

Malmo Journal – From Little things Big Things Grow.

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My first journal explored my emotions and reactions which I experienced while overseas. I referred to these feelings as the “little things” that culminated to create the



culture shock I underwent within the first month of my exchange. I researched, read and critically reflected on why I had these thoughts and feelings in an attempt to give meaning to the experience. Now after re reading my earlier journal entries, I will describe the changes I have had and how I have developed them.

Within my first journal entry, I explained that The Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1961) defines culture shock as the “trauma you experience when you move into a culture different from your home culture”. (p.237) I also believed that culture shock is “precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social association.” (Barias & Pang, 2006, p.57) When I entered this unfamiliar culture, all or most of the usual cues I experienced in everyday life at home were removed. I recall feeling annoyance and resentment towards the host country, emotions that grew out of the difficulty I experienced in the process of adjustment, referred to by Lysgaard, as “Cultural Confrontation,” (1955, p.4) This was followed by a feeling of frustration and anxiety and my home

environment suddenly assumed a tremendous importance. However had no option, but to adapt so I could continue to live, work and study abroad and therefore, I accepted the customs of the country as just another way of living and studying; known as the “adjustment stage” (1995, p.6) When I reflected in my previous journal that there are “high and low points” to this experience, as a student and pre service teacher, I will use this experience to build pre existing skills and adopt and perfect new skills.

On reflection, there have been many high and low points; I recall the environment changing around me and a part of me also changed in Malmo. Tasks became easier and more familiar little by little. For example catching a bus became automatic and I didn't have to worry about the bus going in opposite direction to me. It soon became second nature for me. Gradually with out my conscious knowledge, the culture in Malmo became my culture. I could find classrooms, I could find items in the supermarket, I could use the ATM's, I could even speak a little of the language. My reading informed me that culture shock is fundamental in the transition from “home culture to host culture”,(504) and a way of shaping skills beneficial to the individual as a student and teacher and when I concluded my last journal entry I stated that; ‘I am at the beginning of the stage that represents the transition out of culture shock and into significant “cultural adjustment”’. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2001, p.3) Within two months through the journey of transition, I gained so many practical skills and memorable knowledge that will assist me in the future and is still very much ongoing. I felt comfortable and capable of working, living and studying in the Swedish culture, I have to admit that nothing really changed except that I improved and became more skilled and better at it. I strengthened my skills and hope to use them to help others in the future.

Reference List

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