**CHAPTER 5**

**What Is Culture Shock?**

**Interactive Student Study Guide Table of Contents**

**Learning Objectives**

**Brief Outline**

**Chapter Checkup**

**Critical Incident Analysis: A First-Person Narrative: Walking to School**

**Glossary-Matching Quizzes**

**Practice Quiz**

**Exercise Handouts**

**Chapter 5: Learning Objectives**

As a result of reading Chapter 5 and participating in related class discussions and activities, you should be able to:

1. Define culture shock and use the ABC approach to describe the affective, behavioral, and

cognitive effects.

2. Describe four types of situations and/or individuals where culture shock occurs.

3. Explain the different factors influencing a sojourner’s effectiveness in managing the

experience of culture shock.

4. Track the ebb and flow of the W-shaped intercultural adjustment model and highlight the

benefits and limitations of using the revised W-shaped model.

5. Realize the inevitability of reentry culture shock and all of its surprising elements.

6. Experiment with a variety of constructive strategies to manage culture shock mindfully and

move with agility from a familiar turf to an unfamiliar landscape.

**Chapter 5: Brief Outline**

**I. Unpacking Culture Shock**

A. Characteristics of Culture Shock

1. **Culture shock:** a stressful transition to an unfamiliar environment (NOTE: This is a brief description; see textbook for complete definitions.)

2. Oberg’s identity disorientation state: identity loss, confusion powerlessness.

B. Pros and Cons of Culture Shock

1. Negative implications: emotional upheavals, psychosomatic problems, etc.

2. ABCs of culture shock:

a. *Affectively*: anxiety, confusion, and desire to be elsewhere

b. *Behaviorally*: awkwardness, confused as to norms and rules

c. *Cognitively*: lack competence to interpret “bizarre” behaviors

3. Effective management brings positive well-being, self-esteem, etc.

**II. Culture Shock Encounters: A Variety of Culture Shockers**

A. International Students and Cultural Exchange Students: over 5.5 million

B. Global Workplace Transferees and Global Mobility Families

C. Third Culture Kids/Global Nomads (TCK/GN)

People who’ve lived significant amount of time outside passport country.

D. International Tourists as Short-Term Sojourners

Tourists: voluntarily, short visit to another country, nonwork purposes

E. Initial Tips to Manage Culture Shock

1. Increase knowledge about culture

2. Moderate anxiety levels

3. Host nationals can help by being welcoming

**III. Culture Shock Factors, Adjustment Approaches, and Strategies**

A. Motivational Orientations and Personal Expectations

1. Volunteers do better than those who move involuntarily

2. Goals: Instrumental (task-based), socioemotional (personal, relational) and mixed-motivational

B. Cultural distance Factors and Two Adjustment Approaches

1. Cultural distance: differences in cultural values, language, etc.

2. Psychological adjustment approach: boost feelings of well-being

3. Sociocultural adjustment approach: ability to reach out and fit in

C. Initial Cultural Adjustment, New Media, and Social Support

1. Social media offers safe space for international students to learn about hosts

2. Face-to-face contact needed for longer adjustment, online ethnic social groups

D. Cultural Adjustment Competence Strategies

1. Knowledge, motivation, skills, achievement of instrumental goals – critical to sojourner’s adjustment

2. Skillset (behavioral flexibility) and mindset (cross-cultural empathy) helpful

E. Personality Attributes: “cultural fit” proposition: good match between sojourner’s personality type and hose cultural norm is important

**IV. Intercultural Adjustment: Developmental Patterns**

*Intercultural adjustment*: short- and medium-term adaptive process of sojourners

A. The **U-Curve Adjustment Model**

1. *Initial adjustment*: optimistic or elation phase

2. *Crisis*: stressful phase, overwhelmed by their own incompetence

3. *Regained adjustment*: settling-in phase, effective coping

B. The **Revised W-Shaped Adjustment Model:** 7 stages

1. *Honeymoon*: excited, curious about new environment

2. *Frustration*/*Hostility:* most emotionally intense and challenging time

3 types of “culture shockers:”

a. *Early returnees*: aggressive or passive-aggressive strategies, exit early

b. *Time servers*: minimal host contact, avoidance strategies

c. *Participators*: “active commitment” strategies to adjust

3. *Rebounding/Humorous*: learn to laugh at their cultural faux pas

4. *In-sync adjustment*: “at home,” experience identity security

5. *Ambivalence*: grief, nostalgia, pride, relief, at going home

6. *Reentry culture shock*: not anticipating reentry shock (usually feel more depressed and stressed than during entry shock)

7. *Resocialization*:

a. *Resocializers* quietly assimilate with few overt changes

b. *Alienators* never fit back into home culture

c. *Transformers* act as agents of change in their home cultures

C. Culture Shock Adjustment Summary: Peaks and Valleys

1. Understand that peaks and valleys are part of growth process

2. Be aware and keep track of goals

3. Take time and space to adjust

4. Develop strong and weak ties for a cushion, seek help in crisis

5. Participate in host culture’s major cultural events

**V. Reentry Culture Shock**

A. Reentry Culture Shock: Surprising Elements – Elements that can affect sojourners

1. Identity change not a “good fit” with home culture

2. Nostalgic and idealized images of home culture

3. Difficulty reintegrating into old roles

4. Letdown due to unexpected distance with family and friends

5. Family and friends impatient with listening to sojourners’ stories

6. Home culture’s demand for role conformity

7. Absence of change in home culture, or too much change

B. “Where is Home?” Pico Iyer – may experience “reverse homesickness. Growing global portable tribe, cross cultural boundaries flexibility, growing group

**VI. Intercultural Reality Check: Do-Ables**

Practical tools for managing sojourners’ culture shock:

A. Realize culture shock is inevitable

B. Arises due to unfamiliar environment; develop realistically positive outlook

C. Establish broad-based and deeper contacts

D. Use digital media to learn about new culture

E. Host culture’s efforts can help

E. Involves intense feeling of incompetence; seek positive mentors

E. Transitional affective phase that varies in intensity; emphasize positive rewards

**Chapter 5: Chapter Checkup**

**Check out the following cultural literacy questions and self-assessment questions:**

**QuikChoice 5.1:** Go to the textbook to take the QuikChoice 5.1 self-assessment, “Culture Shock Memory” to learn about the variety of “culture shock” feelings that may be experienced. Record your thoughts with the [**QuikChoice 5.1 self-assessment**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/quikchoice-5-1?previousFilter=tag_sample-resources)online.

**QuikTrendz 5.1:** Go online to [**QuikTrendz 5.1**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/ting-toomey3e-quiktrendz-5-2?previousFilter=tag_sample-resources) to see if you can you name the top three countries of origin of international students to the U.S.? To see the top five, check out **QuikTrendz 5.1** in the text.

**QuikPoll 5.1**: Take the [**QuikPoll 5.1**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/ting-toomey3e-chapter-5-quikpoll-quiz?previousFilter=tag_sample-resources) online to see if you can you name the top three U.S. universities enrolling international students? To see the top five, check out **QuikPoll 5.1** in the text.

**QuikPoll 5.2**: Can you name the top three college majors of international students studying in the U.S.? Take [**QuikPoll 5.2**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/quikpoll-5-2?previousFilter=tag_sample-resources) online. Then, to see the top five, check out **QuikPoll 5.2** in the text.

**QuikTrendz 5.2:** Can you name the top three study abroad locations for U.S. college students? Click to [**QuikTrendz 5.2**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/quiktrendz-5-2?previousFilter=tag_sample-resources)**.** To see the top five, check out **QuikTrendz 5.2** in the text.

**QuikTrendz 5.3:** Can you name the top three worldwide tourist destinations? Test yourself at [**QuikTrendz 5.3**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/quiktrendz-5-3?previousFilter=tag_sample-resources) online. To see the top five, check out **QuikTrendz 5.3** in the text.

**QuikTrendz 5.4:** Can you name the top three countries of origin of visitors to the U.S.? Click on [**QuikTrendz 5.4**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/quiktrendz-5-4?previousFilter=tag_sample-resources) to quiz yourself online. To see the top five, check out **QuikTrendz 5.4** in the text.

**QuikTrendz 5.5:** Can you name the top three tourism cities in the U.S.? Quiz yourself with [**QuikTrendz 5.5**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/quiktrendz-5-5?previousFilter=tag_sample-resources)**.** To see the top five, check out **QuikTrendz 5.5** in the text.

**QuikChoice 5.2:** Take the self-assessment, “Assessing Your Social Support Circle.”

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**Chapter 5: Critical Incident Analysis**

**Check out the following intercultural scenario:**

(NOTE: See “Chapter 5 Exercise Handouts” for a printable version.)

**A FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVE: WALKING TO SCHOOL**

**Desi’s First-Person Narrative:**

It occurred to me about how the W-shaped model can be applied to situations outside of ethnic and cultural boundaries. My example is a car accident that left my brother in a coma for two weeks. When he came to, the doctor discovered that Ryan was paralyzed from the waist down. When I heard the news I was filled with tears, fear, and shock. I could not believe my outgoing brother would never walk again or have children. I had a hard time looking at him in the hospital without crying or feeling angry. Why him? What if he had not driven that night? What if it was me who was driving?

My family and I learned to use humor to get through the most difficult three months Ryan was in the hospital. We sat in the Intensive Care Unit and joked with all our visitors, and I even joked with Ryan a lot about things that could only be funny to the two of us. I tried to cheer him up, and cheer myself up in return. To get through it, I took everything in like a sponge, absorbing any knowledge of Ryan’s injury and the situation. I researched paralysis and became an “expert” on the subject. My parents looked to me for information and advice. It was really a more positive way for me to handle my beloved brother’s devastating situation.

Through the months that I spent visiting the hospital, it became a second home for me. It was not only a place to visit Ryan, but also where I visited family and friends, a study hall, and a place to eat. I soon blended right in with all the staff there. I knew many people—their names, their hobbies, their quirks—including the doctors, nurses, therapists, and cafeteria staff (as well as others by face). When Ryan was transferred to a rehabilitation clinic, I went back to school and spent more time on campus.

Coming back to school was so difficult. I no longer felt like I belonged there. Everyone had continued their lives as before, while I had undergone a major life-changing event. My whole outlook on life changed. It was as if my eyes were finally opened for the first time and I took a long hard look at my life priorities. On the way to class I thought about the blessing that existed in being able to WALK there, while everyone around me was stressed out about their homework assignments, social life, and dating life ... and the matters I used to think were very important became less important. To be able to walk with my two legs matters to me now, and to have a healthy body matters to me ... to have my beloved parents and brother to talk to matters to me. Everything pales by comparison. And to think, my experience in all this was just as a sister.

**INTERACTIVE PROBES (Ask yourself and probe your classmates’ reactions)**

(NOTE: See “Chapter 5: Exercise Handouts” for a printable form containing these questions.)

1. What are your feelings and reactions to this story?

2. To what extent can you relate to Desi’s story and experience? Do you have a similar story to share?

3. Do you find the W-Shaped Adjustment Model useful in interpreting and understanding the story? How so?

4. Thinking of your own life transition or transformation stories and the stories of others, if you could make some changes to the W-Shaped Adjustment Model, what would you recommend?

**FURTHER APPLICATION PROBES** Go [online](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/ting-toomey3e-chapter-5-further-application-probe?previousFilter=tag_sample-resources) to assess your understanding.

**Chapter 5: Glossary-Matching Quizzes**

**Click for** [**Matching Quiz #1**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/ting-toomey3e-matching-quiz-5-1?previousFilter=tag_sample-resources)

**Click for** [**Matching Quiz #2**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/matching-quiz-5-2?previousFilter=tag_sample-resources)

**Chapter 5: Practice Quiz**

**Click here for the** [**Chapter 5 Review Practice Quiz**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/ting-toomey3e-chapter-5-review-practice-quiz?previousFilter=tag_sample-resources)

**Chapter 5: Exercise Handouts**

**Your instructor may ask you to** [**download,**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/ting-toomey3e-student-resources#tag_sample-resources) **print out, and/or email the following class handouts for this chapter:**

**A First-Person Narrative: Walking to School**

**Interactive Probes for “Walking to School”**

**A FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVE: WALKING TO SCHOOL**

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NAME:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**INTERACTIVE PROBES FOR “WALKING TO SCHOOL”**

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