



Introduction:

An image which is often used in describing spaces that foster learning and development in intercultural encounters (or any interaction with someone that is different from us) comes from Nevitt Sanford's Theory of Challenge and Support. The image depicts a target with the comfort zone in the bull's eye, learning zone in the next ring, and panic zone in the outer ring, demonstrating that learning typically cannot take place if we are too comfortable or too uncomfortable. In an intercultural learning context, this image may be used to encourage educators to find a balance between too much and too little support of students and to encourage students to challenge themselves to venture outside their comfort zone to experience true intercultural learning. But what if the image of the target doesn't speak to you personally? There are many other descriptions and images that you may draw upon when you are feeling either too bored or too stretched in a new setting. This activity introduces you to Sanford's Theory of Challenge and Support and encourages you to identify an image and quotation that best captures the feelings that come with adjustment to new experiences and environments, challenging you to go beyond your comfort zone.

Participant Instructions:

1. Spend some time contemplating Sanford's 1966 Challenge and Support Theory relating to the comfort zone, learning zone, and panic zone.

You might consider browsing Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions as you reflect:

<https://www.6seconds.org/2022/03/13/plutchik-wheel-emotions/>

2. You can use the following questions to guide your brainstorming session:

Think of a time you experienced the comfort zone.

Describe the comfort zone as it relates to you.

What does the comfort zone feel like? Does it have a sensation?

What does the comfort zone look like? Does a color, shape, etc. come to mind when you think about the comfort zone?

Think of a time you experienced the panic zone.

What circumstances led to you landing in the panic zone?

Describe the panic zone as it relates to you.

What does the panic zone feel like? Does it have a sensation?

What does the panic zone look like? Does a color, shape, etc. come to mind when you think about the panic zone?

Think of a time you experienced the learning zone.

Describe the learning zone as it relates to you.

What does the learning zone feel like? Does it have a sensation?

What feelings came before landing in the learning zone?

What feelings followed?

What does the learning zone look like? Does a color, shape, etc. come to mind when you

think about learning?

Intercultural Learning Hub

You can browse [this Pinterest link](#) and create your own Pinterest board if you would like. You can also feel free to use the internet to browse for ideas.

3. After reflection, identify an image and quotation with which you personally resonate and that best captures moving beyond your comfort zone. You might consider using a quotation from [this link](#). You can either use the ideas presented in the links or you can come up with your own image and/or quotation.
4. Debrief:
 - Why did you choose your particular image and quotation?
 - Why might different images and quotations be chosen for different contexts?
 - When you find yourself in a new and challenging environment, what will you do to coach yourself out of your comfort zone?
 - For those of you who resonate with the panic zone, when you find yourself there, what might you do to coach yourself into the learning zone? What might you need in those situations?
 - What will help you remember to reference this image and quotation when you find yourself in the comfort and panic zones?