

**Introduction:**

This activity prompts participants to observe and explore cultural messages about *time*. There are so many cultural messages about *time* all around us, yet we often do not take notice. This activity asks participants to consider the multiple messages about time that exist in their environment, and to analyze the extended meanings of these messages. This is a simple cultural activity that can be incorporated into different kinds of training and educational situations.

**Facilitator Notes:**

Please note that this activity can fit well in multiple places within a training session. It may even be used as a “homework assignment” if the training lasts more than one day. If you do not have much time, you can include this activity as an observation assignment during a break.

**Objectives:**

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

1. Identify and examine messages about time in the environment and how they connect to culture.

**Time:**

30 minutes.

**Group Size:**

Pairs.

**Materials:**

None – just access to different spaces and a little bit of *time*!

**Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:**

- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization
- Acceptance
- Adaptation

**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).

**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.

## Activity Instructions:

1. Instruct participants to pair up.
2. Once they've paired up, instruct participants to walk around (you can designate specific areas if you'd like) and notice any indicators about time, keeping a list or taking photos of their observations. Encourage participants to discuss their observations and ideas with their partner throughout the activity. Typically, about 15 minutes is allotted for this exploration phase.

*Facilitation tip: Encourage participants to extend beyond the "traditional" time indicators (such as clocks and standard signs about activities or meetings) and to notice other clues about how time is viewed in the culture (for example, how the building is structured, subtle "conveniences" which serve as time-savers, internal and external clues, physical spaces and the possibilities for interaction within these spaces, amount of detail and layout of information on signs, etc.).*

3. When participants return, conduct a large group discussion, addressing the following questions:
  - What general observations do you have about *time*?
  - How many indicators of *time* did you record on your lists?
  - What criteria did you use in selecting and identifying indicators of *time*?
  - What surprised you the most as you paid attention to *time*?
  - How are you affected by *time* indicators in your daily life?
  - What cultural values underlie your observations of *time*?
  - What new insights can you gain from these observations?