

Introduction:

It's highly likely that, at some point in your academic, professional, or personal life, you might have to work closely with someone who holds different or opposing values to you. This lesson aims to prepare you for this type of scenario by asking you to create a "third culture space" with someone culturally different from you. In this activity, you will first brainstorm some of your cultural norms, beliefs, and values related to a common topic. Then, you will negotiate to generate a set of expectations that you both are comfortable with.

Activity Instructions:

1. For this activity, you will be paired with someone who is culturally different than you in some way. Once you have been paired up, open the [Third Culture Space Jamboard](#). In the top right corner, you should see an icon with three vertical dots. Click that icon and then select "Make a copy." Make sure to include you and your partner's first and last name in the name of the copied document.
2. On this Jamboard you'll see a Venn diagram. You will take one circle and your partner will take the other. Before you get started, you and your partner should decide on a context that is meaningful to you, or that you both have experience with (for example: a team working on a project together, how a friendship should operate, how a family should function, etc.).
3. Once you have decided on your context, individually use the text box function (the seventh icon down in the left-hand toolbar) to list out some of your cultural norms, beliefs, values, and customs related to your common topic. Make sure you are as specific and descriptive as possible in the space that you have. For example, instead of listing abstract things like family or hard work, write phrases or complete sentences: "I think it's important to eat dinner with your family every night" or "In a teamwork situation, I believe every member should put forth their best effort and contribute equally to a project" or "I believe that close friends should be open and honest with each other about disagreements."

Note: If you are working together in-person on the same device, you will need to take turns typing. If you are working on separate devices, you should be able to work at the same time. This might mean that you have to think outside of the box and come up with an alternative solution that you can both live with.

4. Once you have finished, compare what you have written and briefly discuss the following questions:
 - Why are the norms, beliefs, customs, and values you have identified so important to you culturally?
 - What are the primary differences that you see between you and your partner's cultural norms, beliefs, customs, and values?
 - Are there any similarities (or things that are close to similar) that you can identify?

5. Once you have discussed your differences, begin creating a third “culture space” in the middle of the Venn diagram where you would both feel comfortable within the context that you have chosen. For example, if one person said “I believe that close friends should be open and honest with each other about disagreements” while the other said, “I prefer avoiding topics that my close friends and I disagree about,” you might, in your third culture space, include a statement like, “Close friends should address disagreements if they are negatively impacting the friendship.”

Note: Creating this third culture space will most likely involve a lot of compromise and negotiation. You want to aim for a space where you both will truly feel comfortable being your cultural selves.

Reflection Questions:

Once you are finished, type up your answers to the following questions so that you can submit them to your instructor:

1. What were some of the most significant or consequential choices that you made about your third culture space?
2. What is the rationale behind the choices that you made?
3. What did your process of compromise and negotiation look like? What was challenging about this process?
4. What strategies did you use to identify the qualities of your third space that would satisfy the both of you?
5. Was there a belief or value or norm that you had trouble negotiating?
6. In what other contexts would this approach be useful? What are the pros and cons of trying to find a third culture space?