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A Campus Professional's Guide to Understanding Culture Shock in International Students

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CNS 577

Culture Shock Defined

- Culture shock can be described as a sense of uneasiness or disorientation an international student may feel when they are immersed in an entirely new way of life. It is usually marked by anxiety and frustration. The effects of culture shock on an international student are psychological, emotional, and physical. Symptoms and side-effects of culture shock are pervasive and disruptive to the international student experience.

Culture Shock

Causes	Signs/Symptoms
• Language barriers • Differing social roles • Climate changes • Differing values and beliefs • Relationship stress	• Homesickness • Depression • Inability to concentrate • Irritability • Excessive cleaning • Over or under eating • Insomnia • Loss of confidence

Culture Shock

Why is it important?

- International students are vital to creating diversity on college campuses and enhancing internationalization efforts.
- Culture shock can often result in students leaving the university.
- International student enrollment is on the rise.
- Overcoming culture shock leads to a more positive experience for international students.
- Side-effects of culture shock can negatively impact the overall well-being of international students.
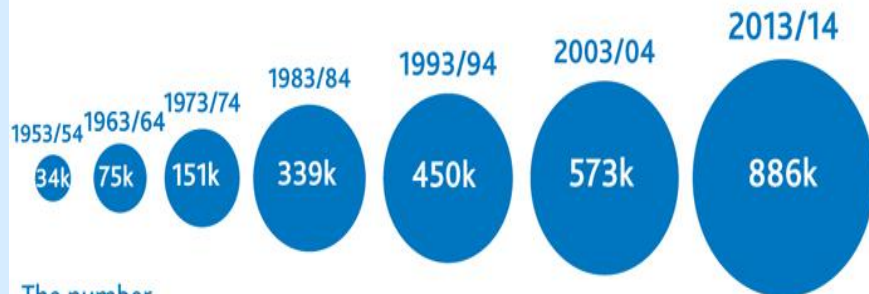
Ways for Students to Overcome Culture Shock

- Keeping an open mind
- Joining organizations on campus
- Meeting up with a veteran international student
- Exercising and eating well-balanced meals
- Keeping in touch with family
- Having a support system through college personnel
- Being able to share their culture with others

International Student Statistics

Left panel:

In 2013/14

886,052

international students studied at U.S. colleges and universities

1953/54 — 34k
1963/64 — 75k
1973/74 — 151k
1983/84 — 339k
1993/94 — 450k
2003/04 — 573k
2013/14 — 886k

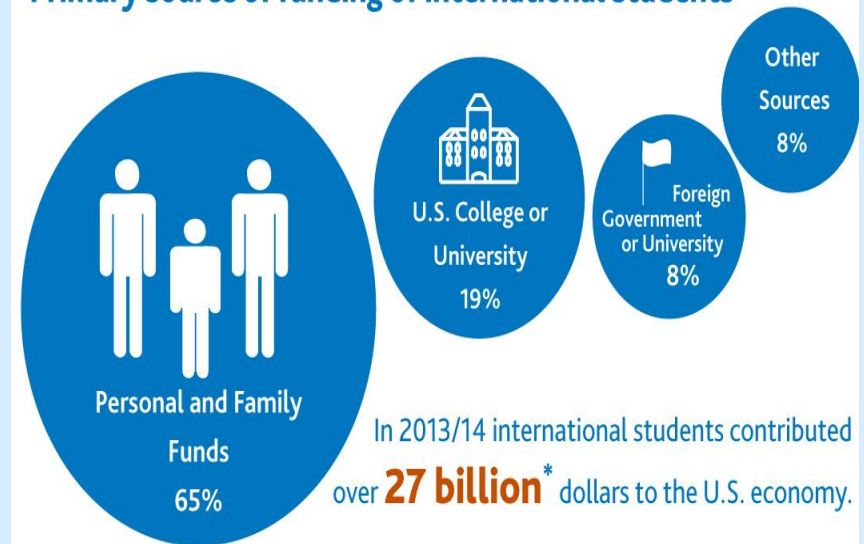The number of international students studying in the U.S. grew by **8%** over the prior year and is now at a record high.

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Right panel:

In 2013/14

Primary source of funding of international students

Personal and Family Funds 65%

U.S. College or University 19%

Foreign Government or University 8%

Other Sources 8%

In 2013/14 international students contributed over **27 billion*** dollars to the U.S. economy.

*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce and is now at a record high.

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