**New experiences studying as an international student in the US.**

The experience of studying in a new country with different cultures, economies and people has been definitely different. The main reason of choosing to study in the US was to be able to learn new things from different people and get a high-level education. The higher level of education will help in making a difference in development in the home country.

 The reason this topic is worth exploring is because of the importance of letting others know the experiences of international students. Both the local students would benefit from seeing information from the perspective of an actual international student in order to better understand them and their struggles. Additionally, students from other countries that may want to study in the US can get a general idea of what to expect once they move to the US. They are able to prepare themselves for the challenges adequately and get some tips on how to deal with them and achieve the ultimate results.

The experience studying in the US has been both positive and negative in some aspect, with some challenges along the way. However, it has been a great and enlightening learning opportunity. To begin with, the US culture is founded on hard work, effort and innovation. The classes attended constantly encourage the students to work efficiently and creatively, and it has enabled me to broaden my thinking. Specifically, the school faculty emphasizes on the need for students to grow.

My experience as an international student in the US has been overral positive and most of the challenges are outside the curriculum and the rest are challenges that can be easily dealt with in time.The general US school culture as compared to my home country is more relaxed, however the grading system was a challenge to keep up with. Students are generally allowed to work on their own schedule, however there are really strict rules when it comes to handing in assignments and during grading. The grades and the GPA mean everything despite the laidback nature of the curriculum.

However, fitting into a new society has been a difficult task. The first week in the school was especially confusing and intimidating being in a completely new environment. Despite the orientation period, the classes and the social aspect after the classes was difficult to figure out. Further, being in a new country makes one homesick and nostalgic. There was a feeling of instant regret of having moved so far away from home and having to start over especially when making friends.

There was a lot of loneliness because of the lack of friends and people who I could relate with. The homesickness was brought about mostly by the fact that the new environment was vastly different from the environment that I previously was in. Moreover, that my family was miles away, further than I had been used to. The homesickness definitely affected my general performance. Spending numerous hours feeling sorry for my situation affected my studies at the beginning of my stay as a student in the US. However, the student services were very helpful in helping the international students since they understood the difficulty of being a newbie. They set up different helpful services including financial aid, advice on career choices, counselling sessions and advice on course registration.

Due to the new culture in the US, there was definitely culture shock. Everything including the food and the whole school system was completely different. The classes and teaching styles were different, s well as te grading system and examination system. Basically, this culture shock is brought about by the interaction with people that belong to a different way of life than I was used to. There were several behaviors, gestures and acts that were interpreted differently in my culture. I needed to unlearn what I was used to and learn to cope with the new culture. Before I created a network of friends and relationships that helped me interpret and learn the new social cues, the experience of unlearning was particularly stressful and difficult.

 Additionally, despite my prior knowledge of English, the language became a bit difficult for me to understand especially due to the new accent. This communication barrier really contributed to my learning shock that caused confusion and anxiety as I tried to understand the lecturers and the unfamiliar learning environment. The teaching method was different as it is mostly lecturing and assignments as compared to my previous learning experience. Additionally, some of the metaphors and figures of speech were difficult to understand. This contributed to my shyness in talking and contributing in classes during the start of my school stay in the US. This was not only in classes and lectures but also in the readings. However, I quickly adapted and learnt that I should not be scared of making mistakes and to be open to learning new things.

 Another issue I faced was the issue of finances. As compared to my home country, the life as a student in the US was more expensive. There was therefore a struggle with having to maintain a budget that was sustainable. Further, not having any close family or friends to ask for money swiftly.

Lastly, I dealt with the social aspect of being in a new environment where everyone was curious and interested in knowing about me and the kind of environment I was from. There was a fascination by others about being an international student that seemed exotic and unique. Despite feeling overwhelmed and disturbed by the constant attention, I accepted it a it actually turned out to be an opportunity to network and get rid of the homesickness and loneliness. Constantly talking about where I was from made me feel appreciated and closer to home. I was glad that I could share my different experiences with everyone.

Despite all the challenges, the experience of being an international student in the US has been amazing. It has enabled me to build my resilience and the ability to adapt quickly and positively to change. Further, I have bee able to learn new cultures along side mine, which I believe improves the ability to understand people better and be less judgmental. Additionally, the education system here encourages having an open mind and creativity which has boosted my overall power of innovation. It has given me a sense of freedom and independence that I would have otherwise not achieved.