University of San Francisco

Cross-cultural Adaptation of Mandarin-Speaking Undergraduate Students in the United States

A Field Project Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Teaching English To Speakers of Other Languages

By
Enhao Wang
December 2020

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Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

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ABSTRACT

Studying in the United States is many Chinese students' dream, but those who manage to achieve it encounter two main problems. The first one is the language barrier and the second one cultural shock. Chine is the highest provider of international students with 30% from statistics of 2017/2018 class. The primary language spoken by Chinese is the Mandarin language. All the other languages come in as a second language to most Chinese, including English. When they travel out of their country to further education as students, they are hampered by language barriers as they navigate through their struggle.

China is also a country of rich ancient culture still upheld to date compared to other places in the world where cultures have changed or merged like in the U.S. When Chinese students come to America, they meet diverse cultures that are very different from those accustomed to. This cultural difference poses great challenges for the Mandarin speakers, which we describe as cultural shock.

This project sets out to outline ways that will help international students adapt quickly to the new environment. The research involved interviewing some Chinese students to understand their cross-cultural experiences and compile information that will help develop a handbook that will guide these students in their stay in America. The research found out that these two problems affect Chinese students on a large scale, interfering with their stay, social life, and education. The two issues have lowered their interactions and self-confidence due to their inability to speak fluently and their reluctance to fit in a new cultural environment.

The project recommended several guidelines to help these international students from China adapt to life in the U.S. These guidelines include psychological preparation before they travel and provide the necessary information to quicken their understanding of new ways of life.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The United States' education system is one of the most envied systems globally. US universities hold high rankings due to high-quality academic standards. The institutions are well supported, and they follow rigorous practices that aid in maintaining excellent quality education for students. QS World Ranking 2019 ranked 33 universities from the US out of 100 worldwide, suggesting that the US degree has an excellent international reputation.

America is also admired because of its extensive cultural diversity. Almost all universities take high consideration in making cultural diversity central during student admissions (Pop, 2020). Students are often commending that they interact with students from all nationalities, different religions, and unique ethnicities in their classes and dormitories. These universities also offer support programs and facilities, especially for international students. Workshops, language practice, orientations, and pieces of training are done to prepare students for their classes. International students also have the opportunity to stay in the United States after graduation to pursue a career.

American universities have invested largely in optimized classroom experiences. Youth are compassionate when it comes to new technology; most of them very eager to use the latest inventions. US universities' keep up with the way technology keeps changing the way information is delivered. Students have easy access to web-based classes, computer-based tests, and different lab resources, giving them modern learning experiences.

Lastly, US universities attract people from all parts of the globe with their flexible academic environments. The universities deliberately shift learning structures and instructions depending on students' strengths, goals, and interests to make studying active, enjoyable, and remain relevant to every student's domain. These are just a few reasons why students from various parts of the world dream of studying in the United States' prestigious higher learning institutions.

It has recently attracted a good number of students, with China having at least 360,000 learners pursuing their studies in the U.S. during the 2017-2018 academic year (Textor, 2020). Most learners prefer learning abroad to advance their studies in terms of language, politics, economy, and cultural aspects with respect to the U.S. philosophies and contribute back to their mother nations in the future (Yujie, 2019). With the myriad learning activities in the United States, international learners reportedly encounter various cross-cultural encounters.

Although studying in the United States sounds like a walk in the park, students encounter several hurdles depending on where they come from. In a new country, students face unique cultures, probably, different languages, different climate, and generally different lifestyle and are expected to adapt to all these for their own good. For instance, students from China have to bend their ways of life to fit in a very different life system. This paper will concentrate on Chinese students' two main problems in their initial stages of life in the US, namely, language barrier and cultural shock.

Statement of the Problem

I have interacted with several people from Asia and mostly Chinese students, and I have witnessed some of the challenges linked to cultural adaptations that they encounter in new environments. Some students who I happen to be close to share their life experiences directly. I have also gathered some of the information from observing the difficulties encountered daily in their lives in a foreign country. I selected this topic to address the challenges international students face in a new place since it could be happening to every person starting life in a new place, and come up with possible solutions to help them.

Most recently, there was an alarm of scholarly attention raised by a group of scholarship that aimed at intervening and satisfying the lives of the learners and making their journeys to fulfilling their dreams successful (Songsirisak, 2018). Findings of the studies indicated that the challenges linked to cultural adaptation involve language barriers, poor communication strategies with the locals, lack of familiarity with the American culture, and lack of appropriate social behaviors (Songsirisak, 2018).

The language barrier is a major inhibitor to communication in any given set up. It isn't easy to pass or receive ideas from people who speak different languages or dialects. Most new Chinese students have difficulty in understanding, reading, and speaking English. This limits their association with other students and other people.

Poor communication strategies with the locals is another problem closely related to the language barrier. Different cultures have different forms of communication. Most people learning a new language will have this problem. Passing the information correctly or interpreting it may create misunderstandings and cause undesirable actions. Chinese students in America face

this a lot in schools and even in shops when purchasing items. The English taught in China for students going to America focuses on written English, and less emphasis is put on spoken English (Guofang, 2001). When they go to America, they still face difficulties in using English as native speakers. It is also hard for them to write academic papers.

Lack of familiarity with American culture is another challenge. China has a long history of strong culture carried in Chinese hearts, which is totally different from Americans. The challenges of adapting to a new environment in college make life stressful for international students. When trying to settle in a new environment, international students might have the U-curve model of cross-cultural adjustment. Developed by Lysgaard (1955), the U-curve model of cross-cultural adjustment consists of four different adaptation stages. The first stage is the honeymoon. It starts with the satisfaction and feeling of well-being that students experience when entering a new culture. The second stage is culture shock, which refers to the frustration, anxiety, confusion, helplessness, and inability to effectively deal with cultural differences. The third stage is an adjustment, in which students start to learn and accept the situation and the surrounding environment. They then take the initiative to change their negative attitude to a positive attitude. The last stage is the recovery in which students begin to acquire the skills and cultural understanding of the second culture.

The most difficult period during the cross-cultural adaptation is the experience of culture shock. While culture shock is just one part of the acculturation process, research indicates that approximately 41% of international students experience stress related to culture shock (Hongmei, 2017). This may include homesickness, cultural shock, and experiences of cultural discrimination. All these stresses may have harmful consequences such as uneasiness, insecurity,

depression, anxiety, and even death. Culture shock may also include difficulties related to learning, including communication challenges, low self-esteem, the inability to adapt to new environments, isolation, and sickness. Managing culture shock is vital for the well-being of international students; it must be addressed so that international students can succeed in U.S. colleges and universities.

Purpose of the Project

The main purpose of this project is to come up with solutions that will help Chinese students who come to the U.S. overcome two main problems that face them. The two problems are the language barrier and cultural shock. The project will also focus on plausible interventions to the challenges, especially those deemed cross-cultural adaptation in American institutions. The project will also focus on possible interventions to the challenges, especially those deemed to cross-cultural adaptation in American institutions. The data gathered from this research will be used to inform the creation of a handbook of resources to help Mandarin-speaking Chinese graduate students adapt and integrate into the local U.S. culture. Resources in the handbook will be based on the recommendations of the study participants. They may include helping students find their community, where they can ask for help, and how to facilitate learners who speak mandarin to identify the resources and get integrated to match with the U.S. system.

The handbook developed after the research should compile valuable information on education, language, culture, and social aspects to prepare students physically and mentally to study in America. The information should include the following.

Give students reasons to choose the U.S. International students should be assured that studying in the USA is the right choice. This area should outline the many benefits found in

American colleges and universities and their opportunities. This information will help students in deciding whether to study in the U.S. or not. It will actually encourage them despite the challenges; most of their focus will be on the quality education and opportunities awaiting them.

The handbook should provide a USA state guide depending on where the students would prefer to go. Since America is a vast country with unique and different cultures, history, and climate in every state, state guides will provide complete directions of each state, especially statistics on the number of international students per state.

Describe the lifestyle of the USA people and what one should expect when they land on U.S. soil. Information on the kind of life students expect will help them know the adjustments they will need to make to fit in, the challenges they might encounter and how to go through safely, the challenges of staying with a roommate, and the social and economic aspects of life.

There should be sufficient information to prepare international students for their stay in the USA. Information about all home necessities, student visa, travel essentials, and insurance plans. Details on how they will set themselves to call their parents and relatives regularly and the charges. Students also need financial advice to prepare them financially for how they will spend.

A guide to studying information about colleges and universities: this will help students choose universities that fit their nature and help them have an easier time. Information on subjects and course selection should also be provided with application processes and fee charges. The guidelines from the handbook will help guide students and give them a prior understanding of their new environment. It will prepare students psychologically to navigate through various cultures.

Theoretical Framework

This project is guided by the affective-humanistic approach. This approach gained international fame in the twentieth century (Prabhavathy, 2016). In this method, human behaviors involving feelings, emotions, awareness of self, and others are considered in the process of learning languages. I chose this approach because, contrary to the cognitive approach that is rather practical, the topic involves students' feelings and emotional challenges in a new environment.

The approach focuses on making learners comfortable and providing a soothing learning experience. The user in this approach used customs and play, narrated stories, and engaged in game playing with their students, honored the students' feelings and strivings to make them feel comfy. Some approaches from this methodology encompassed positive reinforcement, making students assume a new character to get them out of their cocoons and encourage practicing the new language and being unconstrained and imaginative. Users often repeated reading and listening exercises multiple times, each time focusing on different aspects of combining these exercises with music or smell to open the intuitive personality. They frequently had students creative by dancing and singing and using games to help students liberate their psyches. The methodology accentuates how important the students are and how they are altogether cherished and all equal. Reducing the stress of the mandarin students happens on two planes of awareness. The first one is the conscious mind, and the other one is the subconscious mind. The affective humanistic methodology relies upon having fun in learning. It relies upon singing, playing music, dancing, and taking delight in every bit of the class. Several unique procedures that might have been utilized in this approach are alluded to as de-suggestopedia or the silent way.

Significance of the Project

This project aimed to address two challenges Chinese students face as international students in the United States of America. Those two challenges that Chinese international students face are the language barrier and cultural shock. This project is essential to Mandarin-speaking students because it may help create a useful and relevant community to their lives. The handbook will be based on individual life experiences that may support Mandarin-speaking graduate students in the U.S. to overcome the difficulties associated with cultural adaptation. This field project may also raise awareness of the stress of Mandarin-speaking students in U.S. colleges and universities. This may be helpful to university staff and professors who want to learn more about these students. It may encourage teachers to create individually relevant lessons for their students. Finally, this field project may be creating awareness of the distress experienced by Mandarin-speaking students in U.S. institutions. This information is crucial for the staff and professors of the institutions in knowing more about their learners.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

There are several problems faced by Chinese Students who speak Mandarin in the United States. The problems range from cross-cultural issues, linguistic challenges, ethnic discrimination among others (Songsirisak, 2018). The students have lacked a proper way of finding such problems and also fail to have a proper intervention that will help them address the problems.

Therefore, the claim for this literature review is that addressing language barriers is important for Mandarin-speaking students who wish to integrate into American culture. Three reasons justify this claim and the humanistic theory of language learning provides a rationale for studying barriers to language acquisition, such as culture shock. The reasons include the fact that addressing language barriers will (a) reduce stress related to academic performance; (b) lower feelings of loneliness and isolation; (c) increase personal development opportunities. Joint reasoning is used to justify the claim that addressing culture shock is important for Mandarin-speaking students who wish to integrate into American culture because the individual sets of evidence that support this claim cannot stand alone. However, when the sets of evidence/reasons are added together, they warrant the final conclusion. A visual representation of the logic equation is as follows: (R1, + R 2 + R 3) ∴ C (Machi & McEvoy, 2012, p. 97).

Addressing Language Barriers Reduce Stress Related to Academic Performance

A body of research claims that breaking down language barriers will reduce stress related to academic performance. Currently, the attainment of education has become a critical need for everyone. For this reason, there has been an increase in migration and travels for both children and adults seeking better educational facilities in order to advance their careers. In 2007 alone, statistics revealed that over 3 million students were pursuing their studies abroad in countries like the United States, Europe, Germany, France, Spain, and China (Friedman, 2019). However, language barriers pose challenging issues for international students who struggle to express themselves and understand what others are saying which can lead to emotional stress. As a result, they underperform compared to their native learners. While there are many problems affecting students' academic achievement, addressing language barriers will reduce stress related to academic performance.

The role of teachers is to transfer information, facilitate student's ability to gain higher understanding levels and apply basic knowledge. To facilitate this, they must create a learning environment that fosters questioning, synthesizing, seeking, and discussions. Lecturers could speak slowly, and use short sentences to help students to comprehend the new language. Long monologues may result in language fatigue. Thus, more learner-centered activity can be promoted (Vargas-Bello-Pérez & Hernández-Castellano, 2019). The teacher can initiate peer pairing techniques. In this situation, the host partner is paired with an international partner. The host partner can give advice on campus resources, lifestyles, the documents that are needed, and help to understand the grading system. This will create an interactive and engaging classroom atmosphere (Vargas-Bello-Pérez & Hernández-Castellano, 2019). When students are well-versed

with the most spoken language at school, their engagement and interaction with other students become proactively high (Bai, 2016; Yu & Shandu, 2017). Teachers and instructors should find innovative ways to overcome language barriers to reduce stress which would lead to better performance among students.

Increased interactions amongst students from different cultural backgrounds help reduce stress and boost effective performance. According to Wallin (2019), student cohesion is strengthened when they understand and respect each other's language. Discussion groups can be formed with three or four students from different cultural contexts (Vargas-Bello-Pérez & Hernández-Castellano, 2019). According to Mudaly and Singh (2017), these interventions help students make sense of new academic terms based on different cultural contexts. Also, there is a diffusion of knowledge among students from different cultures. Alongside this, stress amongst students is reduced as student appreciation of their home culture is increased. On top of that, ethnocentrism is lessened, tolerance is augmented, cognitive complexities are removed, and depiction of greater personal awareness and high self-esteem amongst students is seen (Hassan & Jusoh, 2020). More significantly, students experiencing stress due to language barriers may achieve the same benefits from more positive cross-cultural interactions with students not facing language barriers. Thus, encouraging cross-cultural interactions among students can help learners perform well and reduce stress related to poor performance in school.

In some contexts, bilingual learning becomes a helpful approach. The implications of bilingual learning are many, namely: increased interactions, reduced levels of stress, increased sharing of knowledge which later translates to good performance. Makoni (2017) makes a point of integrating native languages with English in the classroom especially in countries like South

Africa. According to the author, research done on South African universities revealed that the introduction of African languages improved quantity and quality of academic achievement because students engaged more actively in the production of knowledge. Native languages alongside English could be actively used to impart education. Hinner (2017) attests that incorporating language barrier interventions reduces stress by enabling students to minimize misunderstandings among themselves. Interventions could include offering disciplines in the native language with access programs to the English language course which would help in augmenting knowledge of a foreign language with the least stress.

Evidence of this can be found in Frias (2019) who proposes that it is necessary to provide a safe learning environment for students who may experience culture shock. Related to this, Bista (2019) articulates that language barriers are the most common challenging issues for non-native English students and impact student's academic performance negatively. According to Bista, this makes the transition to a new learning environment more challenging. Barriers to language can also negatively affect students' social life and how they relate with others (Chao, Hegarty, Angelidis, & Lu, 2019). Lack of language skills and social efficacy can negatively affect a student's academic performance, putting them at risk of dropping out.

It is important to note that mismatched academic and cultural values can also hinder academic success, and the relationships between the international students and their professors and peers (Kim, 2007). According to Yeh and Inose (2003) international students who can break the barriers associated with language and create a new social network in a foreign country experience less stress in the cross-cultural transition. Students who are able to break these

barriers demonstrate improved academic performance as well. Universities can help international students reduce cultural and academic stress by providing appropriate support while paying attention to the delicate cross-cultural issues (Bista, 2016). This literature is related to the literature that addresses the experience of loneliness and isolation among international students studying abroad and supports the claim that addressing culture shock is important for Mandarin-speaking students who wish to integrate into American culture.

In conclusion, with the current growing number of students learning internationally, the language barrier has been identified as a key issue generating stress and affecting students' performance levels. Based on the above discussion, it was found that addressing language barriers helps reduce stress and boosts performance in three significant ways. It helps broaden the perspectives of students, improves cultural interactions among students from different cultural backgrounds, and lastly, it improves the quantity and quality of academic engagements amongst students.

Addressing Culture Shock: Feelings of Loneliness and Isolation

Similar to the fact that breaking language barriers reduces stress related to academic performance, research further demonstrates that breaking language barriers may lower feelings of loneliness and isolation. Addressing the language barrier reduces loneliness and stress and brings in a sense of belongingness In most cases, international students isolate themselves because they are unable to interact with others.

Additionally, addressing the language barrier reduces emotional conflicts responsible for loneliness and isolation amongst people. According to Tenzor and Pudelko (2015), addressing the language barrier translates into reduced anxiety, stress, shame, frustration, and embarrassments, all of which contribute to isolation in people. The notion behind this is that when people are taught different languages, they develop a deeper understanding of word meanings, and as a result, misunderstandings are reduced (Tenzer & Pudelko, 2015). Wallin (2019) also asserts that language learning strengthens cohesion amongst students from different cultures. As such, an understanding and respect for each other are fostered which translates into strong and quality relationships. When such relationships are created, there will be no need for isolation as well as loneliness.

Last but not least, addressing language barriers helps encourage interactions amongst individuals. Through these interactions, Abuarqoub (2019) notes that the exchange of feelings, thoughts, ideas, and experiences are enhanced. With knowledge of the other language, students can talk about their issues to friends and encourage them. Besides, Hinner (2017) attests that addressing language barriers means giving students a deeper understanding of other languages, and as such, misunderstandings are reduced and, in the end, friendships are fostered. Despite the benefits presented by addressing the language barrier, Fakoya, McCorry, and Donnelly (2020) posit that incorporating other strategies can also help because isolation and loneliness are not due to the language barrier alone. Language learning fosters interactions reducing loneliness and isolation.

According to Gatwiri (2015), non-native students find it difficult to interact and mingle with other students due to challenges in communicating effectively in their new environment. According to Gatwiri (2015), building competence and fluency in English can have a positive influence on social interactions and adjustment, and reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation. Similarly, Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, and Ramia (2008) demonstrate that foreign students experience loneliness and isolation coupled with confusion, anxiety, and disappointments. According to the authors, this can lead to academic attrition as a result of loss of motivation, as students with feelings of isolation are less confident compared to their peers. Similar to the recommendation by Gatwiri (2015), Sawir, et al (2008) suggest that assisting international students to gain familiarity in English may help the students survive and improve their academic success.

Boosting language competence and confidence of international students may improve their ability to socialize with native English speakers, reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation. Research illustrating this can be found in Yeh and Inose (2002) who established that international students struggle with challenges related to learning the English language. They often feel stigmatized and isolated in class. Helping these students break the barriers related to language, by understanding and countering the stereotypes and discriminations leveled against them, is a vital step in lowering the stigma, isolation, and loneliness associated with the inability to communicate fluently. The literature related to experiences of loneliness and isolation among international students is related to a final body of literature on the relationship between culture

shock and personal development. Both bodies of literature support the claim that addressing

culture shock is important for Mandarin-speaking students who wish to integrate into American

culture.

Addressing Language Barriers to Increase Personal Development Opportunities

A final body of literature reviewed in this chapter suggests that breaking down language

barriers will increase personal development opportunities. Communication is integral to success

in all frontiers of life. It is the most crucial aspect of politics, sociocultural, and socioeconomic

relationships. This directly influences students' personal development. Those who can

communicate effectively within their environment are more likely to appeal to others. People

appreciate and respect those with pleasing personalities or those who can conduct themselves

properly. Communication helps people convincingly express themselves by honing their

personalities. Addressing communication barriers will increase personal development by

allowing individuals to express themselves better, gain more knowledge and skills, and improve

cooperation.

Lack of self-confidence among foreign students, as a result of the language barrier,

prevents personal development (Sawir et al., 2008). They may, as a result, experience limited

personal development including academic challenges and financial difficulties. Breaking down

the barriers associated with the inability to use the local language may help these international

students achieve personal development goals. Once international students can communicate

effectively using a foreign language, they can access more opportunities for personal development. Increased language competency often leads to increased exposure to community life. This can then lead to opportunities such as the enhancement of problem-solving skills, improvement of the functionality of the memories of the Mandarin-speaking Chinese students and improvement of creative thinking. According to Sawir et al., (2008), this can further improve self-confidence as students begin to master the foreign environment.

Similar to Sawir et al., (2008) Hiratsuka (2016) illustrates that international students face obstacles in accessing nearly all of their resources provided by the universities they attend. According to the author, this is due to a lack of skills in the host country's language. In addition, Hiratsuka (2016) demonstrates that satisfaction among international students is directly influenced by the achievement of communication skills and cross-cultural adaptation. Because of this, Hiratsuka recommends that international students be accorded opportunities to interact with the local students in host countries and to take part in other non-academic programs such as field trips. The author claims that this may give international students self-confidence to pursue personal development opportunities such as advancing their attitude towards the target foreign language and the United States' culture and having a broadened memory capacity.   As with the preceding sections, this body of literature supports the claim that addressing culture shock is important for Mandarin-speaking students who wish to integrate into American culture.

Summary

This literature review claims that breaking down language barriers is important for Mandarin-speaking students who wish to integrate into American culture. (Bai, 2016; Yu & Shandu, 2017) Evidence that supports this claim demonstrates that breaking down language barriers reduces stress related to academic performance among Mandarin-speaking students. (Yeh and Inose 2003)   Moreover, research shows that breaking language barriers will lower feelings of loneliness and isolation. (Tenzor and Pudelko 2015) International students experience stigmatization, discrimination, isolation, and loneliness and coupled with confusion, anxiety, and disappointments. This can lead to academic attrition as a result of loss of motivation. Likewise, breaking down language barriers will increase personal development opportunities. Lack of self-confidence among foreign students as a result of a language barrier prevents personal development. This claim and body of evidence address the problem of how to help Mandarin-speaking students access resources and guidance, and integrate them into American culture. With my field project, I propose that American colleges and universities should come up with appropriate strategies that would help Mandarin-speaking students adapt to the American culture as this would boost their personal development, social life, and academic achievement.

CHAPTER III
THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Brief Description of the Project

The field project is a handbook for new Chinese international students in the United

States. The handbook is a crucial tool to provide Chinese students joining US universities with

suggestions to help them have a successful academic and social life.

I have developed the handbook in anticipation of the unique needs of Chinese students

who can benefit immensely from its contents as they pursue their studies and as they chart a

successful career path. The university, being a significant destination for international students,

can use the draft to show its commitment to cultural diversity. The main sections of the

handbook include a welcome letter, students' information form, procedures for adding class,

academic writing, academic performance and stress, communication, personal development,

psychological evaluation forms, and risk assessments. The ten sections focus on the students'

specific issues and needs that need to be articulated for the effective and successful assimilation

of students into the campus.

The first section is the welcome letter written to the university congratulating the

international student to the institution and appreciating China's role in offering a chance for

students to explore the United States campus. Notably, the letter comes out as an introductory

piece for students to know that the university appreciates diverse perspectives, personalities,

cultures, and experiences. It gives international students a sense of belonging by showing that the faculty, staff, and local students are social and welcoming. The second section is a student information form that is a crucial tool for the institution to understand their background and personal details more. In the form, the students are expected to confirm their details, including student names, their date of birth, country of birth, country of citizenship, email address, planned program of study, spouse or child availability, country of residence, US address, and emergency contact. Section three includes the procedures for adding a class. The third section introduces the class to how the curriculum is designed in the institution, focusing on the student academic portal. The student is presented with information regarding the portal, its use, components, and contents. The section also confirms that an academic advisor or instructor will be eventually assigned to each Chinese international student.

The fourth section focuses on academic writing, reiterating the importance of scholarly writing throughout the course. Academic writing is emphasized by every learning institution in the United States and all students, regardless of their racial or ethnic background. In this regard, every student joining the campus must utilize academic writing for assignments and projects. The section also explains the availability of a campus resource center to support the student as they get assimilated into the institution's writing culture. The fifth section elucidates the connection between academic performance and stress. Basically, emotional, physical, and psychological exhaustion is crucial during the study and must be addressed promptly to avoid poor performance. This section describes the possibility of a student suffering from such

exhaustion and the availability of mentors and tutorial advisors to maneuver through the challenge. The sixth section is a vital area that addresses communication challenges among students. The section is aligned with the notable communication challenges and misunderstandings that are expected between Chinese students and other ethnicities or races. Chinese students and other ethnically diverse students from across the world can have a difficult time interacting with the locals due to cultural differences in forms of communication. As such, this section gives new students resources they can utilize, especially a community learning program.

The seventh section refers to the concept of personal development for Chinese students. Personal development is essential in education and workplaces because it gives individuals an opportunity for improvements. Students need to assess their strengths and weaknesses and select relevant groups and clubs that they correlate with. The section further details the career guidance and external competition opportunities that students can engage in to enhance their personal development. The eighth section focuses on psychological problems that students are likely to experience. The part essentially recognizes that mental health is a significant element of consideration in the institution. Notably, the faculty and staff believe that academic excellence is not the ultimate end of the courses, but rather, a holistic growth mentally, socially, and physically is required for sustained success. The section gives advice regarding professional interventions. The ninth section is the psychological evaluation form that the student may be requested to fill by the school. The contents of the section include physical and psychological

health conditions that one might experience or might be experiencing. They include chronic, infectious, mental, and other disorders that the student might have had before, requiring particular caution or care. The final section is a risk assessment form that the student may be required to fill to determine the potential risk to self and others. The section is premised on the fact that some individuals are prone to mental health issues that may increase their risk of suicide or homicide, and if the signs or symptoms are captured early enough, the adverse events may be prevented. I concentrated on psychological well-being in the handbook because, without mental well-being, students cannot achieve the desired academic and life outcomes.

Overview of the Project

1.   Welcome Letter

Dear International Student,

I congratulate you on the admission to this reputable institution. As a fraternity, we embrace cultural diversity and appreciate each student's unique individuality. The handbook will act as a compass to maneuver through your academic and career path. The institution provides academic and social growth, with an assured interaction with excellent local students, faculty, and staff. Feel free to ask for assistance.

2.   Student Information Form

Please fill the following form and include the following,

·   Student Name

·   Date of Birth

·   Country of Birth

·   Country of Citizenship

·   Email Address

·   Program of Study

·   Spouse or Child

·   Home Country Address

·   United States Address

·   Emergency Contact Person

3.   Procedures for Adding Classes

Despite each student's ability to communicate effectively in English, the curriculum is the same. Every student has an academic portal with all the courses and units taken. The portal is also used for communication with faculty and administration. Besides, it has an ICT, housing, and fee or scholarship sections. An ESL class assists students in mastering English. An academic advisor is assigned based on the language level as per the placement test.

4.   Academic Writing

Academic writing is crucial across courses and units, and students must utilize it for projects and assignments. A tutoring center will provide students with academic writing guidance and a

library to enhance learning. Professional and multilingual tutors are assigned during study

sessions.

5.   Academic performance and Stress

Considering that students may get overwhelmed and stressed out during their studies, mentors

and tutorial advisors are availed for assistance. This service prevents students from experiencing

low academic achievements due to being overwhelmed. For students exhibiting poor

performance, an evaluation of the coursework will be done, and advice given after engaging the

student.

6.   Communication

It is expected that some students will face communication challenges, leading to

misunderstandings and limited interactions. In this regard, the students will be provided with a

community learning program that has been established in collaboration with the local

community. International students are given a chance to join the locals to learn their forms of

communication and behavior.

7.   Personal Development

For students willing to enhance their interpersonal skills, they can join various clubs and groups.

Students can get guidance at the career center where they can get mentorship regarding career

choices. Besides, students are given a chance to showcase their creativity at the innovative

department. They should also engage in external competitions. Participation in the activities leads to free educational scholarships, as well as prizes from the administration.

8. Psychological problems

The new environment may cause emotional turmoil due to loneliness and isolation. The psychological challenges can be resolved through interventions at the health center. The institution emphasizes not only academic excellence but also mental, physical, and social wellbeing. Essentially, the institution has professional psychologists available at any time of the day or night.

9. Psychological Evaluation Form

Please fill in the following details on the provided form.

· Present your problems

· Purpose of your visit

· Existing cause of distress

· Medical History

· Past Hospitalization or Surgery

· Past traumatic Disorder or Head Trauma

· Family Medical History

· Other Conditions Diagnosed or Experienced

10. Risk Assessment

Please fill the following details in the form

·	Any thoughts of harming yourself or others

·	Plans on how you would harm yourself

·	Previous attempt to harm yourself

·	Family history of self-harm

·	Attempt to assault or threaten

·	Anger management issues

·	Drinking or taking drugs

·	Lethal weapon ownership

·	Psychological visit history

·	Psychologist's assessment

·	Name of psychologist

·	Prescription

·	Date

Development of the Project

Many ties have been broken between countries due to world wars and conflicts around

the 19th and the 20th century. Notably, the United States and China had been experiencing

broken ties due to World War I, World War II, and the Chinese Civil War, but a few decades

ago, the diplomatic connection with the US government was reestablished, allowing an influx of

Chinese students in the United States (Shirley, 2017). With my parents being receptive to the foreign learning opportunities, they sent me to study abroad in 2013. At that time I attended San Francisco State University as a marketing major for four years. Most of the Chinese students studying abroad at the time were from upper to middle-class levels, meaning that they were considered affluent.

During my first few years in the United States, I suffered from culture shock, discrimination, and communication challenges. However, I had immense support from my parents and my few classmates. I could meet my basic needs, as well as enjoy the company of the few Chinese students studying at my school. Although we were a very social group when together as Chinese students, we experienced unfathomable difficulties interacting and socializing with the local students and faculty members.

I now believe that culture shock, communication challenges, and failure to fit into a new institution as a student can lead to significant problems. Different issues experienced by new Chinese students may lead to emotional, academic, and psychological challenges. The new knowledge has continuously reinforced my passion for cultural diversity, inclusion, and competence in schools.

In order to gain more knowledge and skills, after I graduated from college I decided to enroll in the TESOL program Teaching English as a second or foreign language at the University of San Francisco. Through the TESOL program, I learned that there were diverse issues affecting

students from foreign countries, and most of them were not just about communication challenges. Prominent issues included even psychological health challenges exacerbated by underlying factors, and these were specific to racial demographics in the United States. Notably, the pertinent Chinese issues were different from those of other races.

Based on my experiences and my extensive literature review, I have realized that Chinese students face considerable challenges in language skills, culture shock, and, passive and active racism, often leading to poor academic performance. The lack of essential and timely interventions may cause unrepairable damage to the students' wellbeing. Resources should be availed to every new student for proper induction and orientation into all the spheres of school life. I have realized that the interventions and resources need to be consolidated into one resourceful handbook available to all the relevant students. Besides, the handbook leads to improved interactions between the students and the faculty, hence being beneficial to the school staff as they handle students with excellent academic and psychological achievements.

Cultural practices and beliefs for students from China are different from those of locals, leading to various biases and prejudices. In developing the handbook, I explored relevant literature to confirm the needs of Chinese students and how relevant interventions can be articulated in a resourceful booklet. Chinese students cannot feel different from the rest of the school if they are helped through their orientation. I believe that different forms can be used to collect and analyze student information to help serve them better. They should also have an academic guideline about adding a class in the portal, learn about academic writing, personal

development, and communication. Students' psychological well-being should also be considered

and evaluated to ascertain the suitability of the student to go through school successfully. All

these issues are articulated in the handbook.

CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The cross-cultural challenges facing international students arise from two smaller

hurdles. The first is the language barrier, and the second is culture shock. These issues adversely

affect the students' academic, psychological, and social outcomes, leading to overall frustration

for the student. This project identifies this aspect as a problem that requires solutions to increase

the success of international students in the United States' institutes of higher learning. The

project adopts a specific target group: The Chinese student. The project's goal is to develop a

handbook to improve this population's outcomes based on their particular needs and experiences.

The narrowed focus enhances the handbook's effectiveness by providing a language for use in

developing the student's understanding of the American higher education setting and their place

in the greater social setting. This project is significant as it targets a third of the current

population of international students who come from China. This large group makes the project

important in improving outcomes across the board. The Chinese students would offer models for

other international students to follow due to their large proportion of the student population.

The literature review addresses three reasons for using the reduction of language barriers

to improve the academic, psychological, and social outcomes of the Mandarin-speaking graduate

student in line with the humanistic theory of language learning. These reasons revolve around

addressing the language barrier for reduced academic-related stress, lowering loneliness and

isolation, and increasing personal development opportunities. The project succeeds in tackling

these three issues and the graduate international student's experience as a whole. The handbook developed as part of the project acts as a guide to the student's integration into American institutes of higher learning. The target is to develop a cohort of well-integrated students who can fit in with the system and add value to their academic and social lives during their stay in the United States.

Firstly, the handbook acts as a substitute for a human guide during the initial stage of the integration, and before the student can find an assigned guide. Welcoming the student and letting them understand what is required of them without making them appear less proficient than other students is essential to the project's success. By enabling the students to understand what is required well before they are in the campus environment, they feel at ease, and the initial anxiety is reduced. This composure contributes to a heightened sense of self-worth and improves the student's confidence. Thus, the welcome letter and the procedures for adding classes reduce the confusion at the first stages and enhance a positive attitude about the school. This positive attitude is vital to forging ahead, even when faced with challenges. The student requires this quality to succeed. These two sections of the handbook contribute to the goal of reducing loneliness and isolation by offering questions to common answers before the student interacts with other students and make acquaintances or friends.

Secondly, the project offers students an entry into the social life around the campus. The feelings of loneliness and isolation mentioned above are potentially harmful to the integration process as they increase stress. The handbook's communication section, which establishes a community learning program, offers students a quick way to interact with locals in their natural

setting. This quick exposure to the surroundings increases the likelihood of forming social binds early on. Further, it allows the student to reduce their yearning for home by showing them aspects of their new environment that they could like. Increasing the student's attachment to the new environment boosts the student's chances of successfully integrating. This community learning program also offers students the opportunity to find out the location of essential services. In this program, they can discover where to shop, eat, and find health assistance, among others, without relying on online services. Thus, the discovery process is humanized, and interactions increased beyond what is normal for a new international student. This approach reduces the feelings of isolation and loneliness, contributing to the student's personal development by increasing their ability to communicate effectively in the new environment.

Thirdly, the handbook focuses on personal development by enhancing communication and encouraging students to join clubs and societies. The seventh section of the handbook helps the new students to find out more about clubs and other organizations they can join. Further, it mentions the career center, which offers mentorship and career counseling. Thus, the student can pursue their personal and career interests through some of these means. Although most students eventually get around to joining these societies and mentorships programs, there is a benefit in early adoption. The advantages are due to the student's exposure to more like-minded people, external competitions, and interactions with leaders in their respective fields.

Finally, the final three sections demonstrate the focus on the student's mental health. At this stage, the student learns about professional psychologists, undergoes psychological evaluation and risk assessment for harm. This focus on mental health demonstrates the

institution's commitment to wholesome growth and puts the student at ease by volunteering professional help if needed. The student's stress due to academics is managed as soon as it arises as students are encouraged to speak to professionals when they feel overwhelmed. Further, the academic writing issue is identified, and help is provided to eliminate the students' foremost reason for academic distress. In this way, the handbook reduces stress or provides a pathway for handling stress before it grows. These activities decrease the effect that stress has on the student's academic performance. Thus, the project succeeds in handling all three approaches, as highlighted in the literature review.

Recommendations

This project makes initial progress in the study and management of cross-cultural hurdles within the graduate international student body. However, one study is not enough to handle a problem that has existed for as long as international studies in the United States have. Therefore, periodic review and refinement of the project and handbook is essential to ensuring the claims made and addressed in this study are effective. The assessment requires data collection from students using the handbook. The data collection activity should cover the student's personal development, academic performance, mental well-being, and participation in social activities (Zhang, 2016). Additionally, data from students who have not used the handbook is required for comparison. Areas where significant change lacks require refinement and can form the basis of further research.

Similar comparisons should occur between Chinese students who used the handbook and a control group of non-Chinese students allowed to use it as well. This approach would explain

the relationships between mental health, language barrier, loneliness, and academic performance, among other subsets of the student population. These studies would be essential in ensuring that the handbook uses effective theoretical relationships for students in general. Moreover, this study can eliminate the need for further research to understand other subsets of the student body and instead inform modification of the handbook to better effect change in these other areas. If the comparisons between Chinese students' results and those of other subsets demonstrate variance, the implementers will identify the areas that require modification and narrow subsequent research to increase their accuracy.

Finally, once the iterative refinement of the project improves student outcomes beyond expected values, the model should apply to students in other population groups. Even though Chinese graduate students face these challenges, it would also be essential to consider the plight of other international students as well (Zhang, 2016). At that point, results from the initial studies on mandarin speaking students can improve the research activity for other student groups and hasten the process. The recommendation for this further research is that a larger subset of the population is taken, such as Latin-American international students, to ensure the project's benefits spread to the largest possible proportion of the student population.

Overall, the recommendations section highlights the need for continued refinement of the handbook to meet international students' needs better. The generalization of the project's handbook design also requires careful management. This management can help ensure the first subset results can improve its application and reduce the time taken to produce practical solutions from this study for other subsets. In time, the author envisions a handbook that can

serve all members of the international student body. Similarly, these recommendations should

improve academic and professional outcomes for all international students.

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APPENDIX

A Handbook for New Chinese International Student in the United States

A Handbook For New Chinese International Students In The United States

Becky (Enhao Wang)

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter

Dear International Student,

It is with much pleasure that I congratulate you on your admission to this campus which serves thousands and thousands of students every year. This university is among the largest universities in the United States with a diverse community as we enroll approximately over three thousand international students from different countries globally, China being the major beneficiary. Cultural diversity is the epicenter of development and as a fraternity we embrace it by allowing you with your unique personality, perspective, culture and experience to augment our campus even as you succeed in your academic goals and tread on your career path.

Your choice to attend this great institution was the best. This handbook will be a guide to the dynamic aspects of our campus. The university is filled with vibrant faculty and staff, devoted to ensure you achieve your personal and academic success. The local students within our campus are very welcoming and social. As you will see, the school is situated in the most serene environment suitable and supportive of your own personal and academic growth. The best of the city is easily accessible as it is located few minutes from the campus. During your period of study, it is advisable to engage into various academic and social activities and become an active member of the dynamic university community. There are many outstanding opportunities offered by the university which you can build your personal, social and academic potential. You will experience many decision making processes as you try to balance your academics with your personal and social life and for that reason we have provided an array of professional individuals who will help you and encourage you in the journey you are about to begin. Kindly, reach out when you need help. I look forward to seeing you successful as enlarge your wings and scope of life in this remarkable territory! I hope you find this journey worthwhile.

Student Information Form

Please fill in this form as practice, your school might ask you to fill out this form.

Here is a sample of the student information form.

1. Student Name (as it indicated in your passport)

   _____

2. Last /Surname:_____   First Name:_____   Middle Name:_____

3. Date of Birth: _____(mm/dd/yyyy)

4. Country of Birth: _____

5. Country of Citizenship:_____

6. Email Address: _____

7. Planned program of study: _____

8. Are you bringing a spouse or child along with you? Yes_____   No_____

9. Country of Residence Address (full address is required)

    - House/apartment number and street name:_____

    - City: State/Province/District:_____

    - Country: _____

    - Zip Code:_____

    - Cell phone:_____

10. Address in the United States (while attending school—if known at this time)

    - House/apartment number and street name:_____

    - City: State/Province/District:_____

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- Country: _____

- Zip Code:_____

- Cell phone: _____

11. Emergency Contact Person in the United States

- Name:_____

- Relationship to Student:_____

- Address:_____

- Home phone:_____

- Cell phone:_____

- E-mail address:_____

12. Please permit the contact person to handle my admission process:

Yes _____   No_____

Student signature:_____   Date:_____

Procedures for Adding Classes

The curriculum for all students is the same with regards to their ability to communicate and effectively write and read English. Each student has an academic portal, which entails your course outline and units or classes to be taken. The portal acts as your student profile with which you can communicate to the administration, faculty and staff whenever necessary. The portal also has a fee and scholarship section, an ICT section and Housing section. For the Chinese students whose first language is Chinese, a placement test will be given. There are ESL classes or English class readily available for our international students.

The ESL class is for students who would love to learn English as their second language. The course entails learning English pronunciations, vocabulary, grammar and spelling. The English class has different levels and one goes through each level depending on their English knowledge.

An instructor or academic advisor is assigned to advise you on which level or class to enrol in depending on your language level and as per your performance in the placement test. It is important for each international student to know their language level to avoid enrolling into classes not appropriate for their needs.

Academic Writing
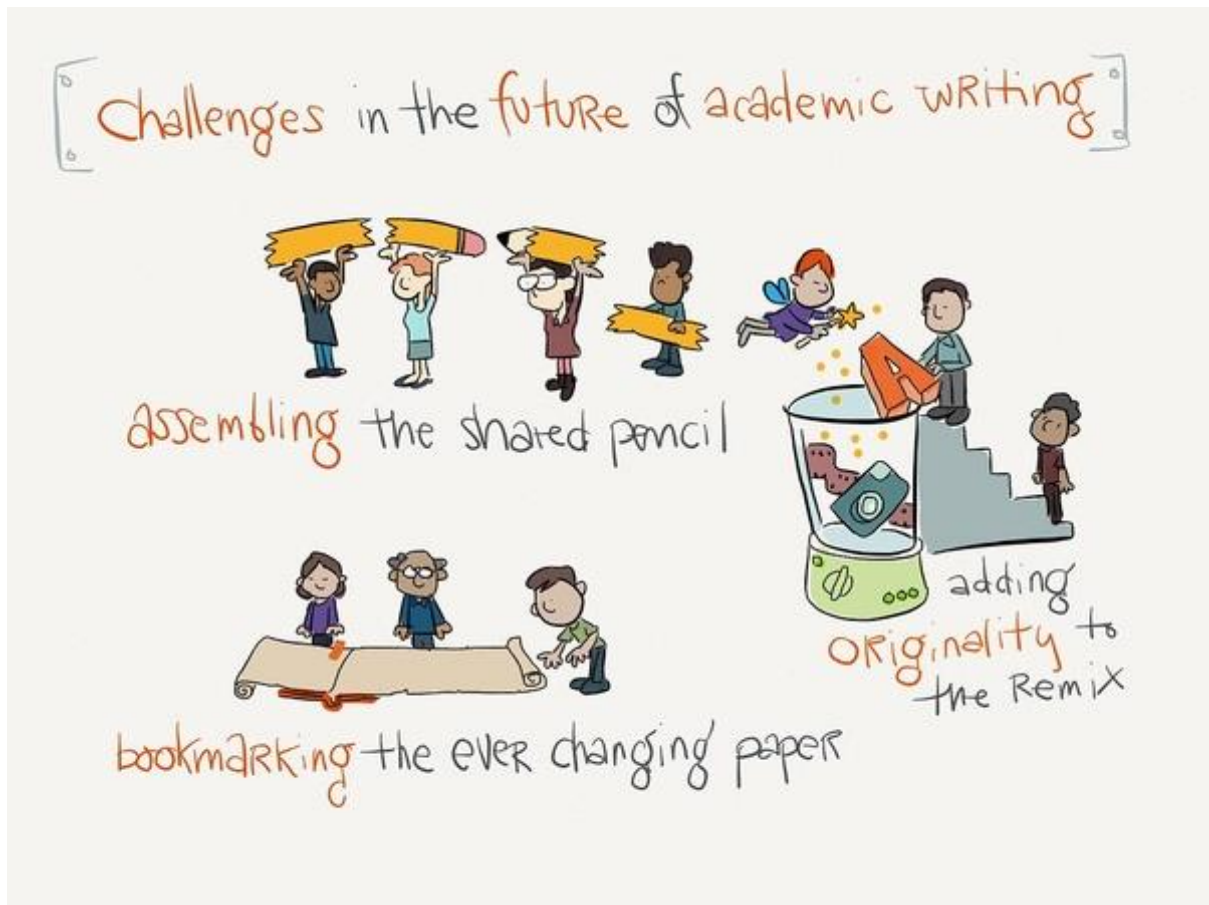
This section is for students who have issues with academic writing. As you will notice, academic writing is an essential part of all your course work and not just English classes. It will be an effective tool for your assignments and projects.

A tutoring center is available within the campus resource center. The resource center also has a library where one can access books to enhance their learning process. There are several professional tutors assigned for each study session. They are multilingual and are able to effectively communicate to you for better understanding of your writing sessions.

Academic Performance and Stress

Studies can at times become overwhelming. Students at times become stressed out and their performance decreases or they become drained due to poor performance. As stated earlier, our faculty and staff is reliable. The mentors and tutorial advisors are available for any form of help a student will need. Continuous poor academic assessment will lead to a re-evaluation of the course work and an appropriate advice will be submitted after engaging the student.

Communication
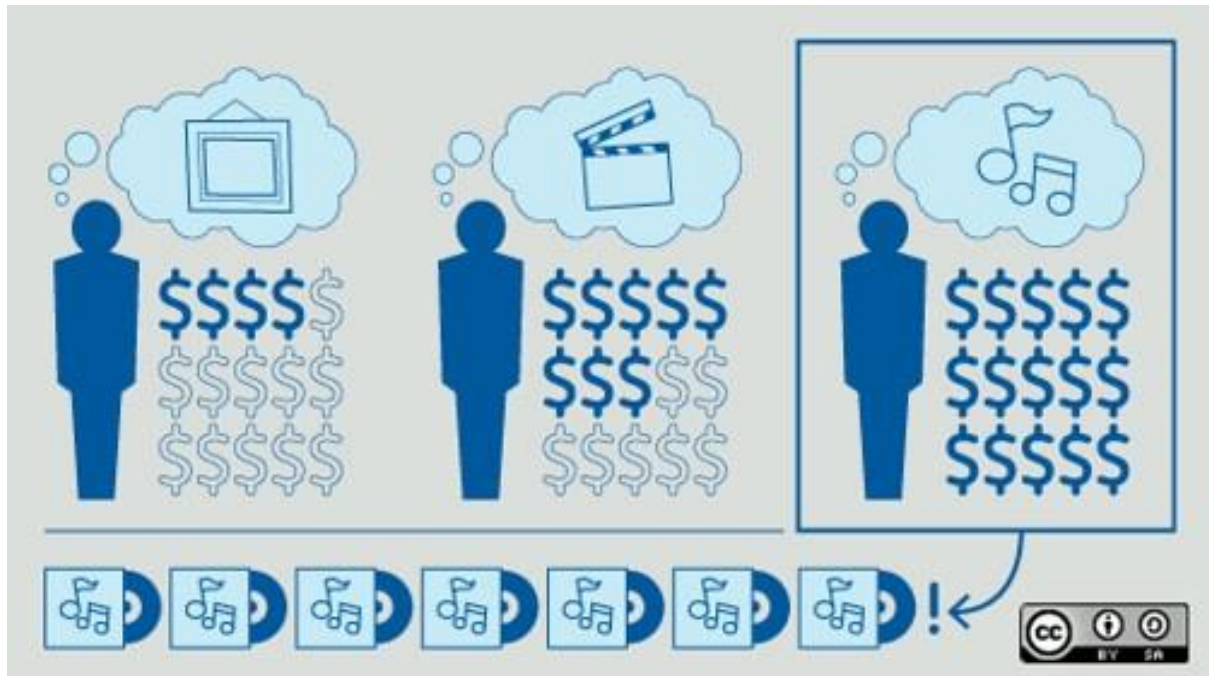
  This section is for students who face communication challenges within and out of the school environment. We understand that inability to communicate can breed in misunderstanding which can be fatal at times. Our campus has managed to create a bond with the local community and as a result a community learning program has been put in place for our international students. You are required to join the local community to understand the behavior and forms of communication. You will realize you are not alone in this challenge and we are hopeful you will learn and sync with the society with time.

Personal Development

This section is for students who want to increase their interpersonal skills through the opportunities provided by the institution. There are a variety of groups and clubs with which any international student can correlate with.

A career center is instituted at the resource center in which an individual can get a advisor depending on their career choices. Each student have at least one mentor. From the innovative department, all students are given a chance to showcase their talents and creations. There are different sections including but not limited to sports, culture, media, fashion and design, music and drama and religion. Each student is allowed to enroll in at least two groups of their choice.

There are external competitions and students are encouraged to participate. Any activity leading to the institution appraisal leads to free educational scholarships and other prizes from the university administration.

Mental Health

This is for students who feel isolated and lonely possibly due to the new environment. Change comes with of challenges which can be psychological. Our main aim as an institution is not only to ensure you attain academic excellence but to see you growing mentally, physically and socially as an individual. Our policy states that mental health is our priority and to speak is strength. We have a health center within the campus, located near the administration area. The health center is not only for students who are sick but also for students who want closely attention. The institution has employed professional psychologists available 24 hours.

Psychological Evaluation Form

Please fill in this form as practice, your school might ask you to fill out this form.

Here is a sample of the student information form.

1. **Briefly present your problem(s):** (in your own words)

2. **Summarize the purpose for your visit:** (in your own words)

3. **Describe existing cause of distress in your life** (family, school, work, home, social):

4. **Medical History:**

5. **Past hospitalization or surgeries done: (specify)**

6. **Past traumatic disorder or head trauma: (specify)**

7. **Family medical history:**

8. **Have you ever experienced or been diagnosed with the following?**

Hypertension		Hepatitis	
Headache		UTI	
Asthma		Digestive problems	
Shortness of Breath		Hemorrhoids	
Dizziness of fainting		Hearing Difficulty	
Allergies		Heart problems	
Depression		Seizures	
Cancer		Chest pressure, tightening or pain	
Any neurological disorder		Kidney Diseases	
Cataracts		Movement Disorder	
High cholesterol or triglycerides		Eating disorder	

Hypertension		Hepatitis	
Headache		UTI	
Asthma		Digestive problems	
Shortness of Breath		Hemorrhoids	
Dizziness of fainting		Hearing Difficulty	
Allergies		Heart problems	
Depression		Seizures	
Cancer		Chest pressure, tightening or pain	
Any neurological disorder		Kidney Diseases	
Cataracts		Movement Disorder	
High cholesterol or triglycerides		Eating disorder	

Risk Assessment

Please fill in this form as practice, your school might ask you to fill out this form.

Here is a sample of the student information form.

1. Do you have thoughts of harming yourself or others?   Yes ☐   No ☐

2. Are there plans on how you would harm yourself or others?   Yes ☐   No ☐

3. Have you ever tried to harm yourself or other people around you?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

4. Does your family have a history of committing suicide?   Yes ☐   No ☐

5. Have you ever attempted to threaten or assault others?   Yes ☐   No ☐

6. Do you have anger management issues? If yes, have you ever gotten into trouble due

   to your temper or violence?   Yes ☐   No ☐

7. Do you drink or take drugs? (Specify)   Yes ☐   No ☐

   if yes, does taking drugs or drinking make you violent?   Yes ☐   No ☐

8. Do you own any lethal weapon?   Yes ☐   No ☐

   If yes, have you ever thought of harming yourself or anyone with the weapon?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

9. Past psychological visits history: _____

10. Psychologist's assessment: _____

11. Name of Psychologist: _____

12. Prescription:_____

As you fill out this form, if you answer YES it's important that you reach out to your

health center immediately

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Conclusion

Congratulation! You have finished the handbook, I sincerely hope you find the support from our handbook. on behalf of the faculty, staff, and administration I am pleased to inform you that your life in the United State just begins. I hope that you will enjoy it. If you have any concerns please do not hesitate to ask us for help.