

## Overview:

This creativity-training activity was designed for a Spring Break study abroad program at Purdue University titled Amsterdam: Creative Thinking & Innovation in Collaborative Leadership. Specifically, it was designed to help travelling students use their airport "down time" productively. It is adapted from the well-known activity [Martian Anthropology](#), which was created by Donald Batchelder.

For this activity, participants are placed on teams and asked to observe what is happening in an airport through the lens of a "Martian"—meaning that they will not understand the purpose of the airport, just that it is an important location where many humans gather. They will use ethnographic field research techniques to investigate a hypothesis and answer questions provided to them. Then, during the next meeting time, they will prepare a three-minute report that synthesizes their research and either supports or negates that hypothesis.

*Note:* This activity could be adapted to take place in a variety of settings, such as a student union, an office building, a restaurant, etc.

## Objectives:

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

1. Enact connections between science, creativity, teamwork, and intercultural competence.
2. Take risks.
3. Embrace contradictions.
4. Connect, synthesize, and transform.

## Time:

45 minutes

## Group Size:

Small Group

## Materials:

Participant handouts, guidance on taking ethnographic field notes (all in [Downloads](#)).

Further, this exercise works best if each participant has a notepad and pen/pencil or tablet with a stylus and notetaking app.

## Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization
- Acceptance

## AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

### Openness:

- To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
- To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

### Curiosity:

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

### 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.

## Other Skills:

Teamwork

## Activity Instructions:

1. Assign participants to teams using the following table as a guide:

Team Name	Team Hypothesis & Questions	Names	Individual Focus
	<b>“[Airport name]” is a Religious Edifice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What &amp; how do these people worship?</li> <li>• Who participates? Who doesn't?</li> <li>• Why?</li> <li>• Is their leadership paradigm team-oriented or not?</li> </ul>		Contradictions
			Ethnicity/ Nationality Roles
			Leadership Paradigm*
			Gender Roles
	<b>“[Airport name]” is a Museum or Art Gallery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do these people find aesthetically pleasing?</li> <li>• How are they creative?</li> <li>• Who participates? Who doesn't?</li> <li>• Why?</li> <li>• Is their leadership paradigm team-oriented or not?</li> </ul>		Contradictions
			Ethnicity/ Nationality Roles
			Leadership Paradigm*
			Gender Roles
	<b>“[Airport name]” is a Fitness Center &amp; Health Spa</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do these people stay healthy, maintain fitness, relax, and rejuvenate?</li> <li>• Who participates? Who doesn't?</li> <li>• Why?</li> <li>• Is their leadership paradigm team-oriented or not?</li> </ul>		Contradictions
			Ethnicity/ Nationality Roles
			Leadership Paradigm*
			Gender Roles

Activity adapted by Katherine Yngve, CILMAR, Purdue University, from the following:

Batchelder, D. (1993). Martian Anthropology Exercise. In T. Gochenour (Ed.), *Beyond experience* (2nd ed., pp. 143-147). Intercultural Press.

*Note:* You can adjust the hypotheses, questions, focuses, number of teams, etc. to meet the needs of your particular context.

- Contradictions refer to any sort of behavior that doesn't seem to make sense
- Leadership paradigms are based off of the following table from House et al (2004):

Dimension	Behaviors
Charismatic/value-based leadership	Inspires others, motivates, expect high performance; visionary, self-sacrificing, trustworthy, decisive.
Team-oriented leadership	Team-building, common purpose, collaborative, integrative diplomat, not malevolent
Participative leadership	Involving others in making decisions and implementing them
Humane-oriented leadership	Supportive, considerate, compassionate and generous; modesty and sensitivity
Autonomous leadership	Independent and individualistic; autonomous and unique
Self-protective leadership	Ensures the safety and security of the leader and the group; self-centered, status conscious, face-saving, conflict-inducing

2. In preparation for this activity, assign readings on how to take ethnographic field notes (see [Links](#) and [Downloads](#)).
3. Provide each participant with a handout (see [Downloads](#)) and make sure they have something with which to take notes (notepad and pencil/pen, tablet, etc.).

*Note:* If participants will be arriving at the airport or other location separately, the facilitator should provide the handout in advance and tell participants to be prepared to take notes.

4. At the next meeting time, ask each group to present a three-minute report synthesizing their findings, which will either support or negate their hypothesis. The report should answer the team questions, demonstrate creative risk-taking (as described in the [AAC&U Creative Thinking VALUE Rubric](#)), and demonstrate a mastery of inquiry & analysis per the following [AAC&U Inquiry & Analysis Rubric](#) outcomes:
  - "Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus"
  - "States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings"
  - "Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches" which shall include: a) the perspective of gender, b) the perspective of leadership, c) the perspective of ethnic and national difference, and d) at least one contradiction.

## Related Tools:

### *Similar tools:*

- [Alien Among Us, An](#)
- [Body Ritual Among the Nacirema](#)
- [Ethnographic Interview, The](#)
- [Grocery Store Ethnography](#)
- [Hidden Ways in Which Culture Differs, The](#)
- [Martian Anthropology](#)
- [YouTube Ethnography Project](#)

### *Tools to use in conjunction with this lesson:*

- [Hofstede Value Dimensions Online Country Comparison Tool](#)
  - The facilitator can use this tool as a way to introduce cultural differences across countries.