

Instructions for Using Cultural Assessment Methodology

Purpose

Study abroad can be much more than an academic vacation. It's an opportunity to acquire new skills and information that can be a differentiator for you during recruiting and throughout your career. This project is designed to deepen your experience and awareness of your destination country so that you can articulate and build on these throughout your career.

Process

- Your team will conduct an investigation of one cultural feature in your destination country using the materials provided.
- One member of your team will submit your profile plus two photos on Blackboard. Save your profile in the following file format: Your team number + Profile (example: Team3Profile.docx). Save your photos with your team number and the number of each photo (example: Team1Photo1.jpg) Refer to the instructions in the announcement for more information about submitting.
- Your staff liaison is available to help you with questions or problems, and you may e-mail Deirdre for additional help.
- Once all the profiles are submitted, we will send you a composite profile of your destination country based on your class's experience.

Instructions

1. Complete the self test to determine your own attitudes towards the cultural feature your team has been assigned. Discuss with your team which attitudes are most typically "American" (for purposes of this assignment, you will be comparing your destination culture to that of the U.S.).
2. Become familiar with the cultural feature your team has been assigned by reviewing the *Cultural Behaviors and Attitudes* section.
3. Using the *Gathering Data* section, decide what methods you will use to gather data to assess your destination city.
4. Based on your research, describe where your destination city falls on the cultural continuum you've been assigned.
5. Refer to the *Cultural Behaviors and Attitudes* section to predict counterparts' approach to and expectations of business interaction.
6. Refer to the *Reactions and Interpretations* section to predict how Americans would perceive the behavior of people in your destination city and how Americans would be perceived by them.
7. Complete the cultural profile form for your destination city based on your research.

Include in Your Profile:

1. At least five methods or occasions of data gathering. (e.g.: 1) observation of people in a restaurant, 2) question about payment incentives asked during 2 company visits, 3) reading a newspaper for format and wording, 4) observation of people's behavior in a retail store, 5) casual interaction with a local in a park and 6) photo of an org chart on a wall during a company visit
2. At least two photos. For each photo, include an explanation of what each one shows so its relationship to the cultural feature is clear These might include:
 - People doing something that reflects the cultural feature
 - A sign or public messaging that reflects the cultural feature
 - Products arranged on shelves in a store that reflects the cultural feature
 - Artwork or organization of wording on a page
 - Anything you witness that illustrates the cultural feature

Tips

- Be sure to document any questions you ask and the precise answers you receive so you will have them for your report.
- Be sure to take pictures of people, signs, buildings, etc. to support your analysis.
- Company visits are “freebies” since your whole team will attend anyway.
- It's tourist season! Be careful to document what the “locals” do – not what tourists do. Ask your staff liaison to suggest neighborhoods where locals live, shop and work.
- When you encounter a contradiction (two very different approaches in two companies you visit, for example), try to analyze the reason for the difference, and ask questions about it if possible.
- Compare behavior in multiple contexts. Don't conclude that people in your destination city have a casual attitude towards time just because you see people relaxing in a park.
- People vary. One person's behavior/opinion is not a basis for typing a population. Observe several people in the same situation/ask several people the same question. If that's impossible, ask your staff liaison to confirm a trend.
- Focus on your destination city. Differences with other parts of the country you're visiting could make things confusing. But feel free to comment on interesting differences you notice between your city and other places and suggest explanations.
- If you get stuck or have problems, talk to your staff liaison.

Cultural Profile Assessment Form

Fill out one copy of this form **per team** (not per person). E-mail one copy of it to Deirdre.Mendez@mcombs.utexas.edu along with the photo attachments described below.

Note: If the form is not completed properly and in full, it will not be accepted as completion of the assignment, resulting in professionalism grade deduction and withheld grades for the program.

Insert your team’s observations into this form, referring to the examples.

Name of Study Abroad Program (e.g. Paris Accounting)	
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Names of Team Members	
1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Cultural Parameter Your Team Analyzed ("Universalist/Particularist", etc.)	
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I. Observations

List **five** methods of data gathering you used. The fields will expand to accommodate as much text as you want to provide. For each method, provide the following:

- a) Specific examples of what you observed and
- b) What your observations about each experience indicate about the culture of your destination city (see example below).

Example:

Method 3.	Observed three presenters at a company visit.
Observations	In general, they were animated speakers who used a lot of gestures and facial expressions. They moved around while speaking. Their tone of voice varied, and conveyed quite a bit of emotion. Two of them watched the audience for signs that we were engaged and one of them asked questions to make the presentation interactive.
Conclusion	This behavior indicates an expressive orientation to communication.
Comments	One of the three was less animated than her colleagues. We asked, and it turned out she was German, so not a native of the country, which could explain this. Based on the general trends we noticed, we think our destination country is pretty clearly expressive rather than neutral.

Your Observations

Method 1.	
Observations	
Conclusion	
Comments	

Method 2.	
Observations	

Conclusion	
Comments	

Method 3.	
Observations	
Conclusion	
Comments	

Method 4.	
Observations	
Conclusion	
Comments	

Method 5.	
Observations	
Conclusion	
Comments	

II. Visual Information

Attach **at least two** visual indications (photos, videos, etc.) **to your e-mail message** (do not paste them into this document). Provide a **description** in the spaces below showing how they support your cultural assessment. The fields will expand to accommodate your text.

Example

#1	This photo shows someone giving directions to a tourist on the street. You can see his active hand gestures and facial expression, which supports our interpretation that this culture is expressive rather than neutral.
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Descriptions of Your Photos

#1	
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#2	
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#3	
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III. Cultural Profile (at least ½ page, single spaced)

Based on your observations, describe your conclusions about the cultural orientation of your destination city for the parameter you analyzed. The fields will expand to accommodate your text. Comment on the following:

1. What is your conclusion about the cultural orientation of your destination city for the parameter you analyzed?
2. Did all your data gathering methods point to the same cultural orientation? If not, how did you resolve the contradictions you observed?
3. What other interesting aspects of culture did you notice related to this assignment?
4. How do the cultural characteristics of your destination city differ from those of the U.S.?

IV. Conclusions (at least ½ page, single spaced)

Describe the implications of your profile for “real life”. The fields will expand to accommodate your text. Comment on the following: What challenges might Americans have doing business in your destination country? What did you learn about yourselves through this assignment? What was interesting to you as you completed it? How might you use this methodology in your careers? In talking to recruiters about your experience?