

# A Deeper Look at Culture Shock and Its Impact on the Student Experience

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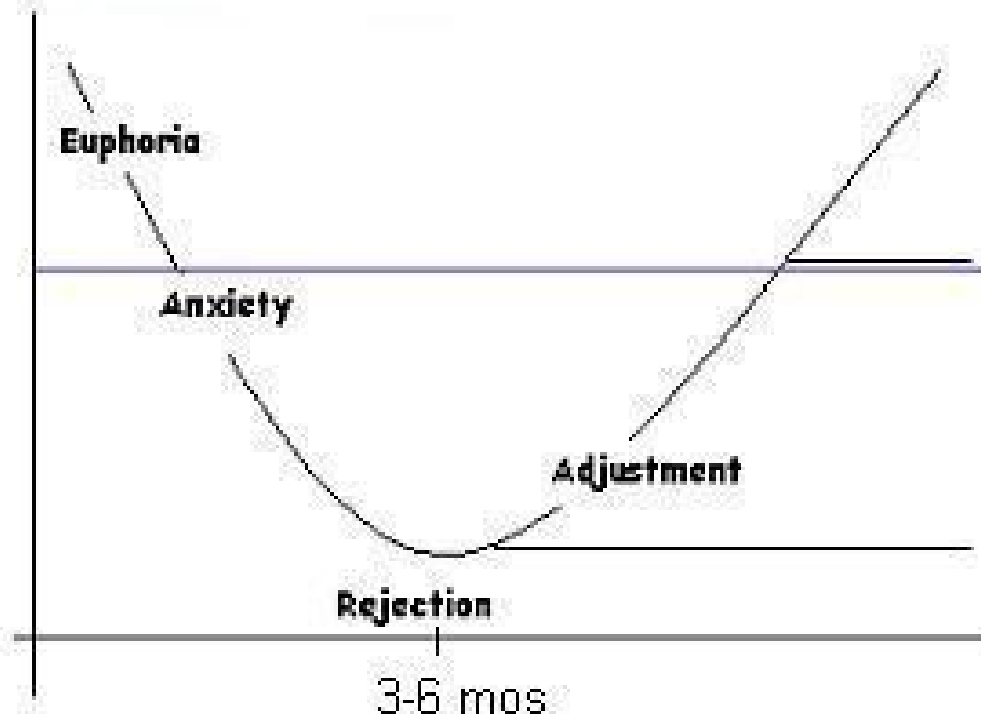
# Overview

- Stages of culture shock
- YouTube video example
- Schlossberg's transition theory
- Small group case studies
- Large group discussion



# The Four Stages of Culture Shock

**Culture Shock U Curve**



# Euphoria



**Euphoria:** This is the honeymoon stage where everything and everyone is new and exciting (Northeastern University, 2012).

- First few days or weeks



# Anxiety

**Anxiety:** This is the frustration stage during which the student may feel helpless (Northeastern University).

Signs can include:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Sadness
- Homesickness
- Exhaustion
- Increased worry
- A desire to withdraw
- Unexplained crying
- Overeating

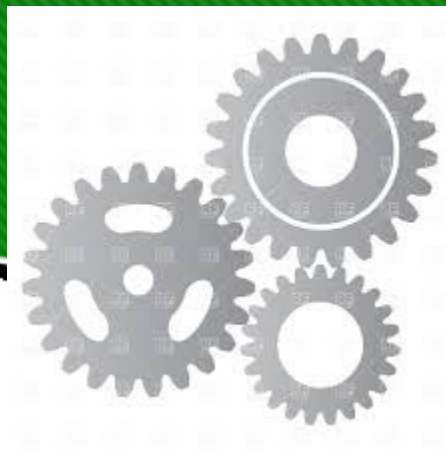


# Rejection

- **Rejection of the new culture:** The student finds him/herself thinking in terms of things being 'wrong' and 'backwards'. Commonly travelers in this stage start to withdraw themselves from the local community preferring to surround themselves with other foreigners (University of Toronto, 2008).



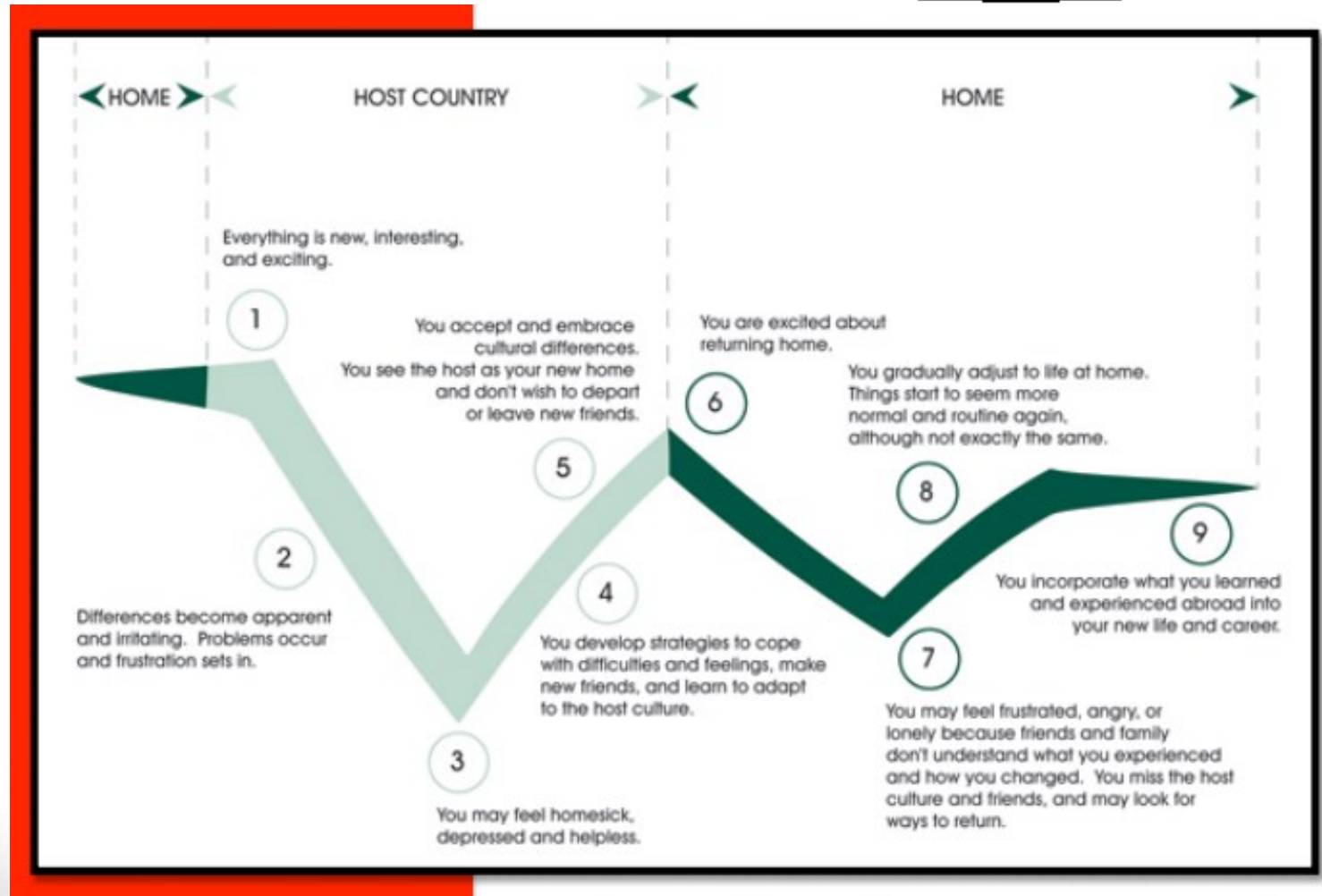
# Adjustment



**Adjustment:** At this point students become more familiar and comfortable with the culture, food, people and language (Northeastern University, 2012).

- Less homesick
- Have friends for support
- Develop strategies to deal with once frustrating situations

# Cultural Adjustment Curve



(Northeastern University, 2012)



# What Would You Do?

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plaqunpTzvM&feature=related>



abc what would you do racism and illegal immigration flv

# Practical Application

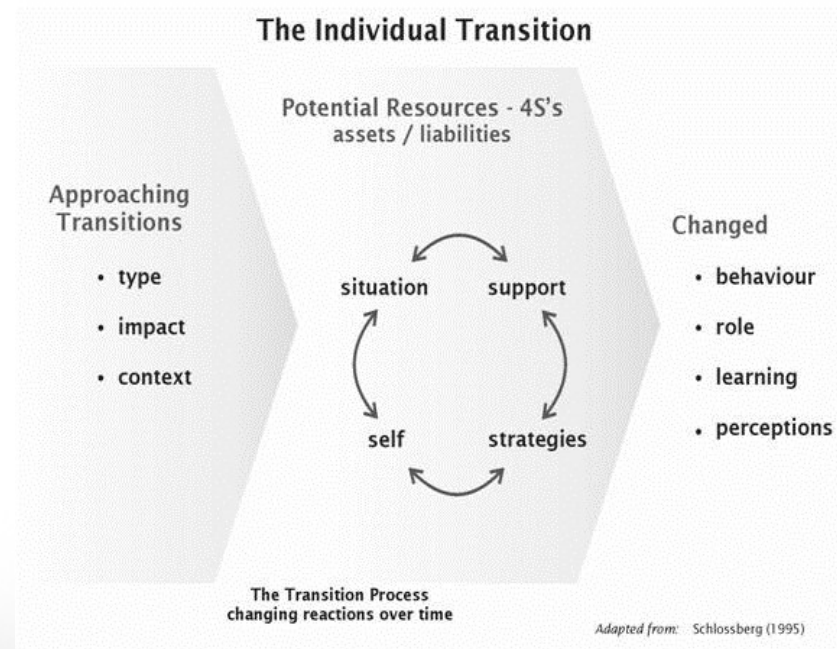
- How does this video relate to students?
- What can we do?

# *Schlossberg's Transition Theory*

- An adult development theory focused on the transitions that adults experience throughout life and the means by which they cope and adjust (Schlossberg et al., 1995).
- Transition: any event, or non-event that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles

# The 4 S System

- Four aspects of a transition that affect how well individuals deal with change
  - *Situation*
  - *Self*
  - *Support*
  - *Strategies*





# Situation

- What kind of transition is it?
- Positive/negative?
- Expected/unexpected?
- Desired/dreaded?
- Timing – good/worst possible?
- Voluntary/imposed?
- What part of the transition – beginning/middle/end?



# Self



- What strengths/weaknesses do you bring to this situation?
- What are your previous experiences of transition?
- What options do you believe you have?
- How do you deal with uncertainty?

# Supports

- Who will help or hinder you?
- Family, friends, colleagues, professors, advisors, etc.?
- In what ways can they support you?



# Strategies (plan of action)

- What coping strategies do you have?
- How creative are you?
- How do you manage stress?





# How can we use this to help students?



- Purposefully integrate aspects of the 4 S's to empower students to be successful
- Be their supporters
- Be patient and understanding
- What else?

# References

- Northeastern University. (2012). *The four stages of culture shock*. Retrieved from [http://www.northeastern.edu/nuin/pdf/gre\\_stages\\_culture\\_shock.pdf](http://www.northeastern.edu/nuin/pdf/gre_stages_culture_shock.pdf)
- Schlossberg, N. K., Waters, E. B., & Goodman, J. (1995). *Counseling adults in transition: Linking practice with theory* (2nd ed.). New York: Spring.
- University of Toronto. (2008). *Culture shock*. Unpublished manuscript, Safety Abroad, Toronto, Canada. Retrieved from [http://www.utoronto.ca/safety.abroad/go\\_global\\_guide\\_shock.html](http://www.utoronto.ca/safety.abroad/go_global_guide_shock.html)

# Case Studies

- Break into small groups and work on case study scenarios
  - How would you use what you know bout culture shock and the 4 S's?
- Share about your case and how you would handle it with the large group

# Maryam

- A student in your freshmen seminar class submits a paper that is identical (all except the first sentence) to one you received from another student earlier in the semester. You call the student in to your office to discuss the university's academic dishonesty policy and as soon as she sits down she bursts in to tears. Before you can delve into the severity of her offense, she tells you her story. She is an Iraqi refugee who came to the US a few years ago. At the time her family came to the US she was just old enough to be out of high school. Instead of choosing to do a year of high school in the US she was able to test out and get a high school diploma without ever attending classes. She then went to a community college and took one year of entry level course work. This semester she is a new transfer student at your University and due to her excellent transcript, she was placed in high level pre-pharmacy courses. It is clear that there are significant gaps in her knowledge and she is struggling with all of her classes. You find out her roommate gave her a copy of her paper to look at as a helpful gesture, not knowing she would change the first sentence and submit it as her own.
- What would you do?



# Pascal

- As an EOP counselor you meet with all of your assigned students on a monthly basis. You meet with a student for his monthly meeting and he is much more reserved than normal. You decide to make an effort to figure out what is going on. After several minutes of chit-chat you get him to open up and you find out that he is about to be evicted from his apartment and has no place to go. He also tells you that he recently experienced a painful breakup and wants to remove this person who was currently listed as his emergency contact. You ask who he would like add as his new emergency contact and he says he has no one in the country he could list. You know he is from Ghana but don't know much else about his story. Based on some of the things he said, you mention it may be a good idea to visit the free personal counseling center on campus. He immediately shuts down on you and rushes through the rest of your meeting. Based on some of the things he said, you are concerned he may hurt himself.
- What would you do?

- You are an academic advisor in the pre-med department of your university. You meet with a first year international student from India who is failing out of the majority of his classes. He appears to be socially withdrawn and is rather awkward to interact with. You need to talk to him about considering a change of major. He insists that he must keep trying to work toward getting into medical school. When you suggest thinking of a plan B in case he doesn't get in, he will not entertain the idea of anything else and keeps talking about how his family expects him to be a doctor. However, he cannot pass his math or science classes.
- What would you do?

# Fay

- You are the coordinator of the international office at a small college and you receive frequent visits from your international students. Fay is a first year international student from China. You know she comes from a rough family life. In China she was her parent's second child and was sent away to live with a family friend in southern China. In the middle of high school, she was sent to New York City to live with Chinese immigrants her parents knew. They treated her poorly and forced her to work in their restaurant in Chinatown day and night in order to pay back the money they fronted for her to come to the US. She finally convinced them to allow her to attend high school but struggled to graduate because of her low level English skills. She ended up graduating and getting accepted as a freshmen at your college. She struggled through her first semester and doesn't want to continue taking ESL classes. You have developed a close relationship with her and she confides in you that she thinks she may be pregnant.
- What would you do?