

Reentry Challenges: An Analysis of the Difficulties Faced by Returning International Students and Coping Strategies



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Introduction

Over the past few years, universities and colleges across Canada have been expanding their international programs (academic exchange, internship, etc.). Schools put in a lot of effort to make sure students are adequately prepared to deal with possible challenges overseas, such as culture shock and lack of social network. However, what kind of challenges do students face after they come back to Canada? Do they receive the same level of support to deal with the reentry challenges? And what are some of the effective coping strategies? These questions are the key focus of this research project.



Objective

- An international education experience can be a valuable addition to a student's profile
- However, this cannot be achieved if the student does not overcome reentry challenges and fully make sense of what they learned
- For example, a bag of antiques are not worth anything unless you have each item evaluated
- Similarly, an international experience cannot be productive if you do not analyze and reflect on it
- This project will give students the tool to transform international experiences into truly meaningful opportunities



Methods

Empirical Sources

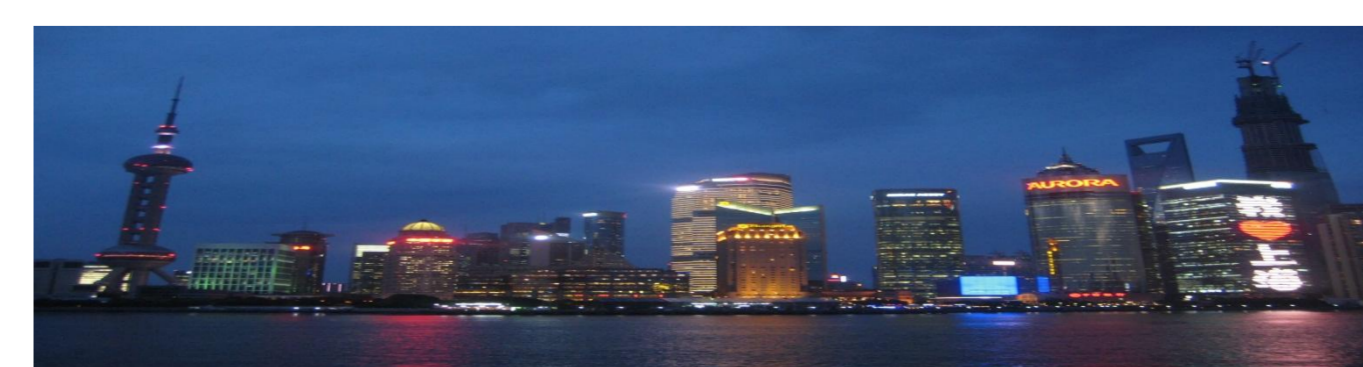
- Reflected on my own international experiences (e.g. internship, volunteer)
- Interviewed students who have had international education experiences
- Interviewed York professors and faculty members who specialize in this field

Primary Sources

- Journals, diaries, and reflection papers written by numerous students

Secondary Sources

- Brochures, pamphlets, and guidebooks published by different universities
- Peer-reviewed scholarly articles published by various academic and professional journals



Conclusion

Findings

Upon returning to Canada, students experience a number of reentry challenges:

- Reverse culture shock
- Identity confusion
- Changes in domestic relationships
- Inability to immediately apply newly gained skills

Coping Strategies

The following can help students effectively deal with reentry challenges:

- Keep reflecting on international experience even after return to Canada
- See changes as opportunities
- Schools should hold more "post-return" courses and orientation sessions

