](http://ukstudentlife.com)  
[ukstudentlife.](http://ukstudentlife.com)

[com](http://ukcisa.org.uk)International students and culture shock. Retrieved March 18 from [http://:](http://ukcisa.org.uk)  
[ukcisa. org. uk](http://ukcisa.org.uk)