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Intercultural communication problems of Nigerian students in the Portland Metropolitan Area : a comparative study of a review of literature and personal interviews

Sam Tugba
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF SAM TUGBA
for the Master of Arts in Speech Communication
presented October 29, 1984

Title: Intercultural Communication Problems of the
Nigerian Students in the Portland Metropolitan
Area: A Comparative Study Based on the
Review of Literature and Personal Interviews.

APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

Dr. Milton Bennett, Advisor/Chairman

Prof. LaRay Bernal

Prof. Ben Padrow

This study is an attempt to discover the intercultural communication problems and the methods of coping used by the Nigerian students in the Portland metropolitan area and the extent to which these discovered problems and tried solutions compare with those of other international students that are commonly reported in the literature.

These problems are discussed following the subcategories of foreign students' adjustment problems in the areas of cultural, personal, social and educational adjustment. Cultural adjustment is used here in a limited way to refer to both physical and world view. In the physical aspect, foreign students in general are reported having difficulty in adjusting to the American food, dress, transportation system and weather. Financial difficulty makes adjustment difficult for some foreign students. The result of the interviews shows that Nigerians in Portland report no serious problems in food, transport and dress, but have problems with weather and finances. Problems of conceptual differences in world view were also identified.

Personal adjustment discussed jointly with the above subcategory refers to the individual satisfaction, acceptance, feeling of comfort and smooth integration into the American culture, which the literature reports requires a possession of a positive attitude. The literature review shows that foreign students with negative attitudes show severe problems in both short and long time adjustment in their sojourn. While a few cases of problems exist in this area, the majority of respondents indicated no problems.

Social adjustment category is defined to mean the ability to form satisfactory relationships with the American host nationals. The educational experience of each foreign student could be impoverished to the extent that he or she fails to maintain good social contact with the host culture. Literature about foreign students generally reports a lack of a meaningful interpersonal contact between foreign students and the host nationals. A strong contrast was discussed during the interview

schedule as this area seemed to present no problem to the Nigerian respondents in Portland. Because of the culturally conceptual differences in meaning regarding friendship, misunderstanding usually exists between the host and the ~~foreign~~ students. Surprisingly, over three-quarters of the respondents in Portland reported they have no problem of friendship with American students. This area needs further research for more confirmation. Problems of misinterpreting nonverbal behavior and assuming cultural similarity are also identified.

Adjusting to the educational system of the United States is one other area that poses problems for international students. For foreign students to experience a maximum educational benefit, they need to understand the problem of differences in language, examination format and grading systems. The problem of relationships to both school administrators and instructors are also examined. Cases of stereotypes which present frequent miscommunication are ~~also noted~~. In these areas Nigerian students in Portland show more similarities than contrasts with the findings reported on foreign students.

The last major category is the analysis of the methods of coping. In order to function effectively in the face of the above problems, foreign students either fight, withdraw, avoid, compromise or go native as their methods of coping. Others use group supports in which case they integrate and mingle with both nationals, other cultures and their home cultures. Nigerians in Portland reported using similar methods. Direction for improvement suggests ways of orienting Nigerian students before they arrive in the United States to pursue their studies.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS
OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS
IN THE PORTLAND METROPOLITAN AREA:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF A REVIEW
OF LITERATURE AND PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

by
SAM TUGBA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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in
SPEECH COMMUNICATION
with special emphasis in
Intercultural Communication

Portland State University

1984

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Special thanks also go to the members of the Committee. They made a special effort to meet even at the shortest possible notice. Dr. Bennett deserves credit for exploring different topics with me when I did not know

how to begin. His open invitation to call on him anytime both at school and at home made his services invaluable. His intellectual skills in exploring alternative viewpoints made useful contributions to my work. I cannot thank him enough. Prof. Barna, in spite of her busy schedule, agreed to relinquish part of her summer vacation to be my advisor. In a culture that places a high value on time, those laborious hours spent in her office in order to guide the direction of my thesis cannot be fully recompensed. Prof. Padrow's insightful questions and critique provoked my thinking a great deal. Janet Bennett, the director of the Liberal Arts Department at Marylhurst, made invaluable contributions to my work. She offered me books which I could not find in libraries as well as giving insights and encouragement.

In all honesty, the thesis could never have been completed at this recorded time without the hard work, willingness and gracious free typing services of Mrs. Louise Fisher. On many occasions, when I handed to her roughly written papers late and wondered whether I would meet a deadline, she would work late and arise early. She would not only return the well typed work on time, but also would include an encouraging note empathizing and praying that the Lord Jesus would help me in my work! Her husband has not only been understanding

but very cooperative. Only Christ can reward them.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Every year thousands of international students enroll in American colleges and universities, and the number keeps growing. An Open Doors (1984) report shows the astronomical figure of 336,985 international students in United States institutions of higher learning for 1982-1983. Paige (1982) quotes Open Doors (1981) to show the statistical growth of the foreign students in the United States:

In the academic year 1954-1955 there were 34,232 foreign students enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions; in 1979-1980, 286,300 foreign students were enrolled in 2,651 colleges and universities.... A recent projection suggests that the number of foreign students will increase to one million by the year 1990. (pp. 102-103)

Earlier on, another researcher, Das (1976), had given a breakdown of foreign student population on "the three largest contingents" for 1975-1976. Quoting official sources, the author says there were 178,850 foreign students in the United States, who came from all over the world. The three largest contingents were from Iran (19,630), Hong Kong (11,764) and Nigeria

(11,282). It is likely the number of foreign students in American higher institutions will continue to grow.

Let us take a glance at the contributions of foreign students both to international relations and to the academic setting. In his unpublished paper, Heft (1976) discussed, among other issues, how the training of foreign students may contribute to the reduction of world tensions which threaten world peace. The author envisions the possibility that international training problems will benefit relations between the United States and other countries. Today, global tension is the topic that dominates the American news media. It is hoped that more American and Russian students will participate with each other in exchange programs, as Angell (1969) discusses in his article on Peace on the March: Transnational Participation.

Thompson (1971) sees foreign students as "Leaders for Tomorrow" when she writes:

A foreign student who finished his graduate work here only in 1961 is today Sweden's Minister of Education. Another who studied here in 1963 is today Singapore's Ambassador to the United Nations. Still another, a graduate student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1961, is now directing a nuclear research center in Israel. Many others, advanced students here as little as 6 to 15 years ago, are now members of parliament, ministers of finance, agriculture, or education; presidents or deans of universities; top level scientists or diplomats; heads of social welfare or economic development programs, leaders in many professional fields from law to dentistry...

No one can say with assurance what specific education or experience produces a leader--in this country or any other. But it's a certainty that more and more of tomorrow's leaders here and elsewhere will be drawn from those who study outside their own country, or have had some opportunity to observe other nations and peoples of the world...

Wherever they study, foreign students represent a potential leadership group on their return home. The presence of foreign students on U.S. campuses, moreover, is recognized as a means of enriching the education of American students and the research and teaching programs of U.S. institutions. (p. 1)

Another writer, Calder (1967), considers the aspects of "International Relations and Exchanges of Scientific and Technical Fields" to other nations through their representative students in American institutions. In this light, American institutions have the opportunity to advertise their scientific and technical equipment in less developed nations, whose citizens may become skilled in the American system of education. Frankel (1966) sees the opportunities for educational and cultural relations leading to more cooperative and binding relationships between the government of the United States and of other nations. Mestenhauser (1975) suggested several areas in which foreign students can contribute to the educational horizon of American students, and how American students may provide a useful and self-enhancing role for foreign students during their stay in this country. The list includes: study of socialization and leadership; country

and area studies, cross-cultural learning--international dimensions of social sciences and other related fields; cross-cultural communication; study of national and international conflicts; and cross-cultural perspectives on development and underdevelopment. Other sources deal with the financial benefits realized from tuition, rents and general merchandise.

Just as there has been a marked increase in the total influx of foreign students into the United States, so has there been a sharp increase in the number of Nigerian students. Nigeria is one of the developing countries with higher priority on education, as can be seen by the vast number of Nigerian students. According to Open Doors (1981) there were only 268 Nigerian students in the United States in 1954-1955. This number suddenly rose to 20,710 in 1982-1983. There are some speculations in newspapers, for example Chronicles of Higher Education (April, 1984), that the current figure has risen to 26,000 for the 1984 academic session. Given either this number or the earlier number, in both cases Nigeria has the largest student contingent in the United States, out of the sending nations. It is also true that there are more Nigerian students in the United States than in any other foreign country. These figures prove that Nigerians have great interest in the American system of education. So, also, should there be concern for the well-being of these

students.

Many people are concerned about what happens to these foreign students in the United States. Organizations like NAFSA have devoted much time and money to study this question and offer services to both foreign students and receiving institutions.

It is common knowledge that when people move from their familiar environmental setting to an unfamiliar one, they are bound to encounter cultural differences, some of which demand major adjustments. Foreign students in the United States are no exception to this fact of cross-cultural reality. Das (1976) succinctly states that:

For many of the foreign students the social and cultural environment of the host country is very different from the one they come from. On arriving in this country, they encounter many problems of adjustments which require a complex learning on their part. (p. 1)

Associated with foreign students, there are usually certain common intercultural communication problems that come to mind. A number of communication experts have researched these problems. One of the articles recently written by Swam (1983) is as follows:

When an international student in the United States attempts to communicate with an American student he is attempting to communicate interculturally. Both participants are completely from different cultural backgrounds. Porter, Sitaram, Barna, Wedge and others have defined intercultural communication in terms of problems or barriers: language, nonverbal

misunderstanding, preconceptions and stereotypes, tendency to evaluate, high anxiety, perceptual distortion, conceptual differences, differing modes of reasoning, social organization, roles, space, time and in general, culture. (p. 92)

This quotation has given light to some of the common problems often associated with foreign students.

Confronted with these problems, students from different parts of the world have been known to characteristically use certain methods to cope with their problems. Perhaps there are identifiable patterns. Some coping mechanisms may prove effective and some not. For example, those who try to solve their problems by the common approach of "avoiding involvement" have consequently missed their opportunities to meet the people in the new culture and thus learn from each other. Since so many international students are here including a large number from Nigeria, it seems useful to identify patterns of common problems and coping mechanisms used to aid future students and administrators/professors who assist them. This point will be expanded further under justification.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose for this study is three-fold: (1) to discover, by means of personal interview, the extent to which the intercultural communication problems and attempted solutions of the Nigerian students in the

Portland metropolitan area match those that are most often mentioned in the literature regarding international students, (2) to analyze the discovered problems and tried solutions in terms of certain intercultural communication concepts, and (3) to suggest directions for improvement in preparation of Nigerian students in terms of the discovered problems.

One of the tenets of intercultural communication theory is that differences exist whenever people from different cultural backgrounds are engaged in various forms of interactions. The magnitude of these differences and the resulting problems are reported by many writers. (i.e. Deutch, 1970; Walton, 1968) In applying a "difference-based perspective," it is assumed that the interacting parties recognize that legitimate man-made and multi-variate realities exist. These differences do not imply inequality. Awareness and respect for cultural differences facilitate conceptual bridge building in intercultural, interpersonal interactions.

Specific problems related to the above theoretical perspective that are relevant to this study include cultural and racial stereotyping, preconception, misconception, and culture-bound interpretations of nonverbal behaviors, value differences in the use of time, differences in the concept of friendship, social relationships, and communication style.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Need To Document Findings
On Nigerian Students in
Portland Metropolitan Area

Numerous studies have been done on a large number of international students in American universities and colleges. This is of great help to many researchers, institutions, trainers and tourists who need specific information on a given group of people. Few studies, however, have been done on Nigerian students in American higher institutions of learning. Out of this few, a very small number touched on the intercultural communication problems of the Nigerian students. See, for instance, Arubayi (1981), Okwudishu (1983), and Fieg and Blair (1975). To the author's knowledge, no study has been done on Nigerian students in Oregon or Portland. There are numerous dissertations written by Nigerian students on various topics, but none are in the field of speech communication. This is unfortunate, for intercultural communication is one of the key areas that Nigerian students and the host culture need to understand for successful interaction.

Considering the vast number of Nigerian students in the United States and their long history in the Portland metropolitan area, the need for such a study has been overdue.

Need To Assess The Degree
Of Similarity Of Problems
With Other Foreign Students

The review of literature will help to discover the most common problems which most foreign students face, as well as the coping methods that have proven effective. Data will be obtained from personal interviews with Nigerian students in the Portland metropolitan area to discover what common intercultural communication problems they face. This information will be compared and contrasted with those of the literature review. If Portland's Nigerian students' problems are similar to those of Nigerian students elsewhere and of international students in general, it will be assumed that the effective coping methods others have used should prove equally effective for these Nigerian students in Portland. The differences will, however, require closer attention to generate hypotheses for further research in solving those problems.

Need To Update and Further
Document Research On
Intercultural Communication

This study is important in upgrading a number of findings relating to Nigerian students from over 15 years ago. As earlier mentioned, few communication studies have been done on Nigerian students, as anyone may confirm by reviewing the existing literature. Of those few, most

of them were done between 1960 and 1970. According to Tucker, Weaver and Fink (1981) the field of communication itself is relatively new, and in some cases is plagued by conflicting opinions on issues of definitions and terminology. Certain changes are known to have taken place since the inception of communication as a major academic field. There is some benefit to be derived by reactivating findings in order to give them an up-to-date dimension in the cross-cultural setting. For instance, among Nigerian students, Sofola (1967) found that they possessed positive attitudes toward American social, political, economic and spiritual ideals on arrival, but developed increasing bitterness and ambivalence during their sojourn. Although this thesis does not deal with Nigerian students' attitudes toward American politics and economy, it encompasses a wide area in social adjustment. It might therefore be useful to update findings to support how Nigerians adjust.

Some interview questions were worded to discover the students' expectations on arrival. It is commonly accepted that individual expectations contribute to the ease or difficulty of adjustment in a host culture. Perhaps findings such as this will further strengthen the scope of research on Nigerian students elsewhere in the States, or future Nigerian students in the Portland area will derive benefits from my documenting the past

findings or new available insights from the theorists of intercultural communication.

FORMAT

The format for this thesis will be as follows:

Chapter I has presented the introduction, which primarily included background material, purpose and justification. Chapter II will present a review of the literature covering the most common intercultural communication problems of international students, including Nigerian students, in American higher education institutions. This section will also look at the coping patterns from some sample foreign students' nationalities. This data will serve as a basis for comparing and contrasting information about the problems and coping patterns of Nigerian students in the Portland area to be compiled through interviews. Chapter III will present the methodology of this study, and also report the findings. Chapter IV will present analysis in the form of comparison and contrast of the problems and the tried solutions of the Portland Nigerian students with those presented in the literature review. Limitations of Study will be the topic of Chapter V. It will present the implications and applications of the study. This chapter will seek to explore certain specific intercultural communication concepts relevant to this study, while looking at the

selected emerging issues in terms of intercultural communication theory on a difference-based perspective.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW: SUMMARY OF MOST COMMON INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS AND TRIED SOLUTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Dixon Johnson (1971) writes:

Foreign students are more students than foreign. If we accept this and recognize them as riders on this same earth with comparable needs and wants and in this spirit receive them on our campuses, we can then create a more healthy basis for the establishment of friendship between Americans and international students.

Because international students leave their homeland and come to this country to continue their education, it is generally expected they will encounter more difficulties than American students in adjusting to a university.
(pp. 68, 61)

The above statements appear contradictory at first glance, but a closer examination shows they are not. The first statement reveals the fact that both foreign and American students have common needs and problems. The second statement shows the fact that international students, by virtue of their being foreign, have unique problems. This chapter will generate useful categories from literature on foreign student problems to compare to Nigerian data, and also will introduce intercultural communication concepts useful in the analysis of Nigerian data.

The problems of foreign students have, for many

years, been a popular topic to many writers and researchers. Books, dissertations and articles have been written covering the topic in various aspects. For his dissertation, Porter (1962) developed an inventory to determine the problems of foreign students in Michigan University campuses. He had three purposes in mind:

(1) to develop an inventory to determine if the problems of foreign students could be generalized from the problems of foreign students as reported in literature and elsewhere; (2) to determine if these problems and concerns once identified would be considered unique as compared to the problems of United States students; and (3) to determine if significant problem differences existed among selected groups of foreign students. (p. 3783)

There were 108 foreign students and 50 United States students who participated in this study. The result of the study, according to the author, reveals that certain problems could be generalized to other foreign students, and that this inventory can differentiate between the problems of foreign students and United States students. The researcher further on suggests that differences exist among groups of foreign students regarding their problems and concerns.

Other research conducted at the University of Tennessee by Johnson (1971), earlier cited, has items similar to Porter's, though in a condensed version, which covered 11 major areas and 132 subitems. Johnson believes that the most common problem areas of foreign students

include the following:

English language proficiency, adequacy of education in U.S., lack of good friends, racial or religious discrimination, unfriendliness of American students, food, lack of contact with people from home, homesickness, difficulty in getting along with teachers/staff, housing, financial difficulty and dating problems.
(p. 62)

In the above research, the author observed some features which are worth mentioning. According to him, the same questionnaires were given to both foreign students and American students, though at separate times. In case of the latter, the wording was changed slightly. For example, instead of "English language proficiency," it was reworded, "Ability to communicate effectively" and "Unfriendliness of American students" reworded as "Unfriendliness of fellow students." Respondents were required to indicate whether each item was a very important problem, important problem, sometimes a problem, or not a problem. A considerable number of items were discovered to be problematic for American students as well. (See Table I.) This may confirm the findings by Walton (1968) regarding the similarity of the problems faced by both domestic and foreign students. However, the American and foreign students may have different reasons for considering certain items a problem. According to the researcher, only in three areas--food, homesickness and separation from family--were statistically significant

TABLE I
PROBLEMS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

Problem area		Percentage Responding	
		Problem	Not a Problem
English language proficiency/ Ability to communicate effectively	Foreign	60	40
	Domestic	63	37
Adequacy of education here	Foreign	49	51
	Domestic	62	38
Lack of good friends	Foreign	46	54
	Domestic	30	70
Racial or religious discrimination	Foreign	32	68
	Domestic	27	73
Unfriendliness of American/ fellow students	Foreign	44	56
	Domestic	53	47
Food	Foreign	34	66
	Domestic	54	46
Lack of contact with people of my own country/from my home area	Foreign	18	82
	Domestic	27	73
Difficulty in getting along with teachers	Foreign	35	65
	Domestic	44	56
Homesickness	Foreign	50	50
	Domestic	27	73
Housing	Foreign	47	53
	Domestic	43	57
My ability to get along financially here	Foreign	55	45
	Domestic	60	40
Separation from my family (in my home country)	Foreign	53	47
	Domestic	20	80
Dating	Foreign	34	66
	Domestic	34	66

International Educational and Cultural Exchange,
A Publication of the U.S. Advisory Commission on
International Educational and Cultural Affairs,
Vol. VII, No. 2, Fall 1971, p. 66.

differences found. In the case of food, the difference was the opposite of what had been expected. In this case, the percentage of domestic students who reported having problems with food was higher than that of foreign students.

Another feature was that when American students were asked to evaluate what they considered to be problems of foreign students, the American students' rating of what they thought was a problem for foreign students was much higher than the foreign students' perception of their problem, except in very few areas. (See Table II for an example.) This might indicate that what people perceive as important problems to them might differ from the general expectations. Perhaps this awareness will be useful during the interviews with the Nigerian students.

In another study captioned "The Counseling Needs of Foreign Students," Das (1976) sought to discover the needs of foreign students in the United States. This University of Minnesota campus study found that foreign students encounter a series of problems:

One area is academic--understanding the American education system, planning what courses to take, difficulties with English. Another group of problems stem from social and personal life of the student e.g. feeling homesick and lonely, difficulty in making friends, encountering racial or cultural discrimination, lack of proper living arrangements, financial difficulties, etc. (p. 1)

Other writers, for example Arubayi (1981), Scully (1983),

TABLE II
PROBLEMS OF FOREIGN STUDENTS AS VIEWED BY
FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC STUDENTS

<u>Problem area</u>		Percentage Responding	
		<u>Problem</u>	<u>Not a Problem</u>
English language proficiency	Foreign	60	40
	Domestic	100	0
Adequacy of education here	Foreign	49	51
	Domestic	86	14
Lack of good friends	Foreign	46	54
	Domestic	100	0
Racial or religious discrimination	Foreign	32	68
	Domestic	97	3
Unfriendliness of American students	Foreign	44	56
	Domestic	97	3
Food	Foreign	34	66
	Domestic	61	39
Lack of contact with people of my own country	Foreign	18	82
	Domestic	100	0
Difficulty in getting along with teachers	Foreign	35	65
	Domestic	83	17
Homesickness	Foreign	50	50
	Domestic	100	0
Housing	Foreign	47	53
	Domestic	83	17
My ability to get along financially here	Foreign	55	45
	Domestic	93	7
Separation from my family in my home country	Foreign	53	47
	Domestic	92	8
Dating	Foreign	34	66
	Domestic	97	3

International Educational and Cultural Exchange,
A Publication of the U.S. Advisory Commission on
International Educational and Cultural Affairs,
Vol. VII, No. 2, Fall 1971, p. 63.

Osayuki (1982), Okwudishu (1983) and Brislin (1982), have endorsed the above list of general problems and added others: alcohol abuse, difficulties with examination frequency and format, lack of jobs for practical work, grade problems, trying to cope with an industrialized society, and social adjustment problems.

The above overview has been an attempt to summarize general problems most foreign students face in the United States. The main focus of this chapter, however, is on the intercultural communication problems of foreign students in American colleges and universities.

To aid understanding and maintain a clear focus on this specific area, pertinent questions in intercultural communication need to be addressed through literature. Some vexing questions that come to mind are: What exactly do we mean when we talk about intercultural communication problems? Are some problems unique or peculiar to students from some regions of the world or unique environmentally defined cultural problems? What coping methods have been tried by various students from different parts of the world, and how successful or unsuccessful have these attempts been as examined in literature? This review will present definitions of relevant terms and the problems of foreign students in terms of relationships and adjustment processes as they attend American colleges and universities.

SPECIFIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS
OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

Definition of Intercultural
Communication Terms

By way of simple definition, Hoopes and Pusch (1981) state that:

Intercultural communication refers to the communication process (in its fullest sense) between people of different cultural backgrounds. (p. 6)

Bennett (1977) defines intercultural communication in terms of several aspects of an "intercultural perspective": A difference-based perspective refers to recognition that legitimate man-made, multivariate realities exist, and that individuals are acculturated to different constructs. These differences do not imply inequality. Awareness and respect for these differences facilitate conceptual bridge building in intercultural interactions. A face-to-face interactive perspective refers to narrowing the focus to a dynamic exchange of meaning involving mutual perception and feedback. A processual perspective involves creating and recreating meaning, growing and learning.

It seems appropriate to offer a step-by-step definition which will present expanded information.

Culture Defined. The word "culture" is really the beginning point in understanding the whole process of the

problems inherent in intercultural communication. This definition was used by Samovar and Porter (1982):

Formally defined, culture is the deposit of knowledge, experiences, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, timing, roles, spatial relations, concept of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a large group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving... Culture also specifies and is defined by the nature of material things that play an essential role in common life. Such things as houses, instruments and machines used in industry and agriculture, forms of transportation...material foundation for social life. Culture is persistent, enduring, and omnipresent; it includes all of the behavioral reinforcements received during the course of a lifetime...culture also dictates the form and structure of our physical realm, and it encompasses and specifies the social environment permeating our lives. (p. 31)

Communication Defined. The second word to be defined in order to gain insight into our topic is "communication." There are numerous definitions of this word. For instance, Littlejohn (1983) presents 15 definitions of "communication" in his book on "Theories of Human Communication." For our purpose a brief definition offered by Hoopes and Pusch (1981) in "A Cross Cultural Training Approach" will suffice:

Communication is the transmission of messages from a sender to a receiver in any one of a variety of codes--language, gestures, signs, written symbols, etc...to which the sender and receiver attach meaning. The aim is to transfer the message with as little loss of meaning as possible. Communication through means other than spoken or written language is generally referred to as nonverbal communication. (p. 8)

Most authors agree that a verbal or written form of communication comprises only a small portion of the communication process. In his article on "Culture: A Perceptual Approach," Singer (1982, p. 57) contends that: "There is a mounting evidence that within any given group nonverbal communications may account for the overwhelming majority of the communication which occurs."

Although Singer avoids an operational definition, he offers a descriptive definition of nonverbal communication as follows:

Although there is not a complete agreement as to what constitutes the province and domain of nonverbal processes, most authorities agree that the following topics must be included: gestures, facial expressions, eye contact and gaze, posture and movement, touching, dress, objects and artifacts, silence, space, time and paralanguage. (p. 57)

The above definitions of culture and communication lead to the appreciation of the inherent misunderstandings in intercultural communication situations. When an international student who has been culturally conditioned brings with him his perceptual view of the universe, culturally internalized values and attitudes into a host culture whose citizens also are conditioned by their culture, there are bound to be communication problems. (Hoopes and Pusch, 1981)

Stereotypes. Stereotypes can be defined as "overgeneralized beliefs that provide conceptual bases

from which to 'make sense' out of what goes on around us." (Barna, 1980, p. 327) There are both positive and negative aspects of stereotypes. Where stereotypes are derived, and how they became a problem as studies have shown, will be the focus of this section.

On the positive side, stereotypes save time in communication. Brislin (1982, p. 46) maintains: "Stereotypes are absolutely necessary for thinking and communicating since people cannot respond individually to the millions of isolated elements they perceive each day." Communication becomes more efficient when we refer to one category instead of referring to so many things. When we speak of "musicians" or "foreign students" we are using stereotypical categories.

The negative aspect of stereotypes comes in partially by associating those categorizations with negative connotation. For instance if "foreign students" are labeled "ramblers" when talking or "dependent people" American students would become very conscious of this whenever they met foreign students. Another way that stereotypes can be a problem is when there is a refusal to acknowledge individual differences in attitudes, character and behavior among any group of people. Barna (1980) gives examples of preconceptions and stereotypes when she says:

If the label that "inscrutable" has preceded the Japanese guest, it is thus we explain the Japanese constant and inappropriate smile. The stereotype that Arabs are "inflammable" causes the U.S. students to keep their distance or alert authorities when an animated and noisy group from the Middle East gathers. (p. 326)

From the above discussion of stereotypes, three elements are immediately exemplified. The first one is cultural stereotyping as illustrated in the above quotation--the labeling of an entire cultural group of people. Studies have confirmed the position of the above author. Fieg and Blair (1975, p. 128) are among those who discovered that stereotype of lawlessness with the American society raised false expectations in the minds of many foreign students. They recall the warning given to a Zambian before he left for America: "The people are very rough; it's a cowboy type of life. You have to confine yourself to your room and your studies." (p. 128) The Zambian student who arrived terribly threatened and gripped with fear was greatly relieved: "to find the ruthless cowboy absent from the current American landscape." (p. 128) Another similar incident was reported of a Ghanaian student who thought: "All Americans would be brandishing pistols and was surprised to find that only policemen had them in evidence." (p. 128) One Nigerian student feared that Americans: "would be shooting all the time," while a Korean noted that: "Americans have everything in terms of material

goods but lack peace of mind." (p. 128) He concluded: "It seems they live in tension and nervousness." (p. 128) They arrive here with their cultural perception of American society. How rigid or flexible their individual personalities are determines how they adjust to fit into the host culture.

The reverse situation has also been observed where foreign cultures like Africans, for instance, have a stereotypical symbol of a jungle with wild animals. African students are therefore bombarded with questions ranging from, "What kind of houses do you live in? Do you have houses?" to, "How do you protect yourself from lions, hyena and those dangerous animals?" (Fieg and Blair, 1975, p. 67) An Ethiopian recounted: "I have been asked if I live in a hut or a cave, and if I ever wore a shirt before coming to U.S." (p. 67) As the interaction continued, the questioner insisted knowing where she lived, to which she replied: "At the top of a tree." "And how do you get there?" "We use elevators." (p. 67) That cultural stereotypes can be inaccurate, misleading and prone to miscommunication is clear from the above discussions.

Secondly there is racial stereotyping. This negative aspect of stereotyping is better understood as racial discrimination, the area in which the author has no vested interest. However, evidences exist in

literature to warrant a brief mention. Klineberg and Hull (1979) who studied foreign students on a worldwide level note that:

foreign students in general do not indicate that a great deal of discrimination is directed against them. On the other hand, there were a number of students who denied that they were themselves discriminated against, but who said they had seen or being told of discrimination directed at others, often their friends or relatives. They may be genuine...or on the basis of current stereotypes. Indian students who were in the United Kingdom or the United States...one-fourth had been the object of discrimination...frequency of discrimination noted in France affects particularly students of black African and Arab origin. (p. 113)

Racial stereotyping refers to the labeling of particular racial groups. The label or category carries along with it certain behaviors which may or may not be accepted in the dominant culture. Once a category has been formed, it can be treated according to both subjective and cultural interpretation. This practice exists all over the world as can be seen in the findings quoted above. In the U.S. there are several racial groups, the black Americans being the most common. As the black Americans have a long history of slavery in the U.S., being black carries along negative stereotyping like low status, inefficiency, distrust, etc. The Civil Rights Amendment has elevated the status of the Blacks in America as well as minimizing much of the visible discriminatory practices against the Blacks, but elements

of subjective feelings still exist. Among the foreign students, black Africans are sometimes victims of mistaken identity. African students discovered that in some cases they were treated better when they were known not to be black Americans. (Fieg and Blair, 1975, p. 130) An Ethiopian student remarked: "If you see a White walking with a Black chances are that the Black is an African." Another African student observes: "I came here as a man, but I will leave as a black man." (Darku, 1984, p. 8) When foreign students are racially stereotyped, this has the potential for inhibiting a free atmosphere for intercultural interaction.

Preconception is the final concept of stereotyping. This definitional discussion has centered on cultural and racial stereotyping which jointly produces the third element, preconception. Social psychologists tell us that by definition the stereotypical categories we form of others are imprinted on our minds by second-hand sources. Stereotypes affect the way we behave toward those we stereotype. (See Feldman and Theiss, 1982.) We treat others based on our preconceived ideas of them either as a cultural or racial group, not as individuals. The problems that this creates are several. (1) We are always dealing with the past, because we are behaving in the present based on our past preconception. (2) We refuse to deal with the present situation on its own merit.

(3) We are always dealing with shadows, not real people, because we treat people based on those known conventional characteristics, ignoring individual differences. Acting this way, we destroy the potential for dynamics inherent in interpersonal interaction. Results of some studies have partially or fully supported the above assumptions. Some studies show that some foreign students complain of poor grades, and not being given adequate attention by the school administrators. (Clarke, 1970) Arubayi (1981) in his study of "perception of problems identified by Nigerians" already cited, stated Nigerian students too complain about the lack of interest school administrators have shown to their problems. Some complaints about prejudicial treatment were also noted. It is assumed that since Nigerian students for years have been noted for having financial difficulties, some school administrators must have developed stereotypes and preconceived ideas that "all" Nigerians will have difficulty paying their bills. Consequently, Nigerian students may not have been fully listened to as individuals. It remains then to see what Nigerian students in the Portland area perceive their problems to be in these specific categories examined above.

Stereotypes are hard to get rid of because they are usually firmly established in the culture of individuals who hold them. Those who do not fit the stereotype are

regarded as exceptions to the rule. (Barna, 1982)

Brislin (1982) observes that: "Stereotypes or prejudice stem from a lack of understanding and unfamiliarity and keep people from being sensitive and interactive with each other." (p. 48) Perhaps the very key to doing away with stereotypes is the frequent interaction with individuals who break those stereotypes. (Brislin, 1982)

This chapter will now review literature on specific problems of adjustments interrelated with intercultural communication which include: (1) cultural and personal adjustment, (2) social adjustment, and (3) educational adjustment.

Foreign Student Adjustment

It is a well known phenomenon that, when people move from their familiar environment to a new setting, they must make many adjustments. Intercultural communication problems are inherent in adjustment processes because foreign students need to understand the unfamiliar cultural cues of the host culture, adapt to the changes in the new environment, and fit into a new educational system. The studies noted below show that changes in certain key communication areas present problems.

Grinker (1974) stresses the importance of adjustment when he states in his forward:

All adaptation at lower levels represents phases of conflict, perturbation, or change from idling to active states. These at a higher level are invisible but appear integrated. Biologically, we adapt to survive both as individuals and as members of the species. People also cope at the psychological level in order to develop and maintain self esteem, self identity and object relations. The biological roots in primates and other infrahuman species extend by evolution to psychological methods based on new symbolic systems. At the social level we learn how to tolerate frustrations imposed by society and to accept delay of gratification. We incorporate by identification and develop the repertoire of social roles that our culture requires. In a changing and complex industrial society, the individual must deal with novel situations, temptations, and opportunities both at work and off the job. He must be able to cope with novelty, to control himself in the absence of ritual and social pressure, to postpone immediate gratification, to operate at a high level of symbolic thought, and to enjoy and be gratified by relatively abstract and intangible operations. (p. xiii)

The above quotation has given an insight into the area of human adjustment in an unfamiliar cultural setting. Lazarus (1963) explains the verb "adjust" both from its psychological and dictionary meaning as: "to fit, to make correspondent, to adapt or to accommodate." (p. 3) For instance, when we adjust something, we change it in some way to make it appropriate to a certain requirement: a ladder could be extended to reach a second-story building. Lazarus (1963) explains further:

As used in psychology, the term means that we must accommodate ourselves in order to fit certain demands of our environment. Therefore, the study of adjustment has to do with how we make such accommodations and how successfully

they fit us to the demands that are made on us. Adjustment consists of the processes by means of which we manage these demands. (p. 3)

For the purpose of this paper, a definition given by Morris (1956) is utilized. The author defines foreign student adjustment in terms of favorableness, personal satisfaction, satisfaction with facilities in the host culture, and the amount and kind of social contact with Americans along the four dimensions of cultural adjustment, personal adjustment, social adjustment, and educational adjustment.

Cultural and Personal Adjustment. Cultural adjustment is used here in a restrictive sense to refer to the extent to which a foreign student likes and accepts the host culture in terms of its local customs, climate, and facilities available, i.e. transportation systems and housing. Personal adjustment refers to one's being satisfied with one's stay in a host culture irrespective of the above factors. This will therefore be linked with one's personal attitude which facilitates adjustment processes.

(a) Physical conditions. An example of this can be seen in the problem narrated by an American woman graduate student who journeyed to London with three teenage children to collect materials for her thesis:

I am not terribly depressed but I find that I have become in the past few weeks, increasingly

irritable at what I have chosen to identify as the "deadful inefficiency of British people"...

The charm of going to the green grocers for one thing, the butchers for another, the bakery for a third, the ironmonger for one kitchen utensil and the chemists for another has rather lost its charm--especially without a car--why can't I go to one place or even one shopping trip to get everything? ...

I am truly tired of having to travel miles to get a complete shopping list done--nothing exotic: 1 spool of brown thread, one bottle of Flex shampoo, bread, mince, air mail stationery, light bulbs, a newspaper (not even a special one), and a key ring. That's an actual shopping list and it actually took six stores to get those things.

I am quite convinced that this is what I've picked out to blame my discomfort on.

This expresses the problem of cultural and personal adjustment in that it illustrates how cultural conditioning can influence personal attitude.

(b) Culture-bound attitude. According to a five-year study of foreign students at the University of Iowa from 1959-1964 conducted by Markham (1967), European students tended to judge America and Americans in more negative terms than students from other parts of the world. His general conclusion was that Asians tended to see Americans in the most favorable light while Africans and Latin Americans were only slightly less favorable. Other groups of studies that support the above finding, either fully or partially, include Restivo (1967), Rising, Copp and Barbara M. (1968), and Miller (1967). Sofola

(1967) however discovered that Nigerian students arrived with positive attitudes toward American political, social, economic and spiritual ideals, but became bitter during their stay.

There are conflicting findings regarding the perspective African students have on the United States. One group holds the view that African students arrive with an unfavorable disposition of American culture, and consequently find adjustment difficult. (Miller, 1967) Another group says that African students arrive with a positive attitude and either maintain it or change while here. Sofola's study of Nigerians falls into this group. Also contrasting Miller's finding is the study undertaken by the United States Information Agency (1971) which:

questioned African participants before and after a short term study visit to the United States... Most arrived with a favorable opinion of the United States; about half left with more favorable, and half with less favorable attitudes. (p. 29)

Positive attitudes that these students hold before arrival to a new culture can ease their adjustment processes in other areas of life as well. (Coelho, Hamburg and Adams, 1974)

Negative attitudes, based on one's own world view, is one of the most common problems in intercultural communication. This problem has attracted the attention of many writers and researchers. Samovar (1979) gives a

formal definition and description of attitude as:

A learned tendency to respond in a consistent manner with respect to a given object of orientation. Attitudes are learned within a cultural context. Whatever cultural environment surrounds us helps shape and form our attitudes, our readiness to respond, and ultimately our behavior. (p. 38)

An example has also been given with regards to how our learned attitude can influence our behavior: "Many North Americans believe that cruelty to animals is wrong and that the systematic wearing down and killing of a bull is an example of that cruelty." (p. 38) Consequently, North Americans view bullfighting within a negative attitude frame and actively avoid viewing it, even on television. Most Latin Americans, on the other hand, view bullfighting as a contest of courage between man and beast: "It is evaluated positively, and the triumph of matador is not seen as cruelty to animals but as the exercise of courage, skill and physical agility." (p. 38) In this sharp contrast of basic attitude orientation, a North American visiting Latin America might have trouble in cultural and personal adjustment, unless he has the cross-cultural skill of tolerance, Brislin (1982), and is able to change his attitude within a short time. Usually, individual attitudinal differences exist within cultures. This paper does not aim at discussing individual differences, but rather commonly held cultural attitudes. These attitudes manifest themselves in a pattern, through

a group of persons with similar cultural identity. It is on this assumption that researchers have been able to make cultural generalizations which have proven to be very helpful.

Social Adjustment. Social adjustment refers to the ability to form relationships satisfactorily with people in the host culture, e.g. establishment of friendships and social interactions that facilitate contact with the host culture. (Klineberg and Hull, 1979)

Social contact with the host nationals has been found to be a universal problem for most foreign students all over the world. This contention is borne out in the conclusions reached by "A Committee for the Study of Educational Exchange" consisting of 13 heads of universities from different countries. Klineberg and Hull (1979) stated that the committee had a common interest in the programs of international educational exchanges and also a shared conviction that there is a need for research to determine the impact of such exchanges, identifying social similarities and differences. The students studied were in different university settings, and were from over 120 countries all over the world. The summary of the findings is reported as follows:

The actual amount of contact shown on behavioral indicators between foreign students and local individuals was slight almost everywhere. To be sure, the respondents were in the sojourn countries seeking an education

and many did indicate that they were pressed for time. Some were experiencing language difficulties and felt uncomfortable in using the host country's language in social conversation. Yet it was clear that more contact would have been welcomed by most of the students. Positive contact with their neighbors at their place of residence, the opportunities to discuss significant issues with local individuals, and doing academic work in cooperation with them were the three most frequent types of social contact reported by the respondents... Other variables categorized as occurring "sometimes" were (a) going for walks, outings, or evenings with local individuals, (b) opportunities for social contact with local families, (c) invitations to local families, and (d) sharing meals with local people in their neighborhood. Involvement in community activities with local individuals, collaborating with them on an artistic or social activity (for example, theatrical performance, film club, social action...) were mentioned as occurring only "rarely." (p. 179)

The above quotation helps to explain the fact that lack of social interaction in a host culture is not unique to students in the United States, but a universal phenomenon. With that in mind let us now focus on the problems of student social adjustment as evidenced in the United States.

In order to determine the areas of needs that foreign students have for purposes of appropriate counseling, research was undertaken by Das (1976) at the University of Minnesota. Findings in order of statistical significance were: (1) personal and social needs are not being met adequately; (2) social isolation between American and foreign students is great; and (3) foreign

students are very concerned about grades, English, and program completion. Numbers (1) and (2) fall in the same areas of social needs of relationships which create problems for many foreign students. Walton (1968), Melby (1966), Deutsch (1970), and Mestenhauser (1975) had earlier documented similar findings on the dire need for foreign students' social interaction with the host nationals. Another section from Melby reads:

Foreign students come to the United States for three reasons: to get training that will enhance their professional status at home; to get training that will be of direct benefit to their countries; and to learn about the United States. While most are satisfied with their sojourn, many encounter problems such as relevance of their education to employment opportunities...and difficulties in establishing relationships with American students and families despite university-community hospitality programs. (pp. 319-26) (emphasis added)

Foreign student adjustment problems which stem from lack of opportunity for social contact is not a current phenomenon, but long existed at least in the fifties. This is borne out by the studies conducted in 1956 in which a group of researchers were involved in a study entitled, "The Effects of Situational Factors on Personal Interaction between Foreign Students and Americans." It was hypothesized that foreign students in small colleges in small towns would be most likely to find themselves in contact situations with high interaction potential, while those in metropolitan universities would be least likely

to be in such situations. Verification of these predictions were to be taken as evidence that interactions are influenced by situational factors and are not dependent upon attitudes alone. The findings were that national origin of foreign students is equally important as the interaction potential of the situation, in determining interaction with Americans. In particular, African students have less interaction potential with the American student body on the whole. This study involved 348 male foreign students attending 35 colleges and universities. As can be seen here, the concern was not only on the student adjustment problem, but also to the causes of apparent lack of interaction between foreign and host national students.

Rising and Copp (1968) in their general and expanded study state that students from non-Western and less developed countries have greater difficulties in adjusting to new relationships with persons from countries other than their own, and to American culture. In support of this finding, Tanner (1968) found that students from Western industrialized countries find it easier to socialize with American students than do students from less industrialized countries.

In her dissertation, Sharma (1971) directed her attention to the study of social adjustment patterns of

non-European graduate students enrolled in some universities in the state of North Carolina. Random samplings were drawn from Far East, South Asia, Middle East, Africa and Latin American students. Although the findings showed more severe problems in academic areas with a longer time to resolve, social adjustment problems were also quite significant.

Other groups of studies involving social adjustment of students from a regional perspective include Klein et al. (1971), Tamar (1973), Heath (1970), Hegazy (1968), Kang (1972), Selby and Wood (1966), and Tanner (1968). These studies support the fact that both foreign students and host nationals maintain resistant attitudes toward one another with resultant social alienation and problems of social adjustment on the part of foreign students. Emphasizing the relative importance of specific needs attached to different parts of the world, Lee (1979) and coauthors made this observation regarding African students:

Regions of the world from which students came made significant differences in terms of importance of certain needs and satisfaction. Even though emphasized by students from all the regions, African students placed importance on... We are under strong impression, based on the preliminary analysis of data, that students from different regions of the world have different perceptions of their acceptance which leads to different degrees of satisfaction, particularly in those needs involving inter-personal interactions. One of the groups which perceived the least satisfaction in receiving

equal acceptance by faculty and human respect by U.S. students was the group who were most likely to return home i.e. African students... We cannot overemphasize the strong need for improving human relations between U.S. nationals, faculty included, and foreign students in academic institutions. (p. 147)

Social adjustment seems linked with interpersonal relationships and acceptance, as the above study shows. Other studies also support the fact that foreign students from cultures that place a high value on groups or being accepted in the community find it difficult to adjust smoothly into the American concept of social life. For example, having done a study on Nigerians, Cohen (1971) found they:

had problems adjusting to the individualistic approach to life in the United States and missed the extended family tradition of their home country. (p. 61)

Among the Asians studied, Klein et al. (1971) found that more than half of these students had not established significant social relationships with Americans during their stay, because they considered Americans insincere and incapable of real friendship. This study is one of the few that used a psychiatric approach to the study of social adaptation.

The findings above seem to support the "national status hypothesis." The proponents of this hypothesis, among them Morris (1960), say that the way in which foreign students view their home country in relation to

their host country (the United States) will influence those students' attitudes in the host country. They conclude:

The student who views his home country as being lower in status compared with his host country will have a completely different attitude from those who attribute higher status to their own country and undergo, therefore, a completely different adjustment pattern or coping process. (p. 25)

There is, however, some reservation on the "national status hypothesis" because of the many complex factors involved in the adjustment process, such as individual differences, attitudes, beliefs and situational factors which are difficult to measure.

A review of literature sheds light on three more topics concerning foreign students' social adjustment: (a) misconception of friendship between foreign students and Americans, (b) misconception of friendship between Nigerians and Americans, and (c) strained relationship between Nigerians and black Americans.

(a) Misconception of friendship between foreign students and Americans. A review of literature on friendship between foreign students and American nationals generally reveals that real misunderstandings exist in this area. Major problems, according to many writers, seem to center not only on attitudes but also on differences regarding the cultural concept of friendship and value systems (e.g. perceptions of time). An example

of this can be seen in Barna's (1980) quotation of a Korean student:

When I call on my American friend, he had been studying his lesson. Then I said, "May I come in?" He said through the window, "I am sorry. I have no time because of my study." Then he shut the window. I thought it over and over. I could not understand through my cultural background. In our country, if someone visits other's house, house owner should have welcome visitor whether he likes it or not and whether he is busy or not. The next, if the owner is busy, he asks the visitor, "Would you wait for me?" Also the owner never speaks without opening the door. (p. 295)

The same author quotes a Vietnamese student who accuses Americans of superficiality in friendship when she says:

The superficiality of Americans can also be detected in relations with others. Their friendships, most of the time, so ephemeral compared to the friendship we have at home. Americans make friends very easily and leave their friends almost as quickly, while in my country it takes a long time to find out a possible friend and then she becomes your friend--with a very strong sense of the term. Most Americans are materialistic and once they are provided with necessities, they don't feel the need to have a friend. Purposes of their friendships are too clear, and you can hardly find a friendship for friendship's sake. (p. 292)

The above two quotations serve to illustrate the differences in perceptions and expectations of many foreign students regarding their U.S. host nationals and fellow students in the area of friendships. This finding is consistent with the results of numerous other

studies: Morris (1960), Selltiz and Cook (1962), Hayden (1973), Lee, Abd-Ella and Thomas (1979), and Mestenhauser (1975). American students have a reverse perception of the foreign students' concept of friendship and accusation. In a study that Matross (1980) did at the University of Minnesota captioned "American Student Attitudes Toward Foreign Students Before and During an International Crisis" in which 743 students were involved, the author said that:

Some students blamed foreign students for the perceived lack of contact. More than one-third agreed that foreign students isolate themselves and are hard to get to know. (p. 9)

One of the American students was quoted as having responded in a questionnaire:

I used to think they were interesting. Now I have become a bit frustrated with their general narrowmindedness and anti-social behavior. I know I'm generalizing--but this is how I feel from the experiences I've had with foreigners. (p. 9)

Other respondents were quoted in the same source:

I like the cosmopolitan atmosphere that foreign students bring to the campus. I feel that I haven't made friendships with the foreign students as much because of reticence on my part as on theirs. (p. 9)

This latter set of responses seems supportive of what Klineberg and Hull (1979) discovered from foreign students in their research. A foreign student was noted as being in isolation by choice when he stated:

I came to this country to secure my Ph.D. degree and have done nothing but study and attend to my work since arriving here. I am not interested in meeting anyone until I finish what I came here for. I am pleased with myself and progress so far. (p. 60)

Perhaps it is worth noting that the above respondent may well be one of the few that concern themselves less with social relationships or is a "task oriented person" whom Brislin (1982) describes in his book.

(b) Misconception of friendship between Nigerians and Americans. Like most foreign students, Nigerian students are oriented toward more intense interaction with others. They tend to pursue deeper friendships with others, shunning superficiality, which is usually associated with the American concept of friendship. Sofola (1967) who studied 265 Nigerian students in Washington for his dissertation found that Nigerian students experienced maladjustment which was due to isolation and other cultural differences, bringing about culture shock. He explained that Nigerians, who are accustomed to intense relationships in family tradition and close friendships, suddenly find they have no one to give them this similar support. They naturally find adjustment difficult. Arubayi (1981), confirming the previous finding, cites the example of Nigerians who arrived without knowledge of other Nigerians or relatives already settled in America who could give them this deep

social need of mutual support.

Kato (1977), in his "Tips for Guests in Africa," emphasized the culture's feature of being intensely people oriented when he noted:

That people matter more than things is a basic assumption in Africa. It is more important to spend time with a friend than to rush to meet a deadline. If Mr. Ali fails to turn up at 5 o'clock as arranged with Mr. Bello, a simple explanation two hours later that he was delayed by Mr. Ade who came to visit him would take care of the matter. On his way to farm, Mr. Nyako feels that it is more important to spend time greeting his friends properly than rushing to save time. (p. 11)

Any literature that takes pains to explore the Nigerian concept of friendship will leave many Americans completely mystified. A review of this literature shows that the Nigerian concept of friendship is totally absent in the American pattern of thinking. It far exceeds, "Hi," on one's way to work or while hurrying to do some research in a library. Kato observes that to say, "Good morning," to a friend could be regarded with suspicion. He recaptured the usual friendly greeting scene where there is a warm handshake with either flipping of fingers or resting the hand on one's chest and shaking again. This may be followed by a series of questions inquiring about the welfare of each other's wife, children, relatives, donkeys, cows, crops, work, studies or anything known to be of interest to each other. Kato

quotes another Nigerian writer, Enahoro, who humorously analyzes the Nigerian greeting pattern as: "a discharge of verbal cannon complete with firing squads and the rattle-tat machine gun fire of sweet nothingness." (p. 11) One argument against this humorous and ironic expression is that though the prolonged ceremonial greeting may simply be a part of the culture, it is through this exchange of information that your close friend learns of your problems and might leave all his plans for that day just to help you. Another reason may be that this is the culture's way to express social concern and interest in each other.

Friendship in Nigeria involves commitment to one another in many areas of life. It involves all the essentials in interpersonal relationships--trust, openness, dependability, flexibility, mutual encouragement, acceptance and self-disclosure. (Gibb, 1982; Roloff, 1981) But the Nigerian concept of friendship goes deeper. It involves commitment in terms of time, possessions, and any form of assistance in time of need. (Achebe, 1959) It is commonly believed that if you have friends you have everything. This is literally true in Nigeria. Friends can assist you financially when you need it. They may or may not ask you to pay them back, depending on the situation and amount. What is clear is that when they too are in need, you would do the same for them. Although this is usually taken for granted, it is implicit in the

unwritten cultural norm of friendship. Your friend can use your car in your absence, provided he finds your car key. He would take good care of it as he would his personal car. Your friend can call on you at 1 a.m. to escort him to the hospital, police station or anywhere he needs to go. Close friends cannot stay aloof and watch their friends suffer. There is a total involvement in this type of friendship, which takes time to form but once started has permanence. To a large extent, this concept of friendship is similar to what researchers have found regarding other international students; see, for instance, "Vietnamese," in There is a Difference by Fieg and Blair (1975), and other foreign students in At a Foreign University: An International Study of Adaptation and Coping by Klineberg and Hull (1979).

The American concept of friendship stands contrasted to most foreign students' concept of friendship, including the Nigerian concept described above. According to Fieg and Blair (1975, p. 116) the American concept of friendship seems to: "lack the depth and permanence which such a relationship demands in a more traditional society." The authors note that the mainstream Americans are generally friendly and approachable to foreigners, which usually constitutes another problem because the visitors misinterpret this initial behavior as a sign of deep friendship to which they have been accustomed. Fieg and

Blair (1975, p. 116) stated: "For many of these visitors, the American comes on too strong too soon and then fails to follow up with the implicitly promised friendship." As would be seen in the section on the assumption of cultural similarity, the tendency for sojourners to equate American friendly gestures with close friendship is what causes problems in the intercultural interactions. There is a necessity to first explore historical and cultural differences in the concept of friendship. (Brislin, 1982; Barna, 1982)

Cultural differences in the concept of friendship are explained by Fieg and Blair (1975, p. 116) in There is a Difference: "Industrialization and urbanization have led to a highly mobile American society in which an average person moves 14 times in his lifetime." This in a nutshell gives a historical setting of an American life. It is mobile. This removes any idea of permanency in a friendship situation. Another factor is that of individualism. Americans are culturally individualistic. They do not want dependence on family, much less friends. Culturally conditioned by technology and ambition for personal achievement, an American values time and would be: "annoyed by the demands placed on his time and energies by 'someone he scarcely knows.'" (p. 116)

The Nigerian society is historically and culturally different. This society is less technologically developed

and has a traditional history of interwoven, extended and heavily dependent family relationships. People are the greatest asset in this society. (Kato, 1977) Communal achievement is prized above individual success. (Doi, 1982) Since people are highly valued, possessions are easily used to enhance human values and ties. Time can equally be used for the benefit of human relationships. The same case can be made of most of the group oriented or people valued cultures. (Condon and Yousef, 1975)

With this wide difference in historical and cultural perspective--a totally different way of looking at life and human relationships in particular--one can see why there is bound to be gross miscommunication when the interactants are not fully aware of and consequently not accounting for the differences.

(c) Strained relationship between Nigerians and black Americans. A review of literature shows an interesting phenomenon between the two groups. These two groups are mentioned separately simply for the purpose of emphasis as discovered in literature. Several studies have reported findings that a poor and strained relationship exists between Africans and black American students. Consequently there are few cases of friendships among the two groups. In his dissertation on "Africans and Afro-Americans on Campus: A Study of Some of the Relationships between Two Minority Sub-Communities"

Odenyo (1970) describes the ambiguity which has characterized the relationship of black Americans to black Africans since the first black African student came to the United States in the 1890's. He explains the ambiguity in a number of hypotheses which were supported by questionnaire data from students in Minnesota that: (1) the ambivalence of Africans rests in part on the fear of being identified with an underprivileged American minority; (2) and in part on what they perceive to be an exaggeration or distortion of African culture by the Afro-Americans; (3) the ambivalence of Afro-Americans toward the African students rests in part on their perception of them as foes, high status black foreigners who do not wear the stigma of former slavery; and (4) the ambivalence of the African and Afro-American students is partly the result of the fact that the two view each other as foreign despite the commonality of the ancestral homeland.

In another study, Tamar (1973) explored the manifestations and causes of strained relations between black Africans and black Americans on the UCLA campus. This study was part of a cross cultural study in which 57 black African students were interviewed, and 33 participated again in the follow-up interview. The result of the study shows that the high status and tangible benefits accorded Africans in preference to

black Americans, the socio-cultural differences, and the perceived rejection by American blacks strengthened the Africans' tendency to emphasize separate identity and minimize contact with black Americans.

Fieg and Blair (1975, p. 107) narrate what they call "a more serious misunderstanding involving difficulty with regional accents" between black Americans and some Nigerians in a restaurant. According to this report these Nigerians could not understand the southern black American accent where the latter was a waitress. A series of interactions brought in more misunderstanding, confusion and finally ended with bad feelings between the participants. In another encounter, the same authors report of an incident on a university campus where black Americans expected Nigerian students to participate in a social revolution of Black Power. The Nigerians who objected concluded: "We are scorned by more militant Afro-Americans. It's difficult to fit in." (p. 108) On the other hand, Pruitt (1978) found in his studies some positive results regarding black African attitudes to black Americans. In his study, "The Adaptation of African Students to American Society" Pruitt explains that 296 African students completed questionnaires. The respondents were from sub-Saharan Africa and were on nine American campuses that differed in size, geographical region and racial composition. Half of these students

were Nigerians. In one of the questionnaires, a third of the unmarried students expressed interest in marrying a white American while: "Half mentioned that they would consider marrying a black American." (p. 100)

The general conclusion from reviewing a number of studies in the area of friendship between black Africans and black Americans, however, is that fewer cases of friendships exist as compared to friendship between black Africans and white Americans. Furthermore, overwhelming evidence exists to confirm that misunderstandings have frequently occurred in the concept of friendship between foreign and American students. Consequently, this has some profound effects on foreign students' social adjustment. It now remains to consider foreign student adjustment to the educational system in the United States.

Educational Adjustment. Adjustment to the American educational system refers to the foreign student's amount of satisfaction with educational facilities and the measure of his ability to fit into the level of norm and comfort in an academic setting. (Morris, 1960) Teaching and learning methods differ from one culture to another. Transitional changes from one system to another are therefore inevitable. An assumption of similarity in educational systems could create adjustment problems. Studies that are concerned with foreign students' educational adjustment have explored several areas.

Language use is one area, which includes the ability to understand lectures, take good notes, participate in class and group discussions, and take examinations. There is also the effect of an accent on academic competence. Researchers are concerned with the use of the library for research purposes. Casual appearance of American professors is said to constitute a problem. Student-professor interaction is another different educational experience to which foreign students need to adjust. This section will briefly address these issues as treated in some literature.

(a) Language use. Inability to use the English language efficiently creates general problems in communication. A number of studies have reported that foreign students have problems with language, which affects their educational adjustment process in American colleges and universities. One such study was that of Sharma (1971) who did his studies on foreign students in North Carolina universities. The results of these studies show that foreign students admitted having real problems in: "giving oral reports, participating in class discussions, taking notes in class, understanding lectures and preparing written reports." (p. 45) The report goes on to say that inability to speak fluent English affected their having appropriate companionship with the opposite sex. Data sampling represented students

from the Far East, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. Sharma (1971), however, notes many of these students overcame some of these language problems after a year or two.

Another study, a much earlier one, by Hill (1966) found the same issue of language problem contributing to difficulty in academic adjustment. Hill did his study at the University of Indiana with 78 students from Indonesia, Thailand, Pakistan and India. Students reported having problems adjusting to the educational system partly because of insufficient language skills.

Hagey (1968) found that Middle Eastern students attending colleges and universities in Oregon had problems in academic and social adjustment with such background factors as English ability, the number of years spent in the United States, age, etc.

Klineberg and Hull (1979, p. 30) observe that language facility may be regarded as a "special case" because it leads to other difficulties which make foreign students' educational experience very frustrating and less satisfying.

A sizeable body of literature makes mention of the fact that many foreign students do not usually participate in the overall classroom discussion. Sometimes they have problems understanding lectures, specific directions or instructions for classroom projects, and some do not know

how to take good notes. Others observe that perhaps as a part of the language difficulty foreign students have problems being specific and direct to the point. It is, however, argued that language may or may not be responsible for the latter. Style of communication and thinking patterns may be more appropriate underlying factors. Hall (1981) while discussing "Culture as an Irrational Force" notes that the:

explanation lies in the concept of logic, which is an invention of Western culture dating back to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle...having had experiences in my lifetime with cultures as disparate as the Japanese and the Navajo, neither of which finds the Western system of logic effective, convincing, or acceptable as a way of arriving at a decision, I am not at all convinced that there is anything sacred in logic. (p. 113)

While the above argument on behalf of the foreign students could be well taken, not everyone looks at the differences in other cultures' approach to communicative style in a positive way. In fact, many mainstream Americans seem to consider indirect communication style as a weakness in interpersonal communication on the part of foreign students.

(b) Effect of accents. There is also the effect of accents on foreign students' language use. Several studies have reported that foreign students' accent immediately becomes a barrier to effective communication. "Accent" is equated with "noise" which DeVito (1982)

defines in general communication as:

anything that distorts or interferes with the message...includes biases and prejudices in senders and receives that lead to distortions in processing information. (p. 14)

Hoopes (1981) notes also that "noise" may be sound or anything which distracts attention from the message.

An accent, authors maintain, constitutes noise. Foreign students in general and African students, Nigerians inclusive, are noted for having a deep accent.

Plueddeman (1983) observes that: "African English... is confusing because of...differences in accent and vocabulary." (p. 134) In a study made by Van de Guchte (1969) the result shows that: "accents, aural and visual cues affect the judgment of native speakers."

(p. 40) This study suspects that:

severe foreign accents lead to lack of communication between foreign students and professors and affect the judgment of faculty as to the academic ability of students. (p. 40)

A Nigerian educator notes that in Nigeria where English is an official language one should be: "prepared for many semantic differences as well as regional accents." (Fieg and Blair, 1975, p. 106)

Burgess and Marks (1968), however, found in their earlier study that "Lado Test of Aural Compression" did not predict academic success of foreign students. In fact many studies confirm that many foreign students prove

capable of doing their course work, in spite of English being their second language, once they understand how the American system of education works. Nigerians, for instance, were found to be academically competent if they had a good educational background back home before beginning their college work in the States. Ohuche (1967) in his dissertation found that Nigerians who completed the equivalent of the "High School Certificate Examination" performed better academically than those who did not. Clark (1963) who studied students from Ghana, one of the West African countries, discovered that those students who held government scholarships were performing significantly better than those who did not. Another interesting feature she also found was that those students who attended accredited universities did more satisfactory academic work than those who did not. It appears from the examples cited above as though issues of prior educational experience, in the case of Nigerian students, and financial support and accreditation of universities, in the case of Ghanaian students, were motivating factors for academic achievement.

(c) Examination format and frequency. Another area that requires adjustment is the format and frequency of examinations in American schools. For countries that have either been colonized by or use a British system of education, for example, most of the African countries,

the essay type of examination questions is the usual format. Usually students have the option of selecting from a list of essay questions. For instance, there may be a total number of seven questions from which a student must answer three. He would of course be required to cover these essay questions in depth. Regarding frequency, the British system offers very few examinations. In the whole course, there may be just the midterm and final examination. The system of weekly quizzes or several examinations for one course, and the multiple, true/false or matching format is quite new to these students.

It is observed that other foreign students have problems with testing methods in the States. Azar (1978) says that students from the Middle East usually find objective tests very difficult and resort to being frequently absent from examinations for reasons that seem illogical. They are also noted for learning by rote. Samovar and Porter (1982) observe that Indian students are used to the rote method of education. Many of these students need to work hard on test skills as required by United States colleges and universities. Ohuche (1967) and Okwudishu (1983) discovered Nigerian students had problems with examination formats though they were generally satisfied with their educational experiences.

(d) Library use. Use of the library for research

purposes is obviously another area of educational adjustment. Students whose educational system allows for the rote learning method find it especially difficult to adjust to creative, analytical, independent and skillful study and library research methods that American students regard as challenging. (Beals and Humphrey, 1957; Borkin and Carpenter, 1979)

(e) Relationship to administrators. A number of studies have reported that the relationship between school administrators and foreign students needs to improve. Clarke's (1970) study was cited as one of the examples. Concerning Nigerians, Arubayi (1981) found they had a prolonged history of financial problems and therefore contacted school administrators often to work out arrangements to stay in school. These contacts are often negatively perceived.

(f) Relationship to instructors. Misinterpretation of nonverbal behavior is a problem in the educational adjustment process. Several studies have commented on the fact that professors in the United States universities dress very casually and behave in a way unbecoming to their status and roles compared to professors in their home cultures. In a study conducted by Cable (1974) regarding the international students' perception of their professors, the findings reveal that these students generally complain of the professors' casual dress habits

and appearance. Judging from their cultural perception, this naturally raises the question of the professors' competence. Making things worse for the foreign students, professors are casually called by their first names by students. This appears disrespectful as many foreign students always address professors by their proper titles, such as "Doctor or Professor" in their home countries. Other findings were that professors speak too rapidly in class, many professors do not know how to pronounce the foreign names, they are treated as though they were the same as American students, the grading systems are unfair, there is a perceived lack of care and concern for foreign students, ignorance of their countries, and that the general student-teacher relationship appears business-like with no personal attention to individuals. Cable suggests that to improve relationships with foreign students, professors should seek to know them individually in class, understand their problems, and guide them in the best way to approach class material.

Other studies that support the above findings include Cowan (1978) who mentioned that instructors are less sociable and personal than the foreign students' expectation; and Glass (1972) who found in his studies of Asian students that American professors dress casually like students and introduce themselves to students only by their first and last names.

Some students from different cultures try to give their teachers gifts in appreciation for relating to them. This is not an American custom, and the teachers usually shun the gifts. Unfortunately the students then feel rejected and misunderstandings result.

(f) Summary. It is clear from the above discussion that differences in language pose a problem to many foreign students. Perhaps for the same reason, many foreign students do not actively participate in classroom and group discussions, some for fear of being laughed at because of their accent, although there may be other cultural reasons involved. For instance, it is said of the Japanese people: "modesty and humility, suppression of self are moral ideals as they lead to calmness and tranquility rare in an age of aggressive self-assertiveness." (Umesao, 1975, p. 25) On the same page, the author says that: "Japan could also be called a communication-passive society." (See also Samovar and Porter, 1982, on "The Role of Silence in Language.") Other studies note that silence is a prized virtue in some cultures, while other educational systems are structured in such a way that discussion formats are nonexistent. Professors are expected to authoritatively deliver lectures and students are not to ask questions. Language problems also affect foreign students' ability to take notes, follow lectures and interact effectively

with others in an educational environment. Frequency and method of testing in American universities is known to be unfamiliar to most foreign students. In some cases, many undergraduates do not know how to do library research. Foreign students do not understand the informal relationship between professors and students and have often complained that professors do not take personal interest in them, sometimes grade them unfairly, and have poor information regarding their country of origin. This type of perception affects, to some extent, their educational adjustment. It is suggested that to facilitate educational adjustment for foreign students, professors should seek to know their foreign students, take personal interest in them and show them how best to approach the course content. (See especially Clarke's, 1970, advice.) To remedy the English language problem, many American universities and colleges now offer English as a Second Language programs which have proven to be useful for those with an inadequate language facility.

This chapter thus far has covered foreign student adjustment problems in the main areas of: cultural and personal adjustments which also involve issues of attitude change; social adjustment involving difficulty of establishing meaningful contact with the general American community and the student body, and misunderstanding in the concept of friendship owing to

cultural differences. Problems of adjusting to the American system of education was also treated. If foreign students have problems in these strategic areas, one important question that comes to mind is, "How do they then cope or survive in order to pursue their educational goals?" Put differently, "What are their tried solutions to their adjustment problems?" These will be discussed in the last section of this literature review.

COPING METHODS OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

Fight, flight, withdrawal and going native are the usual terms used as means of coping in these problem areas. A body of existing literature reports on the coping methods that many foreign students use in their host culture, including these.

Withdrawal

Studies have found that the most common and popular coping method is withdrawal in ethnic enclaves. Antler (1970) who did some studies on foreign medical students discovered that they comparatively have: "more intense social contacts with their countrymen than with host nationals." (p. 57)

Another study supporting the above position was that of Tamar (1973) who wanted to explore the effect of

commitment to national cultural values on the foreign students who have stayed in the host culture for a long time. The result of this study shows that foreign students who have been in the United States for two or more years: "tend to withdraw into congenial social niches and live with compatriots rather than with foreigners." (p. 81)

Regarding Chinese students studied at the University of Minnesota, Kang (1972) found that about 80 percent of these Chinese students: "created their own small communities which contribute to the maintenance of traditional values and belief systems." (p. 30)

In order to continue to preserve their home culture values and detach themselves from the stresses of having to interact with the host nationals, Kang observes that these students: "live together, support their own church, belong to only Chinese organizations, maintain close ties with the homeland, and do not read magazines generally familiar to U.S. students." (p. 30)

This seems to be an extreme case of foreign students doing everything to disengage and have very little interaction with the host culture. This community of students does not want to learn about their new values which surround them but have been living in isolation which ironically offers them protection from confrontations with their unfamiliar settings. Kang, however, mentions another Chinese group that has fully socialized, changed their names, and

exulted great economic and social influence in the host culture.

Gandhi (1970) who studied Indian students notes a similar tendency to congregate together. He, however, observes some regional differences among the Indians which generate occasional conflicts. The studies found that some of the Indian students adjust to the American lifestyle and become fully acculturized usually after several years, while others learn to appreciate their home culture more on their arrival in this country.

The same coping pattern of withdrawal continues with the African students, including Nigerian students. Cohen (1971) who studied Kenyan students for his dissertation found that most Kenyans preferred to make close friendships with co-nationals and live in compatriots. The purpose of his dissertation was to describe and analyze the functions of a compatriot or co-national group of foreign students in an urban setting. His population consisted of 35 Kenyans who were interviewed several times. Nigerian students studied by Sofola (1967) show a similar coping pattern. For his dissertation, Sofola studied the adjustment and attitudes of Nigerian students in the United States. His population consisted of 265 Nigerian students drawn from Washington, New York and Chicago universities. His findings show that Nigerians adjust better if they live with other relations,

friends or other Nigerians. He particularly notes the fact that Nigerians experience maladjustment due to job down-grading, isolation and cultural differences bringing about culture shock.

Supporting the above study, Arubayi (1981) in a more recent study explored what Nigerian students perceive as their problems. One of his findings was that Nigerians who had direct admission without prior contact with other Nigerians ended up in areas where they became lonely and had more frustrations and adjustment problems than those who knew other Nigerians previously. According to this finding, since these Nigerians could not relate and interact freely with Americans, they lived in isolation which is another coping technique, though obviously not the best choice for Nigerians as Sofola (1967) had noted.

Flight

Flight or isolation as a coping mechanism has been discussed by Lazarus (1963) in what he terms as "ego defense mechanisms." Lazarus says that isolation and intellectualization interrelate to each other and are commonly practiced by some people. He explains that in isolation: "a person may separate two incompatible kinds of mental activity as a means of reducing conflict." (p. 22) Intellectualization refers to the process in which: "a person disengages himself from the emotional

content of an experience or situation and examines it entirely from an intellectual point of view." (p. 21)

In applying these principles as coping mechanisms, foreign students separate the physical environment from its people. They learn to appreciate the American culture in terms of physical environment and facilities while at the same time they block out their emotional feeling in order to cope with the threat of not being accepted on their own terms. Usually these kinds of students are those Brislin (1982) described as "task oriented" already mentioned above.

In their research, Klineberg and Hull (1979) found one of them who confidently explained that he came here in the States to study and had no time for people until he accomplished his purpose. Usually these kinds of people are matured with clear goals, which include an intention to return to their own culture, and are usually above twenty years of age. It is, however, clear from literature on adjustment that these mechanisms do not describe successful adjustment in terms of intercultural communication with the host culture. They have at best been described as defense or coping mechanisms or avoidance methods which have nonetheless been employed as coping methods. Benson (1978) is quoted in describing an adjusted individual as: "shown to participate in a wide variety of behaviors...willingness to participate in

activities distinctive to the host country." (p. 67)

Going Native

Some studies, for example Brislin (1982) and Hoopes and Pusch (1981), report that some foreign students are known to "go native," having embraced the values of the American culture. These students study the language, and learn American ways of approach to studies and complaint methods to instructors. In most cases these students end up remaining in the States, getting married to Americans and taking responsible jobs.

This seems an essential coping method for the educational adjustment. Students from Thailand are notably mentioned in literature in connection with this coping method. Very little has been written regarding Nigerians in this area, although Okwudishu (1983) found that Nigerians were satisfied with their professional education, in spite of minor complaints against examination formats, and they still return or hope to return home.

Using Religious Beliefs

Some studies confirm that maintenance of individual beliefs and values has been an effective means of coping in a new environment. Pruitt (1978) in his concluding recommendation urges that: "students should be encouraged to maintain their religious activities and that churches...

take stronger interest in students." (p. 113) The author did a study on the "Adaptation of African Students to American Society" in which 84 percent had described themselves as Christians and 12 percent as Moslems. The total population was 296 and about half the sample were Nigerians.

Many foreign students who hold identical Christian beliefs with Americans have fewer problems establishing relationships with church communities which offer social support as an effective coping method. (Porter, 1962) Additionally, foreign students are exposed to the host culture through social interaction.

Alcohol Abuse

Many foreign students are known to indulge in alcohol drinking to help them cope with the challenges of being in the host culture. Osayuki (1982) did his studies on Nigerian students in New York, where he found that many Nigerian college students were involved in alcohol abuse. Some of them had police records of some minor misbehavior resulting from overuse of alcohol. Perhaps they were attempting to forget the challenges of confronting an unfriendly environment, or overcoming depression or loneliness.

Family Support

Finally, the results of many studies have shown

that, in addition to foreign students' coping methods of living with fellow countrymen, isolation, church support groups, and overuse of alcohol, living with one's family or spouse proves an effective coping method. This is mentioned separately mainly for the sake of emphasis. It could well have been a subset of fellow countrymen, except that some spouses are not always from the same country. It has been found that loneliness, depression, homesickness and irritability are frequent factors associated with maladjustment of many foreign students. One of the conclusions reached by Clarke and Ozawa (1970) is that families provide ease in adjustment by way of emotional support, and therefore sponsors should help married families to come to the States together. This finding is consistent with the results of numerous other studies. (See Klineberg and Hull, 1979; Pruitt, 1978; Porter, 1962; Pavri, 1963.)

This list of tried solutions that foreign students employ to cope in the host culture is by no means exhaustive. This is simply a brief summary of the studies in this area.

The following chapter will report the method of research on intercultural communication problems of Nigerian students in Portland and offer insights from personal interviews.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to report the method of research and also to report the findings from the personal interviews. This study is not meant to be a statistically valid one. It is meant to be a heuristic study. Heuristic is generally taken to mean anything which is done for the purpose of bringing information to light or mainly done for educational purposes as opposed to trying to prove a particular theory or hypothesis. I am therefore engaging in a heuristic study in which an informal analysis will be done to compare problems generally attributed to foreign students to those of Nigerian students in the Portland metropolitan area. This study is capable of generating a hypothesis for future study.

Statement of Why This Approach to Study

I decided to interview 19 Nigerians in Portland because I felt this was a reasonably representative number of the total number of Nigerian students in Portland. I also thought it was important to ask people directly how they felt about the issues that had been raised in the

review of literature.

METHOD

Population

Names and telephone numbers of the respondents were obtained during a general meeting of the Nigerian Students' Union. This meeting is usually held monthly for students who are in the Portland metropolitan area. Most students try to attend these meetings. The purpose of the study was briefly explained to the people who offered to be interviewed. This material was particularly useful as the students were representative of various Nigerian states, mainly from the south. Through my inquiry I discovered there were 63 Nigerian students in the Portland metropolitan area. This number came from 6 different colleges and universities in Portland. Of the 63 students, 40 attended Portland State University. Of these, addresses and telephone numbers of 43 students were available. I felt it was a good representation of the student population in Portland. In a random selection I chose every even number on the list of 43. This reduced the list. To replace those who could not be reached after all efforts to contact them failed (although a successful follow-up was made on several who had either moved to new addresses or had their telephone disconnected), 4 other Nigerian students were contacted

who, I knew, had arrived here about a year ago. Through this process I finally interviewed a total of 19 subjects. Of these, 3 were "short time" and the remainder "long time." Only a few of the subjects were females, which is typical for the overall population of Nigerian students.

Telephone as a Method of Interview

There are many different ways to conduct interviews but I chose the telephone because of its unique advantages and usefulness in interpersonal communication. According to Roman (1976) the telephone as a medium of communication has some unique attributes which include the following:

(1) It is one of the few mediums that creates an instant two-way dialogue between two people, and the importance of immediate feedback cannot be overemphasized in communication. (2) It encourages effective listening.

The person to whom you are talking has to listen and then you have to continue to speak. (3) It saves time.

(4) Nonverbal cues are restricted to paralanguage. This minimizes the potential for behaving differently to different people. You can easily manage the nonverbal cues in maintaining uniformity in discussing with people.

The telephone is also a dynamic means in that the meaning is constructed right on the spot, whereas if it were a matter of writing one has to think of certain things and include certain information that he may have

deliberately reconstrued, but in this case the respondent is more likely to release information which is a part of his real experiences. Lastly, Roman (1976) says messages can be recorded. The document can be preserved and anyone can listen to the proceeding at any time.

The interviews took four days to complete, and an average of 25 minutes was spent with each respondent.

Interview Schedule Questions

The interview questions were constructed following the format of Molyneaux and Lane (1982) on "Effective Interviewing Techniques and Analysis," but I changed the wording to obtain specific information about the categories used in the review of the literature. Specific questions were included within each section.

There were four open-ended questions, as follows:
"Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?" "What can you tell me about your relationship with your instructors?" "Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?" "What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?"

According to Miller and Cannell (1977) the typical interview protocol which has been shown to be useful and proven responsible is a provision of instructions on the respondent's role. The instructions need to deal with

general features of the interview as well as the demands for specific questions. The above authors also say that the interviewer's reinforcement, utterances and probes can be utilized to increase response validity.

To ensure that the above instructions are implemented each question begins with clear instructions. Confidentiality and carefully chosen introductory words are also used as techniques to establish rapport with interviewees.

The interviews with the subjects were transcribed and slightly edited in keeping with the purpose of the thesis. Since the purpose of the interviews was to discover adjustment and communication problems, other problems which were not directly related to communication were edited. The whole interview proceeding has been preserved, however, and anyone interested may contact the author. This chapter reports the findings from these interviews.

FINDINGS

The findings from the interviews are reported under the same categories generated in Chapter II. The first three categories are reported under the major heading of Foreign Student Adjustment, and they are cultural and personal adjustment, social adjustment, and educational adjustment. The last major heading is the coping methods

used by Nigerian students in the Portland area. Intercultural communication problems are related to adjustment problems, in that they all deal with the problems of adapting and functioning effectively in a new and unfamiliar setting.

Foreign Student Adjustment

Cultural and Personal Adjustment. This category has already been defined, but briefly cultural adjustment is used here to refer to the extent to which a foreign student likes and accepts the host culture in terms of its local customs, climate and facilities available, like transportation systems and housing. Cultural adjustment also refers to the integration of personality with culture. For this reason I am discussing the two together. Personal adjustment refers to one being satisfied with one's stay in the host culture irrespective of whether he likes the environment. He is able to achieve a level of comfort in pursuance with his or her goals.

(a) Physical conditions. The question, "What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?" was meant to draw information for this particular data. This question was purposely left general and accordingly attracted many different answers including problems of finances. As expected, a number of Nigerians are having financial problems, which made it

difficult for them to adjust.

The problem that was most often mentioned was that of climate. Nigerians have come from a tropical climate and almost half of the subjects responded that they had had problems adjusting to the cold weather in Portland. Interestingly enough, one of the respondents did not see weather as a problem. This was Subject 17 on page 196 of the appendix, and in his own words he said, "The weather in Portland suits the weather of where I used to stay in Nigeria, except for the cold last January. I have no problems in adjusting." It will be recalled that the weather of January, 1984 was very cold, and individuals have testified that has been one of the exceptions over many years. Another similar response was from Subject 3 on page 162. The subject testifies, "I don't think I am having problems in adjusting. I go to school, fit into my community, go to church, and have no problems."

Food is mentioned as one of the problems of foreign students in adjusting to a particular cultural locality, but there seems to be no problems in the case of Nigerian students in Portland. Only one person mentioned that he or she had a problem with food and dress. (Subject 2 on page 159)

Only one person mentioned having trouble with transportation. It may not be wise to draw the conclusion that Nigerian students have no problems in adjusting to

the transportation systems, however. Brislin (1982), already quoted, has already differentiated between two types of adjustments, short-term adjustment and long-term adjustment. Many of the Nigerians interviewed have been here over five years and have become accustomed by now to the transportation system. Brislin reports that in some cases certain adjustment problems persist, which may shed light on other issues as well.

(b) Culture-bound attitude. Illustrating general cultural differences is a response from Subject 3 on page 164. Responding to the question, "What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?" she mentions feeling rejected by host nationals which seems to be an example of culture-bound interpretation of nonverbal behaviors, one of the concepts which have been introduced previously.

One problem I had when I came here and I still have is a communication problem. People seem to be a little friendly at first then they do weird things, like tying their shoes, adjusting their glasses, and you know they are doing that just because they saw you. Every morning I meet people on the road and it's strange, the things they do. If they are opening their garage and they see me, all of a sudden they pull it shut. That bothered me and is still bothering me.

In my probe question, she responded, "In my culture that would mean you didn't want to see the person." It seems to mean that the subject is interpreting this behavior from her own cultural perception.

Another suspected case of culture-bound interpretation of nonverbal behavior is from Subject 2 on page 159. In response to the question of whether she could describe her relations with United States students in general, the subject said, "They don't like foreigners." The evidence she gave is that, "They look at you and frown." It is not clear whether or not frowning is a universal nonverbal behavior for rejection. Also it is not clear whether she felt rejected because of the American way of frowning or from a Nigerian cultural perspective. It seems as though three of the subjects feel that some Americans have a negative attitude toward them. In some cases, this may be true, but in other cases this may be due to misinterpretation of nonverbal cues as introduced in Chapter I. The example of pulling the garage door shut from Subject 3, previously quoted, which she interpreted as rejection may not necessarily be interpreted by Americans as rejection. On the other hand, it may well be that some Americans do have negative attitudes toward them for reasons of racial characteristics. This of course may be an objective way of looking at this situation but from the subject's point of view it constitutes a problem which makes adjustment difficult.

In summary, frequent rains and cold weather in Portland seems to be a major factor in what Nigerians perceive as a cultural problem in attempting to adapt to

Portland's environment. Severe financial difficulties seem to contribute to their level of discomfort. Other factors mentioned by only one of the individuals were transportation, food, and dress, which are not major issues. There are several cases where perception of rejection based on culture-bound interpretation of nonverbal behavior could constitute problems. The next category will examine the problems of social relationships.

Social Adjustment. Social adjustment refers to the ability to satisfactorily form relationships with people in the host culture, e.g. establishment of friendships and social interactions that facilitate contact with the host culture. This section will therefore present the findings of social adjustment problems of relationships between Nigerian students in Portland and the host nationals, including American students in general and an emphasis on friendship with both white Americans and black Americans.

(a) Relationship with American students. As noted earlier, the extent to which foreign students maintain social contact or close relationship with host nationals other than their own countrymen or other nationals will have a corresponding bearing on their attitudes toward the host culture, with a consequent positive feeling of comfort and satisfaction in their sojourn. This inquiry

was not aimed at exploring the frequency of contact which Nigerians have with American students. It was simply meant to discover how they relate to the host students, i.e. whether they perceive the relationship as negative, and thus unfulfilling, or positive and thus fulfilling. Question 3 was worded, "Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?" By using the underlined word, the respondents were almost forced to explore their perception of their relations with American students. No contact or little contact might imply negative, unfulfilled relations, and normal relationships with some contacts would indicate fulfilled relations. With this in mind, we shall look at the summary of their responses in this area.

In the area of general relationships to others in the student body, most of the respondents seem to be positive and fulfilled. A majority say they have cordial relations with fellow host students. As already stated, how much time Nigerian students really spend with American students outside of the classroom, e.g. in leisure time and social activities, is not specified. There are, however, 4 out of 19 whose responses were clearly negative and could be classified as unfulfilling. Consider, for instance, Subject 2 on page 159 of the appendix. She sharply remarked, "Bad, because they don't like foreigners." Such a response deserves

attention, especially when you consider the fact that she has been here for six years. What is unknown is the cause of this attitude. Consider another response from Subject 5, page 169, who said,

I have a problem with American students.
I have less problems with students from other
nations like Iran, Mexico and Asian countries.
When Americans hear my accent, they don't
understand sometimes.

The problem stated here is that of language difference, an accent.

Subject 6, page 172, said, "They look at me as someone from Africa, a black person. They apply this attitude indirectly."

Another response to be noted is from Subject 13, page 187, who has no direct relationships with any American students after being here for three years, "because of the difference in culture." Interestingly, this subject is married to a black American, but his only close relationship is with his black in-laws. On the other hand, he discloses that he understands "white Americans easier than black Americans."

Subject 16 says there seems to be an invisible barrier between himself and some host nationals. He suspects that the invisible barrier might be the relationship between the Blacks and the Whites.

The last respondent we need to take note of is on page 164 of the appendix. He complains that undergraduate

students are very unfriendly to foreigners and prefers "more mature and open" individuals. This subject himself is in the age range of 20-30. This response seems to support the finding from the study made by Matross, Paige and Hendricks (1980) that older American students are: "more positive than the younger ones toward their student counterparts." (p. 10)

This summary shows that the majority of the Nigerian students relate positively to the host national students.

The last section of the social relationships will report findings on friendships between Nigerian students and American whites and blacks.

(2) Problems of friendship between Nigerian students and white/black Americans. Friendship is used here to refer to an intimate relationship between two or more individuals for the purposes of sharing experiences, mutual encouragement or emotional support. People who are friends are expected to be open to each other, honest and supportive of each other. The underlined word has deeper meaning in the Nigerian concept of friendship. In the Nigerian concept you can depend on your friend to help you when you have a problem. The problem may be financial, family related or a difficult task in which you are limited, but your friend has resources, and vice versa. The American concept of friendship does not always carry these expectations. As many of these

Nigerians have been here for some years and this word friend was not defined for them, it seems they are now used to the American meaning. This suspicion is supported by ~~some~~^{and} respondents who remark, "It depends on what you mean by friendship." (See Subject 16 on page 193.) Another respondent noted (on page 177), "The Americans may think we're real friends; to us, it is just casual." The ambiguity in the definition of "friendship" will be addressed in the "Limitations of Study" section, Chapter V. What should be borne in mind is that it is either understood in the American or Nigerian sense of the word. See, for instance, Subject 10 on page 182 who says, "It is not easy to make friends here...who care, interact, share my problems." Those who do not have close friends as understood on either side clearly indicate or imply having difficulties in this area.

With the above explanation in mind, we shall now look at the summary of the responses involving friendship with both white and black Americans.

More than half of the respondents say they have many white American friends. The same half say they have few black American friends. The phrases, "not much contact with the Blacks," "very few," and "not very much" are the usual replies when the respondents describe their friendships with the Blacks. See, for instance, Subjects 2, 4, 5, 10, 13, and 15. An exception to this usual

response comes from Subjects 6 and 14. Subject 6 on page 174 says, "I have many black American friends. Most of them are educated fellows who want to know more about Africa. They see the opportunity to meet me, and many want to go to Africa." Number 14 says he has black American friends at different levels. Probed further as to whether he means intimate friendship as in Nigeria, he says on page 189, "No, but I have casual friends." The usual phrases in response to friendship with the Whites are, "many friends," "a lot of them," and "cordial relationships." See, for instance, Subject 1, 5, 7, 10, 12, 14, and 15. Subject 12 on page 185 says when he first came here he "met one U.S. white guy from Lake Oswego. He helped me fill out my forms."

One respondent who has been here for about a year decidedly says he has neither black nor white friends. In his own words he responds:

I don't have any friends among them...
 I don't care whether or not I have friendship
 with them. If I meet them I say, "Hi." If
 they don't respond it's OK.... The same
 thing applies to the White. I don't bother
 myself. (p.195)

This Nigerian sounds very similar to the student quoted in the Klineberg and Hull (1979) study in At a Foreign University who has chosen to be: "alone by choice."

(p. 60) It seems an isolated case, as Nigerians usually prefer social relationships with others. On the whole

it seems Nigerians have few reported cases of social relationship problems with white Americans, and less relationships with Blacks on the grounds that they rarely meet Blacks in classes. There are, however, several, though minimal, responses to indicate a strained relationship.

Educational Adjustment. This category will present findings of what Nigerians perceive as their problems in the American system of education in Portland. This will cover such areas as relationships to administrators and instructors, and language and examination problems.

(a) Relationship to administrators. The question that was made to provide data was Question 1 which was worded, "Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?" As many of the students had been here for several years, clear instructions were provided, and the need to take time to reflect on the question was emphasized. The responses to this particular question show that there were only a few cases of problems of Nigerian students with school administrators. For instance, Subject 3 made a general statement. He said his school administrators are not responsive. When questioned further to explain what he meant, he said that they do not take personal interest in students, especially foreign students. He said on page 160 of the appendix,

"I had no personal problems with them." Subject 5 has been here for five years and complains that American administrators do not listen carefully or give personal attention. His complaint was:

A lot of times they don't listen carefully. They don't take my needs into consideration as they make decisions. They see me as an everyday American, which I am not. I have needs that Americans don't have. For instance, it would be more lenient for me as a foreign student to be given a longer time to pay my school fees than an American. Because I am not given preference, I think they push me too hard when it comes to money. (p. 166)

Subject 4 also complained about wanting more personal attention, and preferred a small school where he was given this attention. Subject 14 said he had some misunderstanding about registration and, according to him, the lady was unwilling to talk with him.

On the other hand, there were several positive responses in considering relationships with school administrators. Some of these students have been here for several years. For instance, Subject 1 has been here for three years, Subject 2 for six years, Subject 3 for three years, Subject 16 for five years, and they have had no problems. Several said they had had some delay in paying their money but the administrators had been very understanding. One of them, Subject 10, said he has been in three different schools yet had no problems with school administrators.

In summary, several students complain about personal attention between them and their administrators. On the other hand, a majority of them responded that they have no problems with the school administrators.

(b) Relationship to instructors. The question that was used for this information is Question 2, which reads: "What can you tell me about your relationship with your instructors?" The full responses from the subjects can be found in the appendix. The summary of the responses is as follows. Subject 3 feels the relationship in most cases is businesslike, Subject 5 feels his instructors sometimes expect too much from him, while Subject 6 reports a strained relationship. Subject 11 discloses a one-time misunderstanding with his advisor which was settled. Subject 14 while maintaining he had cordial relationships with the instructors had a mixed impression of one of them. According to this subject, whenever he asked a question the teacher would remark, "I wonder whether you would understand this." (p. 188) Subjects 15, 16 and 18 said they had both good and bad instructors. About 85 percent of the respondents reported having a cordial relationship with their instructors.

How the instructors relate to students in the classroom context has some effect on their academic performance; therefore their responses are useful here. Question 4 was a general question allowing them to report

anything that was considered a "concerned problem." However, there were some specific sections of the questions which requested specific information as well. Part of Question 2 asks, "How would you describe your academic performance?" This seeks information on classroom performance. The other question is, "Do you think you have always been graded fairly?"

A summary of the responses is as follows. In the area of language, several subjects reported they had some problems. See, for instance, Subject 2 who says the difference in language made classwork hard. Subject 5 on page 170 says, "Sometimes I have the feeling I am not understood." Consider the case of Subject 6 who says the teacher gave him a bad grade because, according to the teacher, he did not understand the respondent's English. Subject 6 on page 173 argues, "No matter the circumstances I could not speak like them. They have a different English. We weren't taught that in Nigeria." Subject 6 on page 172 says, "I am the only African in that school.... My friends say I look too serious. I tried to express what I was experiencing and I ended up with a bad grade." Another person says that some teachers appreciate having him in class but others neglect him. He suspects racial prejudice. Subject 9 suspects that one instructor was being prejudiced in assigning grades. Another respondent says he has to work hard to prove he can express his

ideas and apply them.

Examination format, grades, and the educational system all constitute problems. Subjects 1, 4, 5, 9, 15, and 17 report having grade problems. Subject 17 says the teacher graded him down because he was writing British English. Concerning the differences in the examination methods, Subject 8 observes:

A language problem is not a problem. The curriculum is what is difficult for foreign students the first couple of years. You have to adjust to multiple choice or other examination methods. (p. 177)

Similar comments are made by Subjects 5 and 11. Subject 17 complains of the system of education being different from what he was used to.

In summary of these findings, while a majority of Nigerian students admitted having good relationships with their instructors, a sizeable number complained of a strained relationship existing between them and their instructors. As can be seen in this section, while many said they are doing fine with their academic work, about half complain that language differences, examination methods, and the system of education are specific problem areas.

Coping Methods of Nigerian Students

Coping methods as used here refer to the different ways or tried solutions used by Nigerians to adapt and

overcome their problems in order to function effectively in the Portland area. If these students have cultural, personal, social, and educational problems, what are the methods they use in coping with their new environment? The questions that were used to discover these methods were probing ones.

For example, on whatever problems a respondent enumerated in answering the open-ended questions, the probe questions would follow by asking, "How did you solve those problems or solve that problem?" or, "How did you deal with that?" The responses will now be presented following the categories outlined above.

Cultural and Personal Coping Methods. Adjusting to frequent rains, cold and being without personal transportation were some major problems. Subject 1 in responding to the probe, "How did you deal with that?" says that after a year she had to face the fact that it was going to rain. She then bought an umbrella and carried it everywhere. She takes buses to overcome the transportation problem. This response may have been important because in Nigeria it does not rain all year around. There are two seasons in Nigeria: dry and rainy. Also, in some Nigerian cities there are no buses. Some people who have money have their own personal transportation there, but taxis are a general means of transportation. Many need to learn how to take a

bus here, and the right one at that.

Subject 2 who had problems with food, dress and weather also made up his mind: "I made up my mind that I was here and there was nothing I could do but adjust." (p. 160) Therefore, one common method used by Nigerians to fit into the cultural differences was a change of attitude. In other words, they determined to make a shift in order to fit into the new situation.

Social Coping Methods. One way to have a social relationship is to make contact with the host nationals. A majority of the responses show that the Nigerians understand the American concept of friendship and how to maintain cordial relationships with American students. In other words, they develop positive attitudes toward the host nationals. Subject 5 on page 169 says he has had an American friend for five years: "He is the first American I would trust."

Withdrawal or avoidance is a method that Portland Nigerians use. On page 171, one subject says, "I withdraw. That is how I solve the problem. I leave them alone." Similar statements are found on page 178 where this subject says, "I keep to myself.... We turn them off. There is no solution." This shows that some Nigerians decide to withdraw as a means of coping. But they withdraw in most cases into their ethnic enclaves in order to cope. Consider the response from the female

subject who says on page 191, "When I came I roomed with three Nigerian ladies, so I felt I was at home." More evidence of Nigerians living together was that whenever I called to interview a subject, another Nigerian would answer the telephone. I would say I wanted to speak to a certain person, and the usual comment was, "OK, hold on for him."

Social support groups are used as a means of coping. Subject 3 on page 162 notes that, "I don't think I've a problem in adjusting. I go to school, fit into my community, I go to church, and have no problems." In other words, he gets emotional group support from all these avenues and has not been completely on his own.

Compromise is another method. Consider Subject 6 on page 174 who says, "You have to compromise. You cannot change it...I adjusted in order to get along. To me this way of life is not excellent." In this method these people simply give in. They are not accepting the culture. They really do not see reasons why things are done the way they are done. With skepticism, they yield to a different way of life without acceptance from the heart.

Trying to do things the "American way" or going native is another coping strategy. An example of this is striving toward self sufficiency or independence, which is one of the values of the American culture.

Subject 14 who is in the age range of 20-30 reported his attempt to go native in order to cope in the American society.

Feelings of frustration and rejection have been conditions of other Nigerians. Consider the response from Subject 16 who says he has financial problems and has to work to support himself. After staying here for five years he says: "I am still not fully adapted to the culture. When people crack jokes, it is not funny to me, then some things are funny to me but it's not funny to them." (p. 193) This appears to be an expression from someone who is unable to relate to others adequately. It must be difficult, having to remain in this state for all these years. See also Subject 8 who expressed the feeling of being rejected.

Educational Coping Methods. These include confrontation in a positive manner. Consider the approach from Subject 1 who says the instructor questioned his ability as a black person and constantly gave him a C, because the instructor thought that was what the respondent deserved, by his prejudgment. He confronted the teacher: "I asked him if he could help me because I didn't deserve a C." (p. 155) He solved the problem after proving his ability through evidences of better grades in other classes. Subject 15 was a similar case.

This subject had to go to the international advisor, and consequently his grade was raised.

Speaking slowly is one of the coping methods that some Nigerians use. Subject 7 on page 175 says, "I have overcome this by speaking as slowly as possible in my class discussions," as he cannot "say things the way Americans do."

With differences in the educational system and examination methods, they adjust by trying to get used to these in time. (See page 176.)

The next chapter will present the analyses in the form of comparison with data from Chapter II. This chapter will also analyze the problems and coping methods in terms of intercultural communication concepts and suggest direction for improvement.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS' PROBLEMS BASED ON INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION CONCEPTS

As already stated in Chapter I, the purpose of this study is three-fold. One is to discover, by means of personal interview, the extent to which intercultural communication problems and attempted solutions of the Nigerian students in the Portland metropolitan area match those that are often mentioned in the literature regarding international students. The second part of the purpose is to analyze the discovered problems and the coping or tried solutions in terms of certain intercultural communication concepts. The third part is to suggest directions for improvement in preparation of Nigerian students in terms of the discovered problems.

In keeping with this purpose, Chapter II presented the problems of international students including Nigerian students in the United States, as discussed in literature on the subject. Chapter III presented the research undertaken by means of personal interviews with Nigerian students in the Portland area. The findings were presented following the same categories generated in Chapter II, which includes foreign student adjustment problems with the subcategories of cultural, personal,

social and educational adjustments, and the methods of coping.

The purpose of this chapter is to fulfill the demands of the study as stated above--analysis and comparison of the problems. Following the same categories generated in Chapter II, this chapter will compare and contrast the extent to which the findings reported in Chapter III match the problems reviewed in Chapter II.

FOREIGN STUDENT ADJUSTMENT

Cultural and Personal Adjustment

The category of cultural adjustment problems has to do with adapting to the new climate, local customs, way of life including economic and political philosophies. Personal adjustment has to do with satisfaction, acceptance, feelings of comfort, a smooth integration of personality which involves one's personal change of attitude to accommodate the changes in the new culture as have already been defined. Chapter II shows that, generally, foreign students experience problems in this area depending from what part of the world they come. Problems in this area are important because they affect behaviors and interaction. It was mentioned that students from industrialized areas like Europe find it easier to adjust in American culture. Students from less-developed countries need more time for adjustment

in this area. One's personal attitudes and beliefs foster either smooth or difficult integration into a new society. A positive attitude towards a new culture, it was stressed, becomes a great impetus in achieving personal satisfaction and a level of comfort in the American culture.

Literature on African students was found to be contradictory as some say that African students arrive with an unfavorable disposition and consequently have difficulty adjusting to the American culture (Miller, 1967), while some say they arrive with positive attitudes but either change or maintain it. (United States Information Agency, 1971) Concerning Nigerian students studied by Pruitt (1978) along with other African students, they have less problems adjusting to the American culture compared to the Arabs or Latin Americans who had problems with language. Arubayi (1981) and Okwudishu (1983), however, found Nigerians had problems adjusting to the American culture because of their acute financial problems, lack of jobs, etc.

The problems of Nigerian students in Portland match those of other Nigerians and other foreign students in the following areas:

Physical Conditions. Financial difficulty makes adjustment difficult for 5 respondents. Consider the response from Subject 16 who says he has had financial problems and therefore has not been able to adapt to

the American culture after he has been here five years.

Getting used to food in the States was mentioned by only one person. This is so minimal that it does not seem to constitute a problem for these students. In fact, food has not been found to be a problem for Nigerians in any literature reviewed. One reason may be that most Nigerians who come to the U.S. to study are either professing Christians or those who have gone through Mission schools in Nigeria. Devout Moslems, found mainly in the far northern area of Nigeria, might have problems, especially with meat. They do not eat meat or any animal slaughtered by non-Moslems. One wonders where they could buy such meat in American supermarkets. Additionally, they do not eat pork. These areas sometimes constitute real problems in inter-ethnic communication in Nigeria.

Only one person mentioned transportation as being a problem for getting along in Portland. It does not seem to be a factor for most Nigerians in the Portland area. One explanation may be that most of the subjects in this interview schedule have been here for a long time, some up to six years. They either have their own personal transportation or possess adequate knowledge of the environment like bus routes and total transportation systems. It is, therefore, no longer of concern to them at this time, even though it is a factor for many foreign

students in literature. It could be concluded that the assumption of transportation as a problem for any international student should take into account how long the student has been in the host country.

There is a contrast between literature and Portland interviewees as to whether rain or weather has been a problem. This seems to be a major issue in adjustment for Nigerians in Portland, an area which has not received attention regarding other Nigerians in other parts of America. How do students from equatorial climates adjust in contrasting climatic conditions--their level of comfort to function in those cultural environments? Several respondents complained about rain or weather in Portland. For instance, Subjects 1, 2, 7, 11, 12, 13, and 15 all stated that rain tampered with their level of personal and cultural adjustment. An interesting remark is made by Subject 1 who says:

My most common problem is the rain. I came from a dry area. When it rains, it is not easy to go out for me.... After a year, I had to face the fact that it was going to rain, so I got a raincoat and umbrella and carried the umbrella everywhere. I lost some on buses but after awhile, I learned how to take care of them. (p. 157)

The above quotation, previously cited, reveals how uncomfortable this student must have felt in learning how to fit into the rainy and colder culture.

The basic problem that apparently underlies the

issue of weather in Portland seems to stem from a lack of adequate information that Nigerian students had regarding the nature of weather in Portland. Consequently, many of them came assuming they would walk into another day of Nigerian weather. Evidence exists that many were not adequately told what to expect. The respondent quoted previously did not even know what to do for the whole first year. According to this information, it was after one year that she finally made up her mind to face the fact that it was going to rain. Why didn't she buy an umbrella and raincoat on her arrival if she was completely armed with information? Being armed with adequate information about the sharp contrast in weather would not have prevented the rain and cold in any case, but advanced information would have (1) allowed for preconditioning of attitudes (pre-coping), (2) set expectations, and (3) encouraged her to secure an umbrella and raincoat on arrival. According to Brislin (1982): "Preparation before cross-cultural contact is almost always wise." (p. 178) Also quoting David (1970), Brislin (1982) relates the power of prior adequate information on immigrants:

Immigrants who are forced to move from one country to another adapt more easily if they are given accurate information regarding what to expect in their new lives. (p. 178)

In order for Nigerian students and international

students in general to improve in this area, a good orientation program would be necessary before arriving in a host culture such as the United States. What orientation is, who would conduct it and when and where will be treated later.

Culture-Bound Attitude. Apart from physical aspects of the cultural problems mentioned above, /assuming cultural similarity could pose a problem for other Nigerians getting adjusted to the Portland environment.' /An example of this can be seen through analysis of the response by Subject 1. This respondent says she found it hard to adjust here at first:

Because in the U.S. if you need help, you go to the people rather than the people coming to you, which is what I am used to in my country. (p. 156)

This response reveals one of the basic elements of the "high-context cultures," i.e. the ability to know intuitively the needs of those in the community and the initiative to get involved. (Hall, 1981) The concept of community life in Nigeria is quite different from what this subject found or expected to find in Portland. She expected the neighbors to come and welcome her, find out her needs and make life comfortable for her in a new place. As a new person in a community, she is not supposed to be exposing her problem to people. Being shy is a prized virtue in the Nigerian culture. Only after

you have really made close friends, could you be able to disclose your needs. (Kato, 1977) This subject was expecting this pattern in a culture where you are supposed to know what your need is and state exactly what it is in order to receive help. The quotation above could be seen as an example of assuming cultural similarity in that this subject was expecting a replica of the Nigerian culture in Portland. Such expectations are prone to intercultural misunderstanding. Conversely, the intercultural communication theory advises that expectation of differences in another culture should be the norm.

Social Adjustment ("More Contrast Than Similarity")

This is defined as the ability to form satisfactory relationships with people in the host culture, e.g. establishment of friendships and social interactions that facilitate contact with the host culture.

Data obtained for Chapter II from the review of literature, both general and specific, shows that social contact with the host culture is a universal problem for foreign students all over the world, including the United States. Extensive quotations were supplied in that chapter to allow those studies to speak for themselves. Lee, Abd-Ella and Thomas (1979) found in these studies that African students, who place much emphasis on

interpersonal interactions, were not usually satisfied in this area. According to them, African students perceived the "least satisfaction in receiving equal acceptance by faculty and human respect by U.S. students." (Chapter II, p. 40) The review also shows that poor relationships exist between foreign students and administrators or instructors.

Concerning Nigerian students, Cohen (1971) found that those who arrived in the United States and could not find other Nigerians to relate to had problems adjusting to the (1) individualistic approach to life here, (2) problems centered on misunderstanding the concept of friendship between Americans and other foreign students, and (3) strenuous relationship between Africans (including Nigerians) and black Americans.

Relationship to Fellow Students. As already noted *through research I determined* above, foreign students in American institutions do not usually maintain a desired relation of frequent contact with the general American student body. Their relationship usually is kept at the minimal level. Instead, the foreign students frequently spend more of their time with their own ethnic groups or other international students, making friends and maintaining more contact with them. This was the finding of Klineberg and Hull (1979); Matross, Paige and Hendricks (1980); Clarke (1970) and a host of others. Pruitt (1978) discovered the same pattern among

African students including Nigerians in the other institutions of the U.S. There seems to be a marked contrast from the above findings as one looks at the responses of the Nigerian students in Portland. At least from their own subjective perception, there seems to be no problem in this area. Relationship might be taken to mean normal interpersonal contacts, doing things together, etc. Consider the responses from Subjects 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19, who say they maintain cordial relationships with the general American student body.

Only two people observe they have contact problems with the general host culture, as reported in Chapter III. But considering the total population of 19 subjects, two is simply too few a number to represent a major issue. It is in this area that the Portland Nigerians maintain a clear contrast to the common foreign students' problems. Surprisingly, the areas of friendships, both with the white and black Americans, also pose no problem, another departure from the general pattern.

Relationship to White and Black Americans. These questions seek to explore a more close and intimate relationship among Nigerians and American students. The words "general relationship" and "friendship" signal the difference both to the respondents who were also constantly probed to clarify areas that need more information and the

reader, who should sense that friendship conveys closer contact and a more intimate interpersonal relationship. Existing literature shows that most foreign students do not understand how to get along with Americans in their concept of friendship. There is, therefore, a usual misconception of "friendship" which carries along with it different expectations with the resultant intercultural miscommunication. What should be clear here is that this was an open-ended interview which did not define the meaning of friendship for the respondents. It is simply assumed that if they have problems with whatever they define as "friendship" they should disclose it; if they have no problem, it would be regarded on that basis.

The overwhelming number of positive responses surprised me. As reported in Chapter III, many of the subjects said they have many friends. The distinction was becoming noticeable when a similar question was asked regarding friendship with the American blacks. The responses would usually change to the negative.

The result of the above interview shows that Nigerian students in Portland perceive few problems in the area of friendship with white Americans. By doing so, they show a clear contrast to the other Nigerians and foreign students in general who are usually known to have problems in this area. Another area of contrast is in the relationship to the black Americans. Although there is

a clear indication from the responses that these Nigerians have fewer friends among the Blacks, when probed to explain their reasons, the usual explanation is that they do not normally meet the Blacks in their classes or that they only meet a few of them in classes. Subject 10 actually explains that he has not made any friendships with them but that they are not his enemies. One respondent shows that he has problems understanding the black American English and that he understands white Americans more easily. This is one out of the majority. No reason was given indicating a dislike or hostility as some studies have often indicated. In this area again, the Nigerians in Portland stand contrasted to the rest of the Africans including Nigerian students in other higher institutions in the U.S. It seems clear to me that the area of social relationships between Nigerians and the student body does not need any special direction for improvement as they indicate no serious problem in this area.

—To summarize, this category of social adjustment problems discussed the issues involved in Nigerian students relating to the host nationals and reviewed these according to intercultural communication principles of difference-based perspective and culture-bound attitude. It was found that several respondents had complaints regarding the school administrators not giving them adequate individual attention. These students felt that

they should receive preferential treatment because of the virtue of their being foreign. They call for an administrative plan that takes their needs into consideration. This subjective response, nonetheless, matches those of other foreign students in other schools. In relating to general American students, close relationships, the Nigerian students in Portland demonstrate positive relationships. In this area they show marked contrast to other Nigerian students and foreign students in general who normally, according to studies, indicate these as problem areas.

Educational Adjustment

A number of studies including Spaulding and Flack (1976); Klineberg and Hull (1979); and Clarke (1970) report the findings that foreign students have problems adjusting to the American system of education. These problems have to do with the different language in the mode of thinking, how these differences affect our expectation in our academic setting, which includes relationships between professors and students. These studies have revealed that many foreign students, for instance Mexicans, Middle Eastern, Far Eastern and African students, have problems with language. Most African students have the language proficiency for a university education but have a problem with an accent. Nigerian

students are known to have this problem also. The structure of the class which encourages student participation is known to be a problem for foreign students partly because of the language difficulty and partly because of cultural differences. The system is new to many foreign students. The differences in testing methods like multiple choice, frequency and the grading practices of some instructors all create a problem for foreign students including Nigerian students elsewhere. See Arubayi (1981) and Okwudishu (1983). Portland Nigerian students match this trend.

Relationship to Administrators. As reported in Chapter III, many studies have reported that the relationship between school administrators and foreign students needs to improve. Arubayi (1981) found Nigerians had a prolonged history of financial problems, which might contribute to this problem area. Looking through the responses of Nigerians in Portland, this problem was also found. For instance, Subject 14 on page 188 of the appendix says he has problems paying late fees: "but the lady here was not willing to talk to me." The next subject has similar problems; however, they did not take long to solve. Four other respondents reported on a lack of personal attention from clerks or administrators. One specifically says that the administrators do not take the personal needs of the foreign student into consideration

while planning. (Subject 5) It is difficult to ascertain the validity of these responses, because they are basically subjective and one-sided evidences. You will note, however, that the specified problem was communication related. Intercultural perspective was partly defined as "face-to-face interaction." By refusing to discuss personal problems with these students, the above principle is apparently violated with its attendant results. These few complaints, to some extent, appear similar to the common problems that other Nigerian and foreign students in general report they experience but, overall, the Portland respondent did not report this as an important problem.

Relationship to Instructors. Sixteen out of 19 respondents say they have a good relationship with their instructors. Consider the response of Subject 1, page 155, who says: "most of my instructors have been to other countries, so they are quite understanding." From this respondent's point of view, instructors who have traveled to other countries or who have developed an interest in understanding differences in other cultures through contacts, reading books, etc., have a broader perspective of foreign students. This seems to be in line with the view of several authors like Hall (1981), Brislin (1982), Paige (1982) and others who have written books on intercultural perspectives. Subject 5 says he is very

close to his instructors while Subject 19 on page 198 makes similar statements: "They answer my questions, they give me adequate attention." These remarks compare fairly well with those made by other foreign students concerning their relationship with their instructors. For example, Cable (1974) says that a number of foreign students are impressed by the simplicity and friendliness of American professors who go to a nearby restaurant with students, eat, drink and make jokes. Such a thing is unheard of in many of their home cultures.

But a number of other Nigerian respondents in Portland report having problems in how they perceive their relationship with their professors and also irregularities in the grading system. Subject 3 says that his perception of the relationship is business-like, while Subject 6 says that they look at him as someone who is different. Almost half of the interviewees report cases of grade problems. Subjects 5 and 13 observe that it depends on individual teachers, some fair and some biased. For example, Subjects 1, 4, 5, 9, 15, 17, and 19 complained of grade problems with their instructors at one time or another.

While the fact of grade problems seems to be established from the above reports, there also seems to be the problem of confusing social relationships with grading. Relationship to instructors and poor grades

seem to be linked together in the mind of the respondents. Responses such as "businesslike," "look at me as someone who is different" would possibly stem from a cultural way of perception. From the Nigerian point of view, if there is a cordial relation between them and their instructors, they cannot see why such instructors would give them bad grades. Bad grades in this case would be culturally interpreted to mean that the instructors are not interested in the academic success of the respondents. In Nigeria achievement in many cases depends on whom you know. It may or may not necessarily depend solely on one's performance. Relationships are valued more than objective evaluation of comparative worth. In other words, the value is on people, not on the objective achievement per se. This argument should not be misinterpreted to mean that there are no objective standards or truths in the Nigerian culture. There are, but the other side is also part of the culture. The example Barna (1982) cites involving value clashes in interpersonal relationships is also true in the Nigerian culture. The above author narrates the story of a Persian student who got offended with his American friend because when they got into an argument with a third party, the American friend did not support him. The Persian explained the fact that back home: "you are supposed to take the friend's or family's side even when they are wrong. When you get home, then you can

attack the wrong doer." (p. 328)

The American professor, on the other hand, may look at the issue of bad grades and relationship as not being associated. The response from the American student to his Persian friend quoted above also reveals the cultural value position of an American professor (Barna, 1982, p. 328): "This I found strange because even if it is my mother and I think she is wrong, I say so." The ethical value of merit and individual competence may so dominate the thinking mode of those instructors, and culturally so, that they do not see the connection between personal relationship and grades that the Nigerian students do.

It could be argued that in order to accept these grade complaints as valid, multiple research methods would have been more appropriate. From the standpoint of this paper, these grade complaints match those of other international students nationwide. Consequently, the explanation above might be useful.

Language differences is another area of problem for many international students. The level and nature of difficulty vary, according to studies noted earlier. Nigerian students have difficulty primarily with a deep accent. Their level of education back home also determines their overall language competence for normal university academic loads. There are, however, differences in the American English and the British English that Nigerians

were used to at home. For instance, words like "pants, underwear, garage, guy" all carry different meanings in the Nigerian British English. When I first came to America, I used to see the sign "Garage Sale." For a long time I thought it meant "selling the place where cars are kept." It was my wife who first discovered that it meant something quite different from what we were used to at home. These are the same words, but they have different meanings. These differences are, however, overcome with time. As expected, a number of Nigerian students in Portland have language problems, as presented in Chapter II.

The problem of language goes beyond the difference in accent. The mode of thinking, direct versus indirect style of language, are other areas of problems. The example of this additional problem can be seen where Subject 7 on page 175 says: "I do not say things the way Americans do," which could mean a number of things. It could mean that his accent is different. It could also mean that the way this respondent thinks and expresses his ideas is also different. Americans culturally think and use a direct style of communication. The rapid, short and direct expression is not only built on a Western logical linear way of thinking, but it is also loaded with his value of time. (Hall, 1981) He wants to get to the point quickly, get done with it so that he can attend

to other things. Quick thinking and fast solutions to problems are a way of life. Examinations are carefully timed to the second. Sometimes it is not clear which is more important, finishing examinations on time or knowing the material. The Nigerian student may not think and express his ideas in the American way. He may not even hit the point directly from the perspective of an American. He may describe and leave the point understood for the listener to figure out. The Nigerian has time for people; the longer he keeps the person listening and interacting, the better for him. An indirect approach to communication expresses social values of interpersonal interaction but less sensitivity to time. To adjust to the American system of education, the Nigerian is compelled not only to improve his accent, and pay attention to differences in the meaning of English words, but also become aware of the value differences in the use of direct and indirect styles of communication. Consequently, for Americans to expect Nigerian students to think the way they do, be direct and to the point, is not only an example of single reality (Bennett, 1977) but also of ethnocentrism, in that they hold the value of direct style of communication above the indirect approach to communication. This behavior implies that direct communication is the best approach for all foreign students.

Foreign students in general, as studies like Klineberg and Hull (1979), Clarke (1970), etc. have shown, have problems with American examination methods. Saudi Arabians, Mexicans and Indians, for instance, are known to have problems with multiple choice questions. (Cable, 1974) African students, according to Pruitt (1978), have problems with American examining methods. Nigerians studied by Arubayi (1981) and Okwudishu (1983) have problems with multiple choice, other testing methods, and taking several weekly examinations which add to final grades. The findings in Chapter III from the personal interviews with the Nigerians in Portland show similar problems. It seems clear that this area presents problems to all foreign students and needs consideration.

COPING METHODS

In Chapter II, different methods of coping that foreign students use were presented as found in literature. The coping methods of Nigerian students in Portland match those of other students in several areas. But there are also other areas of contrast as will be seen later.

Cultural and Personal Coping Methods

Foreign students in general, African and Nigerian students in particular, are known to vary in this area. People from Europe cope more easily because of a number

of similarities in both the physical aspects of culture, like food, weather, industrial settings, and in the world view aspect. A change of attitude is a major issue in this aspect on the part of many foreign students. The coping of the Nigerian students in Portland is similar in that several responses indicate that they made up their minds to adjust to the environment and fit into the way of life here. (See Subjects 1 and 2.)

It is also worth noting that changing or shifting attitudes to the positive has been characteristic of coping methods for both other foreign and Nigerian students in Portland.

Social Coping Methods

Studies show that foreign students in general use different methods of coping. Withdrawal is one of the popular methods. Since many foreign students find contact with host nationals difficult and need social contact for their emotional support, they withdraw to the enclave of their ethnic groups. Only a few responses from Nigerians in Portland show a similar pattern. One subject says: "I withdraw." (p. 171) Another discloses: "I keep to myself." (p. 178) Nigerians in Portland are also known to room with other Nigerians. (See Subject 15.)

While the coping method of withdrawing to country

people seems very popular and effective protection from severe culture shock, an intercultural perspective does not imply that it is the best solution for intercultural interaction. The aim in intercultural communication is to get people of different cultures to understand their differences which create problems--to learn how to manage those differences and to interact with the different cultures, fully respecting their differences. Staying with one's country people only encourages intra-ethnic or cultural communication. The next chapter will give direction for improvement in this area.

Social support groups is another coping method used by other students and also Nigerian students in Portland. Chapter II reports findings regarding other foreign students and Nigerian students elsewhere. Respondent 3 maintains group support from school, community and church. This seems a very appropriate method of coping. The respondent is likely to come into contact with the host culture at school, community and church. It is no surprise that he says he has no adjustment problems.

Compromise is used as a method of coping by Nigerians in Portland but I did not find any mention of it in the review of literature. This method appears close to the change of attitude to the positive which makes adjustment easier. But the context here shows that the respondent simply cooperates to get along. He

complains that he does not like it. In other words, he maintains a negative attitude in disguise. Intercultural communication theory says that a critical attitude or evaluative opinion is to be avoided if maximum benefit is to be derived from the host culture. (Clarke, 1970)

Flight and alcohol abuse were found among Nigerians in other places, but my interviews did not discover any of these tried solutions among Nigerians in Portland.

Family support is used by other students, including Nigerians. It is also used by Nigerians in Portland. Questions were not worded to find this information, but during telephone calls, females usually answered calls. They would then call my interviewee or tell me when to call back. In one incident I interviewed both the husband and wife who were both students. Their baby was crying as indicated on page 161. According to Clarke (1970) and Pruitt (1978), family support has been a very effective method of coping for foreign students in the U.S. Care must be taken, however, to maintain intercultural relationships with the host culture or nationals.

Other foreign students, according to studies, were known to go native. This means that these foreign students have become "Americanized" or marginal. They embrace American values exclusively and disown the values of their home culture. They consequently decide to remain in America. Some Chinese and Indian Thai students are noted

examples. Again, my questions were not directly aimed at discovering this area.

One aspect of the contrast areas found was seeking to emulate the American value of individuality to create self-sufficiency. (Subject 14) He at first had frustrations at having to live alone for the first time, according to him. But he finally learned that to cope in the American society required abilities to function independently. This is highly recommended for foreign students in the U.S. as this is one of the valued skills in the American culture. (Clarke, 1970)

Educational Coping Methods

Foreign students in general are known to use confrontation, hard work to maintain American educational standards, and giving gifts to instructors to show their appreciation. Nigerian students in Portland reported using some of these. In the case of grade problems, evidence of confrontation exists. Subject 1 confronted the teacher in a positive manner, which worked. Nigerian students are generally known to work conscientiously and are degree-minded. Evidence of this exists in Portland interviews when one of the respondents explained that he worked hard. (Subject 6) In the area of language, Subject 7 says he speaks slowly since he cannot change his accent. They have to learn to become used to the

different system of education as there is no other remedy.
These areas show no contrast to other foreign students.

CHAPTER V

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study has several limitations which should be noted and the findings and analysis should be interpreted with these limitations in mind. First, I will discuss the method of research. As the reader would have observed in Chapter III, the method employed is simply meant to bring information about Nigerian students in Portland to light. It is a heuristic study which employed an informal analysis method and is not meant to be statistically valid. A statistically valid research method might be one which used content analysis with clear category construction based on established theory. Content analysis uses construct validity which ensures one is measuring what one intended to measure. This method is therefore more precise, avoiding ambiguity. (Budd, Thorp and Donohew, 1967)

This leads to the second limitation which is the selection of the population. The interviewees were selected at a meeting of the Nigerian Student Union with a few added afterwards. It is clear that not all the Nigerian students were there on that day. Furthermore it cannot be ascertained whether the population was

completely representative of the different parts of Nigeria. According to the names gathered, most of them, if not all, were from the southern states of Nigeria. There were no recognized names from the northern states. Another characteristic of the population is that there were only four women among the subjects interviewed, while there were fifteen men. This is the usual ratio of women to men in the Nigerian student population.

Another thing to keep in mind about the selection of the population is the random method used for sampling. Every even number was used which was simply the author's choice. A more reliable method would have been the use of already established random numbering systems. Additionally, only student populations in Portland were involved in this study. It could be argued that a more representative sampling should have included the whole state of Oregon or some other universities in other states in order to generalize conclusions of this study.

One final limitation needs to be acknowledged. It is the fact that the word "friendship" was not defined in my open-ended questions. Usually there is a misconception of "friendship" between the foreign students and Americans. As this word was left for the Nigerians in Portland to respond according to their perception, they would usually report "cordial" or "fine" but it was not clear what definition they were using. This suspicion was supported

when one respondent replied, "It depends on what you call friends," Subject 16 on page 193, or when another said, "The Americans may think we're real friends but to us it is just casual," Subject 8 on page 177.

These limitations will need to be overcome in future researches by using content analysis or multiple methods of research. This could be a combination of telephone, questionnaire and follow-up. Statistical methods of measurement and interpretation of results could be used to maintain accuracy and create more power to generalize results. Both oral interviews and written questionnaires should have well-defined key words, especially "friendship."

CONCLUDING REMARKS

From the findings of the personal interviews and analysis of problems of the Nigerian students in Portland, it seems as though certain conclusions can be drawn.

1. Most Nigerian students in Portland have no problem in adjusting to American food, transportation and other physical environmental conditions, except weather.

2. The evidence seems to support existence of perception by Nigerian students of negative attitudes directed toward them by Americans. This perception may be based on the assumption of cultural similarity

including possible misinterpretation of nonverbal behavior.

3. Concerning social relationships, most Nigerian students relate fairly well to American students in general. They do not experience difficulty in making and maintaining friendship with host nationals as is normally the case with other international students. The issue of friendship, however, still remains unclear.

The relationship between black Americans and Nigerian students in general does not seem strenuous, although Nigerians relate more easily to white Americans than to the Blacks/ perhaps because of lack of contact in classes which usually provides a setting for initial contact and interaction.

4. In the educational aspects, there seems to be some unfulfilled expectations between the administrators and the Nigerian students. Lack of listening has received major emphasis and that there seems to be a general effect of accent on communication skills of the Nigerian students. There seems to exist evidence to support the general notion of grade problems which studies have often found regarding the foreign students. There are several cases of strained relationships between instructors and international students. Finally, responses support the general finding that many foreign students have problems with examination methods.

DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Nigerian students in different universities, and foreign students in general, complain of difficulty in making friends with American students. This area does not seem to present a problem for Nigerians in Portland. What are the possible reasons?

1. Are people in Portland more sociable to Nigerians?
2. Can we assume that Nigerians who come to Portland behave differently from other Nigerians?
3. If we assume that the Portland environment is really different, the host nationals are really sociable, is this feeling confined to Nigerians alone or to other international students as well?

Future research would need to define "friendship" and show the differences between "deeper concepts of friendship" and "casual concepts of friendship." If Nigerian students really maintain cordial relationships and adapted, Pruitt's (1978) index, which follows, could be used to explore the specific areas.

1. How much leisure time do Nigerians spend with host nationals?
2. How much leisure time do Nigerians spend with black Americans?
3. While with either white or black Americans, do

Nigerians share their thoughts freely or are they restrained?

4. Are Nigerians willing to marry Americans or are Americans willing to marry Nigerians?

5. Could Nigerians sincerely express that they like the American culture in terms of values and ways of life?

6. Do Nigerians like American food?

7. Do they have frequent contact with American families?

8. With whom do Nigerians share their housing, Americans, other international students or Nigerians?

SUGGESTED DIRECTION FOR IMPROVEMENT OF NIGERIAN STUDENT ADJUSTMENT

The findings and analyses of the problems obtained from interviews with Nigerian students suggest a number of areas that need to be improved. Such problem areas include advanced knowledge of the American culture, communication skills, coping skills and multicultural curriculum. The method of addressing these problems will be suggested, as orientation programs, seminars and classroom contexts.

Advanced knowledge of the American culture can be obtained through orientation programs. The American culture can be looked at from two aspects: physical and world view. The physical aspects of the culture

refer to the physical environment--the city, its buildings, transportation, weather, shopping locations, banking locations, etc. According to some subjects interviewed, lack of adequate and accurate information about Portland made adjustment more difficult for them.

These students simply arrived here with hazy ideas of the physical environment. Importance of advanced information has already been emphasized through the example of immigrants which Brislin (1982) quotes from David (1970). Advanced information enables these students to pre-condition themselves before leaving their home country. The prospective Nigerian student who is to arrive in Oregon should receive a map of Oregon and Portland in particular, which gives clear locations of places. This looks so simple. In some cases, some Nigerian students receive letters from school giving this type of information, but some do not. Subject 1 is a typical example. It is my suggestion that this type of information be made available at all the American embassies.

World view is the second aspect of the information prospective students need before they arrive in the United States. It is my suggestion that an orientation program be set up in Nigeria through the embassy which should have booklets similar to "Survival Kit for Overseas Living" by Kohls (1979). This booklet should

clearly explore American values and way of life. Issues like concepts of time, concepts of friendship, social relationships, value of individualism, activities, concepts of status, dating customs, greeting habits, nature of an American classroom, expectations from an American professor, types of examinations, and general information on nonverbal behaviors, etc. should be included.

Better Orientation Programs

Prospective Nigerian students write to American embassies about a month before their date of travel. The booklet should be sent to them in the mail. They should read it thoroughly. One week prior to their departure they go to the embassy for their visa. They should not be given visas until they attend a two-day session to discuss this booklet. Group discussion formats are used, as advanced planning will have allowed many prospective students to come at the same time. By discussing American values, these groups can also gain insight to explore the Nigerian values and the concept of life that stands in contrast to that of Americans. This will surely make an interesting comparison. The Nigerian students are also likely to be highly motivated because of their expectations to travel. These students are then given visas after the discussion sessions. Personnel conducting these sessions do not need to be full-time.

A Nigerian American-trained person who has had exposure to intercultural communication classes can facilitate along with an American attached to the embassy.

Follow-up sessions begin when Nigerian students arrive at their school. They now have a reasonable idea on how to function in the American culture. This follow-up session is conducted in the office of the International Student Affairs. Apart from the initial orientation, these students are required to take at least one class in intercultural communications if such classes exist in their school. In Portland State University, SP 140, Introduction to Intercultural Communication, would be an ideal class to review some materials they were already exposed to and to explore them more deeply.

The advantages of this kind of orientation are obvious. The Nigerian students are aware of the value differences and are no longer blind to the assumption of cultural similarity. They know how to interact with Americans or at least they are aware of American frames of reference, and how to fit in. Another advantage is that the possibility of serious miscommunication is reduced. Finally, the potential for relating to the host nationals in a meaningful way and maintaining a level of satisfaction can be fulfilling. To continue to prepare the Nigerian students, some useful concepts could be introduced in their orientation program booklet.

These concepts, suggested below, are meant to give them useful insights on the kinds of behaviors and understanding that would increase their coping skills.

Improved Methods of Coping

Several useful methods of coping were reported relating to the foreign students and the Nigerian students in Portland. Such methods of coping include group support networks which involve community, school and church (Brislin, 1982), maintaining positive attitudes to the host culture (Spaulding and Flack, 1976), and working hard to achieve self reliance. (Fieg and Blair, 1975) This section will suggest more ways in which to expand the size of the list of coping methods that can be utilized by Nigerians and other international students as well.

According to Brislin (1982), a complete adjustment is marked by four developments which involve: "people's beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors." (p. 282) It is important to note that all these areas are, to a large extent, shaped by one's own culture. My treatment will not necessarily follow the above areas as stated, but they will be covered directly or indirectly. In his analysis of adjustment in a pluralistic society, Brislin (1982) uses a study carried out by Pruitt (1978) on the adjustment of African students in the United States.

According to the finding of this study, the Africans who identified more with the mainstream, dominant-white American society experienced less stressful adjustments than those who identified more with the black American society. (Brislin, 1982) It might be useful to mention part of the activities which constituted Pruitt's (1978) index: (1) spending leisure time with the people; (2) feeling free to share thoughts; (3) willingness to marry; (4) liking American culture, with special affinity toward values and ways of life; (5) liking American food; and (6) having contact with American families. As it can be seen, this index of activities embraces almost all the major areas of adjustment emphasized by Brislin (1982). Perhaps such an index would be useful for future research on Nigerian students in Portland and elsewhere. But for the purpose of further creating an atmosphere for understanding more coping skills, intercultural communication concepts will now be briefly presented with an explanation on how this knowledge could be useful.

Decreasing Ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is defined as the tendency to (Brislin, 1982, p. 76): "enter judgment around standards which are acceptable in one's own culture." It is important for Nigerians to be aware of this hidden cultural factor before they ever leave home. During my interview with Nigerians, one of the subjects unconsciously but blatantly stated: "In my culture, you

do not do that...that is why it is bothering me." (p. 165)

And another subject declared that he was not taught that type of American English at home. While what they said might be true, the implication is that the Nigerian culture has become the standard for them in the American culture. They need to understand that no one culture, no matter how much they cherish the way things are done in their own culture, can serve as the absolute standard for judging the other culture in which they are.

Stewart (1972) states:

One's own values and assumptions permit the growth of a perspective which recognizes that differing sets of values and assumptions exist, and the development of the potential for greater understanding of another culture.
(p. 7)

As the reader can see, an understanding and possibly acceptance of this position is very essential in getting along in another culture. For one thing, it does not deny the importance and the existence of one's own cultural values and assumptions. It also opposes the concept of dogmatism and ethnocentrism. Foreign students who hold this position will, all things being equal, have less problems of accepting the values or way of life in the host culture. Admittedly, it is not easy to make a shift from one's culture to another within a short period of time, but this position offers greater prospects to effectively function in the American culture. It is

not clear whether a number of Nigerians possess this skill, and that might explain the reason why a majority of them have problems adjusting to the host culture in Portland. It may be that the Portland environment is actually different, but it remains for future research to confirm either of the positions. Another skill closely related to the understanding of the one just discussed is cultural competence.

Increasing Cultural Competence. According to Brislin (1982) this refers to people's own feeling of competence based on positive attitudes and self-confidence. This favorable attitude has to do with learning the language, the willingness to locate essential locations in the environment which many people ignore to their peril. It might be useful to add that flexibility and attitude could be combined under this topic. The quality of being flexible allows a sojourner to be open to new ways of thinking and behaviors, a very necessary ingredient in adapting to situations that lead to interpersonal interaction. A flexible person may be able to take the point of view of another person which in itself may be regarded as a coping method. Aspects of cultural competence include attitudes, creativity, bi-culturality, multi-culturality and communication skills.

(Attitudes) Attitudes refer to our manner, style, orientation or reaction to a thing, person, group of

people or any outside stimuli. Our attitude may be positive or negative, evaluative and judgmental. An evaluative attitude can constitute a personal problem for us in a new setting. We may be prone to quick judgment without understanding why things are done the way they are. If our attitudes can change to accommodate new and unfamiliar ways of doing things in a different culture, this itself would be a powerful coping strategy.

In my interview with Nigerians in Portland, Subject 17 would serve as an example of someone with a negative attitude. He simply says: "I don't care whether or not I have friendship with them." (p. 195) With this type of attitude, a long-term adjustment would be difficult.

(Creativity) This is another coping strategy. This coping skill enables a person to come up with some original or imaginative ideas to problem solving situations. A creative person is able to release his tension in stressful situations. For instance, many Nigerians reported having financial problems. One way to approach this problem is to blame it on his home culture or to get frustrated with school authorities, which will make things even worse. Another approach is to apply to immigration for work and calmly explain the situation. Furthermore, he could seek for a loan, write home and apply for an extension of time in which to pay. While

he continues with these efforts he knows that worrying would not help. He participates in creative activities like sports or hobbies. This participative life helps to reduce anxiety. In case of language problems, he listens carefully to the American accent, takes classes to improve his pronunciation, seeks help from friends, or simply tells Americans humorously that they have an accent.

(Bi-Culturality) This is another intercultural skill which aids in the adaptation process. A bi-cultural person has the capacity to relate not only to his own culture but also to the host culture. He has the skill to function in different roles comfortably. This skill can improve through willingness and change of attitude. (Brislin, 1982) With this skill, the Nigerian student does not only relate to his Nigerian cultural values, but also he is open and has a positive attitude toward the American culture, i.e. liking Americans, appreciating their way of life, and relating to the environment. The last concept has wider dimensions.

(Multi-Culturality) A multi-cultural person is able to relate to his own home culture, the host culture and other cultures. One of the interviewees notes that he has a problem relating to Americans. According to him, he relates more easily with other international students, and obviously his fellow country people. Of course it is

not everyone who can relate to every culture. But according to Lynch (1983, p. 16) it is possible: "to be functionally related but not be dominated by such functions." Nigerians are especially fortunate because they are endowed with social skills. They can then, with the best effort, be flexible and have positive attitudes. With these skills, they can relate not only to their own Nigerian friends but to Americans who are open to them. They can also relate to other international students. It is not possible for a person to shun ethnocentrism, embrace cultural relativity, possess cultural competence, have flexible and positive attitudes, be creative, be bi-cultural and multi-cultural at the same time. However, it is possible to possess an open and flexible attitude which has the potential of embracing several of these skills with time and effort. They serve as useful resources for coping in a different culture. The practice of several of these positive intercultural skills, according to Brislin (1982), offers the hope of making educational experiences in a foreign culture less stressful and more meaningful. These skills are not only meant for Nigerian students, but they are discussed with the hope that others who come in contact with foreign students (for example, administrators, instructors and host students) may cultivate some for the purpose of better relationships.

(Communication Skill in Listening) Formally defined as a selective process of (Brilhart, 1982, p. 151):

"attending to, hearing, understanding and remembering aural symbols." Poor listening has been known to be responsible for many problems in interpersonal communication in many situations. Escort (1982) cites some studies by psychologists to show that:

listening is the least developed of our comprehension skills. Yet we spend 70 percent of our day communicating with each other, and 45 percent of that figure is spent in actually listening. (p. 33)

One of the respondents in illustrating his burden says that: "communication is very important right now. You are listening to me and you respond to me. What I do is forget about my accent." (p. 180) It would be recalled that several people complained about administrators not listening to them when they have problems. Listening is a very difficult skill to cultivate, and yet it is absolutely necessary that we do, in order to maintain relationships to others, do our job and even survive. But hope is not all lost. DeVito (1982) gives us some guidelines on improving our listening ability. First, we need to listen actively by acting like an active listener, physically and mentally. Secondly, we need to listen for a total meaning. This total meaning is not only in the words used; it is also in the nonverbal behavior of the speaker--sweaty hands and shaking knees communicate.

Thirdly, we need to listen with an open mind, even though it is not easy to listen to criticisms of what we think is just great. We still need to suspend judgment. Fourthly, there is a need to listen critically--analyze our understanding of the message critically and evaluate the message judiciously. Finally we need to listen with empathy. DeVito (1982) explains to empathize with others is to feel with them, to see the world as they see it, to feel what they feel. Cronkhite (1976) in supporting empathetic listening says: "The ability to feel and understand what another person is feeling and thinking is probably the most valuable asset in communication." (p. 80)

Bennett (1979) also in supporting the concept of empathy says:

Empathy describes a shift in perspective away from our own to an acknowledgment of the other person's different experience... accompanied by a willingness to participate in the other person's experience, at least to the extent of behaving in ways appropriate to that experience. (p. 419)

I would like to suggest that both administrators and university professors apply the concept of empathetic listening to the Nigerian students, and in dealing with all the international students. This means that the faculty members would possess a fairly reasonable knowledge of other cultures, their values, behaviors and general frame of reference to empathize with them.

By participating in their experience, the administrators would do their planning with the foreign students' needs in mind.

Aside from the concepts discussed above that could be emphasized to foreign students in an orientation program, there are some changes in the educational system that could aid foreign student adjustment.

Creating a Multi-Cultural Curriculum. It would be unrealistic to suggest that the whole educational system in the United States or even at Portland State University be restructured to accommodate the needs of different cultures represented in America. The improvement I am suggesting is that some consideration be given to these foreign students, especially Nigerians, with these unique needs:

1. Problem of accent: That extra efforts be made in understanding these students who are culturally disadvantaged.

2. That the method of examination be reconsidered. For instance, since a majority of foreign students have problems with multiple choice, and matching, which requires a high level of linguistic competence to master, a mixture of multiple methods could be employed. One way to do this is to purposely plan for a take home examination. Some instructors have been doing this, and they are to be commended for it. It solves the

second problem of time limit, which applies more to foreign students. Another way is to plan for an examination that allows a choice of questions. For example, if an instructor wants ten questions answered, he or she should plan for about fifteen questions. Out of these, there could be multiple choice, true/false, matching and essay questions from which to choose.

3. There should be two different deadlines for paying tuition. The first one should apply only to the host nationals. The second one, which should be longer because of the difficulty in communicating with foreign countries, should apply to the foreign students. In this way, the intercultural perspective of applying differences to different cultures in different situations and the concept of intercultural empathy would be truly utilized.

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APPENDIX

Subject 1

Q How long have you been in Portland?

A Three years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 30-40.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A Once I didn't have my school fees and they wrote to me. Other than that, I didn't have any problems.

Q (Probe 1) Can you elaborate more on that?

A I have had no other problems with them.

Q (Probe 2) How did you solve that problem?

A I paid my school fees.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A Most of my instructors have been to other countries so they were quite understanding. One particular instructor was kind of biased because he questioned my ability as a black person. He used to give me a C in his class because he thought that was the best for me. I met with him to talk with him, and after that we solved it. I asked him how he could help me

because I didn't deserve a C. After he inferred from other classes about my grades and we talked about my class work, we resolved it.

Q How would you describe your academic performance in classes?

A I would say I did very well. It was hard for me because of the time schedule. I had to plan my time. Academically I don't have any problem.

Q Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A When I first came here it was hard to get used to the students because in the U.S. if you need help you need to go to the people rather than the people coming to you, which is what I'm used to in my country. In my country if you need help you speak with those close to you. I was able to share with them after awhile how I felt and they shared with me how they were feeling, not to disturb my privacy. Our relationships were better than at first.

Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans.

A I have a friend who is a black American.

Q Do you have friends who are white Americans?

A Yes, I do have a lot of white American friends.

Q Could you elaborate on why you have one black American friend and many white American friends?

A In my school we don't have many Blacks. We have a few students from foreign countries. There are only two black girls, and one of them is in my class and I have made friends with her.

Q How did you meet your friends?

A I just got to know them. At first they ask you where you're from, how long you're staying, and they are curious to know many things like, "What do you do in your country? Do you have houses? Buses? Cars?" I open and I share with them, and we start a friendship. In classrooms sometimes we have a group of four or five to discuss something and we are able to mix that way.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A My most common problem is the rain. I came from a dry area. When it rains it is not easy to go out for me. I do not have my own personal transport so that's a problem for me in Portland.

Q (Probe) How did you deal with that?

A After a year I had to face the fact it was going to rain, so I got a raincoat and an umbrella and carried the umbrella everywhere. I lost some on buses but after awhile I learned how to take care of them.

Subject 2

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A Six years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 30-40.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A No problems.

Q (Probe) Can you elaborate more on that?

A I mind my own business. I go to the class and if I have any questions I go to the instructor and that's all.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A Fine. No misunderstandings.

Q How would you describe your academic performance in classes?

A I think the work is hard.

Q Is there a specific area where you have problems?

A In public health I had problems.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations

with U.S. students in general?

A Bad because they don't like foreigners. They look at you and frown. I just take it because I have to adjust.

Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans.

A Not too much. I don't have black Americans in any of my classes. The Blacks in my classes are foreigners. When I was in a two-year college I had contact with black Americans and we were good friends.

Q Do you have many white American friends?

A Yes. Some of them are nice. You don't expect everybody to be bad.

Q How did you meet them?

A We took classes together and were in groups together.

Q Did you begin talking to them or did they begin?

A I can't remember who talked first.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A It is difficult to adjust to a strange place. I was used to a small place. Differences were in the language, food, dress, and weather.

Q Did you anticipate this before your arrival?

A Yes. Some relatives that had been here told me what to prepare for, so I knew the problems.

Q How did you deal with these problems?

A I made up my mind that I was here and there was nothing I could do but adjust.

Subject 3

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A About three years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 20-30.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A They are not very responsive.

Q (Probe) Can you elaborate more on that?

A They don't take personal interest in students. They are more businesslike. They don't consider what a student thinks. They are unresponsive to the different types of students we have here. But I had no personal problems with them.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A I would say it is more businesslike too. Most of the foreign students, I would say, do not feel

particularly welcome here. The relationship is different. If you have problems they might not help you.

Q Why do you think that kind of a relationship existed?

A Perhaps they don't take enough time to consider the fact you are from a different background, and to understand your problems.

Q How would you describe your academic performance in classes? Do you feel at home in classes?

A Yes I do. (A baby was crying.)

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A I have a few friends. In this country they don't like people to get too aggressive. I have friendly relationships. I try to find someone who's responsive to me and I try to get to know him. I don't go out of my way. Sometimes people are afraid to talk to someone outside of their own circle of friends. They don't know how to communicate. They don't want you to push them into conversation either. I have been here long enough to understand.

Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans.

A I have a few friends--very few.

Q Do you have many white American friends?

A Yes, they are very friendly, even if you haven't met them before. They open up and say, "Hi!" or "Is everything all right?" They are a little bit afraid sometimes because they don't know you. The black people are friendly too.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A I don't think I've had a problem in adjusting. I go to school, fit into my community, I go to church, and have no problems.

Subject 4

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A Three years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 20-30.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A I preferred my previous school, Warner. It was smaller and more individualized. You could go to the school administrators if you had problems. The first quarter in Portland State I was kind of lost

and I didn't know who to go to. One person would say, "Go here," and another person would say, "Go there." They would keep pushing you back and forth. The school administrators were very impersonal in most cases. A few months ago I was to take a certain class and nobody knew where it was. I had to look for almost a month. They kept pushing me here and there until I finally found it.

Q (Probe) How did you solve these problems?

A I had to keep asking until they were solved.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A I find them to be very nice. Most of them are very nice people. During the winter quarter we ended up at a teacher's house and had almost a party. I did not expect this. I think Portland State has improved a lot in student relations. This summer quarter we went to a teacher's house on the last day and had a snack. I thought that was very nice.

Q Do you feel you have always been graded fairly?

A So far, yes. I haven't met the bad teachers yet, except one teacher. I worked so hard in that class. I think the undergraduate teachers grade a lot harder. It was an undergraduate course and we really worked hard. At the end of the course I was expecting an A. I had received A- on some of my

papers. I was really disappointed when at the end of the quarter he gave me a B. My other teachers, I felt, have graded fairly.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A The graduate program is a lot different. You get to meet people that are more mature and more open as opposed to undergraduate students that are still into themselves. I find them so unfriendly to foreigners. Most of the time I don't expect them to befriend me, but they do, sometimes. Maybe 3 out of 100 are beautiful people. I find that even after you get to know people they want you to stay apart from them: "Don't come too close, please." Their attitude says that to you.

Q Do you have white American friends?

A Yes, I do.

Q Do you have black American friends?

A Very few, 3 or 4. I don't come in contact with them in most of my classes.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A One problem I had when I came here and I still have is a communication problem. People seem to be a little friendly at first, then they do weird things

like tying their shoes, adjusting their glasses, and you know they are doing that just because they saw you. Every morning I meet people on the road and it's strange, the things they do. If they are opening their garage and they see me, all of a sudden they will pull it shut. That bothered me and is still bothering me. I would like to know why people do things like that. I asked the people I live with about it, and they said they don't do it because of me. I wonder if they think I'm strange.

Q Did you anticipate this before your arrival?

A No, I never thought of that. In my culture that would mean you didn't want to see them. They would have to be an enemy, to do such a thing. No matter who the person is or where he comes from, you don't do that. I guess that's why it's really bothering me.

Q Have you any idea what the solution might be?

A The only thing I concluded is that they are not used to strangers, especially Blacks. Where we live there are no Blacks there, except for visitors. If there were more around it would not give them such a shock and they would react differently. The white American friends that I have react very nicely and respond to me like I am a human being like them. They do nothing to make me feel uncomfortable or

unwanted. I guess getting to know people is the key. I find the ones who get to know you and are comfortable with you never react in such a way. That would be the solution. They should be told in their culture to accept other people no matter what their color, race or tongue is.

Subject 5

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A Five years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A My age is 25.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A Sometimes it is hard to evaluate school administrators in terms of communication. A lot of times they don't listen carefully. They don't take my needs into consideration as they make their decisions. They see me as an everyday American, which I am not. I have needs that Americans don't have. For instance, it would be more lenient for me as a foreign student to be given a longer time to

pay my school fees than an American. Because I am not given preference, I think they push me too hard when it comes to money.

Q (Probe) How did you solve these problems?

A In most cases I have paid my fees as I go. I found out I could get financial aid, but I have applied and it has never been given to me. So I use the specially funded program to pay my school fees.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A Sometimes it is hard. It depends on the teachers. Some teachers are concerned about the fact that I am from another culture. Some don't care. In some courses that are really hard they have too much expectation from me. I have to perform very well to convince the teacher that I know what I am doing, before I get a grade in that class. Sometimes I have to work hard to get through my class, while in others it just flows.

Q Have you ever had grade problems?

A Yes. There was one instance when I got a B in a class, or so I thought, but the report said a C. When I talked with the teacher he said that was what I deserved.

Q What do you think happened?

A I think he expected me to have some class input about the subject matter. It was a personal finance class, which I did not know anything about until I took the class. I think the teacher wanted class participation. She had in-class evaluation. Sometimes the questions I asked were not answered because she didn't recognize that it was the first time I had taken that kind of class in that kind of curriculum. So I think it was one of the requirements that one should participate effectively, and that was part of the evaluation.

Q How would you describe your academic performance in classes?

A I have a problem in getting grades that reflect what I learn in particular classes. I feel there is an element of bias in the graded system. If knowledge is the criteria for grading, I think I could have done better in many of the classes, instead of going by what the teacher decides I get. I think there is no criteria through which the knowledge I acquired in each class could have been evaluated more ineffectively than through this so-called grade system. There should be a more effective way to find out how much a person has learned. My grades do not reflect my knowledge of the subject matter of some of the classes I have taken.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A I have problems with American students. I have lesser problems with students from other nations like Iran, Mexico, Asian countries. When they hear my accent they don't understand sometimes. They presume I am like any other black American until I talk. The reaction varies. In some Americans there is a level of excitement, for my having come from Africa and can express myself. In some Americans there seems to be a disbelief that I can have expressive ability as I feel to have. So there is conflict in having me around them. They feel uncomfortable and this reflects my reactions to them.

Q Do you have white American friends?

A Yes. I met one friend after my second week in Portland. He is the first American I would trust. We have been friends for five years. I have other friends too.

Q How did you approach them?

A The first was in 1979, in a speech class. Each student had to stand up and say something. When my turn came I introduced myself and told why I came to the U.S. After class this guy came to me and

said he liked me and said he would like to be friends, so we exchanged telephone numbers. I lived in N. Portland and didn't get to know him very well until I moved to Portland State in 1980. Then we saw each other more often, in classes and at my apartment, and his apartment. At first I was nervous because I had problems sometimes communicating with him. I felt I was imposing the friendship on him, and sometimes he withdrew, and I would not see him for awhile. But we are friends and I have done things with his family too.

Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans.

A I see them at school but I have never taken the initiative to make friends with them. Sometimes I talk with them and they like to tell me of their bitterness with regards to the white Americans. When I am with them sometimes they don't like the white Americans to be there. I don't get to know them deeply.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A Sometimes I have the feeling I am not understood, though people say, "Yes, yes." Then later on I ask that person questions about what I discussed with him and he or she does not give me the right answers.

I need to be listened to. Some Americans don't seem to have the time to sit down and listen and try to understand.

Q How did you deal with that?

A Sometimes I feel some of these people I encounter want me to talk in their own dialect. I can't do that. So I have to leave them alone. Sometimes I feel they don't want to be seen with me. Sometimes I feel it is OK if I go to their apartment, or they come to mine, but they don't want to be seen on the street with me. When I sense this, I withdraw. That is how I solve the problem. I leave them alone.

Subject 6

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A Four years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A I'm 27.

Q You may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A Yes. I did not get a certain form in on time. I go to a private school and they have a strict policy.

Q (Probe) How did you solve this problem?

A I had to turn in my papers and my payment.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A They look on me as somebody who is different. A Teacher may look on me with the attitude that Africa is not a leader in anything. I have to prove to them that I can express my ideas and apply them. I am studying graphic designs. Communication is very important.

Q Why do you think those problems are occurring?

A They don't look at me as an individual. They look at me as a person from Africa, a black person. They apply this attitude indirectly. Being a foreigner, it's hard for me to know if this attitude is a way of life or if they are doing this because I am a foreigner. I experience limitations.

Q (Probe) How do you solve these problems?

A The problem is not just one person. I'm the only African in that school. No matter how I shout, my voice cannot be heard. My friends say I frown and look too serious. I tried to express one time what I was experiencing, and I ended up with a very bad grade and had to retake the class. I can't keep arguing with them. I want to do as well as I can and get out of the school.

Q Can you elaborate on the bad grade?

A The instructor told me that when he was marking my paper that he didn't realize that I am a foreign student. He didn't understand my English, he said. No matter the circumstances I could not speak like them. They have a different English. We weren't taught that in Nigeria. No matter how long I'm here I can't speak like that.

Q How would you describe your academic performance in classes?

A I think I was disabled in communication and treatment. They knew I was a foreigner, from a different culture. I think the teachers need to spend more time to attend to foreigners. One teacher said I was like a person who was in the middle of something and you don't actually know what you are doing but you are trying to keep on going. I would consider a foreigner here as being handicapped.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Do you have white American friends?

A Yes.

Q How did you meet them?

A In a society not everyone will look at you as being different or stupid. Someone came up to me and said, "How did you come up with that idea?" That idea came from another part of the world that he would like to

know. When they ask me questions they give me freedom to tell them more about my ideas.

Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans.

A I have many black American friends. Most of them are educated fellows who want to know more about Africa. They see the opportunity to meet me, and many want to go to Africa.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A In order to survive in Portland you must agree to whatever they are doing. You have to compromise. You cannot change it.

Q Did you anticipate this before your arrival?

A No. I adjusted in order to get along. To me this way of life is not excellent; I didn't need it.

Subject 7

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A Four years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A I am 27.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this

question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A I have had no problems.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A I have no problems with them. I think the grades are what I deserved. They are fair.

Q Do you have any language problems?

A I do not say things the way Americans do. I have overcome this by speaking as slowly as possible in my class discussions.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A I don't have any problems with them inside or outside the classes. I welcome their questions if they want to talk to me.

Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans.

A I have a lot of black American friends. I get along well with them.

Q Do you also have white American friends?

A Yes. I have a lot of them in classes and outside classes.

Q Would you describe them as intimate friends?

A I have close friends. In comparing them with close

friends in Nigeria, those I have grown up with, I have not had time with them to know them as well. But the intimacy is growing as years pass by here.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A I had to adjust to the weather. The system is different from what I had at home. I adjusted as time went by.

Subject 8

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A Six years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 20-30.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A I have had some money problems. Also in the area of a change in a grade. I consider these minor problems.

Q Do you think you have always been graded fairly?

A Yes, I do.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your

instructors?

A My relationship has been OK in most classes. Sometimes they neglect your input in the class. Perhaps this is because of prejudice. Some instructors seem to appreciate having me in class. So for the most part I have had good instructors.

Q Have you had linguistic problems?

A No. A language problem is not the problem. The curriculum is what is difficult for foreign students the first couple of years. You have to adjust to multiple choice, or other examination methods.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A In classes that have small groups we have communicated very well. I get along with everybody.

Q Have you black American friends?

A Yes.

Q Do you also have white American friends?

A Yes.

Q When you say friends do you mean the way friendship is in Nigeria, really close and someone on whom you can depend, or just a casual relationship?

A The Americans may think we're real friends, but to us it is just casual.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying

to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A The problem is interpersonal communication. It is different than what I was brought up with. It makes you feel rejected. You feel you can't speak. They will tell you they don't understand you.

Q How did you overcome that?

A I kept to myself. Americans are very ambitious and don't take time to have a good relationship with a foreigner. We turn them off. There is no solution. You just be yourself and with time people around you will get to understand you and listen to you.

Subject 9

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A Seven years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A I'm 47.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A Yes.

Q (Probe) Can you elaborate?

A The problem was with my advisor. One time, he

wouldn't sign papers for me to drop a course. He said I would be behind.

Q (Probe) How did you solve this problem?

A I talked with him and he eventually signed the papers.

Q Have you had any grade problems?

A On one occasion I thought the instructor was prejudiced. I felt someone else was on the same level, and he got a better grade than I.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A I have friends but not many. I will be honest with you. I don't want to have too many friends.

Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans.

A I have two friends who are very close to me.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A The problems come from the different cultures. There are things we like about the U.S. but there are things that we miss.

Q How did you adjust?

A Some things you cannot change. We have an accent. Sometimes people don't have the patience to listen. Communication is very important. Right now you are

listening to me and you respond to me. What I do is forget about my accent.

Subject 10

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A A year and three months.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 20-30.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A I have not had any problems with any of them.

Q (Probe) Can you elaborate more on that?

A I have been to three schools since I arrived here. So far I have not had any problems with them, except the problem of finances. When I do not pay my money on time as is expected of the students I usually receive a letter from the business office asking why and giving a specific time by which I have to get it paid. They often accepted the reasons I had for not being able to pay on time.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

- A It has been cordial. There have been no major problems. If I had a question, like at Warner Pacific College where I am presently a student, the instructor would give me good advice.
- Q Do you feel you have always been graded fairly?
- A I think so. They have graded fairly.
- Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?
- A I don't have trouble disclosing my problems with the nationals, like when I don't understand something taught in class. Others have been friendly but they don't really come to you, I guess because of the racial matter.
- Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans?
- A In some classes I know some black Americans. The relationship has been quite cordial. There has never been any indifference in my relationship with them.
- Q Have you made friends with white or black Americans?
- A So far I have not made any friends. They are not my enemies but I have not made friends with any individuals.
- Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A In the first place as an international student I have a money problem. There have been delays in sending money, so my financial commitments suffer here. Secondly there is the problem of a language barrier in the classroom. For instance when a teacher draws illustrations which I don't understand, that cuts me off from the main idea the teacher wants to communicate. Thirdly there is a lack of friends. It's not easy to make friends here, especially when you are of another race. It shuts me off from having friends who care and can interact, and with whom I could share my problems.

Subject 11

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A About six months.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A I'm 29.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A I have had no problems.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A It has been very good. I did have a problem with my advisor, but I straightened it out the following quarter, so ever since things have been going well for me.

Q What did you do about it?

A I straightened it out myself. The advisor asked me to take 15 units in the doctrinal program. I had moved from semester to a quarter system, which is very different. After that I knew I should be taking between 9 and 12 units. So I solved that problem.

Q Do you feel you have always been graded fairly?

A Yes. This last quarter I had a 4.0. This is different from what I experienced in California. There I was not getting what I merited, but here so far I have been graded fairly.

Q Do you have any language problem?

A I have no language problem at all.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A I relate to all students very cordially because I'm a very frank person myself. I have no problem communicating with any of the students, whether white, black or brown.

Q Do you have white and black friends?

A Yes, I do. White friends and Nigerian friends. But

I have no black American friends, I'm sorry to say. My discipline is not what they go in for, and I don't have contact with them.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A My first problem was the weather. I'm from a subtropical climate. It was too cold for me. My body finally adjusted to the environment. My second problem was changing from a semester system to a quarter system. Classes are very compacted in the quarter system, so I had to adjust. The third problem was the new environment, new people and a new city. I just had to work on it.

Subject 12

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A Five months.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A I'm 19.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A I have had no problems with school administrators.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A They have been nice to me.

Q Why do you think they have been nice?

A If I have problems or questions, I can go to them and they will help me.

Q Do you think you have always been graded fairly?

A Yes, I do.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A They have been friendly to me from the time I came here. When I went to class I met one U.S. guy from Lake Oswego. He helped me fill out my forms.

Q Have you white American friends?

A Yes.

Q Have you made friends with black Americans?

A Yes.

Q You have had no problems with them?

A No.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A The first problem I had was with the cold. I was not used to it. Another problem was one in my country.

Subject 13

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A This is my third year.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 20-30.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A Not really, except with papers, and getting forms out of my country. There were no direct problems with school administrators.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A I am very close to my instructors, depending on the instructor. I understand more when I talk to them after classes.

Q Do you feel you have always been graded fairly?

A Not always. Last time I had a problem was when another student did not do as well as I did on exams and writing, but we both got poor grades.

Q What did you do about it?

A I went to the instructor and he told me that was what I merited.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A My relationships with students at this point are very slim because of the difference in cultures. I have no direct relationships with the students, except in group discussions in class.

Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans.

A I am married to a black American.

Q Do you have any black American friends?

A Not really, except my in-laws.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A A problem has been the weather condition. Another problem has been the language barrier. I can understand white Americans easier than black Americans.

Subject 14

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A I came in 1979, so some five years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 20-30.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A There was one instance that I did not like what happened. I petitioned for an extension of time for registration, and according to them the extension was granted, but I was asked to pay the late fees. The lady there was not willing to talk with me.

Q (Probe) How did you solve that problem?

A I went to the vice president of student affairs and they decided to lend me the money to pay for the late fee, which they did, and which I paid back.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A My relationship with my instructors is cordial. There was one instance where one of my teachers was not very open. I had the impression that he thought foreigners do not understand anything. When you would ask a question, he would say, "I wonder whether you would understand this." Apart from that, my relationships have been quite cordial.

Q Do you feel you have always been graded fairly?

A Personally I do not like to complain about grades. I think I have been graded fairly for the most part.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to

other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A I am a very open, simple individual, and do not really have problems making friends. I think my relationships with my fellow students are cordial.

Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans.

A I have friends at different levels. On an elementary level I do have black American friends.

Q But you do not have intimate friends with them, as friendship is in Nigeria?

A No, but I do have casual friends among them.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A For the first time in my life I lived alone and took care of everything about me. That was hard. But I saw the way of life here was to be self sufficient, and being able to understand your problems. Soon as I realized that I began to think about how to cope with the new environment. I knew very few people here. I began to observe things. I knew it was my place to make the adjustment. The school systems were strange. Everything was strange. I took my time in making the adjustment.

Subject 15

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A Four and a half years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 37.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A I just had one recently.

Q (Probe) Can you elaborate on that?

A I am on a scholarship. The government sent my school fees to them, which was \$10,000 plus, but because they did not send it on time I had to look for a job. When the money came I had already paid part of my tuition so the school said I had already paid. I told them they got the money because I was supposed to be going to school there. They gave me an allowance from the money.

Q (Probe) How did you solve this?

A They gave me an allowance now. They sent the school fees for collection and told me they are going to give it to me and collect the money from Atlanta back. I'm still waiting to hear more.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A It depends. Some instructors think that if you are not from America there is nothing you can do to be their student. Some believe that the foreigners are better students than the Americans. Generally I would say I have an average relationship with them.

Q Do you feel you have always been graded fairly?

A Not always. A woman who taught an English class said there was nothing I could do to get better than a C. I talked with my international advisor. I showed him my papers. The grade was raised.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A I'm always friendly to them and they are to me too. We get along very well.

Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans.

A I have not had much contact with black American students because there are very few in my classes. I have white American friends.

A What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A When I came I roomed with three Nigerian ladies so I felt like I was at home. But the weather was cold.

Subject 16

A My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A This is my fifth year.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 20-30.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A No.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A Some of my instructors are very helpful, in my department. In other departments, I'm not sure. I sense they don't want me around.

Q (Probe) Can you elaborate on that?

A I compare his answers with the way he answers another person, like an American. He answers my questions like I am an idiot.

Q Do you think that in class work language is a problem?

A I don't think language is a problem. The Chinese in my class do not speak as well as I do.

Q Do you think you have been graded fairly?

A In some classes, I have. In some classes, I have not.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A With some students I feel there is an invisible barrier between us. The barrier might be the relationship between the Blacks and the Whites.

Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans.

A I have very few friends with them. I have one girl friend and that restricts me from knowing more. I do not see many black men in my classes. I like to talk with people who are educationally inclined. Sometimes when they talk about women and drinking all the time, I don't like to be around them.

Q Do you have many friends that are white Americans?

A It depends on what you call friends. I do not have intimate friends like I had in Nigeria.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A I have had financial problems because I have had to support myself. Going to school gets very hard. I am still not fully adapted to the culture. When people crack jokes, it is not funny to me. Then some things are funny to me, but it's not funny to them.

Q Did you anticipate this before your arrival?

A No. Before my arrival my vision of America was a place where you can become rich overnight, as soon as you get some education.

Q How do you deal with that?

A I do not have an inflated view of America anymore. People should be told what America really is, before they come here. A friend came over to see me and we walked into a store; he said, "Is this really America?" There is only one difference between us and them, and that is neatness and orderliness, if you take away the high tech. I went through culture shock.

Subject 17

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A About a year.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 20-30.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A I don't think so.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A My relationships with instructors are good.

Q Do you feel you have always been graded fairly?

A Yes, except on one occasion.

Q (Probe) Can you elaborate?

A There was a misunderstanding. He said I was writing British, and not American, English. He graded me down.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A I have a good relationship with other students.

Q Tell me about any contact you have had with black Americans.

A I don't have any friends among them.

Q How do you feel, having no friendship with them?

A I don't care whether or not I have friendships with them. If I meet them I say, "Hi." If they don't respond, it's OK.

Q Do you have white American friends?

A The same thing applies. I don't bother myself. If I meet them, it's OK, or if I don't meet them.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A I have had no major problems so far.

Q Did you anticipate problems and got ready for them?

A The weather in Portland suits the weather of where I used to stay in Nigeria, except for the cold last January. I have had no problems in adjusting.

Subject 18

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A Six years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 20-30.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A No, I have not.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A I have had good ones, and I have had bad ones.

Q What happened with the bad ones? Did you have a misunderstanding?

A I did not have a misunderstanding. I just did not care for the way they taught.

Q Have you always been graded fairly?

A They have the authority and you cannot do anything

about it. You can point out what you think. They give you the grade you deserve. They are the professors and they are supposed to know more than us.

Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?

A I have a good relationship with other students.

Q Do you have white and black American friends?

A Yes, I do.

Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?

A I did not have any problem. I came from a large city and have lived in large cities all my life. The weather has affected me the most. You meet people from different places. I work with different people too. So the main adjustment was with the weather.

Subject 19

Q My main purpose in this interview is to find out what kinds of communication problems you have had since your arrival in Portland. By the way, how long have you been in Portland?

A Six years.

Q Is it possible to know your age range, 20-30, 30-40?

A 30-40.

Q Now you may need to think a bit to answer this question. Since you have been a student in Portland, have you had any problems with school administrators?

A No problems.

Q What can you say about your relationship with your instructors?

A I think it's cordial. They answer my questions and they give me adequate attention.

Q Do you think you have always been fairly graded?

A I don't think so, not in all cases. Some instructors are just biased, because of your accent and that you are a black person. You may get your grade before you even start the class.

Q (Probe) Can you elaborate?

A Perhaps in a classroom situation you get an A in a written examination. In a group situation in the same class you wind up with a B. Some of the others in the group get B's on the written examinations and A's in the groups. On the final grade they get A's and you get the B. The instructor decides. Even if the group gets an A he may decide to give you a B. The group may have done its job but he doesn't give you the credit. I believe it's because you are black.

Q Have you been a victim of this once or twice?

A Yes, especially in the undergraduate programs.

- Q This question seeks to discover how you relate to other students. Will you describe your relations with U.S. students in general?
- A I have a very nice relationship with them. I don't see any problem at all with them.
- Q Do you have white and black American friends?
- A I have friends that are white and some that are black.
- Q Did you initiate the friendship?
- A They became friendly to me, and I gave them the opportunity to become friends. I met them in classes, the snack bar, or in the playground.
- Q What have been your most common problems in trying to adjust to life in the Portland area?
- A The problem was with my accent. They did not seem to understand me. It was discouraging. You begin to think you are not speaking real English.
- Q Did you have any problem with the weather?
- A No, I did not have any problem with the weather.