

Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment






Who needs to be welcomed? Everyone! Inclusive of culture, gender, religion, neurodiversity, sexual orientation, physical ability, learning style, age....

What makes an environment welcoming?



Sharing good practice

Aims



1. Look at a few examples of good practice
2. Better understand the student experience journey
3. Explore relevant elements of neuroscience and culture shock research
4. Consider universal space/lesson design, necessary pre-admission information gathering and other pro-active strategies
5. Mitigate against potential impacts of bias and of marginality



The Hero's Journey




The diagram illustrates the Hero's Journey as a circular path between two worlds: 'Ordinary world (Known)' at the top and 'Extraordinary world (Unknown)' at the bottom, separated by a horizontal line. A red star is positioned at the bottom center. The journey consists of 11 stages:

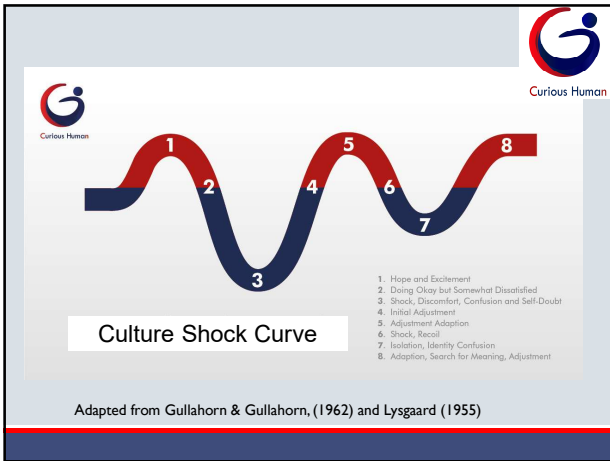
1. Ordinary World
2. Call to Adventure
3. Meeting of the Mentor (Gifts for the journey)
4. Crossing the Threshold
5. Tests, Allies, Enemies
6. The Ordeal
7. Metamorphosis
8. Reward
9. The road home
10. The Gift of the Goddess
11. Return with Elixir

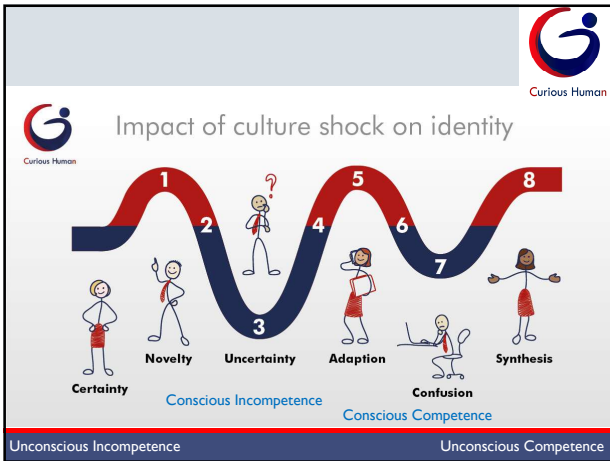
The Student's Journey

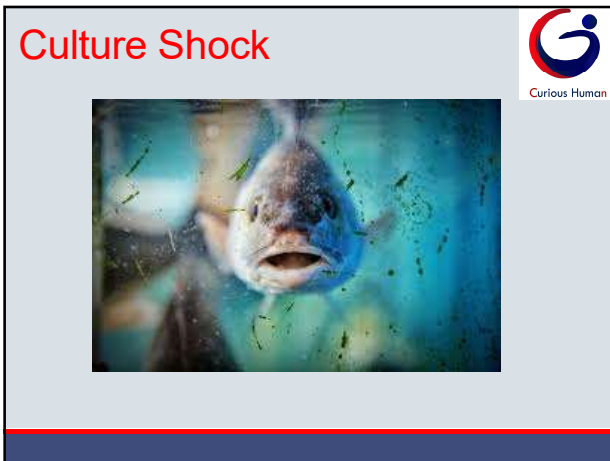



The diagram illustrates the Student's Journey as a circular path between two worlds: 'Ordinary world (Known)' at the top and 'Extraordinary world (Unknown)' at the bottom, separated by a horizontal line. A red star is positioned at the bottom center. The journey consists of 11 stages:

1. Fixed mindset (I know how the world works)
2. Vision of change (I want to learn English)
3. The Welcome (Gifts – recognition, tips for how to behave, optimistic vision of success etc)
4. Experiencing culture shock (these people are not like me)
5. Challenges, Allies, Enemies
6. Cultural/learning crisis
7. Developing a more flexible mindset
8. Achievement in learning
9. The road home
10. The Gift of changed perspective
11. Return with Elixir (Improved English & Life strategies)







Why is it so important to welcome and include all students?



- Marginality can result in feelings of isolation, disconnection, insignificance, invalidation, insecurity. Feeling “on the margins” (Schlossberg, 1989)
- Negative impact on sense of belonging can provoke mental health issues (Stebleton, Soria & Huesman, 2014)
- Increased threat response can result in poorer ability to focus in class and retain information (Rock, 2008)

Understanding the Neuroscience



The brain is deeply social



Neuroscience findings to consider when welcoming students...

(adapted from David Rock, 2008)



1. Our attention is limited
2. We can misunderstand how to deal with emotions
3. The psychological world is as significant as the physical world
4. What we focus on creates changes in the brain

Common cognitive biases

(Because our attention-span is limited and we make decisions quickly)



- 1. **Similarity** (People who are like me are better than people who are not like me.)
- 2. **Experience** (My perceptions of the world must be accurate.)
- 3. **Expedience** (If it feels right, it must be true.)

So in welcoming students and making them feel at home quickly....



- 1. **Similarity** (Can I see familiar things and faces in the space? Am I recognised (name pronounced correctly, my language/flag/culture represented?)
- 2. **Experience** (Do I feel like I matter here? Are people friendly/supportive? Is it as I expected?)
- 3. **Expedience** (The first few days can set the tone for the whole journey...)

What makes an environment welcoming?



Cultural Intelligence



Individualist (Me) Traits:

- Personal well being is more important than the group's well being
- Individual achievement is valued over group accomplishments.
- Standing out from the group and being acknowledged is encouraged.
- Personal freedom and individual rights are paramount.
- Being a member of a group does not define who you are.

Collectivist (We) Traits:

- The well being of the group (company, family, country, etc.) is more important than personal well being.
- The success of the group takes precedence over the individual.
- Standing out from the group is looked down upon and discouraged.
- Group harmony, interdependence, and saving face is paramount.
- Being a member of a group is essential to one's identity, success, and/or survival.

Universal Design Principles



"...design for human diversity, social inclusion, and equality" (source: Design for All Europe, 2008)

"Universal design is a framework for the design of places, things, information, communication and policy to be usable by the widest range of people operating in the widest range of situations without special or separate design. Most simply, Universal Design is human-centered design of everything with everyone in mind. It is not a design style but an orientation to any design process that starts with a responsibility to the experience of the user." (source: Adaptive Environments)




Universal Classroom/Lesson Design



The seven principles of universal design (Center for Universal Design, 1997; Connell et al., 1997) were developed to help make universal design easier to understand:


1. Equity – useful to people with diverse abilities
2. Flexibility – accommodates a wide range of preferences and abilities
3. Simplicity (Intuitive) – easy to engage with, regardless of experience, knowledge, language skills or ability
4. Perceptible Information – necessary information is communicated regardless of culture or sensory ability
5. Tolerance for error – minimum opportunity for adverse effect
6. Low Physical effort – efficient and comfortable
7. Spaces designed for approach and use – regardless of user physicality

What do we know about our students before they arrive?



Unconscious Bias


What are our preconceptions, assumptions or opinions about students based on:



1. Cultural Framework/Ethnicity
2. Gender
3. Neurodiversity
4. Age
5. Religion
6. Physical Ability
7. Emotional/Mental Health vulnerability

** Don't assume you know – check with the individual*


Mitigating against marginality...



1. **Setting common goals** (Encouraging students to collaborate in identifying mutually desirable outcomes.)
2. **Speaking human to human, with respect** (Perhaps share a “Just like me” reflection)
3. **Anticipate common cultural/emotional issues and plan countermoves.** (Understand different cultural frameworks; issues like swearing or romance)
4. **Replace blame with curiosity** (ask for collaboration in exploring what has happened, ask for solutions, offer support)

(adapted from advice by Paul Santagata, Head of Industry at Google)

Good Practice Reminders – 10 top tips



1. Be empathetic – think about what your student actually values, not what you think they might want
2. Communicate effectively and listen actively
3. Work on overcoming negative scripts – provide emotional support when necessary
4. Accept and value students for who they are
5. Help students experience success in identifying and recognising their strengths
6. Help students to set realistic goals
7. Help students recognise that mistakes are experiences from which to learn
8. Find ways to help students feel recognised and appreciated
9. Provide students with opportunities to contribute and to support others
10. Support students in making decisions and finding their own solutions to problems

Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment



Thank you for being here today.


Any further questions?

Get in touch:

Call Curious Human Ltd on 07511638116
Email on: office@curious-human.co.uk
Go to our website: www.curious-human.co.uk

Connect with me on LinkedIn:
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ruth-hughes-a8064650>


Just like me...



- This person has beliefs, perspectives, and opinions, just like me.
- This person has hopes, anxieties, and vulnerabilities, just like me.
- This person has friends, family, and perhaps parents or children who love them, just like me.
- This person wants to feel respected, appreciated, and competent, just like me.
- This person wishes for peace, joy, and happiness, just like me.

(adapted from advice by Paul Santagata, Head of Industry at Google)

Cultural Intelligence



Similar religious or political view	Similar Gender identity	Been to a similar place on holiday	Same first language	Similar social class
Same number of siblings	Similar academic interests	Similar view on punctuality	Similar level of extraversion/Introversion	Similar age
Similar attitude to alcohol	Similar favourite food	Similar taste in clothes	Similar relationship status	Similar social/sporting interests
