Culture Surprise

- First few days – tourist, observer
- Become aware of superficial differences
  - Dress
  - Signs
- Surprising, but not troubling
Culture Stress

- Short term response to stimulus overload
- Have to interact, respond to others’ behavior
  - Driving on the other side of the road
  - Shopping
  - Hearing comments about yourself
Culture Shock

- One part of the adaptation process
- Experienced by people who spend a longer period of time in another culture
- Normal, healthy psychological reaction to the stress of living in another culture
- Feelings of tension and anxiety due to the loss of familiar cues
Culture Shock: Stress

- Physical and psychological symptoms can include:

  headaches, stomach aches, dizziness, rashes, nausea, irritability, insomnia or excessive sleepiness, depression, loneliness, withdrawal, paranoia, anger, aggression, hatred, fear, crying and complaining
The Adaptation Process

Mood

↑

↓

Time →
Why does culture shock occur?

- Loss of familiar cues
  - Physical cues – environment, objects
  - Social cues – facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, language, customs

- Breakdown of communication

- Identity crisis
How to cope with culture shock

- Anticipate it, recognize it, understand the adjustment process
- Try to control the symptoms, don’t let them control you
- Consider culture shock a positive sign
- Put some familiar cues in your environment
- Communicate! Interact!
How to cope with culture shock

- Be flexible and open to new experiences
- Learn about the country, the language and the culture
- Pamper yourself a little
- Keep a diary of your experiences and reactions, reflect on your experiences
- Maintain your sense of humor
Returning home
The Re-entry Process

Mood

Time ➔
Why does re-entry shock occur?

- You can’t go home again
  - Ideas and feelings about home – familiar places, people, routines
  - Dealing with difference
  - Readjustment unexpected
  - Learning point
Intercultural Learning

- Learning about yourself
- Learning about culture
- Learning about intercultural phenomena
- Learning about culture-specific phenomena
- Learning how to learn

(Michael Paige)
What you can do

- Observe
- Analyze
- Keep a learning diary – record your observations and thoughts
- Look for supporting information
Conclusion

Make the most of your intercultural experience, learn from it, and above all enjoy it!