

Introduction:

For this activity, participants will read a [summary](#) of Philipsen's [article](#) and discuss the case studies presented in the summary. Participants will also discuss their own experiences in "finding your feet" in unfamiliar cultural contexts. Finally, participants will explore ways in which they can apply the principles of "finding your feet" and offer their own suggestions about how to gain a better understanding of communication in specific contexts.

Objectives:

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

1. Discuss the case studies presented in the [summary](#).
2. Share their own experiences of "finding your own feet" in the cultural contexts they have encountered.
3. Apply the principles of "finding our feet" as explained in the [summary](#).
4. Generate advice and suggestions about how to gain a better understanding of communication in specific contexts.

Time:

1 hour.

Group size:

Small group.

Materials:

See 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.

Activity Instructions:

1. Take 15 minutes to read the [summary](#) of the article.
2. In a small group discussion (15 minutes), talk about the stories of Reiko and Rachel in the [summary](#). Ask:
 - Which case study resonated with you more? Explain.
 - What aspects of both case studies could you relate to? Why?
 - What aspects of either case study did you find it difficult to relate to? Why?
3. Now discuss a time when you had to “find your feet” in a specific context (15 minutes). Ask:
 - What challenges did you face?
 - Did you feel misunderstood, or did you misunderstand others?
 - Did you find yourself using stereotypes to interpret what happened?
 - How can using observation lead to a more nuanced interpretation?
 - What are the potential risks of using observation as your primary investigative strategy?
4. Whole group discussion (15 minutes). Report insights you gained from your small group discussion. Ask:
 - What were your biggest take-aways from this reading?
 - When might you find Philipsen's advice useful?
 - What advice of your own do you have to add?

Related Tools:

- [Body Ritual Among the Nacirema](#)
- [Ethnographic Interview, The](#)
- [YouTube Ethnography Project](#)
- [Martian Anthropology](#)
- [Grocery Store Ethnography](#)
- [Martians at the Airport](#)