

Introduction:

There are four parts to this assignment. The goal is to sharpen participants' understanding of how the general public in their study abroad host culture views professionals working in their field as well as uncover discoveries and challenges or controversies in their field in their host country. Participants may choose to focus their search on a broad or narrow pool of professions related to their field of study. If, however, they feel that there is a lack of public awareness/presence regarding their field within your host culture, they should investigate this and explore possible cultural reasons for either its absence or for it taking a different form than that with which they are familiar.

Facilitator Notes:

This activity is an assignment for an online discussion post setting, designed for students who are studying abroad. Facilitators can adapt to their classroom environment and setting.

Objectives:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Reflect on their impressions of their career field and compare them with the views of their host country.
2. Develop a better understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in regard to worldview.
3. Ask deeper questions about other cultures and seek out answers to these questions.

Time:

2 hours.

Group Size:

Entire Group.

Materials:

Participant Instructions; "08_Science in the public eye.pdf", "Trust me (I'm a Scientist!).jpg" (all in [Downloads](#)), and participants who choose assignment Option B will need five photos.

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks

- To demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs & practices.

Curiosity

- To ask complex questions about other cultures.
- To seek out and articulate answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.

Other Skills:

Friendship; Teamwork; Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.

Activity Instructions:

1. Instruct participants to read "08_Science in the public eye.pdf" by Stephen McCann, a Science Communication post-doc at Imperial College London.
2. Instruct participants to observe the example image: "08 Trust me (I'm a Scientist!).jpg."
3. Instruct participants to consider the question, "What is the public image of professions in my field of study in this country?" You can give them a choice of two ways to investigate this:
 - Option A:
 - Identify a controversy/challenge, accomplishment, or recent discovery related to your field that is in the local news. Interview at least three members of the host culture about it (separately). Your post should:
 - Briefly identify the issue or event;
 - Outline the general local public opinions about the issue or event and any differences of opinion you heard;
 - Contrast local opinion with either your own view or that of the "average person" in your hometown (whichever is more at odds with the local view).
 - Name one thing you will do in the next month to better understand opinions in your host country about people who work/study in these fields or global challenges facing these professions.
 - Option A Interview Questions:
 - Did you hear/read about the [item you identified] in the local news recently?
 - Could you help me understand local opinions about this [challenge, event, or recent discovery]?
 - What are the biggest challenges in this area for this country?
 - Do you think that people in this country have stereotypes about people working in this profession? And if so, what are they?
 - What cross-cultural skills (if any) does someone working in this field need for success in your country?
 - Option B:



- Collect at least five photos (from different local sources) of an artifact that visually portrays a person working/studying in this field, or engaged in a related project/endeavor. This may be a memorial or statue of a prominent engineer or scientist, a billboard image or public service announcement, a mural or public artwork, a children's book or graphic novel image, a food or pharmaceuticals label, etc. You can be somewhat creative, but each photo must show how the local culture represents the field in question.
 - Create a photo-montage of your images and deduce from the collection of images what the host culture thinks about people who work in these professions.
 - Ask at least one person from a culture and gender other than your own what your photo-montage tells them about public opinion of people in these professions working within this country.
 - Then write a three-paragraph blog post that addresses Option B essay questions below.
 - Option B Essay Questions:
 - What did you deduce from the five photos about the public view of your chosen field in your host country, and did anything surprise you as you attempted to collect them?
 - Judging by the photos you were able to collect, what defines a person working in your field in your host country?
 - Did the same deductions occur to the person you showed your photos to (and what was the nationality and gender of this person)?
 - In what ways does local opinion seem similar to and/or different from "typical" US opinions about those who work in these professions?
 - Name one thing you will do in the next month to better understand opinions in your host country about people who work/study in these fields or global challenges facing these professions.
4. Instruct participants to summarize their findings from these projects by posting a three-paragraph essay. Remind them to upload their collage image should they choose option B.
5. Instruct participants to respond to posts of this assignment from at least two classmates. For each classmate, they should offer both a compliment and feedback that challenges them with specific ways they might increase their proficiency level in worldview frameworks and curiosity in a supportive/ non-confrontational way. They should use the below rubric as their guide. For additional ideas for how to provide such feedback they may refer to feedback their instructor has given them on previous assignments (if applicable).