



Orientation	Midyear
Session Overview	<p>Take the students through a brief “time travel” journey to help them reflect, discuss and share where they are in their adjustment process in the exchange experience. Have students fill out their own adjustment curve from the start of their exchange until today.</p> <p>Note the following lesson icons throughout the session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ - this indicates a take away point that should not be missed during the lesson</li><li>• - this indicates a question or idea that can be used to facilitate a conversation</li></ul>
Session Objective	Discuss the challenges of your exchange and develop solutions.
Participants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Host Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings
Format	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Active / Interactive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some Activity / Interactivity <input type="checkbox"/> Independent
Duration	About 45 minutes
Group Size	Any size
Minimum Staffing	All volunteers present
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handouts:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Adjustment Curve</li><li>○ <b>Javier’s Story</b> for all students</li></ul></li><li>• Flipchart to record anonymous HIGHS &amp; LOWS of students’ adjustment curves to share with parents</li><li>• Flipchart with blank curve drawn and to plot several students curves to show how the curves can vary</li></ul> <p>Visuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Example of two adjustment curves on one graphic (copy from page 8)</li><li>• Flipchart or slide of <i>Charles Swindoll attitude quote</i> written at end of session</li></ul>
Preparation	<p>Prepare High &amp; Lows flipcharts</p> <p>Create example of Adjustment curve on White board, flip chart or slide.</p> <p>Create flipchart or slide of quote.</p>

## BRIEF INTRODUCTION & ACTIVITY # 1- TIME TRAVEL (10 minutes)

1. Share this orientation objective with the students:

Students will discuss the challenges of their exchange and develop solutions.

2. Explain that during session 2 they will:

- Share how the experience has been so far,
- Realize that everyone's year is unique with its' own set of highs and lows,
- Discuss how everyone's reaction to experiences is different and seen through their own cultural perspective.
- Think and talk about solutions to challenges.

This next activity is a **visualization activity**, created to help the students take time for self-reflection and become more in tune with their feelings and memories of their exchange experience so far. As the facilitator, you will set the tone and then read through the prompts below and encourage students to re-experience some of the moments they have had in their exchange thus far. In order for the students to visualize each different part of the experience, talk slowly in a calm voice. Add additional prompts to help the students remember different details about their exchange and encourage deep reflection.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Some students may become emotional or cry during this activity. Crying might indicate joy, homesickness, or loneliness (or other emotions). Make sure fellow volunteers are ready to talk one-on-one with students, as needed.

### 1. Directions to tell the students (word for word)

- We are going to do a **visualization activity**, please get comfortable in your seats.
- Close your eyes and take a deep breath.
- Listen to the questions I am reading without responding. Please do not talk during this activity, sit quietly, listen to my voice, and picture what I am saying.
- For the next few minutes, try and think about how you feel or connect to each question. Visualize this and try to put yourself back in time to the moment described.

### 2. Slowly, read the questions below to the students:

- *Think about when you first met your host family, do you remember the day and the place...*  
What was it like to see your family for the first time?  
Did they look like their pictures?
- *Think about your first day of school...*  
Did somebody show you around the school?  
Did you get lost a lot?

- *Think about your first weekend...*  
How was it different from your home country?  
Did you go out and experience some new things?
- *Think about your first time you felt sad...*  
Do you still have a lot of contact with your home country?
- *And now let's think about all the holidays....Halloween, Thanksgiving, December holidays.....*

*And now you are here at the Midyear Orientation. Come back to the present and open your eyes!*

### **Brief discussion**

Ask:

- How did you feel during this activity?
- Was there a favorite memory that you can share?
- As you visualized these different parts of your exchange, what are you thinking about now?
- Why do you think we did this?

Explain to the students:

- ✓ We hope this activity has helped sharpen your memories about the first part of your exchange. We will do a bit more work thinking about the first part of our exchange and then we will talk about what has been particularly great or difficult. We did this activity to remind you of all you have accomplished so far and to help everyone think about the second half of the exchange year.

### **ACTIVITY # 2 –ADJUSTMENT CURVE** (25 minutes)

1. Tell the students to think about the times they remembered as highs and lows during the time travel exercise. Tell them that they will use those memories to plot out their Adjustment Curves.
  2. Using flip chart paper, draw the adjustment graphic (see example at the end of the session on how to set up the horizontal and vertical axis, with no plot points yet.) and ask students if they have seen this graph before. If they have, ask a student to explain the graph and how to read it.
- ✓ Explain the Adjustment Curve can help students understand their adjustment process.
  - ✓ Explain that time is shown on the horizontal line and how a person feels is represented by numbers 1-10 on the vertical axis.

- ✓ Help the students see the connection between 3-5-8 Choice and how the vertical scale can represent their emotions or feelings about certain times during the exchange, going from 1-10. 1-2 means a person felt very sad, upset, homesick or even angry; 2-4 means a person felt not very good; 4-6 means normal, pretty good; 6-8 means you are happy, and a 8-10 shows moments and times of joy and lots of happiness.
- 3. Ask students to form teams of two or three students.
- 4. Give each group a copy of the story about Javier. Tell them they have five minutes to read the story and talk about Javier and his adjustment process.

***Javier is from San Sebastian, Spain. He arrived in late- August, just in time for the school year. When he first arrived, he was so excited about living in Iowa. He tried all the different foods, met almost all his classmates during the first week of school, and joined the journalism club to help write the school newspaper. He asked his seven year-old host brother every day to help him with English. He felt like life in the USA was perfect!***

***Later in September, Javier started to feel overwhelmed. His classes were difficult and he was having trouble understanding English. Students and teachers at school used so many words and phrases that he had never heard before. While he had met many other students, he didn't feel like he had many friends. One boy talked with Javier a little in Calculus class, but Javier often ate lunch alone.***

***Javier's Area Rep suggested that he try to talk to more students in the journalism club and make some friends. Javier tried a bit more to talk to people. Some people in the club were friendly, but Javier was a little embarrassed about his English. Thankfully, at the end of October, one girl took special notice of Javier and asked him to join her and her friends at lunchtime. This made Javier feel better and he started hanging out with the girl and her friends.***

***Later in December, Javier started to feel very sad and homesick. During the last week before winter school break, he got into an argument with his host mom. He didn't like rushing in the morning, and had slept late causing him to miss the bus for the second time that week. His host mom had to drive him to school and scolded him when he got home that evening. He felt like she was always wanting him to hurry up; he didn't understand why Americans were rushing all the time, "Why can't they just relax?" he often thought.***

***Over the holiday break, Javier's host brother kept asking Javier to play. Javier wanted to be left alone, he was tired of the "baby games." The snow was deep and all the cold weather made Javier miss the warm temperatures in Spain. Things at school were going well, but he was still having a lot of trouble with his classes, especially Chemistry. And the students he met in the journalism club were often talking so fast, Javier felt like he could not keep up. To make matters worse, the girl from his journalism class rejected his***

**asks for a date and she had a new boyfriend. Javier started to miss his “easy” life with friends and family. He missed swimming in the ocean and relaxing on the beach. The more and more he thought about the warm beach, the more angry he became with the cold weather in Iowa. “How can people live in this horrible cold?”**

5. After the teams have had 5-7 minutes to read and discuss the story, bring the group back together to plot Javier’s Adjustment Curve **as a large group**. Using a pre-made graph on flip chart paper, ask the students to think about Javier and to provide different plots along the graph from August through December.
6. Start with August and ask students to come to the graph and provide a number that shows how Javier is feeling when he first arrives in the US. Plot this on the graph. Go through the story, asking students to share where Javier is on the vertical axis throughout the months.
7. Students can plot as many points as they would like to show the ups and downs of Javier’s experience as he adjusts to a new family and culture. Encourage the students to debate how Javier is feeling and emphasize that there is no correct or incorrect answer. Allow students to provide multiple ideas about each rating and encourage them to explain their thinking. Ask follow up questions such as:
  - Why did you give him that number?
  - How did things change in that month?
  - Who has experienced something similar, what happened?
8. As you create Javier’s Adjustment Curve, point out to students...
  - ✓ how quickly things can change within a month
  - ✓ everyone has a unique adjustment process
  - ✓ everyone has ups and downs
9. Next, pass out Adjustment Curve handouts. Ask students to write their name on the handout. Then provide the following instructions:
  - You are going to create your own Adjustment Curve that shows how this process has been going for you.
  - Think about the good times and the challenging times you have had. Describe your own experience, from your arrival thru now (show them the horizontal axis on Javier’s Adjustment Curve) by plotting points on the graph.
  - Plot 5-10 points on the graph to show your own adjustment from the time of your arrival in the U.S. to today.
10. Tell the students that they have 10 minutes to reflect on their highs and lows and complete their adjustment curves.

## DISCUSSION & WRAP UP (10 MINUTES)

**Facilitator Note:** At the end of this activity, you will need to collect the students' adjustment curves and save them for Re-Entry orientation when they will be returned to students. Also, make sure that you save the flip chart with the highs and lows for use later in the day in the Wrap up Session.

Lastly, pay attention to what students are saying when they talk about their highs and lows. Note these on flipchart paper as these will be shared later. A volunteer may need to provide some basic counseling and then reach out to an SSM for additional assistance.

1. After giving the students about 8 minutes to create their own adjustment curve, ask them to share their adjustment curves and a few of the high and low points. Encourage 3 or 4 students to volunteer to plot their curve on a common flip chart page to show how they can vary. Have a volunteer record examples of highs and lows on a flip chart (without names attached) to share with the parents.
2. Start up the discussion by saying:
  - ✓ Every exchange experience is unique and valuable.
  - ✓ Highs and lows are a normal part of life and are experienced by everyone; this is especially true for exchange students who are living in a new place and experiencing so many new things—both good and bad.
3. After a few students have shared their adjustment curves, continue the conversation about highs and lows that they have experienced. A second volunteer should continue to note these on flipchart paper for discussion later. If students bring up problems, encourage dialogue about solutions so students can help one another and provide advice. Use these questions below to help spark the discussion:
  - Can someone tell me the most exciting thing that they have done so far?
  - What is the moment that you were the happiest?
  - How about a moment that was low?
  - What about an experience that was especially difficult or challenging?
  - Does anyone have suggestions to help solve this challenge?
  - Does anyone else have another experience to share?
  - Tell us about a happy memory with your host family, or friends at school?
  - What is the best thing that has happened so far?
4. Wrap up the discussion by making sure to hit these three points:

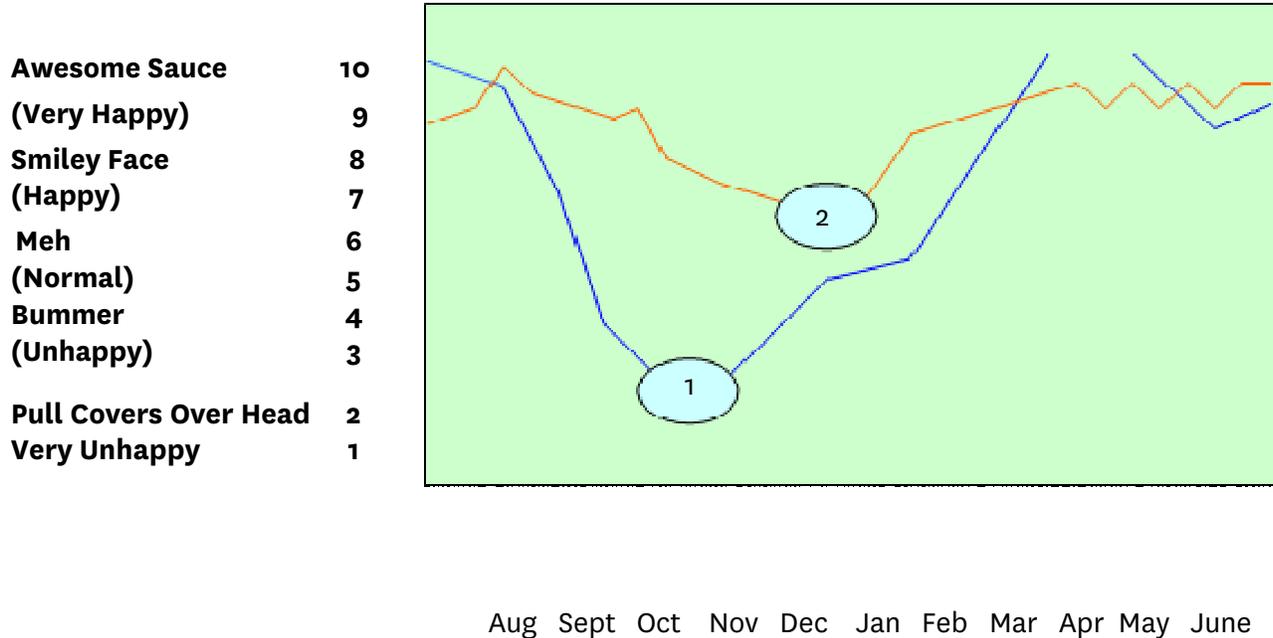
- ✓ Each exchange experience is unique and equally valuable.
- ✓ Students need to understand where they fit emotionally in the adjustment process at this point.
- ✓ Students should understand the importance of their own attitudes towards the exchange experience.

5. Finish the session by reading the quote below:

***“The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day (show 3-5-8 visual). We cannot change the past... we cannot change the fact that people act a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...”***

***- Charles Swindoll***

# Adjustment Curve Visual



## Example of an Adjustment Curve

- For line 1, the student arrives and is excited to be in the US. Everything is new and fun, but then the student begins to miss friends and family. Mastering English seems like an impossible task, school is harder than the student thought and making friends isn't easy. But then things begin to turn around as the student feels more comfortable with English and makes friends. The student is sad to leave and has a drop at the end.
- For line 2, the student has a similar experience but experiences a midwinter drop as it gets cold and the student can't go outside. Near the end of the exchange, the student is excited to return home, but sad to leave at the same time.

# ADJUSTMENT CURVE

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

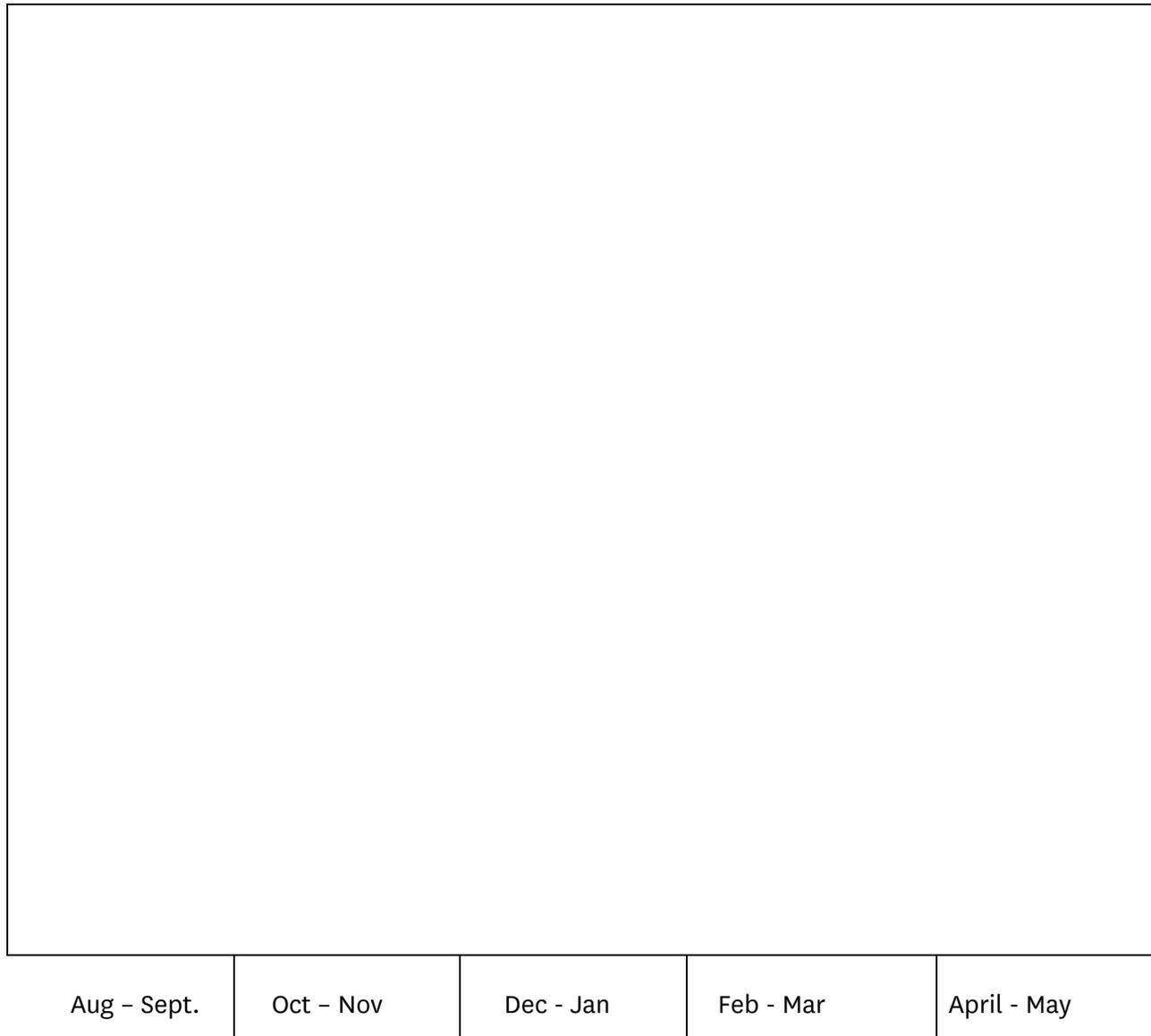
**Awesome Sauce**  
(Very Happy)

**Smiley Face**  
(Happy)

**Meh**  
(Normal)

**Bummer**  
(Unhappy)

**Pull Covers Over Head**  
Very Unhappy



## 2- Adjustment Process quote

***“The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day (show 3-5-8 visual). We cannot change the past... we cannot change the fact that people act a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...”***

***-Charles Swindoll***

## **Javier's Story**

*Javier is from San Sebastian, Spain. He arrived in late- August, just in time for the school year. When he first arrived, he was so excited about living in Iowa. He tried all the different foods, met almost all his classmates during the first week of school, and joined the journalism club to help write the school newspaper. He asked his seven year-old host brother every day to help him with English. He felt like life in the USA was perfect!*

*Later in September, Javier started to feel overwhelmed. His classes were difficult and he was having trouble understanding English. Students and teachers at school used so many words and phrases that he had never heard before. While he had met many other students, he didn't feel like he had many friends. One boy talked with Javier a little in Calculus class, but Javier often ate lunch alone.*

*Javier's Area Rep suggested that he try to talk to more students in the journalism club and make some friends. Javier tried a bit more to talk to people. Some people in the club were friendly, but Javier was a little embarrassed about his English. Thankfully, at the end of October, one girl took special notice of Javier and asked him to join her and her friends at lunchtime. This made Javier feel better and he started hanging out with the girl and her friends.*

*Later in December, Javier started to feel a bit down. During the last week before winter school break, he got into an argument with his host mom. He didn't like rushing in the morning, and had slept late causing him to miss the bus for the second time that week. His host mom had to drive him to school and scolded him when he got home that evening. He felt like she was always wanting him to hurry up; he didn't understand why Americans were rushing all the time, "Why can't they just relax?" he often thought.*

*Over the holiday break, Javier's host brother kept asking Javier to play. Javier wanted to be left alone, he was tired of the "baby games." The snow was deep and all the cold weather made Javier miss the warm temperatures in Spain. Things at school were going well, but he was still having a lot of trouble with his classes, especially Chemistry. And the students he met in the journalism club were often talking so fast, Javier felt like he could not keep up. To make matters worse, the girl from his journalism class rejected his asks for a date and she had a new boyfriend. Javier started to miss his "easy" life with friends and family. He missed swimming in the ocean and relaxing on the beach. The more and more he thought about the warm beach, the more angry he became with the cold weather in Iowa. "How can people live in this horrible cold?"*