



## Northern wind Southern ice reframing cross-cultural communication

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Communication across the Inuit and the western-european cultures is an important matter. Understanding our different sets of perspectives is an ongoing struggle into which we should put consistent effort.

In an attempt to encourage cross-cultural exchange, we organized at winter 2014 in Rimouski (province of Québec), a two-day event involving 12 university students and 3 Inuit. The students were from different fields of expertise (education, communication, archeology, ecology) and they had different level of experience with Inuit communities. The Inuit were a couple of experienced hunter from Rankin Inlet and a young hunter from Pond Inlet. Inuit participants had low experience in southern Canada. Prior to and after the event, we requested participants to fill an information form on their personal experience and on their appreciation of the event.

On day one, our objective was to challenge the university students by bringing them into a typical “trip on the land” lead by the 3 Inuit. This included the use of Inuit traditional tools and skills. Inuit understandably felt very comfortable, whereas the student unanimously expressed a difficulty to adapt. The chilly morning was challenging but the warm bannock has triggered the first interactions.

On day two, our objective was to challenge the Inuit by bringing them into a typical “academic workshop”. The day generally met the expectations of the students as more case study and theory were provided. Inuit have appreciated the day yet they felt that it was more difficult to engage conversations with students.

We learned that the reframing of our own perspectives is very important in communication. While some participants have shared the thought that information has “gained sense” for them during the 2 days, others have expressed the fact that they perceived few relevant information. Our contrasting results are interesting and suggest that some students were successful in reframing their perspectives, while other experienced the so-called cultural shock.