Daniel Chavez

**Essay#1**

**The directness of Americans**

What would you do if you discover that is your birthday and nobody cares? It was Friday night and my classmates and I went to Westwood to have a couple of beers to celebrate my birthday, when we arrived at the bar I noticed that my ID was not inside my backpack. I remember saying to my classmates, “don't worry about me, I will go home because it is going to be difficult to get inside any bar without an ID, the rest of you get inside the bar and have fun!!! In my country, Ecuador, it might really impress people to know that you are sacrificing your own interest for the rest of the group. However, you would expect that people respond with the same courtesy by including you in some other plans. This was not exactly the case with my classmates who asked me one short and direct question “Are you sure???” In my head I was thinking “No, I want to celebrate my birthday, so let’s do something else”, but it seemed to me inappropriate at that moment because all the guys wanted to drink some beers at that bar, so I hided my feelings and went home!! That particular night I spent alone at my home thinking that it was my birthday and nobody cared. In order to avoid situations like this, is important to comprehend the way Americans act and communicate so we wont misinterpreted them.

Now after living almost six months in the United States and socialize every day with Americans I find that the particular experience, during my birthday, was just a misunderstanding between American and Ecuadorian etiquette. In particular, Ecuadorians usually show respect for others, and is practice by holding back one’s own desires. In contrast, Americans are very direct and express their feelings honestly, so they will always “speak up” about things they want regardless of other people’s interests. This doesn't mean that Americans are not respectful, actually, they are unfailingly polite. But, even when they slightly disagree on something, they will mention it politely, directly and clearly delivered.

For this reason Americans make decisions quite fast. This differ from Ecuadorian who usually take more time to make decisions, thus causing “culture shock” to new incoming international students. Americans, don't think too much about things and find the simplest solution to simple problems. On the other hand Ecuadorians look at a problem from different angles mainly due to the fact that Ecuadorians don't want to be rude by accepting or rejecting an offer directly. For instance, let’s imagine a scenario were two students are going to eat together and they are deciding between two different restaurants. One restaurant offers seafood while the other one BBQ ribs, although the Ecuadorian student may hate seafood, he would probably say, “which one do you like" when asked by an American about a place to eat, whereas Americans will clearly respond by mentioning the name of a restaurant in particular. As a result, the students will probably end up eating at the seafood restaurant, which is not nice for the Ecuadorian student. This can get really intense if the American students is told about the Ecuadorian dislike of seafood. The American student will get upset since he asked and received approval to get seafood instead of BBQ ribs. As a consequence, Americans will think that Ecuadorians are difficult to understand and the way they make decisions is confusing. The intention of the, Ecuadorian student to be misinterpreted, and consequently the foreign student will be thought of as an indecisive person rather than polite.

After all the things I have experiences, it is clear to me that when Ecuadorian students arrive in Unites Sates they will undoubtedly have confusing and awkward experiences that may leave them disoriented. Some students could get lost and quite their studies and go back to their home countries. Nevertheless, there is a way to overcome these difficulties. Ecuadorians have to be more direct” don't be afraid to express your feelings. If an American friend invites you out to a restaurant, speak up about the food you dislike. If you want to do something different from everyone else, don't hide it, say it loud and you would find yourself sharing specular moments with persons that can potentially become special friends.