
Breaking Cultural & Communication Barriers

Examining the Value of the Cross-Cultural Experience in Higher Education

By Daeun Song & Charles H. Lee

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Breaking Cultural & Communication Barriers

By Daeun Song & Charles H. Lee

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Industrial Design in the College of Art, Media, and Design.

The University of the Arts
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
May, 2013

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Abstract

International and American students often work side by side in American Universities without engaging in ways that reduce the cultural barriers that separate them. Our goal was to open up understanding and ease tensions experienced by students in globally integrated American classrooms.

Our method included working with students and faculty at the University of the Arts. We conducted observations, interviews, held workshops and tested tools and methods for classroom use.

As a result we created a system to be used in the classroom that helps make faculty and students understand better differences in behavior on the part of international students from Asia.

I would like to thank my father, mother, and brother, for their support: my parents for putting me through school and believing that I could get through this and my brother for his advice. The best love in the world is the love of a family. – Daeun Song

To my family and friends who've always supported and encouraged.
Thank you and I could not have done it without you. – Charles H. Lee

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01

INTRODUCTION





About the University of the Arts

Introduction

“U Arts student population is fairly unique, every other colleges like to think that their students and place is super different. But, ours is really different, because of our focus on visual and performing arts. Its different kind of students.”
– Beth Frederick, Director of Institutional Research

As the globalism is emerging, a study abroad has always been very popular and a large number of international students are coming to the United States, now the educational Mecca of the world. The University of the Arts is no exception in having an influx of the international students. We started the project by looking into what programs U Arts has for the international students.

The University of the Arts

The University of the Arts was established in 1876. It is one of the nation’s only universities dedicated solely to educating students in the visual and performing arts and design. It is located in the heart of downtown Philadelphia, one of the nation’s most culturally vibrant cities, where students can connect, collaborate and create across disciplines and traditional boundaries.

It consists of over 2,100 students and it offers 41 undergraduate and graduate programs through the School of Art, School of Design and School of Film in the College of Art, Media & Design; the School of Dance, the Ira Brind School of Theater Arts and the School of Music in the College of Performing Arts; and the Division of Liberal Arts (U Arts website.)





International Students Program

There are now 141 students from 22 different foreign countries. 5 years ago, there were about 83 international students.

The University of the Arts has an International Student Program to encourage and facilitate foreign student attendance at the University. There are now 141 international students from 22 different foreign countries. 5 years ago, there were about 83 international students. The staff and faculty of the International Student Program serve various programs such as the international students orientations, the ESL Program, and the Exchange Program to help support the diverse community of the international students in their cultural adjustment.

The International Student Programs has three orientations a year; a fall, a winter, and a summer. Also, there is a Peer Mentor Program which assigns first year international students American peer mentors. The ESL Program is a pre-matriculation program, so the students who have not fulfilled the English requirement can take English here before they matriculate into their degree programs whether it's an undergraduate degree or a graduate degree.

The exchange students come usually just for a semester, or sometimes for a year and they are enrolled as students in an international university in between having the exchange. Each year, probably 10-11 of those students attend the University of the Arts and they are mostly European students. A couple of students are from Korea in that grouping, but a lot of the students are from Holland, the UK, and Scotland.

Another thing is that the International Student Programs offers different cultural events throughout the year and the purpose of these is to try to bring the international community together with the American community in going around Philadelphia to see different performances and exhibitions such as a series of Culture Vulture. The idea of the Culture Vulture event is to mix together international and American students. It's a great series and it is usually sold out.

In addition, there are weekly international lunches, which also coincide with the Cooking Another Language series which is a global lunch festival. For the international lunches, it is a in time for international students and any other American students who have been peer mentors and orientation leaders to meet up again every Wednesday. They hang out together and enjoy each other, and it creates a stronger community between international students and American students. With that, sometimes the faculty who has had different international experiences come and present to the population. Sometimes, there is an exhibition in conjunction with the lunches.



International Student Programs offers different cultural events throughout the year and the purpose of these is to try to bring the international community together with the American community.

Study Abroad Program

The history of the Study Abroad program in America is about 30~40 years old but for the Study Abroad program at U Arts, is fairly new only 10 years old. U Arts encourages students in the exploration of the borderless and timeless language of the arts. U Arts provides many study abroad opportunities with the variety of locations and areas of study that will help students meet their artistic and academic goals.



cards from each p
with the 2 cards including





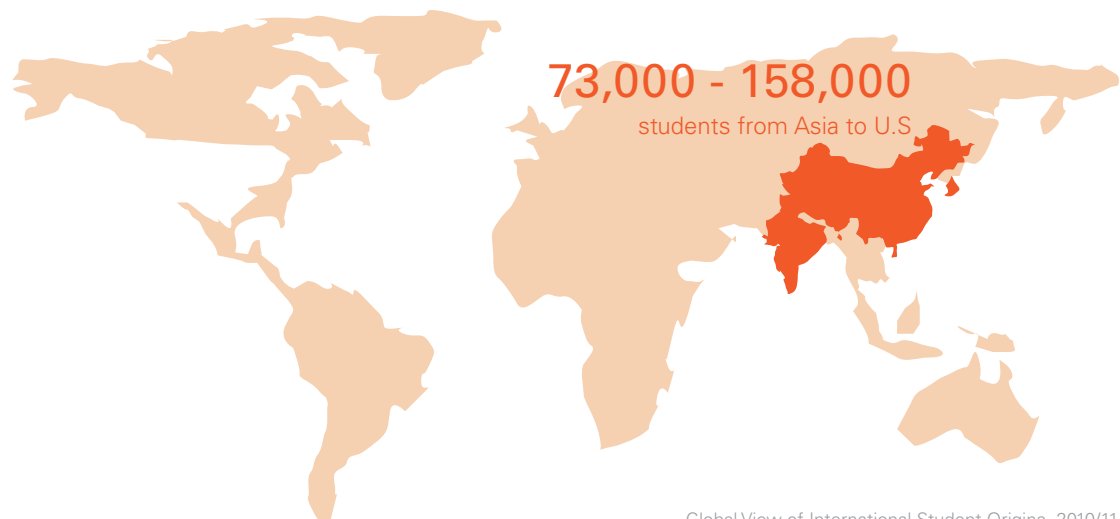
Addressing the Problems

Increasing Number of International Students

“Comprising 25.4 percent of the total international student body in the U.S., China is the leading sending country for the third year in a row, followed by India, South Korea.” – Mark Overmann

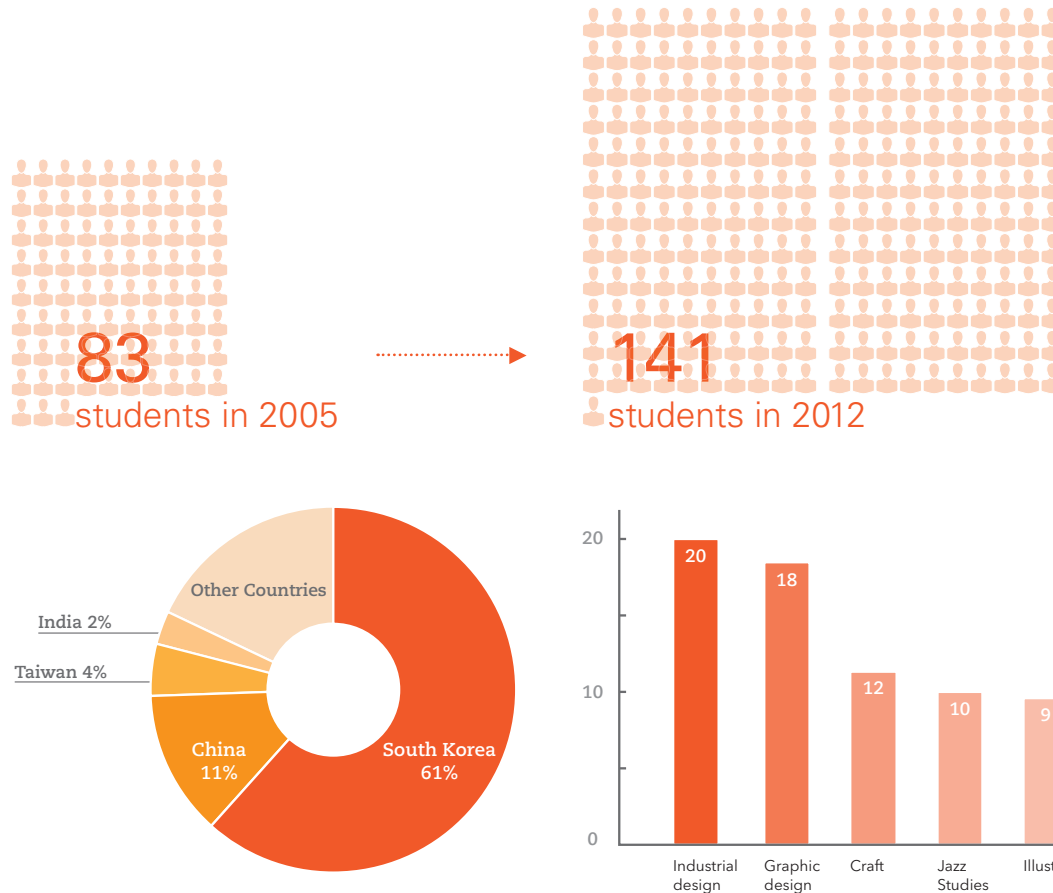
Globalism is a phenomenon that has been in our perception dating back to the ancient times. Thus, the issue is not how old it is, but rather how thin or thick it is at any given time. A vast majority of scholars would define today as globalized society. For that reason, multi-ethnicity, multi-cultural, and even multi-education is not anew to us. In this effect, there has been an increase in numbers of international students coming to the states to study. It also caused an increase in number of study abroad programs, exchange programs, and international student programs throughout the universities and colleges in America.

“The number of international student on U.S. campuses is on the rise - up 5 percent in 2010-11 - fueled in large part by a dramatic increase in the number of students coming from Asia. In just one year, the number of Asian students jumped by 23 percent and 43 percent at the undergraduate level!” – Elizabeth Redden



Global View of International Student Origins, 2010/11

Demographic of International Students at U Arts

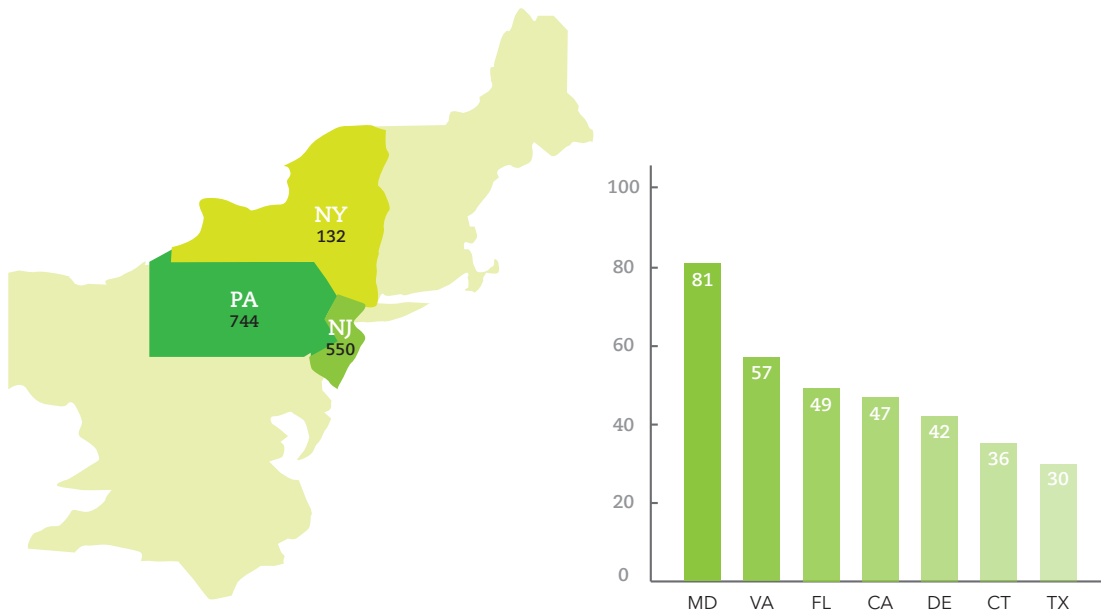


At U Arts, there was a drastic influx of international students over a five year period. There were about 83 international students in 2007, which was a relatively small number of international students at a university. However, the number vastly increased to 141 international students in a five years span. Most of the U Arts international students are from South Korea, which makes up about 61 percent of the international student population, followed by 11 percent from China, 4 percent from Taiwan, 2 percent from India and the rest from other countries. With this drastic change, the U Arts community was uncertain how to deal with this phenomenon. Also, there is not any specific research/data that contains information about the international students and their anxiety as freshmen.

Demographic of American Students at U Arts

“The American students at U Arts feel like they don’t need to pay attention to different cultures. Americans need a surprise and they need to be shocked... They need to experience culture shock.”
– Christopher Magee

Most American students are uncertain as how to approach international students because most American students are from the area or near by states such as New York and New Jersey (Demographic of Domestic Students), where they lack opportunities to engage and encounter different cultures. Faculty members are also unaware of methods to integrate these into class settings as well as dealing with language and cultural barriers. As a consequence of uncertainty, the majority of the international students and American students at U Arts are distant from each other.

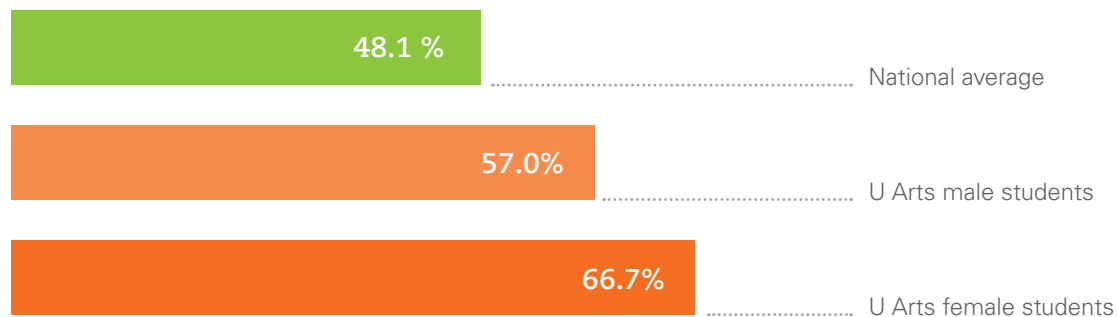


Home states of U Arts domestic students, Fall 2012

Most discussed issues of international students relations to adjusting to America are expectation, language/culture barrier, and difficulty of making American friends. According to a study by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, college freshmen easily get anxious trying to juggle school, work, friends, and family while trying to figure out the rest of his or her life. 48.1 percent of first year college students considered their emotional health as lower than average. More often than not, arts schools tend to have even higher percentage of anxious freshmen. Especially, universities like U Arts that focus on visual and performing arts tend to bring in students in vastly different circumstances and locations. The 61.85 percent of first year students at U Arts considered their emotional health as lower than average, where 57 percent were male students and 66.7 percent were female students (Higher Education Research).

Emotional Health (Anxiety) Rates

First Year Anxiety the New "Freshmen 15" Study Finds Incoming College Students Overstressed



Conclusion

In addition to being in a diverse art school, for international students, the new-foreign experience could easily be a tense and anxious experience that may interfere with their daily routine. Also every international student is likely to go through culture shock in order to adjust to the new environment that causes loneliness, homesickness, anxiety, frustration, and pressure.

International student is likely to go through culture shock in order to adjust to the new environment.

The University of the Arts being a diverse school with above average emotional health (compare to other colleges) and with continual rise in number of international students, we felt that it is necessary to address this issue of anxiety and disconnection that exist between international and American students. Furthermore, help students to break down the cultural and communication barrier.



THE UNIVERSITY
OF THE ARTS
TERRA HALL

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Personal Story

I expected to learn different culture, language, and ethnicity. Also, I was really excited about creating design projects and collaborating with Americans.



I felt heavy anxiety, frustration, and pressure because of my language and culture barrier.

graduated the Korean university. I expected to learn different culture, language, and ethnicity. Also, I was really excited about creating design projects and collaborating with Americans.

A few months later, I got accepted to the University of the Arts and I started my first semester as a junior in Industrial Design department. Because of my limited language and my wish to experience American design education in industrial design, I first transferred to the undergraduate program instead of applying to a graduate program.

When I first got into the classroom, I felt just fine, but it wasn't great. Nobody wanted to greet me because I was just a stranger, and I wasn't surprised with that. When I first introduced myself to the public, I was really embarrassed and felt anxious because of my language barrier. I really wanted to get familiar with the classmates, but I didn't have confidence to approach to them first. I experienced the culture shock during the semester and I felt like an outsider and the loneliness and homesickness were gradually growing worse. My personality was changing as well. I was a good leader, very talkative, and outgoing person when I was in Korea, but in here, I was really quiet and shy, and I didn't want to talk with anyone during my first semester.

My Personal Experience

I want to introduce myself and tell my story how I got interested in this topic for my thesis project. Since I have been here, the United States, I have been through all the struggles and anxiety that comes with being an international student.

I have an undergraduate degree in industrial design from Korea and during the studying of the various design areas in the program, I wanted to go to the broader world to see different people's design perspectives. Also, at that time, the globalism was emerging, so many design students and professionals were moving to another country to study. I was one of them and I decided to go to the United States after I

However, the second semester was different. One day, one of my classmates told me, “Wow, you have a really good hand drawing skill. Can you teach me?” I felt a warm blush rise to my cheeks. After his saying, the people gathered around me and they wanted to see my work and learn the skills. I became familiar with some of the domestic students and we hung out together and worked together. Fortunately, the Industrial Design program has a lot of team buildings and collaborations, so I could get the opportunities of working in a team with Americans. In the first semester, I was really afraid to select a team member that I wished to work with, because I felt nobody wanted to work with me and I was not going to be selected. But, I didn’t feel this way on second semester. Also, I experienced the stereotype of the model minority, which is that Asian students have been stereotyped that they are doing well in school and good at mathematics, science, and engineering. We had to develop a mathematical formula as a pair in one of the classes. My partner, who is an American said, “I’m so glad that you are Asian!” She might think I’m good at math because of my ethnicity. That’s one of the biases that the American students have. Charles and I will deal with this topic about the assumptions or stereotypes on the other section later.

My mixed feeling made me get interested in the topic of integrating the international students and local American students within class settings.

After the junior year, I decided to apply to a graduate program. I was confident with making friends and collaboration with others even if my language was still limited when I got accepted to MiD program at U Arts. However, I felt the exact same way as my first semester in ID program when I got into MiD program, or even more anxious. Before we even got familiar with each other, we first started with the team dynamic class, in which I felt really anxious about the professor and 2nd year students as an authority. During those three days, I felt heavy anxiety, frustration, and pressure because of my language and culture barrier. I still have the anxiety when I meet a person who I never met before or when I speak to the public.

My mixed feeling from those stories as a whole made me get interested in the topic of integrating the international students and local American students within class settings. I felt not only me, but also the majority of the international students are struggling to communicate and interact with the American students. Also I found that these issues are especially for the students who are from Korea and China. I was curious how those students can remove the barriers and understand each other better. I believe that this project has so much value, as the international students are rapidly increasing in the US, for not only our school, but across the other universities as well. I hope that the international students, specifically Korean and Chinese students, overcome the anxiety and integrate with the American students well through this project.

02

DESIGN DIRECTION

3rd space

3rd space.

→ coming from 2 different
culture creating
a product.

fit into
our project?

- How they perceive
(?)

1. S without power

- cultural adjustment
- Acting in classroom
- voicelessness
- state their opinions

- A.S has power
- perceive having more power
- language
- educational cultural background
- ↳ supposed to act more

Group dynamic
&
3rd space
★ Dominant
Theory
culture

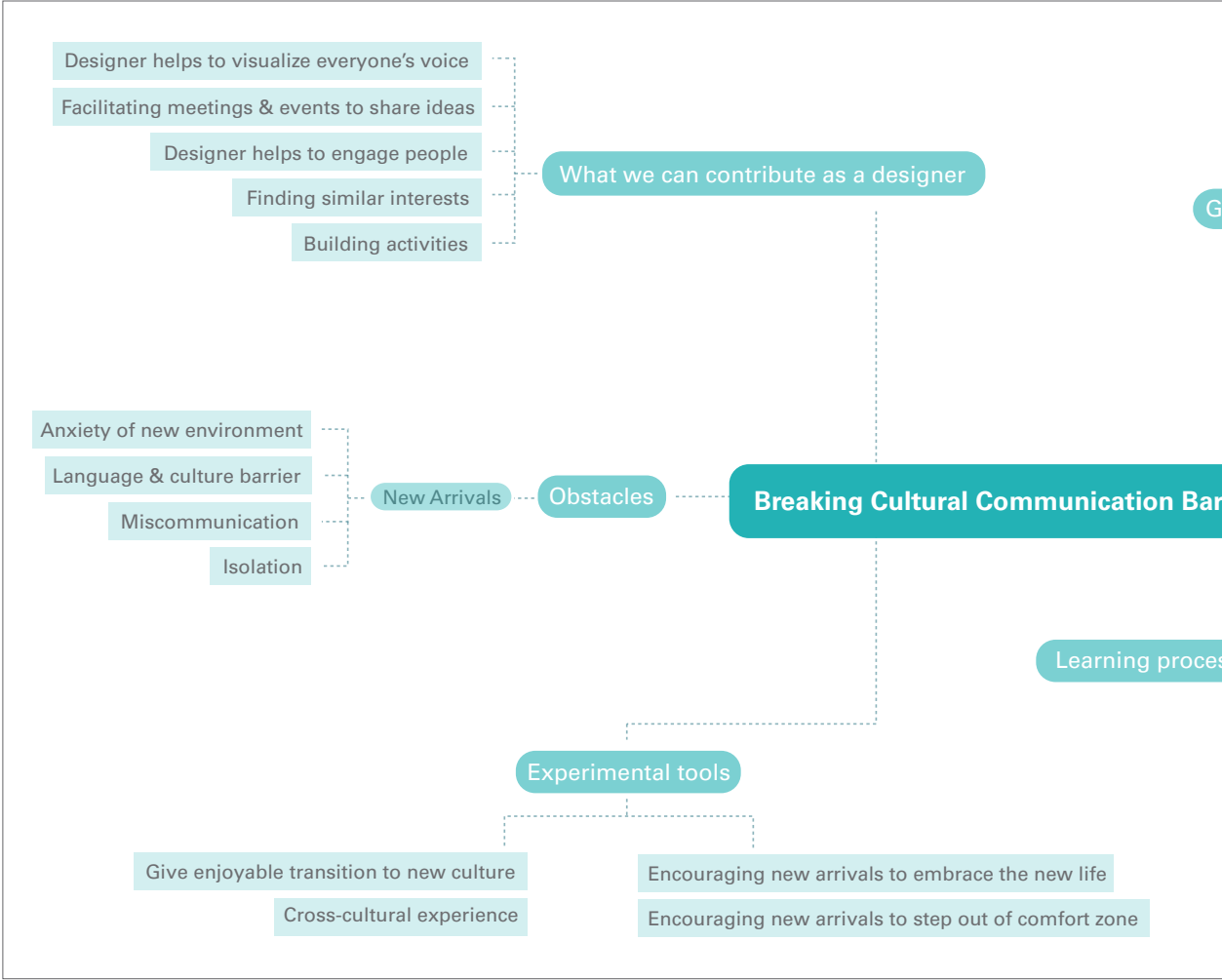


Design Process & Project Theme

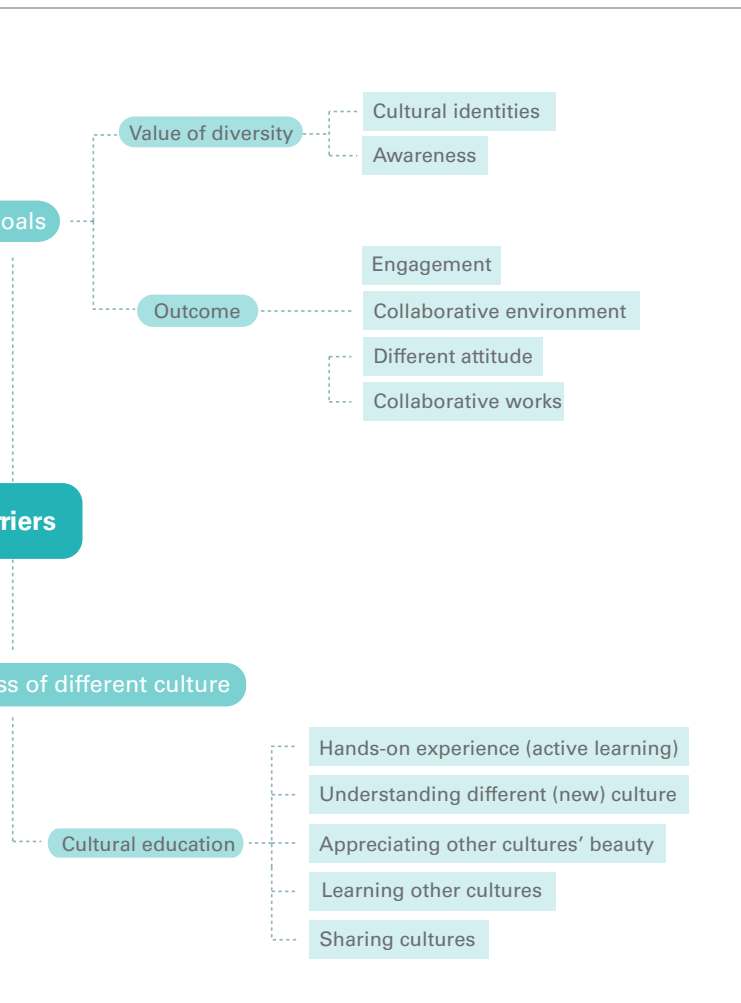
Mind Mapping

Before we started the project in earnest, we created a mind map to find what we were facing and how we could address it as designers. The biggest theme, Breaking Cultural & Communication Barriers was divided into 5 categories: obstacles, different cultural learning styles, goals, tools, and contribution as a designer. For example, under obstacle, there is a) anxiety of new environment b) language c) cultural

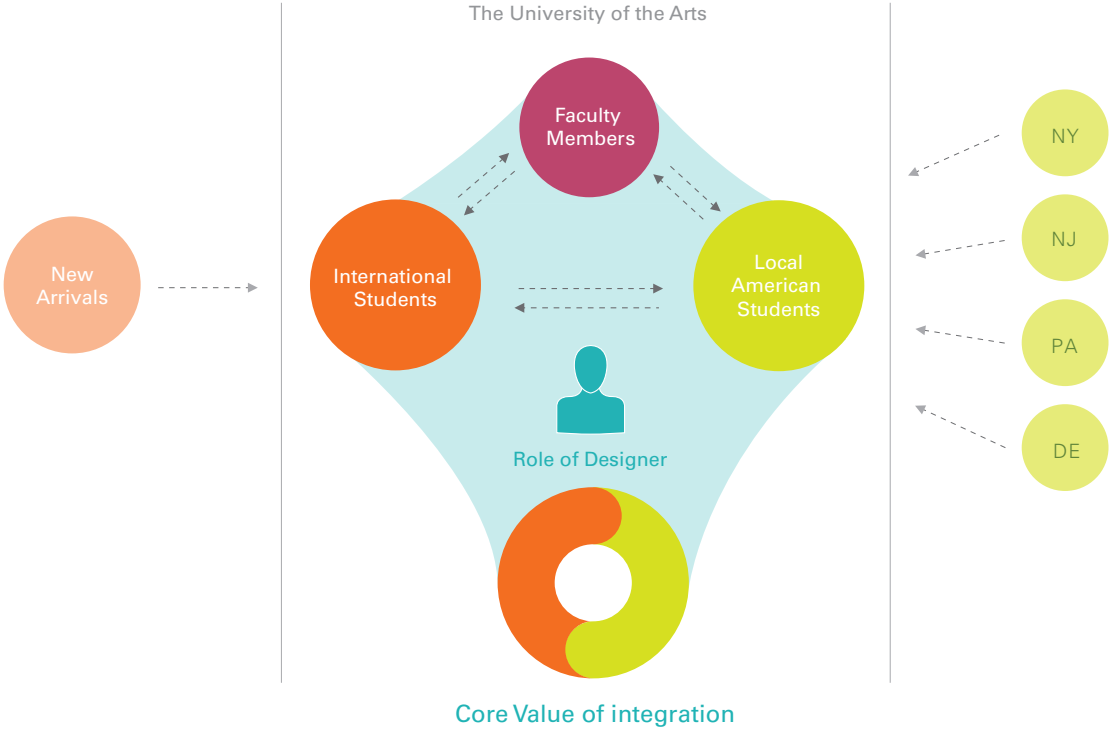
In the very beginning, we sketched out a mind map before we even started the project. We brainstormed and drew our interests and ideas that represent what we could do for the topic of the cross-cultural values. We thought about how we could move forward to the next steps.



barriers for the new arrivals. As we understand different cultures through active learning, we might encourage the new arrivals to step out of their comfort zone. When we created this map, we didn't know we were going to focus on the international student community. However, the international students at U Arts were a really good match with our first interest; cultural barriers of new arrivals.



At U Arts, American students come from local areas and international students come from another countries every year. There are cultural and communication barriers between the students. Our role as designers are to create cross-cultural engagement to remove the barriers and find a richer environment.



Design Approach – Theme

Our focused theme is Breaking Cultural and Communication Barriers that currently exist within the University of the Arts community as a whole. U Arts community members consist of faculty members, staff, local American students, and international students. Every year, there is a new set of international students who arrive from different countries and numbers have been increasing throughout the years. In the fall semester enrollment in 2012, about 80 % of the international students were Asian and, among Asians, 61 % were South Korean.

To be specific, due to the excessive difference between European and Asian students, our focus will be on Asian students specifically Korean and Chinese students at U Arts. As for the American students, the majority of them are from New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Their origins are from near by Pennsylvania, so they are not experiencing a foreign culture. American students don't pay attention to different cultures because they don't have to.

As designers, we decided to help integrate the international students with the American students, and this is what the faculty members are currently facing. Based on the design process and methods, we will gain an understanding of the core motivations from everyone's voice, and discover the value of the cross-cultural experience within the U Arts community.

Role of Designer

Our approach is to find a solution based on human-centered design. The human-centered design is a process that uses design tools or a set of techniques to create potential service improvements. We use methods and tools to solve the complex problems based on the human needs. Engaging people with the methodologies would create meaningful and innovative solutions. The design process starts by examining the needs, wishes, and behaviors of the people who are affected by the service. We understand the problems that they are facing from the user's perspective, and we synthesize and create a new concept within the constraints of feasibility, viability, and desirability. The design process is valuable to this problem because of its ability to consider the deeper insights of people.

Using the design process, we will gain insights to the core motivations and values of the cross-cultural experience at U Arts. Moving forward with this information, we will continue to engage our process to prototype and test co-created actions that enhance cross-cultural communication between international students and American students within the U Arts community.



Project Goals

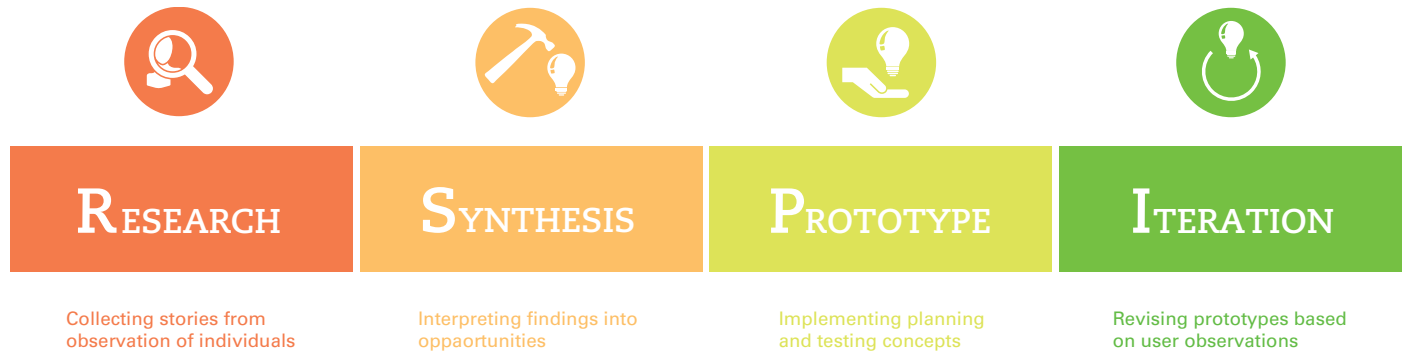
The purpose of this project is to create a model for cross-cultural collaborative engagement between international students and American students in a culturally rich environment.

Our goal is creating a model for cross-cultural collaborative engagement to examine the core value of the cross- cultural experience between international students and American students in a culturally rich environment. These engagements can occur in places within the U Arts community such as a classroom through the design methods and tools. It would be a catalyst for positive change within the bigger culture of the University of the Arts.

Positive change would be for:

- International students: providing an opportunity to overcome culture shock.
 - International students would not have to struggle to communicate with the American students.
- Local American students: provide an opportunity to encounter different cultures.
 - International students and American students would diminish the cultural and communication barriers and understand each other better.
- Faculty members: provide an opportunity to create a valuable cross-cultural class setting
 - Faculty members would be aware of the cultural values of having the international students in classroom.





Design Process

Research: A project begins by gathering information. Expertise is not required, however the information should be sufficient to have a solid understanding of the subject.

Synthesis: It is important to digest complex and disparate sets of information, process it and present it in a manner that is clear and easily accessible. Synthesis allows the designers to draw connections between separate sources of information, revealing points of entry for interventions.

Prototype: Designers conceptualize tools or artifacts to address the points of entry they've discovered. They prototype their concepts so they can test them in "real world" scenarios. If designers don't prototype their ideas, then they remain theoretical and lack the potential to have a meaningful impact.

Iteration: It is the act of repeating a process with the aim of approaching a desired goal, target or result.

Moving forward with this information, we will continue to engage our process to prototype and test co-created actions that enhance cross-cultural communication between the international students and the local American students.

03

RESEARCH





Stakeholder Profiles

This is Jason



Jason Lempieri

Jason Lempieri is currently a Master Lecturer at the University of the Arts. He teaches a sophomore industrial design class. Professor Lempieri holds a B. Arch. from Pratt Institute and an MID from the University of the Arts. He was selected as a finalist in Metropolis Magazine's Next Generation Competition for his graduate thesis, Urban Reincarnation. An avid urbanist, he proposed the activation of a neglected urban structure for memorializing and storing the ashes of loved ones. While a student at Pratt, he also studied in Copenhagen, Denmark; Athens, Greece; and Nicosia, Cyprus.

Lempieri is from Central Bucks county which is not too far from the school but he has experience living abroad such as in Greece and Denmark. Through his experience of living a broad, he has learned the value of cultural immersion. He likes to recommend to his students to go study abroad or live abroad. Its is important to him that students get exposure to those elements outside of the U.S culture and that American students understand their work in a global context.

During Lempieri class, he likes to talk about design in a global context and invite larger conversations or interactions. To enhance the learning experience of the students, he also forces his students to work with people who are different from themselves in age, gender, ethnicity and culture background.

Lempieri designed his class curriculum to encourage students.

Starting off the semester, students will be paired up or placed in a group randomly with the consideration of different age, gender, ethnicity and culture background. Semester projects will consist of students working in groups, follow by short individual projects and back to their group project.

The reason for giving students times to work by themselves is to ease their frustration and stress level. There is often frustration that comes from working in pairs and working together. Individual projects also provide opportunities for students to thrive and show what they want to do/ can do.

Through out Lempiras' courses, he wants to teach students the value of working with others and remind students that people outside of school are constantly working in groups.

Mi Kyung Lee

Mi Kyoung Lee is a mother of two lovely daughters as well as Associate Professor of Crafts and the Head of Fibers at the University of the Arts. Professor Lee came to United States of America back in 1993 to study. Before coming to USA, she earned her BFA in Fibers from Dong-A University in Busan, South Korea. After coming to USA, She acquired an MFA in Book Arts/Printmaking from the University of the Arts, as well as MFA in Fibers from Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Professor Lee has had eight solo exhibitions and a number of national and international shows, including at the Reading Public Museum, Cranbrook Museum of Art, New York and Chicago SOFA, Busan Metropolitan Museum in Korea, and most recently Espace des Tisserands, Alsace, France.

In her early year as an international student, Professor Lee thought that America was a very liberal place but she came to believe, after living in the states for over twenty years, that it is actually a very conservative country. Over the years she also made several observations about the work culture. She considers that the work culture is very different between South Korea and America. South Korea tends to be fast paced while most Americans work slowly and in a more relaxed way.

During her student years as graduate student, she also went through struggles pertaining to cultural difference and language barriers at U Arts. It was a lot tougher back then to deal with these issues because there wasn't a strong system in place for international students. She stated that international students need to be constantly challenged and face these issues in order to learn how to adapt to American culture.

From her experience, she shared that culture of U Arts has changed. It became a lot more open minded and became more global. One of the examples she gave was student's usage of chopstick. Back in year 2005-2006, students were just starting to use chopstick because of the sushi culture but now it is a very common thing to witness.

As a professor, she feels that compared to other schools, U Arts doesn't have too many international students and doesn't feel the influx of international students yet.

Currently, she teaches introduction to fiber and advanced fiber. In her classes, there aren't too many international students but the difference she noticed is that domestic students ask more questions compared to international students. Most of the times, when it comes to critics and presenting their works, she requires everyone (regardless of background) to participate fully. When this expectation is not met, she tries to call on students to encourage students to participate.

Professor Lee also has another role within U Arts. Because she has an experience of being an international student at U Arts and has dealt with international students over her years of teaching, she plays a role of older sister outside of her classroom. She is empathetic to international students and she gives many great advises to international students specifically Korean.

From Professor Lee, we were able to learn how U Arts culture changed throughout the years and how local student and international students behave in class setting.



This is Mikyung



This is Eunsol

Taylor Rudolph

Taylor Rudolph is an American student who is currently a sophomore in Industrial design at The University of the Arts. She is 21 years old. She is from West Chester, Pennsylvania fairly close to the city. She described herself as pretty quiet, laid back and mellow. She grew up in a very diverse area and attended a boarding school where she encountered and was exposed to different types of students from everywhere. Also as part of her curriculum at her high school, there were culture related classes that addressed the topics of Latin American history, Holocaust and more.

Other than English, she is not fluent in other language. But, she has studied Spanish for four years back in high school. She hopes to continue studying Spanish when she gets a chance to. Even though she doesn't speak other languages, she is still interested in other cultures. She feels like "there is a lot more out there than just America." She also thinks that America is a pretty closed country.

So far, she has only been to Colombia for her high school senior project and worked at an orphanage there. But, she wants to travel and explore different parts of the world after she graduates from college. Some of the places she wants to visit are Caribbean, Greece, and London.

She is highly interested in different religions. She wants to encounter and see different types of religions in different countries. Coming a Quaker background, she currently practices meditation as her religious ritual and practice. If she gets a chance to, she would love to attend different types of services or go sit at their temple or churches to experience them.

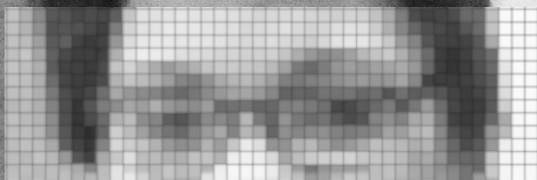
She is vegetarian, but she likes to try different types of food. Her favorite foreign food is Bibim pab (Korean food). She was recently introduced to it by her Korean classmate named Wonji. Ever since her encounter with Bibim pab, she has been going to a Korean restaurant near school.

She has some experiences working with international students and she likes and enjoys working with students from different cultures. Especially, she has experience with Korean students because her roommate from high school was Korean and she is also currently working with Korean students for her class.

Regardless of her experiences, she still feels most comfortable approaching international students during class because outside of class setting she finds it difficult to approach them because of their shyness and quietness.

One the concerns that she has working with international students is on writing activities. She considers herself not too strong a writer so she feels burdened when she is asked to proof read papers or is left in charge of writing.

Regardless of her concerns, she values having international students at school because she feels that they bring different sets of skills but she also feels that understanding each other could be sometimes tricky. During class work when she is doing teamwork with international students, she tries to cope with the frustration that comes from language barrier by being patient.



This is Taylor

CROSSING THE CURRICULUM

otiation of Identities
Multilingual Contexts
Aneta Pavlenko
and Adrian Blackledge

Constructing Grounded Theory

GLOBAL
PHILADELPHIA
TEMPLE

GE
ANDREW SHEA

DESIGN THINKING.
WILEY



Secondary Research

Literature Reviews

Providing insight into the challenges the international students face in adapting to American classrooms.

In an effort to provide insight into the challenges the international students face in adapting to American classrooms and how their performances are affected by these challenges, the review of the literature will explore the following topics: (1) stereotyped model minorities, (2) cultural shock, (3) anxiety, (4) fear, and (5) other issues regarding group dynamic.

Stereotyped Model Minorities ■

Many assumptions about the model minority are false.

Model minority refers to ethnic, racial, or religious groups whose members are often perceived as over-achievers, self-reliant, academically intelligent, and achieving a higher degree of success than the population average. This success is typically measured in income, family status, education, and other related factors that may apply. Perhaps we cannot deny that these factors are based more on perception rather than actual achievement.

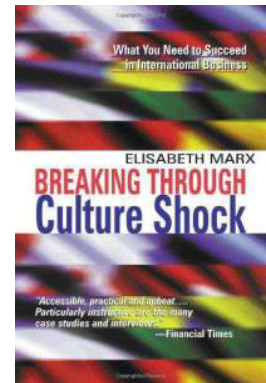
Many Asian students are believed to have high enrollments in the fields of mathematics, science, and engineering. However, many assumptions about the model minority are false and studies have demonstrated that the Asian students' academic achievements depend on their generation, family income, and environment around them. According to Alan Gomez, an Ithaca College historian of labor and social movements, for many model minority members the American dream is not within their reach. Aspects of Asian culture such as working hard, respecting teachers, and living up to parental expectations made high achievement possible, but, on the other hand, the generalization masks the challenges and failures experienced by Asians in the United States.

Culture Shock ■

Studying abroad could be a new and exciting experience for the international students. But during the adaptation process, most students go through the experience called “culture shock” in one form or another. It is a feeling of disorientation experienced by someone who is suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes. It causes symptoms of feeling isolated, anxiety and worry, reduction in job performance, high energy, and helplessness (Marx 7). The inclusion of high energy came as a surprise to us, “but it could be nervous energy, or a high energy level caused by changing circumstances” (Marx 6).

Culture shock may have bad connotations but international students “[w]ho were not affected by culture shock and generalized their own views to the other culture did not adapt very well. Culture shock is therefore a positive sign on the road to international adaptation” (Marx 6).

Elisabeth Marx, in her literature called According to Breaking Through Culture Shock, demonstrates four phases of adaptation to culture shock; honeymoon phase, culture shock, recovery, and adjustment (Marx 9). First is the honeymoon phase, where all encounters in the new place are seen as exciting, positive and stimulating (Marx 7). This develops into experiencing the culture shock, where students realize that something is not quite right. This foreign experience may begin with a creeping awareness of disorientation and a feeling of not quite knowing what is going on (Marx 8). The third phase of recovery usually starts with acknowledging the problem and working to resolve the issue. It involves a compromise between the feeling and thinking of the honeymoon phase and the culture shock phase. More specifically, it compromise[es] between the exaggerated expectation and reality” (Marx 8). “In the final phase, also known as the adjustment stage, students are able to work effectively, know the limitations of their skills, can take on new ways of doing things and, most importantly, are able to be more flexible” (Marx 8).



Breaking through Culture Shock – Marx Elisabeth

Anxiety and Fear ■

International students constantly face challenges having to deal with symptoms caused from cultural shock.

The trend of studying abroad has gradually increased and America has encountered a flood of immigrants and international students who hope to live the American Dream. Multi-ethnicity has now become a must in our country and in our education.

Unlike most American students, international students constantly face challenges having to deal with symptoms caused from cultural shock, in addition to other obligations that students may have. According to the data collected from the class observation, the majority of the international students showed signs of anxiety as the most common symptom of culture shock.

It comes from the lack of understanding the culture, lack of communication abilities, fear of not being able to fit in, and fear of being wrong.

Anxiety is described as “the painful feeling of not being able to deal with the threat of a special situation” (Tillich 173). Anxiety is further broken down into three forms, which are fate and death, emptiness and meaninglessness, and guilt and condemnation. According to the research by Eysenck, it suggests, “[that] there is a correlation between anxiety and learning. Anxiety does not necessarily have an effect on the quality of performance if there is sufficient effort expended, although it produces differential effects if there is a lack of motivation among high-anxiety subjects” (Young 44).

Students with high-anxiety have a harder time focusing on the class work and they “spend more time on irrelevant tasks, have less working memory capacity, and spend more time on secondary, rather than primary tasks. Eysenck suggested that anxiety produced task irrelevant cognitive activities that impair task performance. These highly anxious subjects engage in dual activities which, ultimately, impair performance in primary tasks” (Young 44). Anxiety on the part of international students, specifically Korean and Chinese students, originates from various sources. It comes from the lack of understanding the culture, lack of communication abilities, fear of not being able to fit in, and fear of being wrong.

An important thing to note is that “the reason for this...behavior is the lack of an object on which the subject (in the state of anxiety) can concentrate. The only object is the threat itself is nothingness” (Tillich 37). Another way of putting this is fear of non-being.

When the subject of anxiety is discussed, fear cannot be ignored. Fear and anxiety have the same ontological root but they play a different role. Fear has a definite object where it can be faced, analyzed, attacked, and endured.

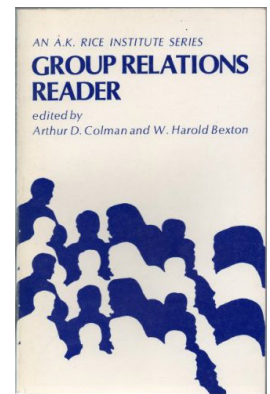
"Fear is being afraid of something, a pain, the rejection by a person or a group, the loss of something or somebody, the moment of dying. But in the anticipation of the threat originating in these things, it is not the negativity itself which they will bring upon the subject that is frightening but the anxiety about the possible implications of this negativity" (Tillich 37).

The majority of the international students (mainly Asian students) tend to work-hard to reach and sustain academic success because of their fear of non-being. In most Asian society, people are represented and treated by their status of wealth or their academic accomplishment. For the students, their grades and their test scores will represent the way other Asian students and Asian society will rate and view that student. If students do not meet the expectations of the society, they are ostracized and in extreme cases get disowned.

Group Dynamic ■

Within the group dynamic such as the class setting, some international students feel the fear of non-being. Most of the international students tend to stay quiet unless they are in ESL (English as Second Language), where they are surrounded by other international students. Being in their comfort zone, they feel comfortable to speak and be themselves. But once they are removed from their comfort zone, international students stay introverted and don't voice their ideas or opinions. Most of the time, international students only speak when the professor calls on them. This has some cultural root in the distribution of power but it also is caused by the anxiety that students feel.

In comparison to international students, local American students feel at ease and are more active when it comes to group work with international students. It is because American students have different ways of coping with their anxiety. Most of the time, there is a norm that gets created that deals with the distribution of the power. American students have dominant power over international students due to having the dominant linguistic background and culture. This norm can be seen through nonverbal communication such as eye contact, body language, and seating positions. Students who work in small groups unconsciously interact in various ways that are subtler than just speaking.



Group Relations Reader –
Colman, Arthur D

Scapegoating ■

As a result of language barrier, Korean and Chinese students are often scapegoated by shouldering disproportionate amount of the anxiety for the class as a whole.

Scapegoating is when the group exploits a vulnerable situation in an untrue and unfair way. For scapegoating to occur within the class setting, the circumstance has to be unconsciously manipulated at the expense of the international students.

There are different dimensions to scapegoating. International students most specifically Korean and Chinese students seem to shoulder a disproportionate amount of anxiety for a class. This disproportionate amount of anxiety may include understanding and performance related to academic settings. As a result of language barriers, Korean and Chinese students are often scapegoated by shouldering disproportionate amount of the anxiety for the class as a whole. Because they are vulnerable as a function of their language barriers, they become a likely target for everybody's anxiety whatever the reason about learning the task.

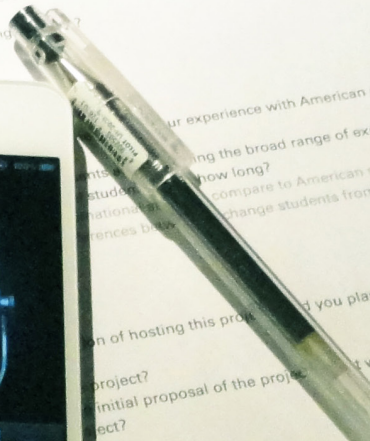
The second dimension is the way in which that population Korean and Chinese are injured by this dynamic. This does not mean that students fail the course but as a direct result of shouldering an unfair amount of anxiety for the entire class, it hinders their learning capabilities.

In addition, it also causes international students to make believe that they lack the ability to perform equally or better than American students even though they bring achievement and resources to class the dynamic.

How Did This Research Inform Our Project?

- American students may have preconceptions about what motivates Asian students (competition for grades) and what skills they have (math and science) these stereotypes may create misunderstanding that we want to address.
- International students might appear calm and quiet but this often masks high anxiety. We needed to be sensitive in finding ways to relieve their anxiety in the classroom.
- Inequalities in power between American and Asian students need to be addressed by creating ways to encourage equal exchanges.





Questions for two professors:

Background

Where are you from?
Have you grown up in an ethnic family?
Have you lived abroad?
In your opinion, what are the differences and similarities between here and there (Japan / France)?
How has that influenced you as teacher of art?
How long have you been working at U Arts?

Where did you grow up?
Could you describe the environment of your neighborhood?
Where you lived abroad?
Have you grown up in an ethnic family?
In your opinion, what are the differences and similarities between where you been?
How has that influenced you?
How long have you been working?

... your experience with American
... the broad range of ex
... how long?
... compare to American
... change students from
... differences betw

... you pla
... of hosting this pro
... project?
... initial proposal of the project
... ect?

... ns? Were these expectations met or
... Could you describe the experience
... ng / challenging part in the project?
... dents showed their interests in the

18. How
... interested?

19. Could you describe the interaction between the American
... students?

20. What was the outcome of the project? (Document? Insta
... of that project?

Value / influence of the cross-cultural project

Interviews

students at U
perience?

students?
h Japan and

n this kind of

was the project?

do... the project?

project? How many be involved? Why

students and the French / Japanese

ilation?) What was the impact / influence





44

Interviews

21 International students

11 American students

12 Faculty members

Interviews

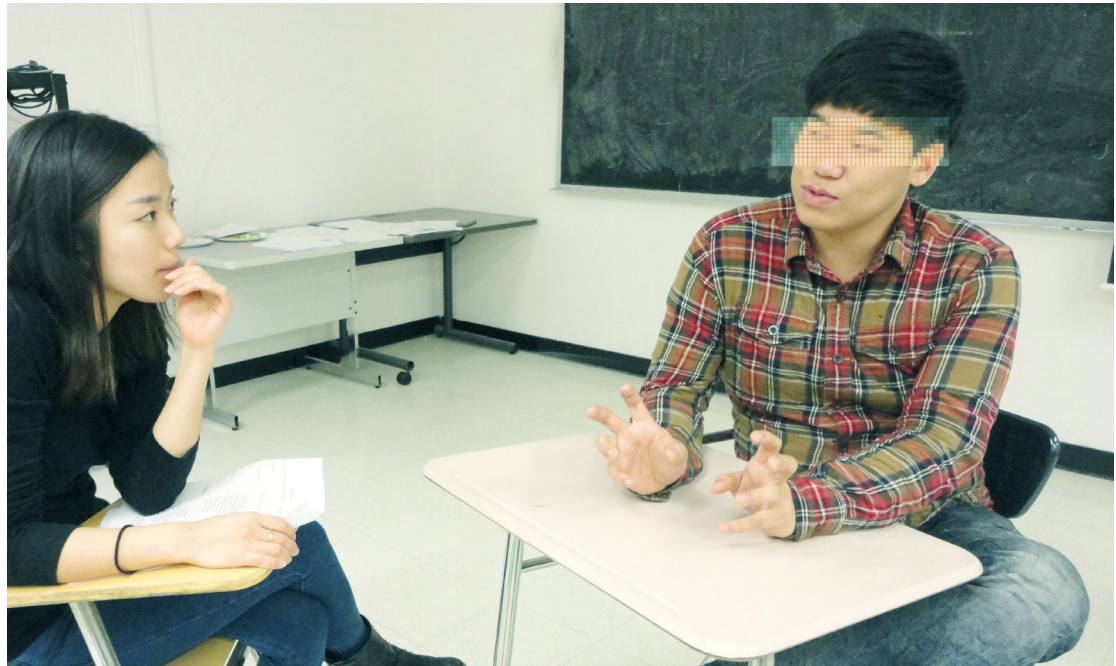
R

Among the international students, they had clearly different thoughts between Asian students and European students.

As part of our research, we conducted interviews with the University of the Arts community, which includes international students, American students, and faculty members. We have conducted a total of 42 formal interviews.

We designed our interview questions with the over arching goal of understanding the U Arts community and issues that exist in relation to cultural communication.

We also created a separate set of interview questions for each group (international students, American students, and faculty members). These questions were divided into different sections. We would begin by asking questions related to their background information (their name, age and, major), and their interest and curiosity about other cultures, and their specific experiences at U Arts.



International Students

For international students, the questions were specifically geared towards understanding their experience as international students and their adaptation to America and U Arts.

Here are some of the questions that we asked of international students:

- How long will you stay in America?
- Why did you choose to study abroad in America?
- Why did you choose to study at the University of the Arts?
- What was your expectation before arriving? How does it differ or not differ?
- Do you feel like your personality is thriving at U Arts?
- Culturally, what is the biggest difference/ similarity between here and your country?
- What are you struggling with and can you share some of the anxiety you have?
- What are some advantages and disadvantages in being an international student?

R

Most Asian international students feel more anxiety from the family's expectation than other students.

Through the interviews with international students, we noticed that even within the international student body, there is a big difference between European students and Asian students.

Most Asian international students feel more anxiety from their family's expectations than other students. Asian international students focus more on grades and getting their diploma while European students are a lot more relaxed and at ease with the whole school experience.

There appears to be a lot at stake for Asian students. Asian society values a person based on degrees and grades. On top of that, Asian students have the urgency to do well because most Asian parents pay for their tuition to study abroad and once they graduate and their parents retire, they are obligated to take care of their parents.

It was also evident that Asian students have a harder time making close American friends and that they wish to have more meaningful interactions with native students.

They are all international students,
but the perspectives toward new life here are different.

“

Making American friends is hard, since I have **little in common**.

It's **hard to talk with American** students about American culture.

I expected to **work harder and be better** than other students.

I feel that I am like an **outsider**.

”

Asian students' view

European students' view

“

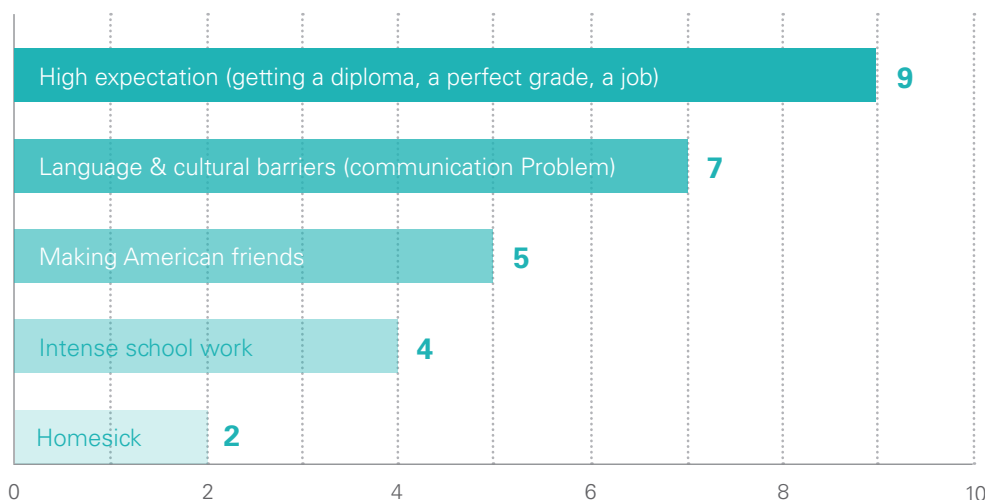
I started to realize I should **enjoy and live the life here**,
and tried to take the **best from American life**

I **don't have pressure to work hard** and be better than others here.

I **enjoy asking people** thing, and starting conversations.

”

Top 5 of Asian Students' Anxiety



R

Asian international students focus more on grades and getting their diploma.

Narrowing on Focus

We addressed the demographics of international students in an earlier chapter: in 2012-2013 over 80% of the international student population at U Arts was from Asia. Our interviews with 21 international students indicated to us that Asian and European students at the University experience their new environment very differently. Most European students mentioned that they enjoy asking people things and starting conversation, but Asian students thought that it's hard to approach American students and voice their opinions in public. While the European students are enjoying their new American life, the Asian students showed anxiety about their new life here. For these reasons, we decided to focus on Asian students, especially Korean and Chinese students, rather than the whole international student community at U Arts. We believed that researching Asian students and discovering the roots and nature of their anxiety would help frame ways to integrate them with the American students and faculty members in the future.

R

we decided to focus on Asian students, especially Korean and Chinese students, rather than the whole international student community at U Arts.

R

American students showed high interest in other cultures but not a lot of students have actually been to other countries.

American Students

For American students, questions were asked to understand their curiosity about the other cultures and their relationship with international students.

Here are some of the questions that we asked to America students:

- Where are you originally from?
- Have you been to other countries?
- Have you worked with international students before? How was your experience?
- What are some of the advantage and disadvantage working with international students?

From American students, we learned that most of the American students were local citizens, either from PA or near by states such as New Jersey and New York. American students showed high interest in other cultures but not a lot of students have actually been to other countries. It was interesting to note that Canada seems to be a popular place that students visit but rarely consider for study abroad.

Within class settings, American students found having international students valuable because international students bring different achievement and resources to class dynamic. However, American students stated that it is difficult to approach international students due to language barrier, and their quietness and shyness.





Faculty Members

For Faculty members, questions were asked to understand their experience with international students and American students.

Faculty members expressed that majority of the students at U Arts don't have opportunities in American culture to think about other cultures. However, they are aware of the cultural change at U Arts because of the influx of international students.

Most of the times, due to the busy schedules that faculties have, providing the necessary help towards international student can be very tough and it usually becomes the last thing on their mind when it comes to teaching a class. Interestingly, regardless of lack of assistance, one common theme that most professors addressed was that usually most international students are the hardest working students and that international students do quite well in their classes. However, there was a sense of the need for support from faculty members. They could use assistance in integrating international student with the American students because they don't always know how to deal with the language and culture barriers in classes.

Faculty members at U Arts also showed their interests in cross-cultural activities within school and found it valuable. They gave us positive feedback and support for collaborative projects between local American students and international students.

R

Faculty members at U Arts showed their interests in cross-cultural activities within school and found it valuable.

The image shows a workshop activity on a grid paper. The grid has columns labeled 'Social Media', 'Colors', 'Sports', 'Majors', 'Learn', 'Stand', and 'Food'. The rows are labeled 'Diversity', 'Our Theme is', '1 = 2', and '3'. Each cell contains handwritten notes on sticky notes or index cards. The notes are as follows:

- Social Media:**
 - Using FB for sharing info, events, political news, music, video...
 - Colors AS Language too
- Colors:**
 - Colors AS Language too
 - Colors AS Language too
- Sports:**
 - We could understand diversity in US via analysis of traditional sports of each country
 - we could understand diversity in US via analysis of traditional sports of each country
- Majors:**
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
- Learn:**
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
- Stand:**
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
- Food:**
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
- Diversity:**
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
- Our Theme is:**
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
- 1 = 2:**
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
- 3:**
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country
 - we could learn about other cultures through traditional sports/games of each country



Generative Research

Participatory Design Workshop: Cross-Cultural Conversations

R

The workshop was to stimulate cultural interest between international students and American students, and of encouraging better understanding and learning from each other.

We hosted a participatory design workshop with the goal of stimulating cultural interest between international students and American students, and of encouraging better understanding and learning from each other, based on students' personal interests, experience and expectation of the different cultures.

The concept of this workshop was derived from many interviews that we have conducted with students from U Arts.

This workshop was hosted on November 28th of 2012 at Levitt Foyer at Gershman Hall at University of the Arts. It took about 1.5 hours, with about twenty participants. Participants included international students, American students, and some faculty members.

The participants were divided into three different groups with the equal number of international and American students mixed. The workshop was divided into six different sessions.



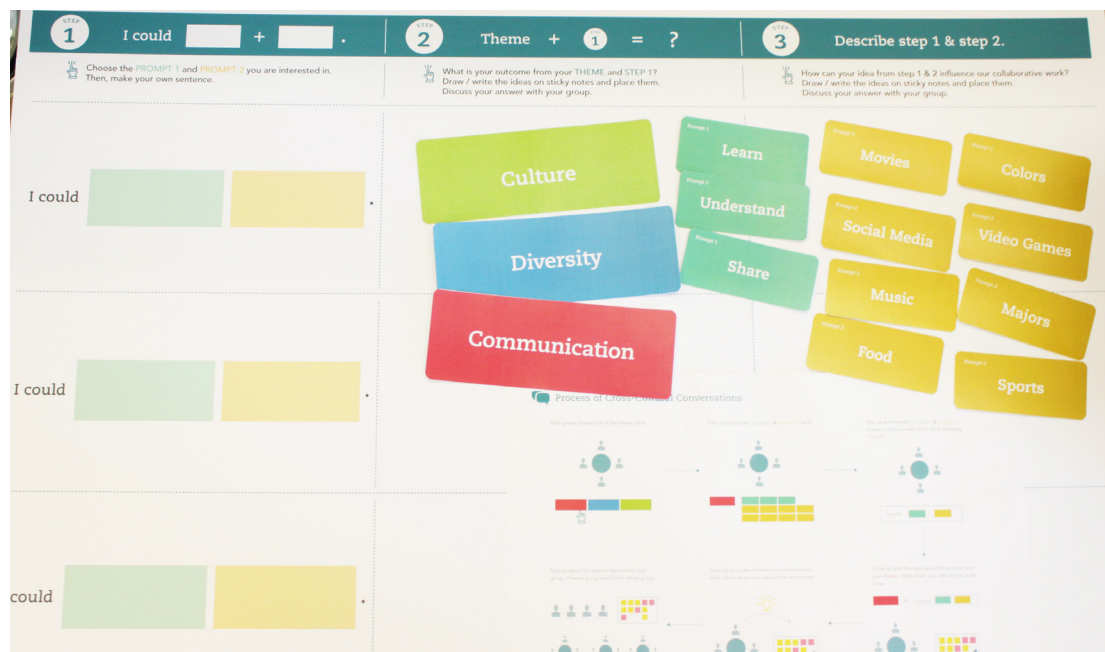
Date: November 28th, 2012
Location: Levitt Foyer,
Gershman Hall
Duration : 1.5 hour
Participants: International
students, American
students, Faculty members



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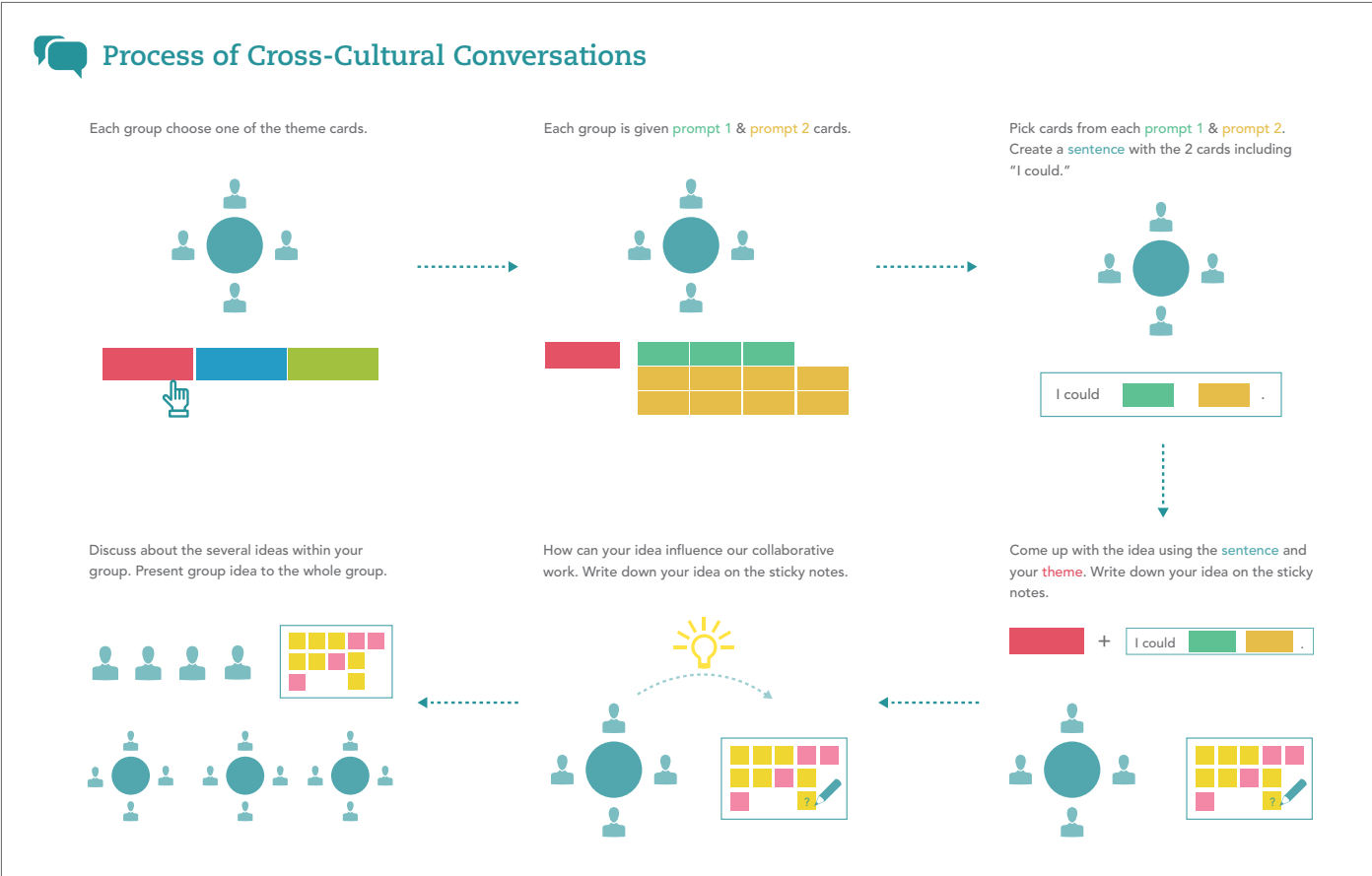
Preparation:

- Steps of Poster boards
- 4 Theme cards
- 3 Prompt I cards
- 8 Prompt II cards
- Process handout
- Post-it notes / name tags



R

The visualization of the process hand-outs helped students to understand process better.



The Process of the Cross-Cultural Conversations



STEP 01 Introduction

A brief presentation given by us. During this time, we formally introduced who we are, what the goal of the workshop was, benefits that come from doing a workshop, and the agenda of the workshop.



STEP 02 Choosing Theme

Brainstorming assignment. It began by choosing theme cards as small groups. Each group chose one theme card either communication, diversity or culture.



STEP 03 Prompt

Next, each group was given prompt cards from both prompt 1 and prompt 2 categories. Prompt 1 included "Share, understand, and learn" and Prompt 2 included "food, movies, video games, music, sports, social media, colors, and majors."



STEP 04 Making Sense

Each group picked the card from each prompt 1 and prompt 2. They were asked to create at least 3 different sentences with them. Including the phrase such as "I could (prompt 1 +prompt 2)".



STEP 05 Creating Ideas

Next step was combining the theme plus ideas that came out from combining (prompt 1 + prompt 2).



STEP 06 Sharing

Each person wrote/drew their ideas on sticky notes, and organized, and shared them in a visual way with their group members. This workshop concluded with each group presenting the findings from the activity to the whole group.

S

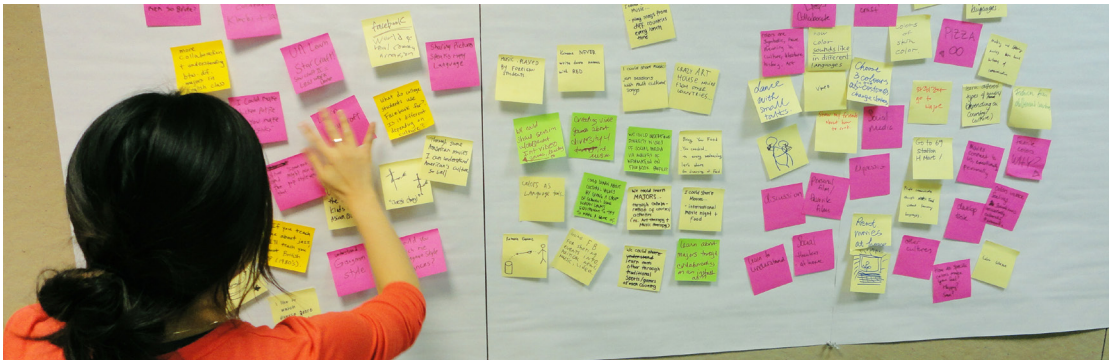
We should have provided more specific activity guidelines for students.

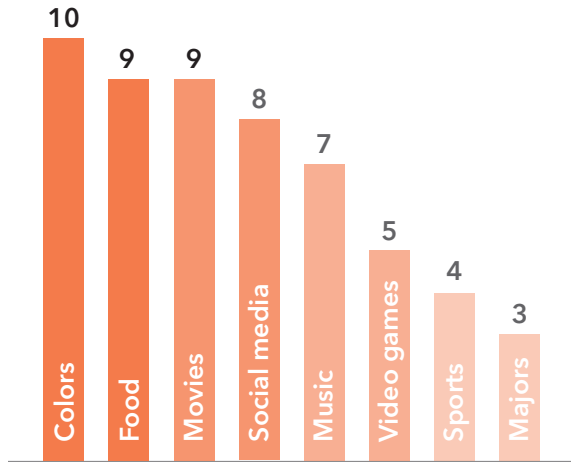
Difficulties encountered during this workshop:

- A greater number of international students over American students.
- Because this workshop was not mandatory for students to attend, we had no control over students coming and going.
- Some participants had difficulty following the brainstorming process.

Reflecting back, we noticed some improvements we could make. We realized that we should have provided more specific activity guidelines for students. It might also be helpful to have students choose ideas from their personal desired contents. On a positive note, we had full engagement of the participants who were present. International students were especially active. We felt that the familiar environment made them feel comfortable and at ease. We were also glad that we prepared process hand-outs. The visualization helped students to better understand the process.

Overall we had a great experience facilitating this workshop. One of the crucial pieces of knowledge we gained was that providing food is a great way to motivate and gather students to participate in this active but sometimes food is not enough to motivate students. We realized that students need to be encouraged by people with authority in order for them to participate in extra activities out side of class setting. This was evidenced when students were leaving early after grabbing food or coming late to the workshop. From these results , we decided to focus on a collaborative project within a class setting and use data gathered from this workshop as a catalyst to move us forward to the next step.





The most interesting topics: Colors & Food

S

Students need to be encouraged by people with authority in order to have some type of collaborative work. For example, they wanted a credit for the collaborative work, but they were still interested in different cultures and majors.



The groups' common outcomes were created by combining "theme + prompt 1 + prompt 2"

The groups' common ideas came from a question of how their previous ideas could influence their collaborative work.

Weekly International Lunches

R

The international lunch is a genuine time for international students and any other American students who have been peer mentors and orientation leaders to meet every Wednesday.

To understand the culture of the international students at U Arts, we attended international lunches. International lunches are hosted by International Student Program every Wednesday. This event is open to all U Arts students and faculty members.

There are many positive outcomes that attend holding international lunches. It creates time for international students to get needed information for a smooth and enjoyable transition to life in Philadelphia and at the University of the Arts, they could meet peer mentors, but most importantly it provides free food with a place where international students can come and hang out. It's also great that each week there are different activities prepared for the students. Sometimes, guest speakers are invited to speak about issues related to cultures and sometimes artists and performers are invited to share their work.

We have observed that there aren't too many American students who attend this lunch. Also during this period of time, most international students become out spoken and less stressed about speaking English because everyone there do not speak perfect English. Also if they choose to, they don't have to speak English because there are other students who speak the same language as they do. From this, observation, we learned that international students need to feel comfortable in order for them to speak up and voice their ideas.









Class Observation

Observation : Collaboration Needs Faculty Enforcement

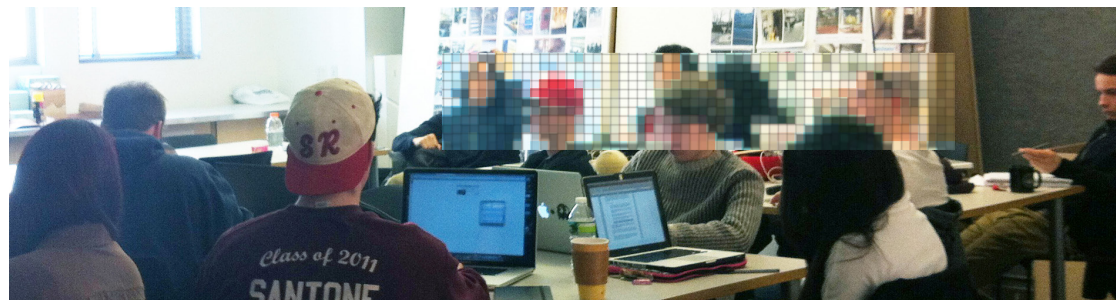
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Industrial Design majors hold a substantial advantage for international students, especially Korean and Chinese students as well as other team building projects within the program.

From the previous workshop, Cross-Cultural Conversations as a generative research, we learned that students fulfilled their responsibility when they got group work which was mandatory or required by someone in authority. Our plan was gathering the students randomly and creating collaborative work to have an exhibition or an installation, but we realized the difficulty of engaging the people who are really enthusiastic for the collaborative work without an authority. Therefore, we changed direction, which was creating design toolkits to assist professors for a better collaborative work between the international students and the domestic students within class setting.

We first decided to observe some classes to find an opportunity to apply a design model of our project as our prototype. The targeted major was the Industrial Design program in the University of the Art because it has the biggest international population especially Korean and Chinese students within the program. Also the ID program has a lot of team building programs and group projects within class.

After the discussion with the ID program director, we gained permission to observe one of the sophomore classes and freshman Intro to Design class; the freshmen in our school have learned a School of Design introductory studio, but they can select one or two specific classes to learn the basic specialty of the programs. The reason why we chose the freshman and sophomore classes instead of the seniors is that we wanted to observe the students who rarely had experiences of collaborative work with each other (Korean, Chinese international students and local American students) and therefore might have fewer biases to one another. We were also curious how they would cope with their barriers that are not familiar to them yet.







Observation of the Freshman Class

The course we observed for the freshman class was “Intro to Design: Design the World” taught by Tony Guido. However, we were faced with the problem that there was only one international student and there was no team-building project in the class. The international student who was from Saudi Arabia sat by himself and just worked on his project. The class was 6 hours long and it was composed of 2 sessions; first the instructor lectured to the students, then the students had individual meetings with the instructor to discuss the process of the project.

During the one on one session, we found out interesting things from the American students through chatting with them; most of them didn’t have an experience of working with the international students, so they were not aware of values or issues that might be involved in collaborative work and they hadn’t yet had a chance to approach international students. The American students mentioned that they didn’t have experience traveling to other countries as we had assumed before the observation since they were from pretty local areas. We realized that this class didn’t meet with our expectations, so we decided to stop observing the class and discontinue working with freshman class.

R

The American students in the freshman class hadn’t yet had a chance to approach international students.



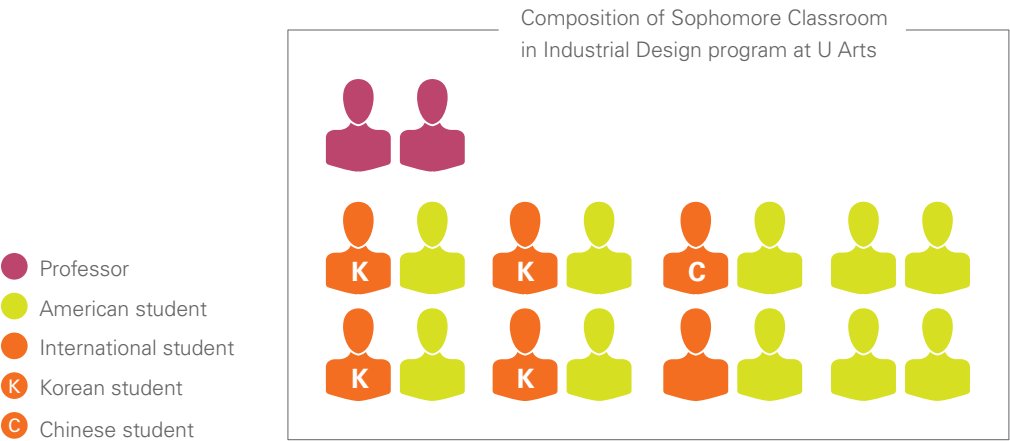
Introduction of the Sophomore Class

The course we observed for the sophomore class was “Project Studio” taught by Doug Bucci and Jason Lempieri. The class was a really good fit for our project because they had already formed pairs to develop a studio project for the whole semester. The professors had deliberately formed pairs of different genders and different ethnicities. As the professors were aware of an increasing number of the international students, they wanted to try this new method of building groups for the project.

The students were composed of the following numbers:

- Total number of students - 18 students (9 male & 9 female)
- 6 international students - 4 Korean, 1 Chinese, 1 Turkish
- 2 Asian American (2nd generation)
- 1 immigrant from Paraguay (1.5 generation)
- 9 domestic students
- 6 groups included the international students

The diversity of these students made us excited to observe each class and see their dynamic in progress.





1st Observation

R

It was very interesting that all the American students of 6 groups, which included international students, started typing as soon as the activity began even though they were supposed to discuss their project first.

The first class observation started with the professors' introduction of the new project topic. That was a golden chance for us because we could keep following the project curriculum and we could assist the professors later on as we were in sync with the students. Before the professors introduced the new project, the students pinned their assignment up and showed a short video of the previous project done by each pair.

The common behaviors observed in Korean and Chinese students included avoiding eye contact when instructors asked questions and engaging in pre-discussions among Korean students when they wanted to answer. It was also obvious that the American students were a lot more outspoken than the international students.

We were able to observe a writing activity during the break time. The professors set a task that required students to discuss their previous project and write a few paragraphs within 20 minutes. The professors left the room. Due to their absence during the writing activity, the instructors were not able to observe

R

Some of the American students appeared to be operating from prior experience assuming no input from the international students.

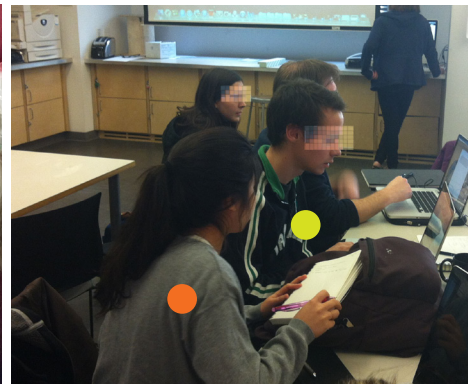
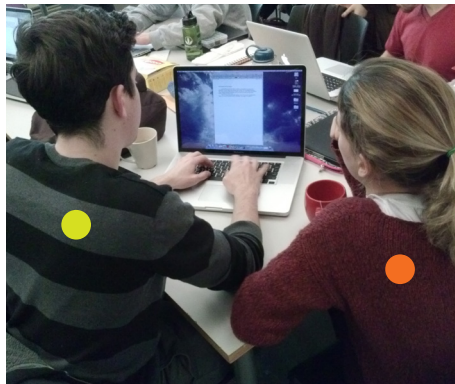
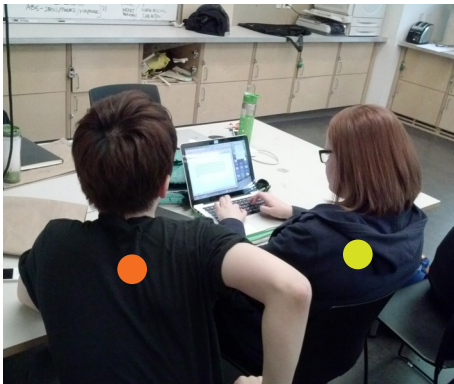
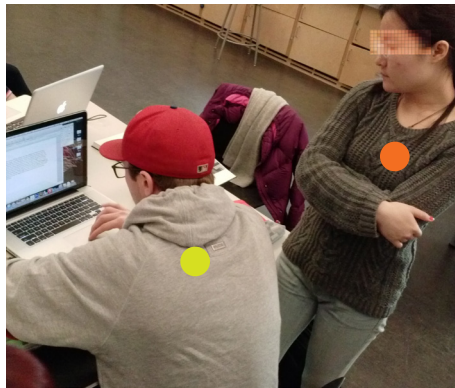
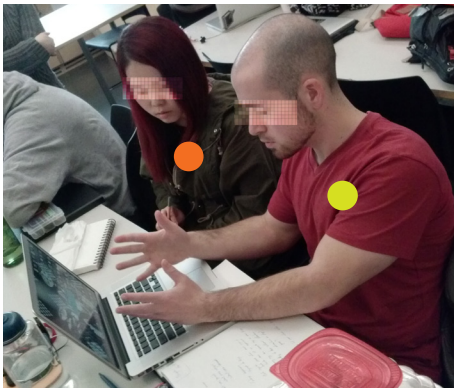


Date: February 4, 2013
 Time: 8:30am - 11:20am
 Content of the class:
 Review assignment
 - Writing activity from the last assignment for 20 minutes
 - Introduction to the new project topic

the division of the work task between the students. It was very interesting that all the American students of 6 groups, which, as we said, included international students, started typing as soon as the activity began even though they were supposed to discuss their project first.

Some of the international students noticed that their partner was writing, then quietly sat next to their partner and looked at the typing. The other international students tried to discuss what they were going to write with the American students, but they also didn't try to type it. Some of the American students appeared to be operating from prior experience assuming no input from the international students.

● International Student
● American Student



2nd Observation

R

All of the American students of the 6 groups spoke out first, then the international students spoke after they were relaxed by their partner's presentation.

The 2nd class started with a presentation that had three different types of scenarios. The students' assignment was to narrow these down to one. Each group volunteered to present their version, but the 5 groups that included Korean and Chinese students presented after the 4 groups without Korean and Chinese students. This order suggests that the international students preferred to present later unless domestic students took charge and showed their interest in presenting earlier. The international students seemed to read their partner's countenance to see their eagerness to present, but they were very passive to express their opinions.

During the presentation, we found that all of the American students of the 6 groups spoke out first, then the international students spoke after they were relaxed by their partner's presenting. We noted that the international students did not appear to have a language barrier presented. Even though the international students were fluent in English, they tended to get behind the American students. Most of the time, the international students would only speak when the instructor asked them. However, the American students were a lot more aggressive in presenting their group's ideas.

The Korean and Chinese students were psychologically shrinking because they were used to treating the American students as a dominant group unconsciously. The professor was asking questions directly to international students to help them voice their opinions, but the international showed their fear to answer to their authority.





Date: February 11. 2013

Time: 8:30am - 11:20am

Content of the class:

- Review assignment
- Presentation of 3 different types of scenarios by each group
- Narrow down to one scenario with the professors' feedback

3rd Observation

Date: February 14. 2013
 Time: 10:30am - 11:20am
 Content of the class:
 - Library Tour
 - Quick presentation of last assignment

The 3rd class started with visiting the library for their project research. After they came to the studio, all of the 9 groups had to present their assignment in an hour. The behavior we observed in the previous presentation was repeated. The American students dominated the discussion even more than last time and the international students had no chance to speak out because of the time constraint. The professor was asking questions directly to international students to help them voice their opinions on the last presentation; however, this time, the professor was rushing the presenters and cutting it short as the time went on. As a result, most of the international students did not speak a word during the presentation. It seemed they didn't have the courage to jump in and voice their thought.

4th Observation



When the international students were having trouble expressing an idea, they drew pictures and showed them to the group members

We observed students engaged in a brainstorming session on the topic of "How does someone take ownership in a public space?" Students were divided up into three different groups of six. They had to come up with 100 ideas through brainstorming by the next class, but they didn't have any experience with brainstorming. The professors tried to teach how to brainstorm during the entire class time.

The students were eager to learn the new method and a lot more active in the class. When the international students were having trouble expressing an idea, they drew pictures and showed them to the group members or asked a friend who speaks the same language and then spoke to the members. The Americans were a lot more aggressive than the international students in presenting their group's ideas but most of them played a supporting role when international students had a hard time presenting. We observed that students were getting familiar with each other. This and the class's focus on collaboration encouraged us to move forward to the next step. We decided to make the Brainstorming Activity our prototype activity.



Findings of the Class Observations

S

During all of the classes we observed, most of the international students were very passive and this had become a norm of the class.

Overall, It was surprising to find that each team had domestic students type out the paragraph and they spoke first before international students in the presentation. During all of the classes we observed, most of the international students were very passive and this had become a norm of the class.

A week after our first class observation, we asked some pairs which included international students whether they remembered the content of the writing, or not. As we assumed, the 4 out of 5 American students remembered exactly what they were writing, but the 3 out of 5 international students couldn't remember even a few sentences. As we mentioned about a stereotyped model minority in Lit Review section earlier, we realized that the assumption about model minority is not true. Because of their anxiety in the classroom and their disengagement from collaborative work, they do not have deep cognitive retention of their class work.

Also we found out that most of the international (Korean & Chinese) students were not given the chance to speak out even though they wanted to say something. We were curious why these situations happened especially for the Korean and Chinese groups. Clearly they have some cultural differences in learning styles, and they tend to regard American students as a dominant group because they have better writing and verbal skills.

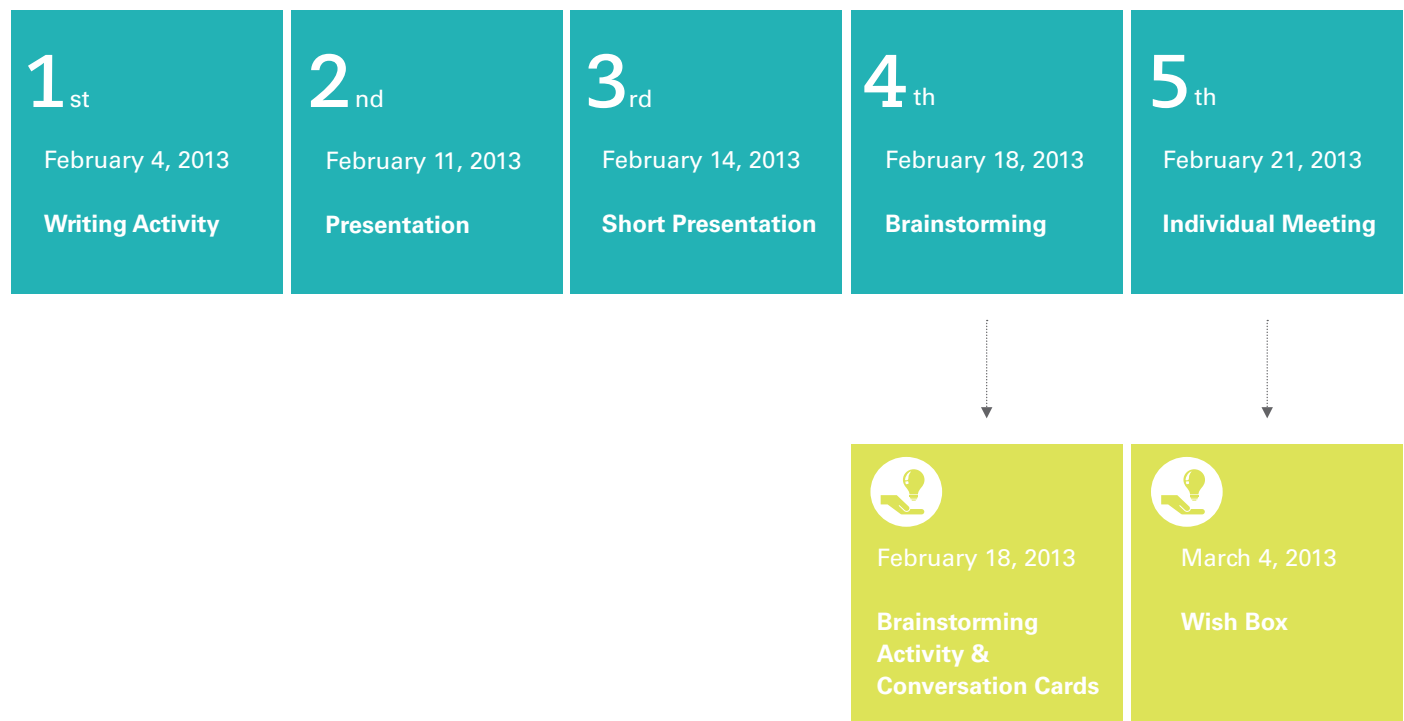
For these reasons, we wanted to encourage Korean and Chinese students to be more active in the class and make a better engagement. Also, one of the goals for our project was to assist the faculty members in integrating the international students with the American students for the collaborative projects in the curriculum. We came up the idea of creating a culture-related charrette using design methods and tools for better collaboration between the international students and the American students.

After the fourth observation, we gained an opportunity to organize an activity outside of the class with the students and we decided to implement our prototype, at the same time; Conversation Cards, which helped better communication and loosen up the tension between the students.

After the fifth observation (there were only individual meetings), we created another prototype Wish Box & Wish Cards that helps to voice the individuals' opinions for better understanding with each other. This was where each student got a chance to write wishes or suggestions to their partner and to the professors of the studio class while staying anonymous. We thought, as we deliver the suggestions back to the students and professors later, it would improve the collaborative works in the class setting.

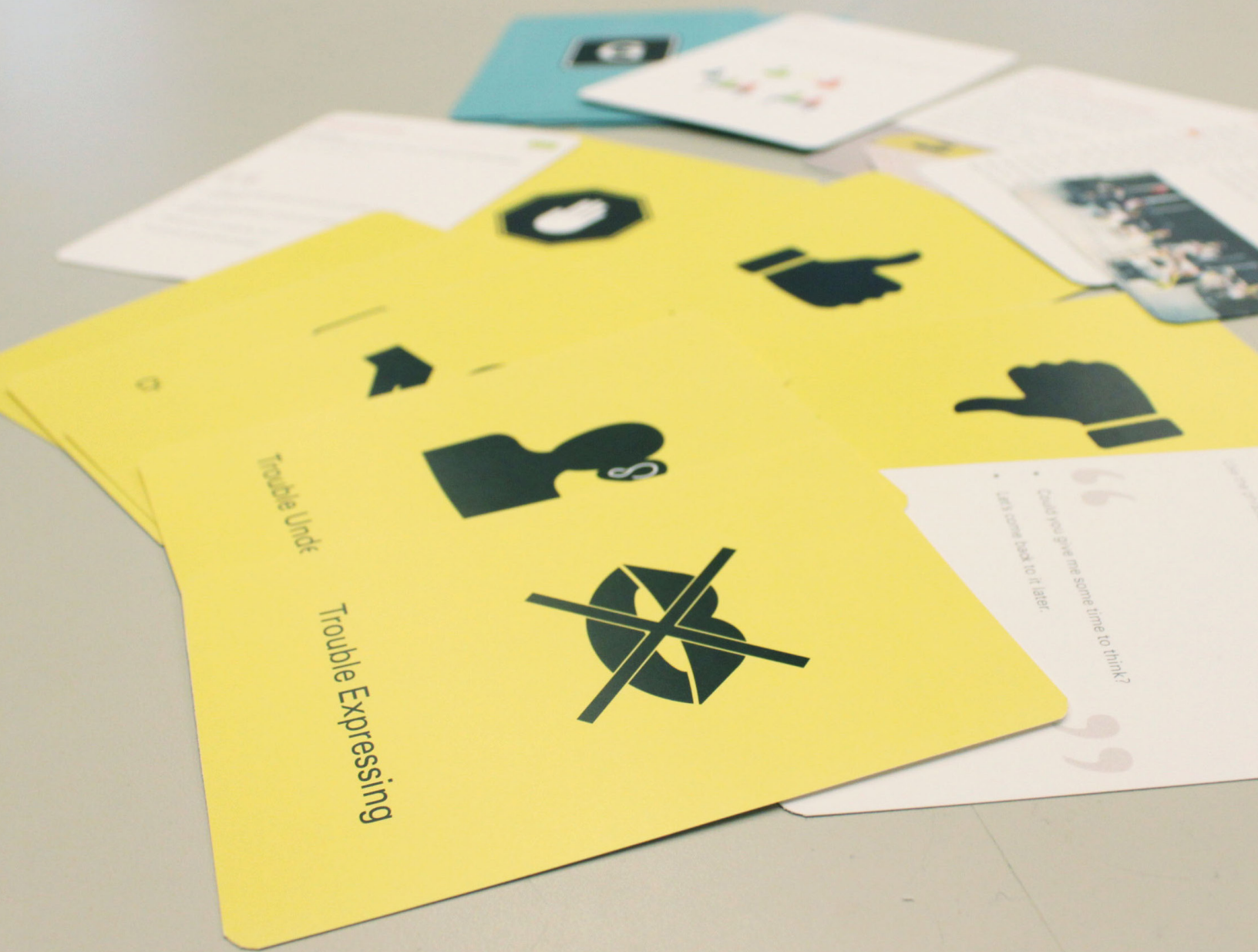
P

Holding the activity with the Conversation Cards were to give an awareness of a cross-cultural experience between the students in the classroom.



04

PROTOTYPE / ITERATION



Prototype I : Conversation Cards



Conversation Cards

P

To test whether or not our conversation cards would enhance and encourage dialogue and understanding between the students in class.

To test whether or not our Conversation Cards as our second prototype would enhance and encourage dialogue and understanding between Korean, Chinese students, and American students in class, we gained permission to intervene in an exercise already planned for an Industrial Design class. The exercise required students to team up and create 100 ideas through brainstorming. We knew that there were already 9 pairs for their project and 6 pairs included the international students. Since the 6 groups fully attended, we were able to observe how they used the cards.

P










We designed two different sets of cards, one for international students and one for local domestic students. Each card has an icon and a phrase that addresses the situation.

During the activity, we encouraged the groups to use the Conversation Cards, which were designed to remove the language and culture barriers and to help the students' communication and discussion to achieve the same goal. They were designed to encourage active communication between the international students (specifically, Korean & Chinese) and the US domestic students by raising cultural awareness in the classroom. They also provide international students an opportunity to overcome the anxiety that comes with being an international student. Also, they might assist students and faculty members to interact with different cultures while creating a valuable cross-cultural class environment.

We designed two different sets of cards, one for international students and one for local domestic students. Each card has an icon and a word that addresses the situation. On the other side, it explains the situation and provides the phrases that can be used during the discussion to help users to have a better co-working experience. International students get 6 different cards for different situations such as trouble understanding, trouble expressing, chance to speak, need more time, agree, and disagree. Local domestic students get 3 different cards that address trouble understanding, sharing, encouraging. Different color, one in yellow and one in green also differentiate it.

Prior to the "brain-storming" assignment, students had never before collectively brainstormed, using Sticky notes to record the flow of their ideas. We prepared material for a class prep session—with attendance not required.

The Conversation Cards can be used during the discussions while students are engaged in a group work or in a pair. For example, if an international student is having trouble understanding what the partner is saying, the student shows the "Trouble Understanding" card to the partner, and reads the appropriate phrases on the backside of the card.

 <p>Trouble Understanding</p>	 <p>Trouble Expressing</p>	 <p>Chance to Speak</p>	<p>Express yourself</p> <hr/> <p>Situation. You have a trouble speaking / expressing ideas.</p> <p>Use the phrases below.</p> <p>“</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let me sketch out my idea. • Let me ask my friend. • Let me find the words. <p>”</p>
 <p>Disagree</p>	 <p>Agree</p>	 <p>Need More Time</p>	<p>Express yourself</p> <hr/> <p>Situation. You are listening, but you have trouble understanding.</p> <p>Use the phrases below.</p> <p>“</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't understand, could you please repeat (slowly)? • I don't understand, could you please explain it differently? • What do you mean by "x"? <p>”</p>
 <p>Trouble Understanding</p>	 <p>Sharing</p>	 <p>Encouraging</p>	<p>Express yourself</p> <hr/> <p>Situation. You need more time to reflect.</p> <p>Use the phrases below.</p> <p>“</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you give me some time to think? • Let's come back to it later. <p>”</p>

P

Through the Conversation Cards, the students expressed themselves in more of a fun way and it helped loosen up all the serious tension.

Through the Conversation Cards, the students expressed themselves in a fun way and it helped loosen up all the serious tension during the Brainstorming Activity. Also, it was helpful to communicate about each other's idea when the international students were having a hard time explaining something. However, the use of the Conversation Cards was lower than we expected because they had to quickly create as many ideas as they could.





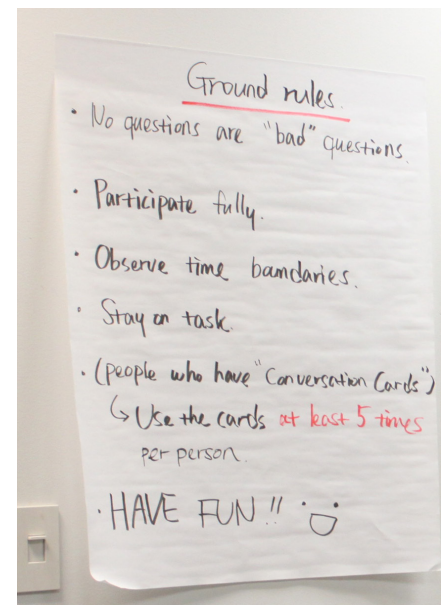
Brainstorming Activity

P

As we delivered the Ground rules, which included using the Conversation Cards at least 5 times, the students were aware of how to use the cards.

The Brainstorming Activity was held on February 18, the evening of the 4th class observation. The attendance of the session was surprisingly high. 15 out of 18 students attended and it showed how much the class requirement and obligation were powerful in pushing the students do things. The goals of the activity was not only assisting the professor, but also mainly implementing out second prototype, "Conversation Cards." We expected to see how the international students and American students express their opinions and ideas through the Conversation Cards during the discussion.

The groups were more engaged and more integrated than the actual classes we observed. Also the international students (Korean and Chinese) were able to voice their opinions very naturally and we realized it is caused by not having the most powerful authority, the professors. Because of their culturally instilled respectful behavior, they tend to be afraid to voice their opinion in front of the authority.





Brainstorming Activity
Task: Creating 100 ideas
Participants: 15 Sophomores
Date: February 18, 2013
Time: 6:00 - 8:00

Preparation of the Activity

P

All the 9 Conversation Cards’ design was considered from our research part: interviews and class observation.

For our “how to brainstorm” session, we were able to create 4 steps of activities. We customized the activity, which was inspired by one of the method books, Universal Methods of Design, and also by our experience with Jon Kolko’s workshop last year. We pulled out the 5 trends idea form the workshop: the students created ideas under the 5 trends theme.

Another thing we created was an evaluation form and it includes 5 wh + how questions which could summarize the students’ best ideas. As doing this, the students could analyze how well the ideas fit with their studio project after the brainstorming and they could move to the next step of their final products. We also provided assignment sheets, which allowed the students to evaluate their ideas in relation to the requirements the professors gave, within appropriate size.

The main preparation was Conversation Cards. All the 9 cards’ design was considered from our research part: interviews and class observation. We gathered information we saw and came up many situations when the students have discussion, and then created the cards by dividing categories.

P

Assignment sheet & Evaluation form

The students were able to consider the categories and the questions to create new ideas by this form.

TITLE / IDEA

CATEGORIES

☐ Gratitude

☐ Incentive

☐ Etiquette / Courtesy

☐ Souvenir / Keepsake

☐ Shared Totem / Experience

IDES 202 Studio 1: Projects Studio_Liminal Project Brinstorming_Feb 21, 2013





Conversation Cards

BRAINSTORMING: Summary

Place the sticky note of your best idea.

General note:

What problem is this idea solving?

Who could use this idea?

When will this idea be used?

Where will this idea be used?

How can we make this idea better?

What do you need to make it real?

IDES 202 Studio 1: Projects Studio_Liminal Project & MID Thesis Feb. 18, 2013

Evaluation Form

Process of the Activity



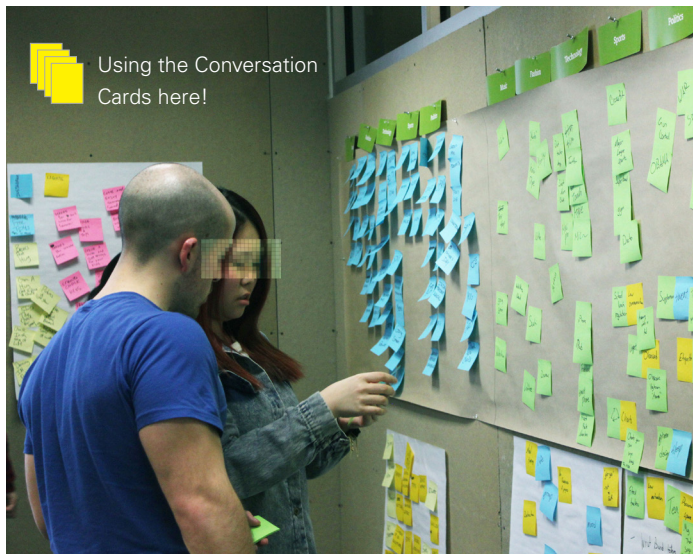
STEP 01 Intro & Icebreaker

The activity was started with an icebreaker, which included culture related questions. We led the curiosity of the students by showing similar cultural games between Asia and America, and they felt a sense of kinship with each other before the brainstorming. The students were able to keep talking about the other cultural similarities and differences naturally at this step.



STEP 02 Insights & Patterns

As a second step, the students wrote down the insights from their findings and thoughts during their research, observations, and surveys of their projects. Then, the students were given the 5 categories of trends; fashion, technology, music, sports, and politics to come up the patterns for each topic and to find opportunities for next step which was creating new ideas.



STEP 03 Creating New Ideas

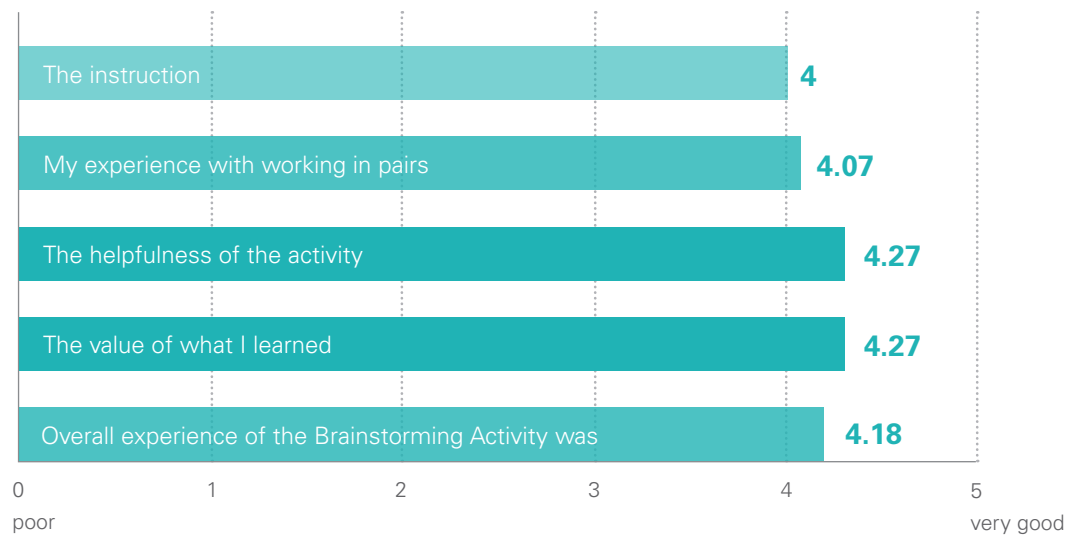
In the third step, the students picked up an insight and a pattern, and then combined them to create a new idea. They repeated the process and kept creating more ideas as many as they could, but the time limit made them stop developing the required 100 ideas. However, most groups completed about 60 ideas and they were surprised that they could finish a large amount of their assignment in a short time. We encouraged the students to use the Conversation Cards at least 5 times in this step.



STEP 04 Sharing

For the last step, they shared and presented the best idea using the evaluation form we gave to the whole class. They were able to analyze their best idea by 5 wh + how questions in the form. At this time, most of the international students were very active and they were able to present and share the groups' ideas.

Rating of the Activity



Positive Outcomes

S

To test whether or not our conversation cards would enhance and encourage dialogue and understanding between the students in class.

- The students were satisfied with the experience overall.
- The students were eager to learn something new.
- Thinking that they had to get something done for the assignment made them decide to attend the Brainstorming Activity.
- They expressed themselves in more of a funny way by using the Conversation Cards.
- The Conversation Cards helped loosen up all the serious tension.
- The Conversation Cards helped everyone communicate their idea when the international students were having a hard time explaining something.

Negative Outcomes

- Some students who didn't have a partner were having difficulty following the steps.
- They had to produce ideas quickly, so they rarely used the Conversation Cards in general.
- If we had focused more on the Conversation Cards and pushed the students to use the cards more, we might have gotten more interesting results. Because we were busy facilitating and documenting each step, we did not adequately observe the use of the cards between the students.

“

Conversation Cards were **useful to break the ice**. As an ice breaker, if there are some funny pictures or funny word, it might be more fun!

I think the cards would be **definitely helpful** if we had used them properly.

Conversation Cards **helped us speak** to our stakeholders.

”

Positive

Negative

“

“I don't think the cards were helpful. It highlighted the problem, but we **didn't need a card to identify** it. I think there is a **mutual understanding** of where the confusion is.”

”



Drop your opinions in
&
make changes



Prototype II : Wish Box

Wish Box & Wish Cards

P

The initial idea was writing a letter that would be an effective method to share information because the letter gives full control and the ability to describe the problem.

We wanted to explore a different method from face to face interaction for our second prototype. As we began our brainstorming for prototype ideas, we came across the idea of writing a letter.

Our initial idea was that writing a letter would be an effective method to share information. The reason for this is that a letter gives full control, the ability to describe the problem in one's own way, and as much time as one needs to devise one's communication in a tactful manner.

This gave us an idea for Wish Box & Wish Cards. The initial process included students filling out two or more Wish Cards anonymously and dropping them into Wish Box. From this we would gather wishes/suggestions and delivering collected comments to students and instructor.

A Wish Box was introduced into a Sophomore class where we had been doing most of the class observation. The process was fairly simple. Students would pick up Wish Cards and write their comments/suggestions/wish to their partner or professors and drop the Wish Cards into the Wish Box.

After three days, we noticed that not a lot of students participated so we had to extend the time period and encourage students to participate. After a few more days, the Wish box was collected for us to analyze and package as deliverable messages. There were varieties of different comments written on the cards, mainly four different types of messages.





S

There were a lot of comments pertained to their concerns on the projects they were working.

The first types of the comments were irrelevant types of the comments. These comments were caused due to the lack of clarification of its purpose and its topic boundaries. These comments pertained to their concerns on the project their working on or complain that they have on the professors.

The second types of comments were encouragements from American students to international students. The comments were such as “Communicate when you do not understand what is being said.” and “don’t be shy when meeting stakeholders.”

The third types of comments contained some sarcastic but honest comments. One of the cards written by American student writes, “They’re fine, I just feel like I have to do everything.” It is very short and simple but it carries some weight.

Lastly, from international student’s side, one student wrote about the frustration that comes from the lack of effort, on the part of American students, to listen. Its reads “Sometimes, American students don’t pay any attentions to thing that I say because they think it’s wrong. There is nothing wrong with my ideas but because my lack of English, I get treated as fool.”

To: ☐ Professors
☐ American Students
☒ International Students

“

Communicate when
you do not understand
what is being said.

”

To: ☐ Professors
☐ American Students
☒ International Students

“

They’re fine, I just
feel like I have to do
everything.

”

To: ☐ Professors
☒ American Students
☐ International Students

“

Sometimes, American
students dont pay any
attentions to thing
that I say because they
think it’s wrong.

”

After reviewing the messages and speaking with committee members, we came to the conclusion that we would not go forward with this idea of delivering anonymous messages. It was discussed that, delivering this type of messages anonymously would create more issues than help students to collaboratively work together.

The information we extracted from “Wish card” was used as additional data to help Doug and Jason (Sophomore class professors) as well as help us to improve on our “Conversation Card”(prototype).

S international student wrote about the frustration that comes from the lack of effort.







Iteration of the Conversation Cards

Iteration of the Conversation Cards

I

Guide part for an instructor, or whoever wants to implement the Conversation Cards and wants to see how well the cards work for a conversation between the international students and American students in their classes.

From the Brainstorming Activity, we realized that there is a high value of the Conversation Cards even though the students rarely used the cards. The Conversation Cards made the groups feel more a ease and comfortable in conversations .We concluded that the cards should be used in a real class setting and we decided to revise them so that they addressed the teachers as well.

For the final prototype, we created a set of the cards, which includes Guide Cards, Suggested Direction Cards, and Step Cards for the instructor, and also includes Conversation Cards for 6 pairs of the students.

Our intention was that the card kit would be delivered to some ESL institutions, or some classes at a college level where there is a mix of international and American students. This would prompt a discussion / team building session in the class settings. We added the blue guide part for an instructor, or whoever wants to implement the Conversation Cards and wants to see how well the cards work for a conversation between the international students and American students in their classes. We also removed the different colors on the Conversation Cards (it was yellow for the international students and green for the American students), because we didn't want to differentiate and distinguish by dividing two different groups. The new version of Conversation Cards are all the same color. However, the cards have a label, so that the cards could perform an original function between the students.

We wanted to implement the new version of the cards in an actual class at U Arts, but it was difficult to test it out because every class had their own tight schedules towards the end of the semester. However, we still believe that implementing the Conversation Cards in class would enhance interaction between the international students and the American students.





Guide 1

Introduction

1

What is the purpose of the toolkit?

The Conversation Cards will help both an instructor and the students' conversation / discussion within class setting. It is designed to encourage active communication between the international students (specifically, Korean & Chinese) and the US domestic students by raising cultural awareness in the classroom.

It also provides international students an opportunity to overcome the anxiety that comes with being an international student. Also, it assists students and faculty members to interact with different cultures while creating a valuable cross-cultural class environment.



Explanation of Conversation Cards

2

The Conversation Cards can be used during the discussions while students are engaged in group work or in a pair. There are two different sets of cards, 6 cards for international students (there is a 🇰🇷 mark on the top) and 3 cards for American students (there is a 🇺🇸 mark on the top). Also, other situations can be created and used on blank cards.

Conversation Cards are designed visually, so that users can easily know when and how to use it. Each card has icons and simple words that address the situation on the front side. On the other side, it explains the situation and provides the phrases that can be used during the discussion to help users to have better communication. Even if the students can express their idea well, the cards will allow a more fun way to communicate smoothly between the students.

For example, if an international student is having trouble understanding what the partner is saying, the student shows the "Trouble Understanding" card to the partner, and reads the appropriate phrases on the back side of the card.

Cultural Tips

3

If you have Korean and Chinese students in your class, you should be aware of these cultural aspects.

These tips are about the students' behaviors in the classroom, but there are a few exceptions.

The Korean and Chinese students are influenced by the Confucian culture. Most of the students are very respectful to seniors and they have a clear distinction between a male and a female. Also, they are very family oriented.



Cultural Tips - Respectful Behaviors:

4

- If the Korean and Chinese students avoid eye contact when you are speaking, it doesn't mean that the students don't respect you. Culturally, it is rude to keep eye contact with a person who is an authority or older than the students.
- If the Korean and Chinese students are very quiet when you are speaking, it doesn't mean that the students are not listening to you. Culturally, it is rude to interrupt, stop, or cut in on an instructor's speaking.
- If the Korean and Chinese students don't criticize directly during the critique, it doesn't mean that the students don't have critical thinking. Culturally, it is rude to say disagreement, dissatisfaction, or negative judgement directly.

Cultural Tips - Typical Behaviors:

5

- The Korean students prefer to say "we" instead of saying "I". For example, the American students refer to the United States as "my country," but the Korean students tend to refer to Korea as "our country."
- When the Korean and Chinese students introduce themselves, they tend to introduce their name, age, and family members. Also they usually ask the age when they meet a person the first time, because they have to recognize how much respect to give the person.
- The Korean and Chinese students are working very hard to get a good grade because the family expectation is high.
- If you ask "Do you understand?" then, the Korean and Chinese students answer "Yes" or nod, but they don't fully understand sometimes. They are afraid or embarrassed to say "I don't understand" in front of everybody.

Guide Cards (Instructors)

1: Introducing the purpose of the toolkit and its value.

2: Explaining how the Conversation Cards can be used.

3, 4, 5: Describing the Korean and Chinese students' typical behaviors and respectful behaviors.

D

Suggested Direction 1

Suggestions6


These are just our suggestions if you are feeling anxious about using the cards in the class.
We suggest you implement the following steps with the Conversation Cards.
If you want to use the cards in different way, go for it!


Scenario
Conversation cards can be utilized most effectively when the following requirements are met.


- When there is a discussion topic ready.
- When class is divided into subgroups (two or more students per group).
- When each sub-groups consists of both international students (specifically Korean & Chinese) and US domestic students.

Steps of Activity7

If the class is satisfied with the scenario and you are informed of all the content, you are ready to do this activity.
Feel free to add more steps or take away the existing steps to fit in your class curriculum.

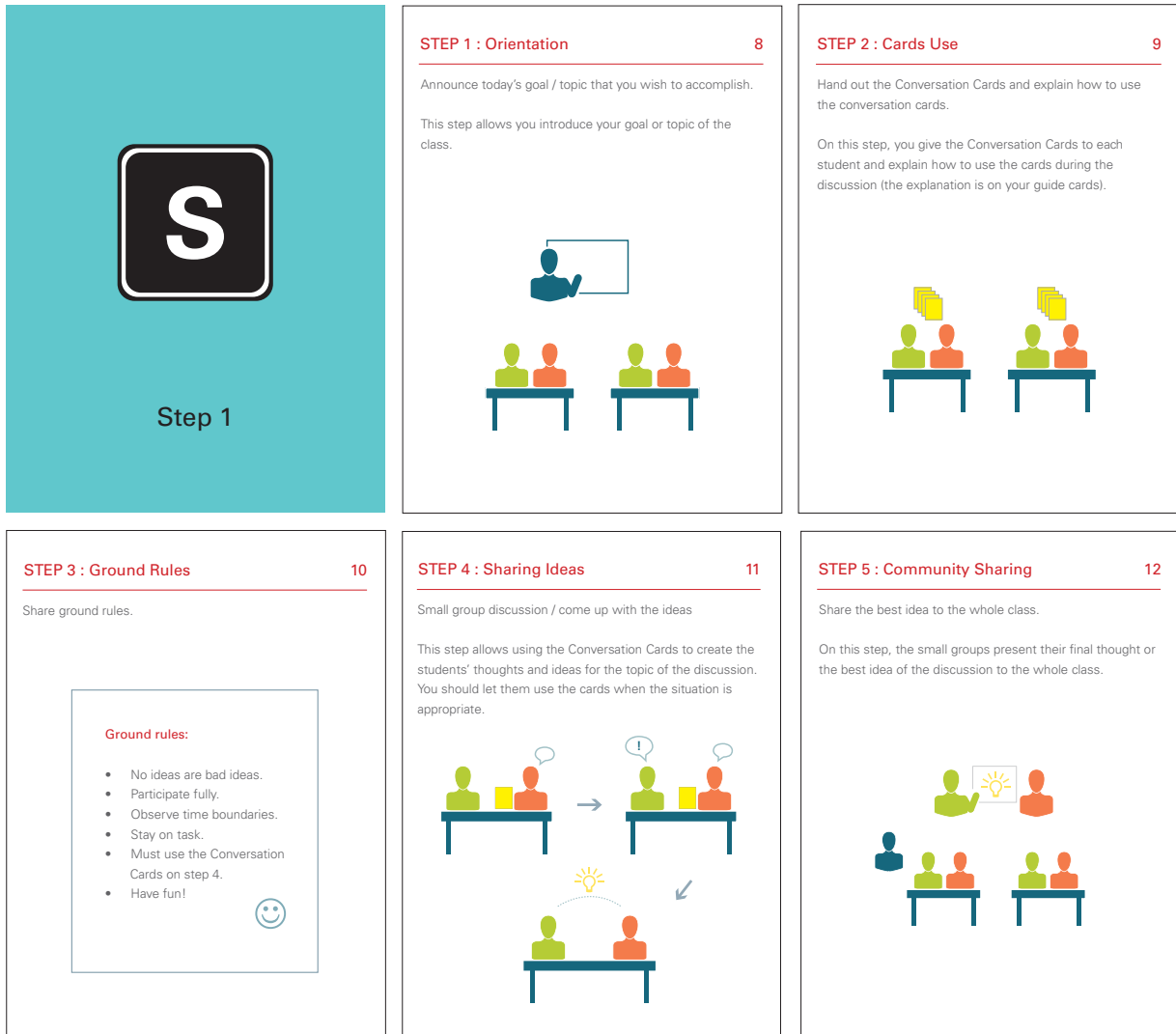
Instructor

International student

American student


Suggested Direction Cards (Instructors)

- 6 : Explaining how to implement the Conversation Cards in class.
(It is a just suggestion when the instructor is not sure how to use it in the class.)
Showing a scenario of a class environment that has the most effective conditions to use the Conversation Cards.
- 7: Introducing the steps of the activity with the visual contents.



Step Cards (Instructors)

8, 9, 10, 11, 12 : Showing the process of the activity that has conversation / discussion session.



Trouble Understanding

Express yourself


Situation:
You are listening, but you have trouble understanding.

Use the phrases below.

“

- I don't understand, could you please repeat (slowly)?
- I don't understand, could you please explain it differently?
- What do you mean by “_____”?
- Could you write that down?

”



Trouble Expressing

Express yourself


Situation:
You have trouble speaking / expressing ideas.

Use the phrases below.

“

- Let me sketch out my idea.
- Let me ask my friend.
- Let me find the words.
- Please be patient.
- I need to talk about my idea.
- Can you please listen to me?
- I'm not sure if this makes sense, but let me try to express it in the best way I can.

”



Chance to Speak

Express yourself


Situation:
You want to speak, but you are not given a chance.

Use the phrases below.

“

- Hold on, I have an idea.
- Excuse me, I would like to talk.
- I want to make sure, so what you mean is (repeating your partner's idea)?
- I understand what you're saying because I was thinking doing it in this way.

”



Agree

Express yourself

Situation:
You agree with what your partner is saying.

Use the phrases below.

“


- I agree with you and I'm really interested in _____.
- I agree with you and we can also do _____.
- I agree with you because _____.
- I think that's a good idea.

”

Conversation Cards (International Students)

The international students are given 6 cards and there are situations and phrases on the back of each card. They can show to their partner (a American student) and read the appropriate phrases.

- Chance to Speak** : It prompts a international student to jump in when they want to speak, and connect with the person who is speaking.
- Agree** : The phrases here represent more about the further communication, creating an articulation and finding ways to add to the conversation.
- Disagree** : It offers a constructive way to voice disagreement.



Disagree

I
Express yourself
I


Situation:
You disagree with what your partner is saying.

Use the phrases below.

“

- I'm wondering if maybe we could do it in different way.
- I understand what you're saying, but maybe we can try _____.
- That's an interesting idea, but _____.
- So, do you mean (repeating your partner's idea)?
- I'm not sure if that would work.
- Okay, here is what I think.

”



Need More Time

I
Express yourself
I

Situation:
You need more time to reflect.


Use the phrases below.

“

- Could you give me some time to think?
- Let's come back to it later.

”





Trouble Understanding

Express yourself


Situation:
You are listening, but you have trouble understanding.

Use the phrases below.

“

- I don't understand, could you please repeat (slowly)?
- I don't understand, could you please explain it differently?
- What do you mean by "x"?
- Could you write that down?

”



Interrupt Me

Express yourself


Situation:
You are speaking / expressing ideas, but your partner is having trouble understanding.

Use the phrases below.

“

- Please feel free to stop me if you don't understand.
- Please feel free to interrupt me if I'm talking too much.
- Ask me questions if I'm not being clear.
- Would it help if I sketch it out?
- Am I speaking too fast?

”



Encouraging

Express yourself

Situation:
You want to encourage your partner.

Use the phrases below.

“

- What do you think about it?
- Do you want to give it a try?

”

Express yourself

Situation:

Use the phrases below.

“

”

Conversation Cards (American Students)

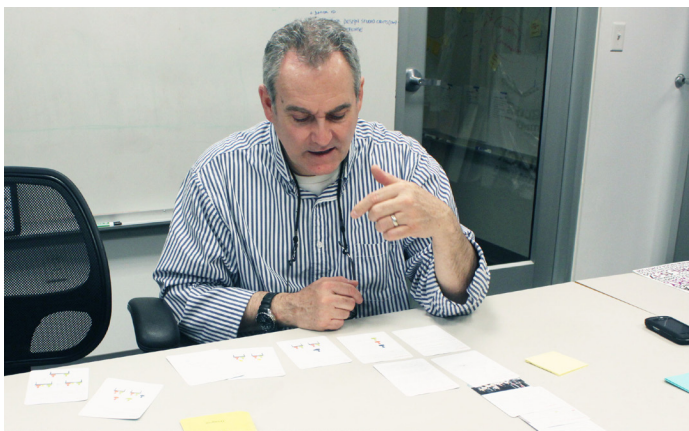
The cards for the American students are designed to encourage empathy and honest communication. They can use it with the same methods as international student’s cards. The students can show to their partner (an international student) and read the appropriate phrases on backside.

- Trouble Understanding** : Occasionally, American students are unclear what international students say. It gives a clear understanding between the students.
- Interrupt me** : It gives the international students a chance to jump in and voice their opinions.
- Blank card** : The international students and American students can co-create a card when they face with another situation.





Feedback of the Conversation Cards



Anthony Guido

Industrial Design Program Director

Tony called it “a good design with a great process” but, he expressed his desire that we incorporate an activity pertaining to cultural experience.



Sharon Lefevre

Assistant Professor

Sherry finds the cultural tips section valuable and she believes it would be very helpful to the faculty members to learn about international students. She would also like to see Conversation Cards implemented during her class discussion.



Mikyung Lee

Associate Professor

Fiber classes that she teaches do not require group work, so she does not see a use for the Conversation Cards. She suggested that it would be interesting and be more helpful to create guidelines poster or a book with the information visualized in a fun way.



Melanie Boston

ESL Coordinator

It's hard for her to imagine using it during her class because she only has international students. But, it could be a good idea to use it when she has peer tutors come to practice critic with her students.



Jason Lempieri

Master Lecturer

Conversation Cards can also be used as breaking the ice between students when it is used in a fun way. But Jason sees Conversation Card as step two of the process. Jason suggested that it needs an icebreaker active that leads to the usage of Conversation Cards.



Christopher Magee

Assistant Professor

Chris likes the fact that Conversation Cards look professional and that it helps to communicate to the teachers a issue of cultural & communication barriers.

04

CONCLUSION

- Participate fully
- Observe time boundaries
- Stay on task
- (people who have "Conversation Cards")
 - ↳ Use the cards **at least 5 times** per person
- Have fun!! ☺





Moving Forward

Accomplishment

I

We suggest faculties to try utilizing our deliverable “Conversation Cards” in class, especially group assignments. It is for creating a cultural integration within U Arts community.

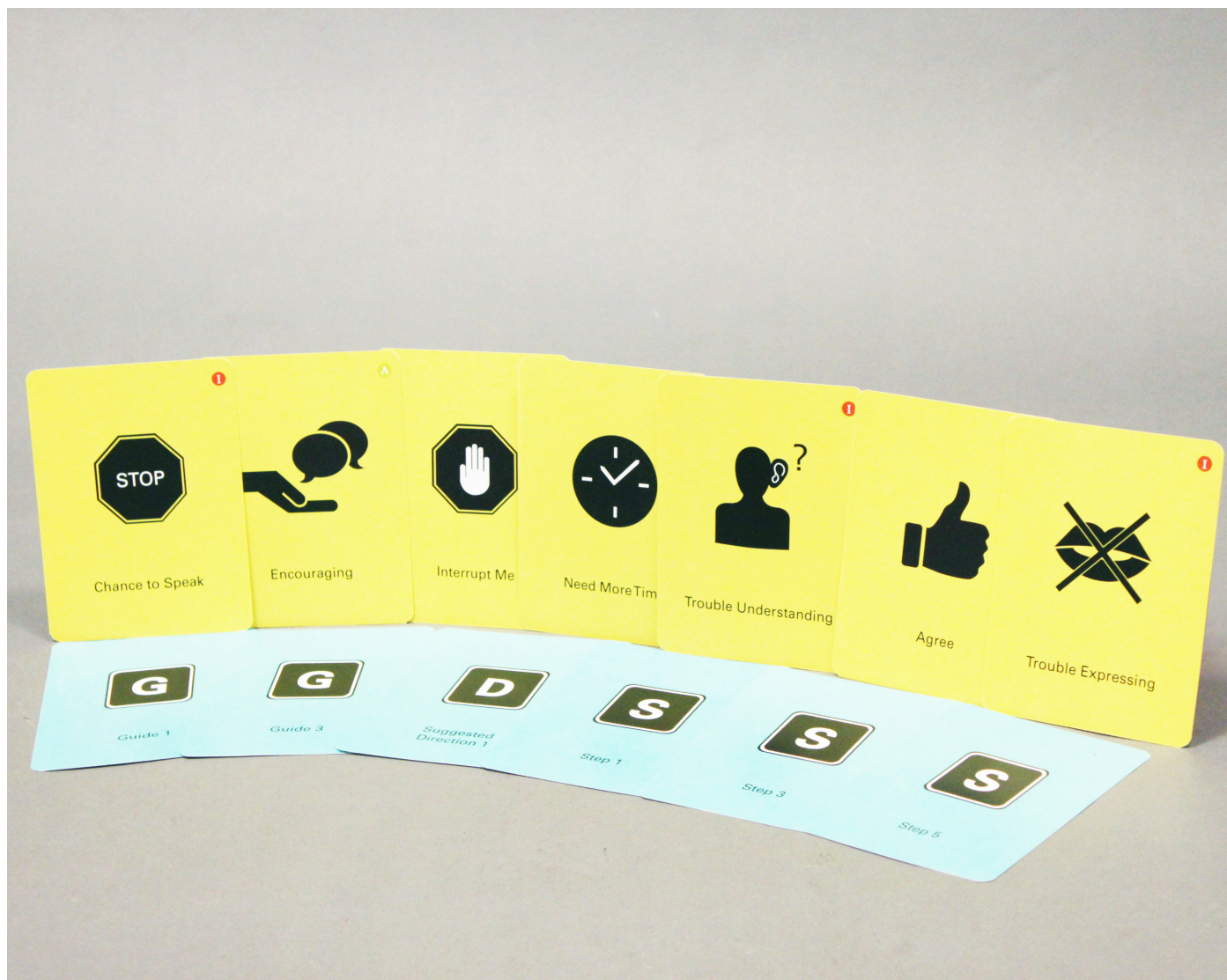
Throughout our process (Hosting design workshop, Wish Box & Wish Cards, class observation, Brainstorming Activity) and with our interventions specifically with “Conversation Cards,” there were a few things that we have accomplished;

- We tested and verified a list of classroom behavior traits common to the interactions between many international and American students.
- Through research we connected these common traits to cultural norms unknown by many American faculty and students.
- Finally we created simple tools for the communication of these culture norms, as a way to break down misunderstandings and open up communication in classrooms with international students.

Having “Conversation Cards” present within group sessions raised cultural awareness in the classroom and brought it to student’s attention.

However, due to the lack of testing, we were not able to fully test the edited version of Communication Card. It still remain as a question as to how effective it could help students to remove language and culture barriers and help students communicate well during group session between American students and international students (specifically, Korean & Chinese).

Reflecting back to our process, we have made some revealing mistakes with our first prototype “Wish Box and Wish Cards.” We came to the realization that inviting indirect communication through a “Wish Box” and “Wish Cards” was ineffective because it provided a substitute for more direct interaction and discussion. We later thought that the mistake was revealing of our own cultural proclivity (as S. Koreans) for indirect and discrete forms of communication.



Suggestions

I

We have created a “three-step process” that could be implemented in the beginning of the semester as a class curriculum or workshop activity/program.

The next step of this process would be actually testing out the “Conversation Cards” within the class setting and making an adjustment according to its results.

It is also important to note that “Communication Card” is just a one portion of our program to create cultural integration within the U Arts community.

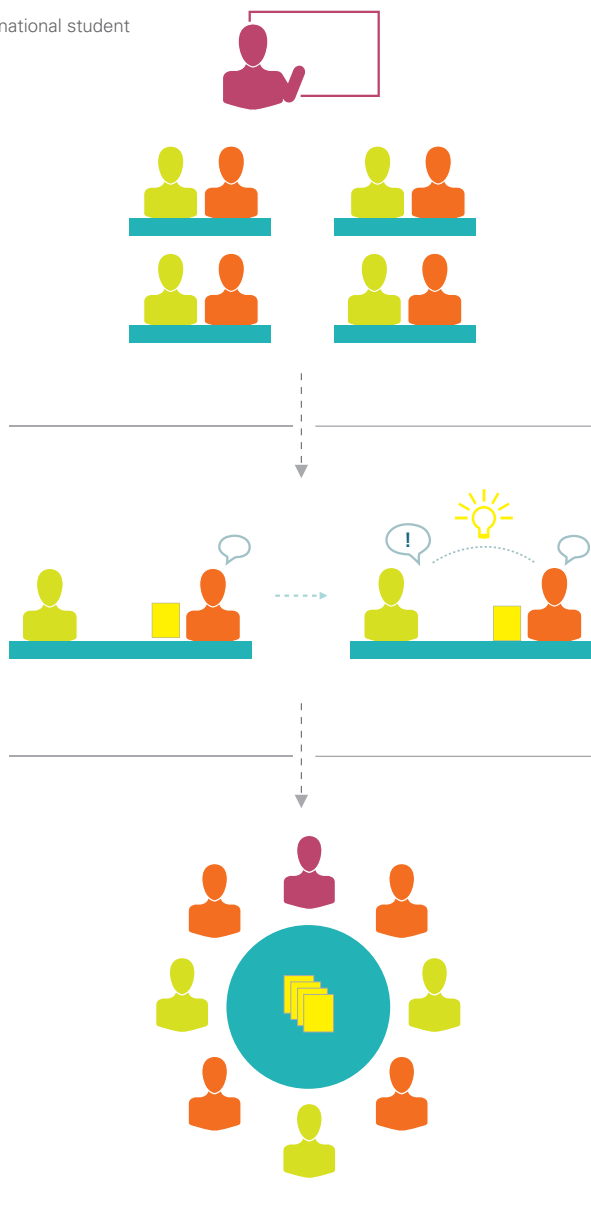
We have created a “three-step process” that could be implemented in the beginning of the semester as a class curriculum or workshop activity/program. This three-step process includes an icebreaker, utilizing Communication Cards, and regrouping.

The process begins with an icebreaker for the whole class. It is playful and fun to get everyone involved. Icebreakers are one of the most recommended activities to interweave intimacy and closeness within the whole group. Students will then share their stories with each other with the topic of their “first experience”.

A second step is utilizing Communication Cards to actually accomplish a work task for class or for a workshop. During the work task, students will be able to each seek clarification and talk about trouble understanding the vastly separate lives.

Regrouping is a process of grouping students anew for students overall to be reminded with the sense of family like community. It will reinforce students with an assurance that their place of origin or their native language will no longer be a source of hindrance in their daily routine and struggling to juggle their college life. Nonetheless, we must understand that we all are a handful of disparate lives intertwined as we deal with the tense relationships that belie the international life.

- Professor
- American student
- International student



Whole Group : Icebreaker / Storytelling

Implementing in the beginning of the semester as class curriculum or workshop activity / program.

Small Groups : Accomplishing a work task

Utilizing the Conversation Cards between the international students and American students.



Design process & toolkits here

Whole Group : Expanding the ideas for the future

Regrouping as a whole to discuss the value of the cross-cultural experience. Sharing the experience with other faculty at U Arts.

05

APPENDIX

Postscript

At our thesis defense, the fact that our project focused on our shared university community seemed to engage the audience in a lively discussion of the topics raised. We appreciated their feedback. The faculty members are facing the issues that we dealt with as the number of the Asian students is increasing currently.

One member of the thesis advisory committee informed the audience that recent statistics on student GPAs at the University show Asian students leading American students academically. While some audience members found this to be a challenge to our project focus, we disagreed. The fact that international students are doing very well in the school does not seem to affect their anxiety and their success at engaging fully with their classmates. Our interest is in the overall wellbeing of University students, not simply their academic performance.

We wanted to examine the insights of the international students, particularly Korean and Chinese students, because of:

1. The barriers that are coming from big cultural differences between East and West culture.
2. The influx of the Korean and Chinese students to study abroad in America and the U arts currently, but there is no specific research / survey about them at U Arts.
3. Our many experiences and observation that the Asian students struggle to communicate with Americans and to adjust to new American life.

Also, one of our findings from all the interviews and observations is that Asian students were really close to the Asian student community. Secondly, they could comfortably approach their professors, but their relationship with American students seemed to be challenging.

Our intervention focuses on the social needs students in the classroom because of their anxiety originating in cultural and communication barriers. The Conversation Cards kit as our prototype catalyzes the interactions of students and faculty members in a more playful way to interact within the class setting. That helps break the barriers and reduce the anxiety, so that the groups can work more collaboratively and productively.

We know that every school needs to develop ways to improve the interactions of Korean and Chinese students in their class curriculum. For our next steps, we would like to research the Korean and Chinese students in the other schools and examine the commonalities and differences of Asian students' classroom behavior from school to school.

We would also like to focus further research on faculty as leaders in the classroom. Our thesis indicated that faculty need to be informed about cultural differences that often inform Asian student behavior in the classroom and faculty need to be afforded methods for developing more dynamic and universalized educational systems.

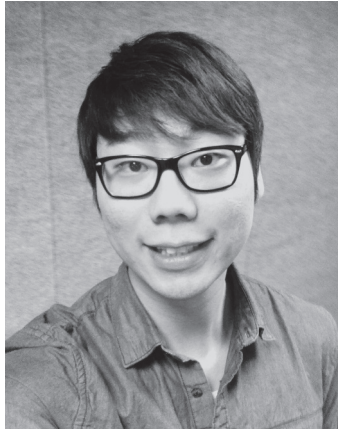


Daeun Song

As I came to the U.S. alone from South Korea, I have faced many challenges and struggles. I have an undergraduate degree in industrial design from Korea. During my studies, I felt the Korean environment limited me and wanted to experience the design education in a different environment, in America, to see different people's perspectives on design.

During my studies in the MiD program, I have grown to appreciate design methods and tools based on the principles of human-centered design. At the beginning of the first semester, my anxiety, pressure and frustration levels were high: even higher than when I first moved to the U.S. However, I was able to funnel my experiences of culture shock and the many challenges I faced at U Arts in a thesis topic that would affect me personally: breaking cultural communication barriers and integrating international students with American students in a class setting.

I believe that the work that my partner, Charles, and I have done is very valuable and would be useful for the international community that's constantly growing. I am also excited to share our work with other institutions that are dealing with similar challenges, hoping that our project would act as a tool for them to make the necessary improvements.



Charles H. Lee

I am an “one point five generation” immigrant from South Korea. I moved to America at the age of 13. I am currently a second year Master of Industrial Design student at University of the Arts. I earned my BA in New Media design from Penn State Abington.

Having an Asian-American U.S senator as my grandfather (paul shinn), I have always been interested in the topic of cross-cultural experience. Since my undergraduate years, I have been active and taken part in many groups and activities.

To name some, I was a president of Korean Student Association at Penn State Abington and I also have been TaLk (Teach and Learn Korea) Scholar where I had an opportunity to teach English to underprivileged children in rural areas of South Korea for six months.

Glossary

Anxiety : Stress can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous.

Brainstorming : a group or individual creativity technique by which efforts are made to find a conclusion for a specific problem by gathering a list of ideas spontaneously contributed by its member(s).

Co-creation : Engaging people with different backgrounds and roles to work collaboratively as part of the same team, in order to examine and innovate a given experience.

Co-design : The process of designing with people that will use or deliver a product or service.

Collaboration : To work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor.

Communication barrier : Obstacle that prevent effective exchange of ideas or thoughts. Such barriers include status differences, gender differences, cultural differences, prejudices, and the organizational environment.

CTL : Center for Teaching and Learning.

Culture Shock : The feeling of anxiety when operating within a different culture.

Design tools: Artifacts and frameworks that aid multiple aspects of the design process.

ESL : English for Second Language.

Facilitation : To make easier or help bring about.

Generative research : Informed by exploratory research, and it may also include similar methods, with a consistent emphasis on developing empathy for users.

Globalism : The policy or doctrine of involving one's country in international affairs, alliances, etc.

Group Dynamic : A system of behaviors and psychological processes occurring within a social group (intragroup dynamics), or between social groups (intergroup dynamics).

Human-Centered Design : A process in which the needs, wants, and limitations of end users of a product are given extensive attention at each stage of the design process.

Icebreaker : A facilitation exercise intended to help a group to begin the process of forming themselves into a team and commonly presented as a game to “warm up” the group by helping the members to get to know each other.

Iteration : It is the act of repeating a process with the aim of approaching a desired goal, target or result.

Research : A project begins by gathering information. Expertise is not required, however the information should be sufficient to have a solid understanding of the subject.

Scapegoating : The practice of singling out any party for unmerited negative treatment or blame as a scapegoat.

Scenarios : Illustrate a story line describing the context of use for a product or service.

Secondary Research : Supportive information including published articles, papers and other pertinent documents to develop an informed point of view on design issues.

Stakeholder : One who is involved in or affected by a course of action.

Stakeholder Map : A visual or physical representation of the various groups involved with a particular service.

Storytelling : A method for sharing insights and new concepts through the use of compelling narratives.

Synthesis : An abductive sense making process of manipulation, organizing, pruning, and framing data in an effort to produce information and knowledge.

Participatory Design : An approach to design that attempts to actively involve all stakeholders (e.g. employees, partners, customers, citizens, end users) in the design process to help ensure that the product designed meets their needs and is usable.

Prototype : A first full-scale and usually functional form of a new type or design of a construction.

U Arts : University of the Arts

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