The W-Curve Hypothesis Model
Gullahorn and Gullahorn

Level of comfort, satisfaction and effectiveness

Time

1. Honeymoon
   - Hope
   - Doing ok, but somewhat dissatisfied
   - Awareness of promise that new experiences may help

2. Culture Shock
   - Shock
   - Discomfort
   - Confusion
   - Recoil
   - Self-doubt
   - Adjustment/adaptation
   - Awareness, experimentation, practice, connection, hope

3. Initial Adjustment
   - Shock
   - Recoil
   - Adjustment/adaptation
   - Awareness, experimentation, practice, connection, hope

4. Acceptance & Integration
   - Synthesis
   - Adaptation
   - Readjustment to the University
   - Search for meaning
   - Adjustment

### The W-Curve Hypothesis Model

**Gullahorn and Gullahorn**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage A: Honeymoon</th>
<th>Stage B: Culture Shock</th>
<th>Stage C: Initial Adjustment</th>
<th>Stage D: Mental Isolation</th>
<th>Stage E: Acceptance &amp; Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Before students arrive at school and for the first few days.</td>
<td>• New set of surroundings hard to adjust to.</td>
<td>• Physical adjustments occur and students feel more “at home” on campus.</td>
<td>• Even though students have adjusted to the physical environment, other things stand out as “different”</td>
<td>• Students feel good again.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students are enthusiastic and want to meet new people. The want to get away from home and start out on their own.</td>
<td>• Too many or too few people around, depending on the size of the student’s hometown.</td>
<td>• This stage occurs more quickly for extroverts than introverts</td>
<td>• Feeling that getting to know others is hard.</td>
<td>• Students feel more completely “at home”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• University faculty and staff provide very welcoming environment</td>
<td>• Expectations differ from prior experiences</td>
<td>• Gap between home and university customs/values persist</td>
<td>• Feeling that no one else feels the same way.</td>
<td>• Students feel they are part of their new environment/community</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Housing-related</strong></td>
<td>• Students have difficulty fining their way around and feel lost.</td>
<td>• Housing-related</td>
<td>• Feeling alone</td>
<td>• Home values are reconciled with university values</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Excited about new roommate and living on their own.</td>
<td>• Excitement wears off and people withdraw.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Values are challenged</td>
<td><strong>Housing-related</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Community bathrooms are problematic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Housing-related</strong></td>
<td>• Cliques may form</td>
<td><strong>Roommate issues likely to be resolved/overcome</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Excitement about living with a roommate wears off</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Critical time period for many students</td>
<td>• New friends are made on and off campus</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Larger roommate issues may surface</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>