Explore

What is *Explore*?

Explore is a 13-week course providing a foundation for cross-cultural mission and an opportunity for participants to explore God's purposes for them. It is intended to form part of an on-going journey in training and service.

The material is written and facilitated by a training team that has current experience in integral mission.

The course comprises online lessons, community learning through weekly discussion and personal reflection using downloadable workbooks that will be commented on by a tutor.

Why choose *Explore*?

Explore is aimed at those who are considering, or involved in, cross-cultural ministry but have had little or no training for example:

- Those who are not able to attend a residential course.
- Those preparing to go on a first placement (of at least a few months).
- Those who have had some mission experience but want to know more and 'fill in the gaps'.
- Those who are working in mission and wish to reflect on their experience as part of seeking guidance about their current or future ministry.
- Those seeking the basics with a view to a long-term journey in cross-cultural work.
- Agency or church personnel supporting others in cross-cultural service, or involved in cross-cultural work in their locality.

Participants will be committed Christians with a desire to learn more about how to live, work and witness cross-culturally.

The course requires commitment to **full participation** in the weekly activities, particularly the discussion forums.

What is the training ethos of *Explore*?

Our vision is to develop participants' 'Head' (knowledge), 'Heart' (character, spirituality) and 'Hands' (skills). Each theme will be Bible-based and will focus on equipping and facilitating personal development. It is a holistic, participatory, foundational, transformational...experience!

What it is:
- An opportunity to explore ideas and gain tools from the experience of others.
- An opportunity to prepare by learning but also a time for personal and spiritual growth.

What it isn't:
- A substitute for in-depth training for longer-term service.
- A course that emphasises academic achievement.

How is *Explore* delivered?

Through:

- Online lessons/Individual study
- Learning through peer review (engagement with fellow participants) in the Discussion Forum
- Personal development through 'directed reflection' in Workbooks
- Community building & spiritual support through informal forums (Prayer Room & Virtual Café)
- Support, guidance & regular feedback from the Facilitator and Tutor

See Appendix 1 for screen-shots of the course.

When is *Explore* offered?

Explore runs three times per year – refer to the website for course dates.

The course follows a repeating weekly pattern of working through online lessons, submitting 'posts' to discussion forums and personal reflection through a workbook that is submitted at the end of each week. There are **12 weeks** of study and **one week** at the beginning for introductions, etc. The total time required is **13 weeks.**

What sort of workload can I expect?

Participants must be prepared to make time available for this routine, in the same way that they would commit to attending a face-2-face class. To get the best out of the weekly schedule, we recommend setting aside blocks of time throughout the week, especially for responding in the forum (which must be done by the end of each Wednesday).

People who study online do so in different ways, however, the minimum time commitment is approximately 7 hours per week. Additional material will be made available to those who want to study in more depth. If English isn't your first language, you will need to allocate more time for your studies.

The course material will include a devotional element and we encourage participants to use this as part of their regular time with God.

Who delivers *Explore*?

Lessons are written by members of the All Nations training team and outside trainers. The course is facilitated and tutored by All Nations trainers and other experienced mission personnel.

Is e-learning for you?

The internet is a learning medium that is highly suited to some personalities and situations but not to all.

You will benefit most from **Explore** if;

- You set aside several periods of quality time per week for study and discussion
- You already enjoy communicating online (e.g. email, Skype, forums)
- You are self-motivated
- You enjoy learning through reading
- You are ready and willing to learn
- You want to grow personally & spiritually
- You have a mentor/pastor/friend who will support you and to whom you are accountable
- You have good internet access
- You are familiar with using and navigating around websites

To help you assess your suitability for online learning, you may find it helpful to answer the 'e-learning suitability' questionnaire in Appendix 2.

Agreement to participation in **Explore** requires a commitment to participate fully in all aspects. A core value of the course is to promote learning in community. This is an outworking of our vision to help prepare people to live and work better with others.

See Appendix 3 for some student comments.

Some guidelines regarding local 'mentors'

The purpose of **Explore** is to help participants develop on a personal and spiritual level. Some pastoral support will be given by the Facilitator, as appropriate, however we recognise that there may be a need for more immediate support and care. We therefore request that participants ensure they have a friend, colleague, pastor or mission agency contact who will act as a 'mentor' and give pastoral/prayer support for the duration of the course.

We recommend that the mentor makes regular contact with the participant to review their progress with respect to personal and spiritual development.

Our hope is that participants will benefit from developing within the context of both online and face-2-face communities.

Explore in more detail…

Cross-Cutting Themes

Four themes run throughout the 12 weeks of study:
- Biblical foundation - Exploring and developing a Biblical foundation for our life and work.
- Cultural awareness - Understanding the issues that arise from working in other cultures.
- People skills – Developing our ability to work with others.
- Practical issues – Putting the theory into practice and being equipped with a range of tools for life and work.

The *Explore* journey

- **Who am I?**

Understanding who we are; our identity, motivation and personality in relation to God and others. How strong is our faith and spiritual walk with God? We will look at some of the challenges we may face; how to prepare and deal with them by developing spiritual disciplines (prayer, study, meditation, etc.).

- **What is mission?**

What is God's mission to the world? We give a brief overview of mission in the Old and New Testaments as well as looking at Biblical mission methods. We also look at what lessons can be learned from post-New Testament mission. Finally, what are current trends and contemporary issues for mission in the 21st century?

- **Culture and living in community**

Why do they do things differently? Develop an understanding of culture and worldview and get an introduction to major & minor religion. What are the effects of our cultural differences? Culture shock, ethics, conflict, understanding contextualization & syncretism. How do we deal with our differences? How do we live and work in community? Learning to relate and integrate and developing the right 'heart' and attitudes. What about our boundaries and how do we prevent burnout?

- **Integral Mission**

Understand poverty and the principles of secular and Christian development. What's it all for? Building the Kingdom of God. Understanding God's 'calling' on our lives and being the people that God wants us to be within the context of our personality and our environment.

Ready… Steady… GO!
Preparation for the next step, 'know the work the Lord has for YOU', practical tips for preparing to go – healthy mind, body & spirit, security, agency information, etc.

Technical requirements

- A reliable internet connection, Internet browser (preferably Mozilla FireFox – this can be downloaded free from http://www.getfirefox.com)
- Personal email account (accessed using a secure connection [SSL])
- Word-processing software - preferably Microsoft Word (or software capable of reading and writing files written in Word format e.g. OpenOffice which can be downloaded free from http://download.openoffice.org)

- Acrobat Reader. This can be downloaded free from http://www.adobe.com/uk/products/acrobat/readstep2.html (or software capable of reading PDF files)
- A soundcard and speakers (optional) will allow you to play audio files and will enhance your learning experience.

Summary

Information & Enquiries	**explore@allnations.ac.uk** 01920 443509 / 443500
Application process	Please use the online application form which is on the website.
Application fee	£15
Cost	Refer to website for course fees
Married couples discount	Where both are studying they receive a discount of 20% on the second student's fees.
Deposit	None
Exit award	All Nations certificate of participation
Selection criteria:	
Age	From the young (ideally over 21 years) to the retired and all ages in between.
Nationality	All
Language	All parts of the course are in English. Those who confident in expressing themselves in written English will benefit most from the course. There will be some written work but no lengthy assignments
Acceptance	1. Candidates already accepted by mission/aid agencies* Automatic acceptance in most cases Requirements: • Full application form • Personal Christian testimony • Letter of recommendation from agency • Presence of local 'mentor' (see guidelines)
2. Independent applicants** Acceptance subject to application information: • Full application form • Personal Christian testimony • Reference from church pastor/minister • Reference from one other Christian (not family member, preferably one who has known the applicant for a number of years.) • Presence of local 'mentor' (see guidelines)	
** Special Note	If applications come from outside the EU, North America & Australia, all references will be followed up. Those who do not speak English as a first language must have an IELTS pass of at least 5.5. Please send a copy of the transcript with the application.

Please email any enquiries about **Explore** to explore@allnations.ac.uk

For further information about other courses at All Nations Christian College visit www.allnations.ac.uk or contact admissions@allnations.ac.uk or 01920 443500.

Completed applications (with supporting documentation) will be processed by the Explore course administrator who will inform you of your acceptance and any other requirements.

Appendix 1:   Screen shots

Home page

Weekly topics

Lesson page

You are logged in as Andrea Thomas (Log out)

Lesson 2 - What is worldview?

Time - orientation

4. Our worldview guides our orientation to time

What is more important, the past or the future?

Activity

Take a piece of paper and draw 3 circles – one for the past, one for the present and one for the future. Determine the relative size of each circle by how important you think it is. The degree of overlap should be dependent on how inter-related you think they are.

Again, try and do this exercise with a friend(s).

When you get on a train, do you walk along the aisle until you find a seat facing forwards?

Westerns are almost completely orientated towards the future. They are always planning and saving for the future. Traditionally, Africans are orientated to the past. They see time passing like people sitting in the seats that face backwards. This has its own logic, because clearly you can see where you have been but not much of where you are going. We know the past but we don't know the future.

The Western orientation to the future has caused some problems in Africa. Westerns can easily think about a golden age to come, when all their problems will be solved, either in heaven or on this world - in a new age. This is because we can project these dreams into the distant future; we don't really expect them to come true during our lifetime. However, if you take teachings of the second coming of Christ into an African or Melanesian context it tends to cause problems.

In a worldview with a 'shallow' future people tend to expect that Jesus will come really soon, maybe next month, but at least before the next rains. This can have serious

Appendix 2: e-learning suitability questionnaire

The questionnaire below may help you to decide whether you are the sort of person who would benefit from and enjoy an e-learning course.

Please answer the following questions by selecting one answer for each question. Be as honest as possible - the questionnaire is for your personal use only and the accuracy of your answers will help you to decide whether or not e-learning could be a good way for learning for you.

1. I am considering doing this e-learning course because

   a) I need to do this type of training to support my ministry but can't attend an on-campus / residential course
   b) I think that this course would be interesting and would like to try learning online
   c) I've been told to do some more training and this looks like it's something I could do in my spare time

2. How much time do you think you would be able to devote to this course?

   a) 5 or more hours a week
   b) Usually around 5 hours a week
   c) Less than 5 hours a week

3. How often will you be able to log on to the internet to work on this course?

   a) Every day
   b) Every other day
   c) Once or twice a week

4. What access do you have to internet and email facilities?

   a) I have internet access at home
   b) I have internet access at work which I can use for the course but not at home
   c) I only have access via an internet cafe or library

5. Do you know how to send/receive e-mail and how to send/receive attachments?

   (a) Yes, I know how to do both
   (b) I can send/receive email but don't know how to send/receive attachments
   (c) I don't know how to send/receive email or attachments

6. Do you know how to find information on the internet?

   a) Yes, I search for and find information regularly
   b) I'm not very confident, but I have had some experience
   c) No, I don't know how to find information on the internet

7. Do you know how to use word processing software such as Microsoft Office or Open Office?

   a) Yes, I am familiar with using word processing software
   b) I only use word processing software occasionally but know the basics
   c) No, I have never used word processing software

8. Would you describe yourself as a self-motivated, independent learner?

   a) Yes, I am as happy to study alone as I am to be learning together with others
   b) I don't mind studying alone, but need others to keep me motivated
   c) No, I find working by myself really boring.

9. I would consider myself to be someone who

a) Can prioritise tasks effectively and often completes assignments ahead of time

b) Can prioritise but tends to do assignments at the last minute.

c) Is poor at prioritising and is frequently late in completing assignments

10. How important is it for you to have face- to- face interaction with your fellow students and instructors?

a) Not particularly important to me

b) Quite important but not essential

c) Extremely important to me

11. Sharing my ideas with others is

a) Really helpful in my learning - I value others' feedback

b) Quite helpful but not essential

c) Not helpful at all - I like to keep myself to myself

12. How much instruction do you need from your course instructor/facilitator?

a) I prefer to be guided in my learning rather than provided with all the information by the course instructor

b) I prefer to be provided with all the information by the course instructor, but am happy to explore other ways of learning

c) The course instructor is the expert so they should provide all the information and direct my learning

13. How much feedback do you need from your course instructor/facilitator?

a) I am able to progress with my studies even if I don't get immediate feedback from my instructor

b) I prefer to receive regular feedback from my instructor but if there is a delay it probably won't prevent me from progressing with my studies

c) I have to have immediate feedback from my instructor, otherwise I can not progress further with my studies

14. I prefer to learn

a) Through a combination of studying on my own, reflection and group discussion

b) Through studying on my own, but I don't mind having discussions with others

c) Through testing out ideas and theories practically rather than reading and reflecting

15. When asked to respond to a question or issue, I like to

a) Have time to think carefully before responding and then receive feedback from others

b) Have time to think carefully before responding, but I'm not too concerned about receiving feedback from others

c) Respond to the question or issue quickly and then refine my answer based on the feedback of others

16. How comfortable are you with communicating with others online?

a) I am very comfortable with communicating with others online

b) I don't mind communicating with others online but it doesn't come naturally

c) I don't like online communication - it's far too impersonal for me

17. If I didn't understand the instructions for an activity or assignment I would:

a) Be happy to contact my instructor by email to ask them for help

b) Feel somewhat uncomfortable, but would contact them anyway

c) Feel very uncomfortable and wait until some one else asked the instructor for help

18. How confident are you at reading and writing in English?

    a) I'm very confident at both reading and writing in English
    b) I am better at one than the other
    c) I am not very confident at reading or writing in English

What do your answers mean? If you selected answers that were ...

- **mainly a** you may be particularly suited to doing an e-learning course.

- **mainly b, or a combination of a and b** - e-learning is a possibility for you, but you may need to make a few adjustments to your time schedule or your study methods in order to get the best out of this type of learning

- **mainly c** - an e-learning course may not be the best option for you at the moment.

Appendix 3: Student comments

What have you enjoyed about the course?

"I think the course content is spot on... I have found it to be a really helpful course for me and I can honestly say it has been totally relevant to my current context. I had no idea prior to starting the course that it would speak to me in the way it has."

"My heart is bursting with thanksgiving, yes my Lord and God has once more been faithful in meeting me where I was... en route has played a big part in this process. I knew from the start that God planned this encounter for me and it was exhilarating meeting Him through all the topics. The course has been a rich, rewarding experience which God has used in my life."

"It is an excellent introduction to cross cultural mission, a chance to learn in company with like minded people and understand God's purpose for your life."

"Discovering more about God's plan and my relationship with Him."

"All of my hopes were met, even those that I didn't know about"

"The single biggest thing which directed me spiritually which then helped most practically was the Explore course."

What advice would you give someone doing en route Explore?

"Enjoy it as God's encounter with you, and keep your ears open in EACH lesson, HE wants to speak to you."

"Try to set aside times in the week to focus on the course (as you would if actually attending a lesson), take your time with the lessons, try to find someone in real life to discuss the ideas in the course with."

"Ensure time is set aside - have clear and firm boundaries - have materials ready - set time for breaks and take them. Do not be put off because you are not good with IT."

"Be open. Prepare to be challenged. Enjoy!"