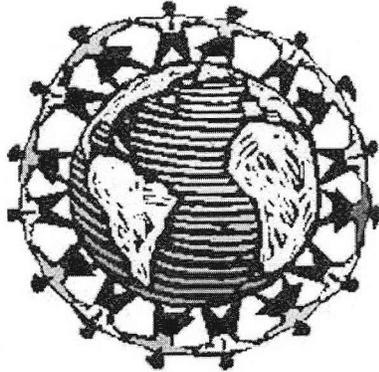


Supplementary Guide for ESOL Conversation Program Guidelines Part A

Spring 2012



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Week 1 Setting Goals and getting to know each other

Cultural Corner

Culture Shock: Beginning

Customs, Cues, Norms

Culture shock is caused by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social interaction.

These cues, which may be words, gestures, facial expressions, customs, or norms are acquired by all of us growing up and are learned without our noticing it.

Stage 1 The Honeymoon Stage (Excitement)

During the first few weeks most individuals are fascinated by the new surroundings. They stay with people who speak their language or others who are polite and gracious to them. This honeymoon stage may last from a few days or weeks to six months depending on the circumstances.

Stage 2 Withdrawal (Stereotypes)

The individual now has some more face-to-face experience with the culture and starts to find things different, strange and frustrating. The individual may dislike the new environment and focuses on its insufficiencies and it criticizes it. (The most well-known stage of culture shock).

Stage 3 Adjustment

Culture shock is lessened as the individual succeeds in getting some knowledge of the language and begins to get around by himself/herself. This is the beginning of his/her adjustment to the new cultural environment. The individual begins to have a sense of humor. Instead of criticizing, he/she makes jokes about the people and even cracks jokes about his or her own difficulties. He or she is now on the way to recovery.

Stage 4 Enthusiasm

In the final stage of adjustment the individual accepts the customs of the country as just another way of living. He/she can function within the new environment without feeling anxious although there are moments of tension. Only with a complete understanding of all the clues of this social interactions will this tension disappear. They enjoy being in the culture and may prefer certain cultural traits and adopt certain behaviors of the new culture rather than their own.

Adapted from:

Culture Shock & The Problem Of Adjustment To New Cultural Environments (An editorial by Dr. Lalervo Oberg; *Anthropologist; Health, Welfare and Housing Division; United States Operations Mission to Brazil*) http://www.worldwide.edu/travel_planner/culture_shock.html and

The Stages of Cultural Shock (Kwintessential)

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/cultural-services/articles/cultureshock-stages.html>

See intermediate/advanced version below.

Intermediate/Advanced

Customs, Cues, Norms

Culture shock is caused by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social interaction. These signs are the **thousand and one ways** in which we position ourselves to the situations of daily life: when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips, how to give orders to servants, how to make purchases, when to accept and when to refuse invitations, when to take statements seriously and when not.

These cues, which may be words, gestures, facial expressions, customs, or norms are acquired by all of us in the course of growing up and are as much a part of our culture as the language we speak or the beliefs we accept. All of us depend for our peace of mind and our efficiency on hundreds of these clues, most of which are unconsciously learned.

When an individual enters a strange culture, all or most of these familiar cues are removed. He or she is like a **fish out of water**. No matter how broad-minded or full of good will he may be, a series of support have been taken away. This is followed by a feeling of frustration and anxiety. People react to the frustration in much the same way. First they reject the environment which causes the discomfort: "the ways of the host country are bad because they make us feel bad."

Another phase of culture shock is regression. The home environment suddenly assumes a tremendous importance, everything becomes irrationally glorified. All difficulties and problems are forgotten and only the good things back home are remembered. It usually takes a trip home to bring one back to reality.

Stage 1 The Honeymoon Stage (Excitement)

During the first few weeks most individuals are fascinated by the new surroundings. They stay with people who speak their language or others who are polite and gracious to foreigners. This honeymoon stage may last from a few days or weeks to six months depending on circumstances.

Stage 2 Withdrawal (Stereotypes)

The individual now has some more face-to-face experience of the culture and starts to find things different, strange and frustrating.

They may use stereotypes to soothe the ego of someone with a severe case of culture shock but it certainly does not lead to any genuine understanding of the host country and its people. This second stage of culture shock is in a sense a **crisis in the disease**. If you overcome it you stay, if not, you leave before you reach the stage of a nervous breakdown.

Stage 3 Adjustment

Culture shock is lessened as the individual succeeds in getting some knowledge of the language and begins to get around by himself. This is the beginning of his adjustment to the new cultural environment. The individual's sense of humor begins to exert itself. Instead of criticizing he/she makes jokes about the people and even cracks jokes about his or her own difficulties. He or she is now on the way to recovery.

Stage 4 Enthusiasm

The individual functions well in the culture and enjoys being in it. He/she may prefer certain cultural traits of the new culture rather than their own and adopt certain behaviors from the new culture.

In the final stage of adjustment the individual accepts the customs of the country as just another way of living. He/she can operate within the new environment without a feeling of anxiety although there are moments of strain. Only with a complete grasp of all the clues of this social interactions will this strain disappear.

With a complete adjustment you not only accept the foods, drinks, habits, and customs but actually begin to enjoy them. When you go back home on leave you may even take things back with you and if you **leave for good** you generally miss the country and the people to whom you have become accustomed.

Adapted from:

Culture Shock & The Problem Of Adjustment To New Cultural Environments □ (An editorial by Dr. Lalervo Oberg; Anthropologist; Health, Welfare and Housing Division; United States Operations Mission to Brazil) http://www.worldwide.edu/travel_planner/culture_shock.html and

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