

# ETHNOGRAPHIC JOURNAL

FOR STUDENT EXCHANGES



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Conseil Jeunesse office is located on the unceded, traditional and ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

Unceded means that these lands were never surrendered, relinquished, or handed over in any way, and as such, we are currently situated on occupied territories. The places where we gather, work, and play remain sovereign Indigenous lands.

We therefore reaffirm our commitment to reconciliation, as it is our moral responsibility—as settlers, visitors, or residents on these lands—to ensure that our meetings and actions align with Indigenous values and priorities as we walk together on the path of reconciliation.

## LE CONSEIL JEUNESSE FRANCOPHONE DE LA COLOMBIE-BRITANNIQUE

The Conseil jeunesse francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (CJFCB) is a non-profit organization created to promote, develop, and represent the interests of French-speaking youth in British Columbia. The members of the CJFCB are youth aged 14 to 25 who live in British Columbia and gather around the same goal: to speak, have fun and get involved in French.

In 2018, the CJFCB received the mandate from the Ministry of Education and Child Care of British Columbia to administer the BC-Québec Exchange Program. For information on the program, please see: <https://cjfcb.com/programmation/exchange>



By living in a new environment for a few months, you will most likely experience situations that are unfamiliar to you.

How can you better understand, respond to, and adapt to these situations? Completing this journal will help you navigate them.

This ethnographic journal was designed following the results from Carl Ruest's doctoral dissertation exploring adolescents' development of intercultural competence through the Canadian Interprovincial Student Exchange.<sup>2</sup>

Carl Ruest is an Assistant Professor of Teaching in French Education and French Teacher Education in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. Before, he was a French Immersion Teacher in Richmond, BC, encouraging his students to participate in the BC-Québec Exchange Program.

### WHY SHOULD YOU USE THIS ETHNOGRAPHIC JOURNAL?

Completing the journal activities can help you:

- Better understand your own identities and values
- Process difficult situations
- Make sense of the new things you experience

→ Broaden your perspectives

→ Adjust to new situations

<sup>1</sup> I didn't expect it to be so different, y'know, we stay in Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Ruest, C. (2022). Exploring adolescents' development of intercultural competence through the Canadian Interprovincial Student Exchange [Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia]. UBC Open Collections.

## WHAT IS THE ETHNOGRAPHIC JOURNAL?

The ethnographic journal consists of a variety of activities that are meant to help guide you in understanding other people's actions, behaviours, and reactions that confuse, shock, or unsettle you, or that may make you uncomfortable. They may be situations that simply feel different from what you're used to.

The first activity is about you and should be completed before your departure. Next are ethnographic activities to be completed while in Québec. Finally, the last one, the Post-Exchange Reflection, should be completed once you return home.

## WHAT IS AN ETHNOGRAPHER?

An ethnographer is someone who observes how human beings behave in various situations in their community (e.g., family, school, work, city, public spaces), and attempts to make sense of it through inquiry.

## WHAT IS AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ACTIVITY?

An ethnographic activity is one in which the ethnographer observes a specific situation and tries to make sense of it by making assumptions and collecting information with local informants (people from the community who can help them).

## HOW TO USE THE ETHNOGRAPHIC JOURNAL?

This journal is organized chronologically, and will make the most sense if you complete it in order. For each section, there is a suggested timeline so you know when to complete it. Answer each question freely. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers. You can write as little or as much as you want. This journal and the reflective process is meant to be useful to you.

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## SECTION 1 WHO I AM

### SUGGESTED TIMELINE



Before you depart for Québec

In this pre-departure entry, you are asked to reflect on who you are as well as on your friends, family, school, and community. These reflections will help you make sense of the experiences you will have when away in Québec.

## QUESTION #1 WHO I AM, WHAT I LIKE

INSTRUCTIONS → Fill in each box with information that reflects your preferences and aspirations. Feel free to draw or write your answers.

Hobbies

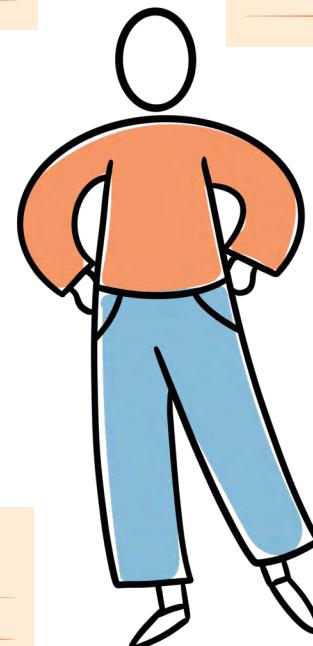
Favourite sports

Favourite cultural media  
(e.g., songs, TV shows, movies, artists...)

Favourite school subjects

Favourite food

Other: \_\_\_\_\_



Careers I envision

# QUESTION #2

## WHO I AM, WHERE I LIVE

INSTRUCTIONS → Fill in the table for each person/group in your hometown.

	What makes _____ unique? Ex.: What makes my friends unique?	How is/am/are _____ similar to other _____ I know Ex.: How are my friends similar to most people their age?	What I love most about _____ is: Ex.: What I love most about my friends is:
Myself			
My friends			
My family			
My school			
My community or town			

# QUESTION #3

## WHO I AM, WHY I AM WHO I AM

INSTRUCTIONS → Looking back at the answers you gave so far, try to answer the following questions.

### Social surroundings

What might explain some of the answers you gave to Question #1 – Who I Am, What I Like? For example, what contributed to a sport being your favourite sport, or a food being your favourite food?



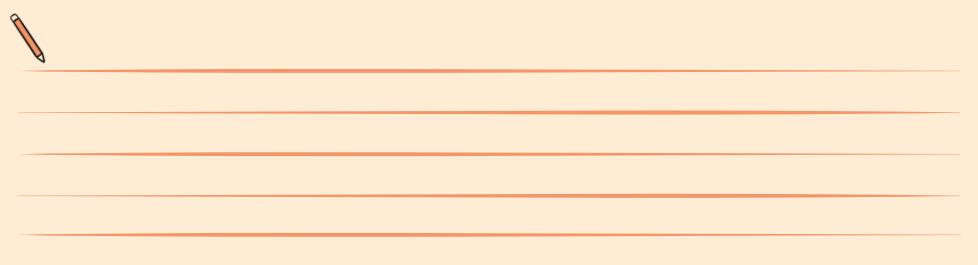
### Values

What are some values that you have? Values are things that are important to you.

If needed, consult this document for a non-exhaustive list of values →



a. List 6-8 values that are **important** to you.



b. Think about these values and select the 3 that are **most important** to you. Fill out this table based on your three principal values.

Value	Evidence: What shows that this is a value for me?	Why is this value so important to me?
		

The exercises in Section 1 helped you better understand who you are. You are now better equipped to explore the perspectives of others, which you will do through the next activities.

## SECTION 2

# UNFAMILIARITIES

### SUGGESTED TIMELINE



A few days after your arrival until the end of your exchange

**Now that you are in Québec, you are asked to think about different situations that have happened since your arrival. Think back on other people's actions, behaviours, or reactions that confused you, shocked you, or unsettled you.**

Were there situations that made you feel uncomfortable? Think about situations that simply felt different from what you're used to.

For example, it could be something a teacher or a new friend said, it can be something a classmate or person on the bus did, it can be the way something is done at school or in your host family, or anything else.

**INSTRUCTIONS** → List as many of these situations as possible. Try to write at least two for now. If possible, explain why **YOU** think this person acted, behaved, or reacted in this way.

#	Situation	YOUR explanation of what may have led to that behaviour/action/reaction
1		Maybe...
2		Maybe...
3		Maybe...
4		Maybe...
5		Maybe...
6		Maybe...
7		Maybe...
8		Maybe...

For the rest of your exchange, continue to be attentive to any similar situations. Look out for situations that confuse you, shock you, unsettle you, make you feel uncomfortable or uncertain, or that you simply felt were different. Keep adding these experiences to this table, as they will help you complete your ethnographic activities.

### SECTION 3

## ETHNOGRAPHIC ACTIVITY #1

### SUGGESTED TIMELINE



A week or two into your exchange

In the entry *Unfamiliarities*, you wrote down situations that confused you, shocked you, made you feel uncomfortable or dubitative, or that you simply felt were different. In this three-step activity, you are going to continue this reflection to better understand a specific situation.

Please refer to your last entry to complete the following questions. If you have encountered more unfamiliar situations, continue to add them to the table on page 13.

### STEP 1 • YOUR ANALYSIS

INSTRUCTIONS → From the situations that you listed in *Unfamiliarities*, select one that you will focus on for this first ethnographic activity. It should be a situation that you are still wondering about and that you are willing to discuss with local informants (friends, host family, teachers, twin, or another person) in the near future.

Answer the following questions. Keep in mind the situation that you selected.

Give a **short title** to this situation.

Ex.: Drama on the bus,  
Confusion in class, Weird  
happiness, Strange dinner...



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**Describe** the situation.

What happened? With whom? Where? In what circumstances?



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Why did you choose this situation for this activity?



How did you **feel** when it happened?  
What were your thoughts?

Handwriting practice lines.

How did you **react** at the time?

For example, did you pretend everything was okay? Did you ask questions?



Handwriting practice lines.

How did you **feel** when it happened?  
What were your thoughts?

Handwriting practice lines.

**INSTRUCTIONS** → Now, give as many possible explanations as to why YOU think this person acted, behaved, or reacted the way they did. In Section 2, you already gave one possible reason; now find at least 6 different explanations (or hypotheses). You may have to expand your thinking, think outside the box, and go beyond easy and simple explanations. This exercise allows you to develop your intercultural competence from decentring from your own perspectives and expanding them. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers as long as you give at least 6.

#	Possible explanations (Hypotheses)
1	Maybe...
2	Maybe...
3	Maybe...
4	Maybe...
5	Maybe...
6	Maybe...
7	Maybe...
8	Maybe...

This activity should have helped you reconsider your initial reaction and open yourself up to different potential perspectives.

## STEP 2 • LOCAL INFORMANTS' PERSPECTIVES

In the first part of this ethnographic activity, you explored your own perspectives on a situation you experienced. For this entry, you need to gather perspectives from local informants about the situation you described.

**INSTRUCTIONS** → In the next few days, discuss with at least two locals about the situation. These people could have been in the situation, but you can ask other people too. It can be local teachers, local friends, your exchange partner, or members of your host family. Describe the situation to them, ask them what they think about it, and why they think such a situation happened. Ask them how they would explain it. Take notes if possible.

Once you've had these discussions, you can summarize them in the table below. Write down who your informants were (the people you discussed with), what were their reactions about the situation you presented, and what were their possible explanations (their hypotheses).

Informant Ex.: A classmate in Biology	My informant's reaction	My informant's explanation
		

## STEP 3 . COMPARING PERSPECTIVES

**INSTRUCTIONS** → Once you've gathered various perspectives on the situation, answer these questions.

How were your informants' reactions and explanations similar to and different from each other?



Handwriting practice lines for the word 'Dad'.

Dad

In light of your discussion with your informants, how has your perspective on the situation changed (or not)? Explain why.



Handwriting practice lines for the word 'apple'.

apple

During this first ethnographic activity, you tried to **move away from your own perspectives by making hypotheses and talking with local informants**. You then reassessed your initial reaction and perspective.

In the next few weeks, be attentive to how you react and behave in similar situations.

# SECTION 4

# ETHNOGRAPHIC ACTIVITY #2

## SUGGESTED TIMELINE



## During the second month of the exchange

You can now start your second ethnographic activity.

## STEP 1. YOUR ANALYSIS

## INSTRUCTIONS →

From the situations that you listed in Unfamiliarities (Section 2), select one that you will focus on for this second ethnographic activity. It should be a situation that you are still wondering about and that you are willing to discuss with local informants in the near future.

**Answer the following questions. Keep in mind the situation that you selected.**

Give a **short title** to this situation.

Ex.: Drama on the bus,  
Confusion in class, Weird  
happiness, Strange dinner...



### Describe the situation.

What happened? With whom? Where? In what circumstances?



**Why** did you choose this situation for this activity?



How did you **feel** when it happened?  
What were your thoughts?



How did you **react** at the time?

For example, did you pretend everything was okay? Did you ask questions?



INSTRUCTIONS → Now, give as many possible explanations as to why YOU think this person acted, behaved, or reacted the way they did. In Section 2, you already gave one possible reason, but now find at least 6 different explanations (or hypotheses).

#	Possible explanations (Hypotheses)
1	Maybe... 
2	Maybe...
3	Maybe...
4	Maybe...
5	Maybe...
6	Maybe...
7	Maybe...
8	Maybe...

## STEP 2 • LOCAL INFORMANTS' PERSPECTIVES

For this entry, you need to gather perspectives from local informants about the situation you described.

INSTRUCTIONS → In the next few days, discuss with at least two locals about the situation. Then fill out the following table.

Informant Ex.: A classmate in Biology	My informant's reaction	My informant's explanation
		

## STEP 3 . COMPARING PERSPECTIVES

**INSTRUCTIONS** → Once you've gathered various perspectives on the situation, answer these questions.

How were your informants' reactions and explanations similar to and different from each other?



Handwriting practice lines. The page features a vertical margin line on the left and a series of horizontal lines for writing. A pencil icon is positioned in the top-left corner.

In light of your discussion with your informants, how has your perspective on the situation changed (or not)? Explain why.



Handwriting practice lines for the word 'apple'.

apple

In the next few weeks, be attentive to how you react and behave in similar situations. Keep this situation in mind as you will come back to it in your post-exchange reflection.

## SECTION 5

# POST-EXCHANGE REFLECTION

## SUGGESTED TIMELINE



## Upon your return to BC

We hope you had a great experience during your exchange! For this last entry, let's go back to the two ethnographic activities you completed.

INSTRUCTIONS → Fill in the table below.

Ethnographic activity (Write the titles you gave on page 15 and page 22)	Describe a somewhat similar situation you experienced after	How did you react this time?	How was your reaction this time different or similar to your initial reaction? Why?
			

## What I Learned

What did the ethnographic activities help you learn about the people or the community where you did your exchange?

What are your take-aways regarding ways to react or interact with people in the future?

## CONCLUSION

During the completion of this journal, **you developed skills that helped you observe and analyse unfamiliar situations so that you avoid quick judgement.**

These are transferrable skills that you can continue to use in your daily life. These skills help you better understand the world around you and develop your intercultural and interpersonal awareness and skills.

## NOTES



**CARL RUEST**

<https://lled.educ.ubc.ca/carl-ruest/>

**KATIE PINTER**

**BC-QUÉBEC EXCHANGE PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

[echangequebec@cjfcb.com](mailto:echangequebec@cjfcb.com)



**CONSEIL JEUNESSE  
FRANCOPHONE**  
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