

⊕ INTERVIEW GUIDE:

CULTURAL JOURNEY ADJUSTMENTS: VOICES OF INTERNATIONAL BYU-I STUDENTS

By Camila Ogden





VINICIUS CASTRO

ABOUT ME

This interview explores the personal journey of a Brazilian student at BYU-Idaho, offering valuable insights into cultural adaptation, academic challenges, and the transformative power of persistence in foreign education.

Vinicius Castro is a Computer Science major from São Paulo, Brazil, studying at BYU-Idaho since Fall 2022. His journey began through the Pathway program, which helped him transition from technical courses in Brazil to full-time studies in the United States. As an international student, he brings a unique perspective on cultural adaptation and academic integration in American higher education.

Key Highlights: Cultural communication differences between Brazilian and American styles posed significant adjustment challenges.



The Counseling Center played a-

“... WE ALL NEED TO
LEARN AND WE ALL
NEED TO GROW AND I
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EVERY OPPORTUNITY...”

crucial role in helping overcome initial adaptation difficulties.

- Language barriers impacted academic confidence, particularly in writing-intensive courses.

- Work environments proved more conducive to building friendships than academic settings.

- The importance of being proactive in seeking help and maintaining open communication.

- The value of humility and willingness to learn in overcoming cultural barriers.

Vinicius Castro's experience highlights the complex journey international students navigate when studying abroad. While facing challenges in cultural adaptation, language barriers, and social integration, his story demonstrates how utilizing available resources and maintaining an open mindset can lead to successful adjustment.



His insights offer valuable guidance for future international students, emphasizing the importance of active engagement in both academic and social aspects of university life.



CONSUELO SAN MARTIN

ABOUT ME

In an insightful conversation about international student experiences, Consuelo San Martin shares her four-year journey of cultural adaptation at BYU-Idaho. Her story highlights the challenges and triumphs of pursuing higher education in a foreign country, offering valuable perspectives on language barriers, cultural differences, and personal growth.

Consuelo San Martin is a 25-year-old Business Finance major at BYU-Idaho from Santiago, Chile. Initially starting her academic journey in Chile and switching from Marriage and Family Studies, she has spent four years at BYU-I, working her way through various campus positions including custodial services and IT support. Her experience represents the journey of adaptation and perseverance common to many international students.



**“FIGURING OUT WHAT
NEEDS YOU NEED TO
HELP WITH YOUR
MENTAL HEALTH...
DON'T FORGET THAT
BECAUSE IT IS SO
IMPORTANT.”**

Key Highlights:

- Language adaptation requires patience and persistence, with significant improvement. typically seen after the first year
- Cultural differences in social interactions, dating customs, and humor present unique challenges.
- The supportive academic environment at BYU-Idaho offers numerous resources for international student success.
- Mental health management is crucial for international students dealing with distance from family and cultural adjustment.
- Building connections within both the international and local student communities is vital for success.
- The university has improved its support systems for international students over recent years.



Her story emphasizes the importance of patience, persistence, and self-compassion in overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers. While challenges exist, the supportive environment and available resources at BYU-Idaho provide opportunities for growth and success. Her insights offer valuable guidance for future international students considering similar educational paths.



MOLLY MOLINA SOLORZANO

ABOUT ME

In this insightful interview, Molly Molina shares her unique experience as an international student from Honduras pursuing a chemistry degree at BYU-Idaho. Her story illuminates the challenges and triumphs of adapting to American academic culture, while offering valuable perspectives on cross-cultural communication, academic resilience, and personal growth.

Molly Molina is a 26-year-old chemistry student at BYU-Idaho, originally from Honduras. She began her studies at BYU-Idaho in Fall 2023 after serving a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Known for her bubbly personality and adaptability, Molly brings a unique perspective as a mature international student navigating American higher education.

Key Highlights:

- Cultural adaptation requires openness to accepting differences and understanding new social norms.



“BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF. SOMETIMES EVEN IF YOU PUT EFFORT, IT WON'T BE AS WHAT YOU WANT. YOUR EFFORTS ARE STILL BEING SEEN.”

- Professor accessibility and free tutoring services significantly enhance the learning experience.
- Language barriers can be overcome through consistent practice and seeking help from tutors.
- Building relationships with classmates and professors is crucial for academic and professional success.
- Early academic planning and understanding prerequisites can prevent delays in degree progression.
- Maintaining a balance between social integration and academic commitments is important.

Molly Molina's experience at BYU-Idaho demonstrates how international students can successfully navigate cultural and academic challenges through openness, resilience, and proactive engagement with university resources.



Her journey highlights the importance of building meaningful connections while maintaining academic focus, and offers valuable insights for future international students considering study in the United States.

ADRIANA MARROQUIN

ABOUT ME

In an insightful conversation about international student experiences, Adriana Judith Marroquin shares her five-year journey at BYU-Idaho. Her story offers a unique perspective on cultural adaptation, academic challenges, and personal growth while navigating life as an international student in Rexburg, Idaho.

Adriana Judith Marroquin, originally from Guatemala City, is a senior International Studies major at BYU-Idaho. Having spent five years at the university, she brings valuable insights into the international student experience, particularly from a Latin American perspective. Her journey includes significant academic achievements, cultural adaptation, and personal growth, including her experience as a married student navigating both academic and cultural landscapes.



"I WOULD HAVE LOVED TO KNOW MYSELF BETTER, SO I WOULD HAVE CHOSEN A MAJOR THAT WOULD HAVE HELPED ME MORE IN MY CAREER."

Key Highlights:

- Cost and accreditation were primary factors in choosing BYU-Idaho
- Cultural adaptation challenges, particularly regarding religious practices
- Language barriers persist even with strong English skills
- International student community provides crucial social support
- Importance of understanding long-term implications of study location
- Need for better awareness of practical challenges (weather, administrative requirements)
- Value of getting involved in campus activities for integration

Adriana's experience highlights both the challenges and opportunities faced by international students at BYU-Idaho. Her journey demonstrates the importance of preparation, adaptability, and building support networks.



While cultural and linguistic barriers present ongoing challenges, her story also reveals how engagement in campus activities and building cross-cultural relationships can facilitate successful integration into university life.



NATALIA CORZO



ABOUT ME

In an insightful conversation about international student experiences, Natalia Corzo shares her journey of adaptation and growth at BYU-Idaho. This interview explores the challenges and triumphs of navigating cultural differences, language barriers, and academic life as a South American student in the United States, offering valuable perspectives on cross-cultural education and personal development.

Natalia Corzo is a senior business management student at BYU-Idaho, originally from Oaxaca, Mexico. With a minor in psychology, she has spent three years studying in the United States after initially completing a year abroad in California during high school. Her experience spans both Mexican and American educational systems, providing her with unique insights into cross-cultural academic environments.



“PEOPLE HERE WANT TO HELP YOU. THEY WANT YOU TO SUCCEED, BUT IT BEGINS WITH HOW YOU WILL TAKE OR PERCEIVE THINGS.”

Key Highlights:

- Cultural adaptation focusing on different social norms between Mexican and American societies.
- Strong support system through professors and the university community.
- Importance of spiritual foundation in academic success.
- Evolution from initial language anxiety to confident classroom participation.
- Value of open communication in resolving cultural misunderstandings.
- Development of personal strategies to navigate cultural differences.

Natalia's experience at BYU-Idaho demonstrates how international students can successfully navigate cultural transitions while maintaining their identity.



Her journey highlights the importance of embracing challenges, seeking support, and utilizing both academic and spiritual resources. The interview reveals that while cultural differences and language barriers present real challenges, they also offer opportunities for personal growth and deeper cross-cultural understanding.

