



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Intercultural Adaptation & Intergroup Communication

Elizaveta Arzamastseva & Elisa Pratesi
International Coordinators, JYU International Office

Similarities and differences activity



Talk to a person near you (or in Zoom, as a group), and find at least:

- one thing **you have in common**
- one **difference between you**



Raise your hand if...



- You watch Netflix or any other streaming platform
- You have travelled abroad
- You consume media in (a) foreign language(s)
- Rent is expensive in your home town
- You enjoy Finnish nature
- You have swam in a lake at least once in your life
- You like spicy food
- You drink coffee or tea in the morning

...JYU identity?

“According to the JYU strategy, all students at the university develop a JYU Identity, which, among other things, includes **strong interaction competence, language skills and cultural awareness as well as global and ethical responsibility.**”

(Strategy of the University of Jyväskylä 2019–2030)



JYU identity: skills to thrive in an international context

This notion of JYU Identity is founded on communication and the ability to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds and life stories:

→ **Internationality as a skill, can be developed and practiced regardless of your degree programme.**



Communication



Cultural Understanding



Adaptability

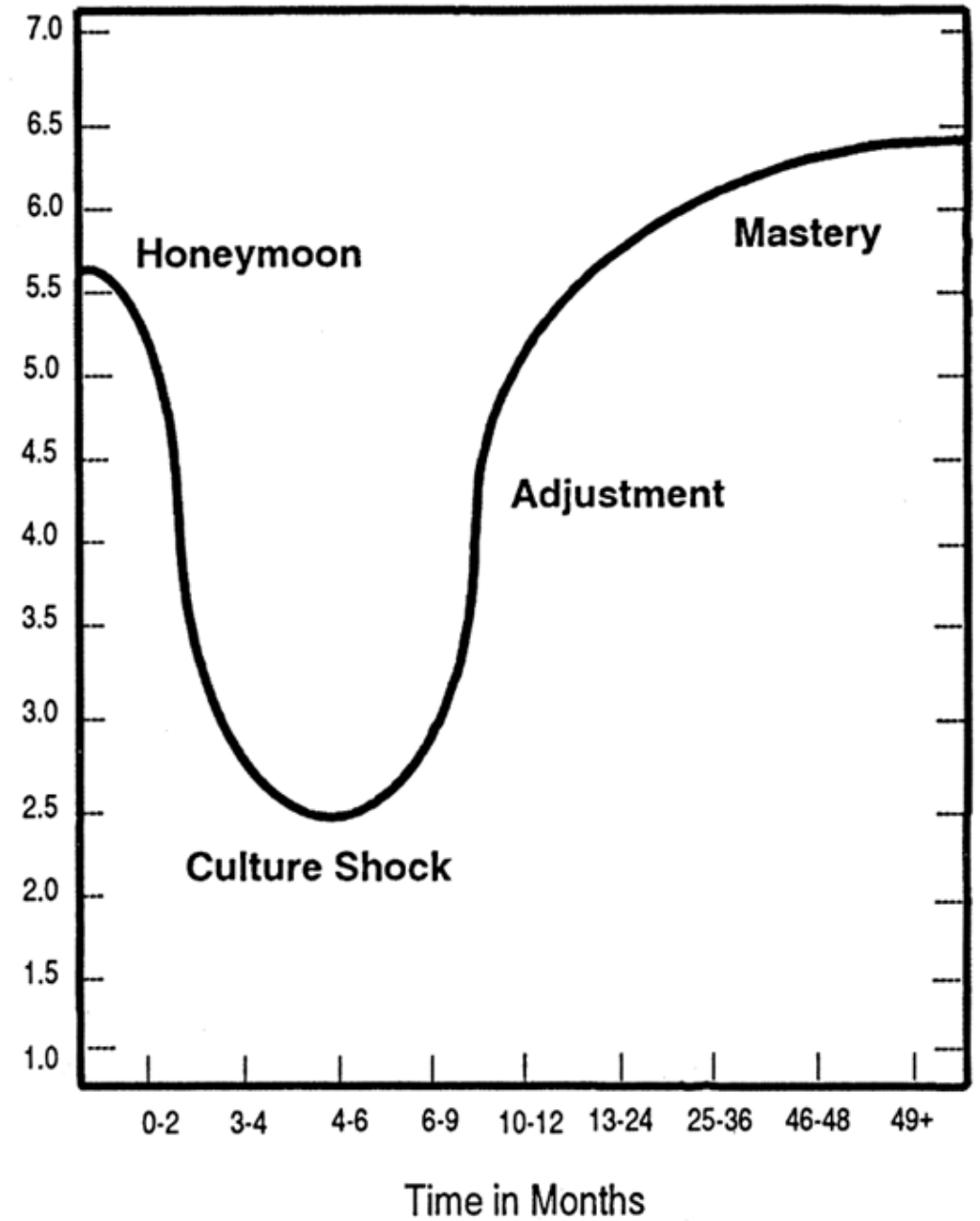


Empathy

Stages of cultural adaptation, culture shock?

Black, J. S., & Mendenhall, M. E. (1991). The U-curve adjustment hypothesis revisited: A review and theoretical framework. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 22(2), 225–247. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490301>

Degree of Adjustment



The reality...



“First, cultures do not interact – people do.

Culture only matters to the extent it is manifest in and through people in interaction.”

Brian Spitzberg 2015, 24

Many factors affecting your adaptation to the new context you are finding yourself in:

- Expectations
- Stereotypes
- Environment and personal situation
- Language
- Values, norms and rules
- Perception and interpretation
- Personality
- Cultural distance
- Social network
- Attitudes toward change
- Multilingual and Intercultural Communication Competence

Finnish "culture" and "Silent Finn"



- Stereotypes are oversimplifications. Such assumptions shape how we perceive and interact with others and might become communication barriers. Take them critically.
- "Silent Finn" as an academic myth (research by Marko Siitonen & Margarethe Olbertz-Siitonen)
- Assuming that all Finns are quiet because they don't speak much in public settings overlooks deeper values and social norms like **respect for personal space, non-intrusiveness, or valuing silence as meaningful.**



Finnish Nightmares by Karoliina Korhonen

Networking - Strength of Weak Ties

(Strength of Weak Ties Theory by Mark Granovetter)

- **Strong ties:** Close friends, family, people you interact with regularly. These ties are emotionally rich but often share the same information and networks.
- **Weak ties:** classmates from other departments, acquaintances outside of university circle, people you meet at different events, projects, volunteering. These ties connect you to different social circles, offering access to **new ideas, diverse viewpoints, and working opportunities**, helping you to grow both personally and professionally.
- -> Don't spend all your time within the "**study programme / university bubble**"
Leave your comfort zone 😊



Tips & resources



Social relations

- Fostering a sense of **belonging**. Communication relationships are often seen as a one very important factor in adapting to life changes in general.
- Places become **homes** through relationships.
- Do not to reduce individuals to cultural clichés, **be open-minded and curious** to learn about the person you are interacting with.
- Reflect on your own iceberg: Recognize how your own values influence how you interpret others.
- Networking! Leave your bubble: hobbies, volunteering, Adult Education Centre!
- Empathy (towards yourself, and others)
- [Movi courses to enhance your multilingual and intercultural competence](#)

Before we conclude



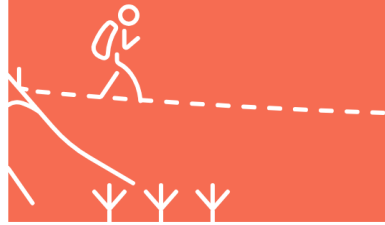
Comfort zone

Safe and familiar environment



Embrace new challenges

Face uncertainty and discomfort



Explore potential and make meaningful connections

Discover capabilities and resilience



Foster Adaptability

Encourage learning and exploration



Growth Zone

Stronger, more confident self



Special thanks to



- **Lotta Kokkonen**, PhD, (Movi), for her Introduction to Intercultural Communication presentations in the past Orientations.
- **Maria Sharapan**, PhD, (researcher affiliated with JYU), for her Intercultural Adaptation presentation in the Orientation of 2024.

Orientation programme's timetable

- Orientation on 24- 28 August
- Important information for all new students, be present on campus or in Zoom for the sessions!
- **Slides and recordings** of the sessions will be published on the same webpage one week after the orientation at the latest.
- Check your Degree programme's own orientation schedule online:

r.jyu.fi/degree_orientation



Programme om Wednesday 26.8

Opening fair at Agora building

- 10.40-10.50 Student Union info in Aud 1
- 10.50-11.30 - Visiting the fair

Transit to C building

Auditorium C1+C2 (University Assembly Hall)

- 12.00-12.45 Student Housing, Soihtu and KOAS
- 12.45-13.25 Personal Safety
- 13.45-14.15 Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication MOVI
- 14.15-14.45 Student Life and wellbeing
- 15.05-15.30 Public Healthcare Services
- 15.30-16.00 uMove, Academic sports services

14. 16.00-16.30 InfoDesk of the International Office in the C building lobby



Programme on Thursday 27.8

Auditorium C4

- 9.00-10.00 Bank info
- 10.00-10.30 FSHS - Student Health Care Services
- 10.35-11.05 Services of the Student Union JYY and student association
- 11.05-11.20 Alumni Services

Lunch break

Afternoon: check your degree-specific programme using the "Further information" drop down menu on the Orientation webpage:

r.jyu.fi/degree_orientation



**Remember to pick up
your JYU bag at the
fair in Agora
tomorrow!**





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