

Introduction:

This activity encourages participants to reflect on their own patterns of thought and templates of behavior they are most comfortable with. It also asks participants to consider what patterns or templates they are comfortable with, and what cultural figures they may find disorienting, through the act of searching for online photos and images that evoke similar feelings.

Objectives:

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

1. Consider how we recognize patterns and put information into templates that are familiar to us.
2. Discuss the similarities and differences between cultural rules and patterns and templates.

Time:

30 minutes.

Group Size:

Small Group.

Materials:

Can you read this Participant Instructions (in [Downloads](#)).

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

Cultural Self-Awareness:

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

Openness:

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

Knowledge of Cultural 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 and practices.

Other Skills:

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.

Activity Instructions:

1. Instruct participants to divide into pairs and attempt to read the messages in each of the images on the Participant Instructions, starting with the first one.
2. Ask participants to then discuss:
 - Were you able to read the messages in one or both of the images? If so, what allowed for this? Which one was easier to read, if at all?
 - What do these images have to do with culture?
3. Instruct participants to do an online search for photos or images that “promote cross-cultural understanding.” (Saphiere, 2012)
4. Instruct participants to then share their collection of photos and images with their partner and explain why certain images conjure certain reactions, e.g., comfort or disorientation.
5. Debrief: Ask participants to give summaries of their discussions to the larger group.

Facilitator note from Saphiere (2012) to include in the discussion:

“Our minds interpret a lot of things every day, constantly. They make sense of the world around us. They do this by recognizing patterns, putting information into templates that are familiar to us.

Obviously when we enter a new culture, the rules are different. The patterns are different, the templates unfamiliar. Our inability to make sense of what’s happening around us can cause us to feel disconcerted, maybe to lose confidence. Our past knowledge, from another place, can cause confusion. It can lead us to think we understand what we really don’t, to fail to see what is really there, or to miss important information.”