



Intercultural
Development
Inventory®

Intercultural Development Plan

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Your Intercultural Development Plan (IDP)

Completing the Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI®) and reviewing your own IDI Individual Profile Report provides key insights into how you make sense of cultural differences and commonalities. The next step is to systematically increase your intercultural competence—from where you are to where you want to be—by designing and implementing your own Intercultural Development Plan® (IDP®). This IDP is *specifically customized to your own IDI profile results* and is an effective way for you to increase your skills in navigating cultural differences. After completing your IDP, you may consider taking the IDI again to determine your progress in increasing your intercultural competence. Should you select this option, a second customized IDP would then be produced based on your most recent IDI profile results, thus providing further intercultural development. By completing your Individual Development Plan, you can:

- Gain insights concerning intercultural *challenges* you are facing and identify intercultural competence development goals that are important for you,
- Gain increased *understanding* of how your Developmental Orientation impacts how you perceive and respond to cultural differences and commonalities, and
- Identify and *engage* in targeted, developmental efforts that increase your intercultural competence in bridging across diverse communities.

Why Have an Intercultural Development Plan?

Have you ever heard someone say, “*experience other cultures—you will be better able to communicate with people who are different from you?*” Many of us may also believe that traveling and living in another country automatically results in our developing greater intercultural competence.

Unfortunately, these are two common myths regarding the development of intercultural competence. Intercultural competence does not simply happen because of being in another culture. For example, assume you are from the United States and you go to Japan and live for six months—or even six years!

Does this mean that you have increased your ability to shift cultural perspective and adapt behavior more effectively and appropriately because of your “Japanese experience?” Not necessarily. You may have lived in and experienced Japan largely from your own, monocultural perspective. You may, for instance, have lived in an area of Japan where people from your own culture predominate and your relationships may have remained largely with people from your own cultural group. Further, your behavior may have changed little even though you were working and living in a foreign country. Under these circumstances, you would likely gain little intercultural competence development.

Making a Commitment

As you review the information in this IDP guide, you will be asked to identify and make a commitment to engage in a set of activities and reflect on what you have learned from those activities. Each activity has a suggested time commitment listed so that, as you design your IDP, you will know the total amount of time you are committing to your own development.

The more activities you select and the more time you work on your IDP, the greater your ability to bridge cultural differences will be. Engaging in the activities in your IDP can help you achieve a gain of one full orientation (or more) along the Intercultural Development Continuum. When possible, you should work on your Intercultural Development Plan at least once, if not twice, a week.

Key Intercultural Learning Opportunities

The specific list of activities in this IDP are targeted to your own Developmental Orientation and are reflective of a wide-range of different learning methods, including:

Training Programs	Are there web-based or in-person training programs you can attend that present information on cultural difference across diverse groups?
Workplace Activities	Are there workplace committees and groups in which you can participate to build your intercultural skills? This can include participating in your organization's diversity and inclusion efforts, joining various affiliation/affinity/employee resource groups, and taking on work-related responsibilities that involve cultural bridging.
Theatre, Film, & Arts	Are you able to attend cross-cultural movies, plays, and other artistic exhibits? Such events often hold post-event discussions that allow you to explore the concepts presented with others who share your interest.
Educational Classes	Are there classes at your community college or university that focus on cross-cultural communication and cross-cultural relations? Other useful courses include ethnic and gender studies classes.
Personal Interactions	Could you work on projects that involve interactions with people from different cultures?
Books & Articles	Are there books or articles you would like to read that specifically describe and explain patterns of cultural difference and similarity?

Intercultural Journal	Could you keep an intercultural journal in which you reflect on cultural differences and commonalities you observe in your daily interactions with people from other cultural groups? You might consider focusing your intercultural journal on situations you have observed or been a part of in which you and/or others needed to understand cultural differences and then respond appropriately.
Travel	Are there cross-cultural travel opportunities on the horizon where you can systematically observe and engage cultural diversity?
Intercultural Coaching	Is there an opportunity to work with a qualified intercultural coach?
Site Visits	Are there specific cultural site visits that can increase your knowledge about diverse cultural experiences?

Tips for increasing the benefits of your IDP:

- If possible, working through your IDP with another person (who is also working on their own IDP) can increase intercultural growth and development for both of you.
- If possible, working with an IDI Qualified Administrator in a coaching capacity can increase insights and learning.
- Completing your activities on a weekly basis deepens intercultural understanding.

“Developing intercultural competence is a core capability in the 21st century that involves cultural self-awareness and culture-other understanding along with the ability to adapt one’s mindset and behavior to bridge across differences.”

Mitchell R. Hammer, Ph.D., 2017

Polarization

Your IDI profile results indicate your Developmental Orientation is within **Polarization**, an orientation that makes sense of cultural differences from a more judgmental stance (“us” and “them”). Polarization can take the form of *Defense* or *Reversal*.

Defense has a positive attitude towards one’s own group, uncritically favoring the cultural values and practices of one’s own group while being overly critical of another culture’s practices that are substantially different. Reversal is positive and uncritical towards the practices of other cultures and overly critical towards one’s own culture.

Overall, Polarization is aware of the challenges that can arise around cultural differences, but over-emphasizes differences from a good/bad, positive/negative view.

Your Developmental Opportunity

There are likely commonalities, which may escape your notice, between your views and the views of people who are culturally different from yourself. Exploring these similarities is an important bridge in building positive relations across diverse groups.

Your developmental task is to consciously balance your evaluation (advantages and disadvantages) of your own and others’ cultural beliefs and behaviors and to actively identify commonalities between your own and other’s views, needs, and goals.

Tips for selecting developmental activities in your IDP:

- Select activities that pique your curiosity
- Select activities that are enjoyable
- Select activities that are less familiar
- Select activities that are challenging

Designing Your Intercultural Development Plan

Surprisingly, people often have not thought much about the experiences they have had—or not had—around cultural differences and commonalities. Some of us may have had quite varied and extensive living and working experiences in different countries and diverse communities yet have not reflected much on those experiences. Others of us may think we have had little “cross-cultural” experience when in fact cultural influences may have significantly influenced how we live our lives and the goals we set for our work teams and ourselves.

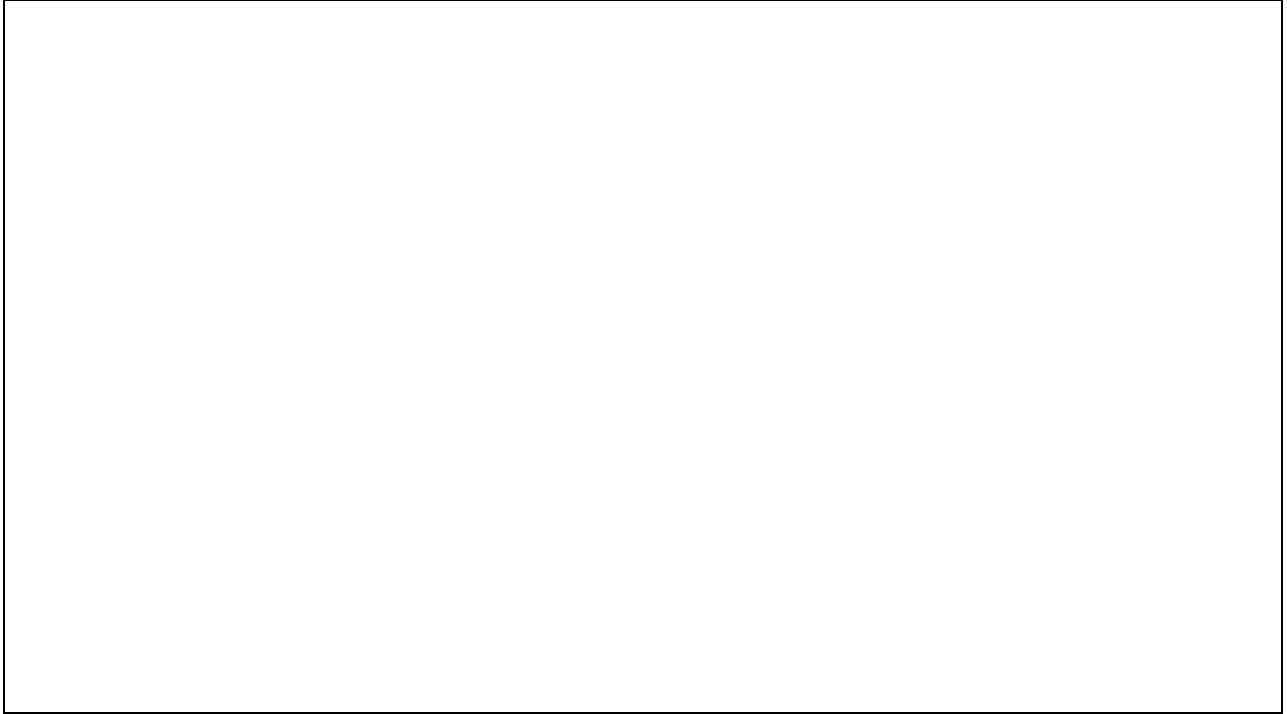
The suggested activities in *1.0.*, *2.0.*, and *3.0.* are *foundational* to deeper intercultural competence development. These foundational activities are designed to increase your cultural self- and other-awareness across all Developmental Orientations along the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC).

The activities suggested in *4.0.* are *targeted to your own primary Developmental Orientation*, as identified by the IDI. As you engage in these activities, you will be able to choose how much time you want to spend on each one.

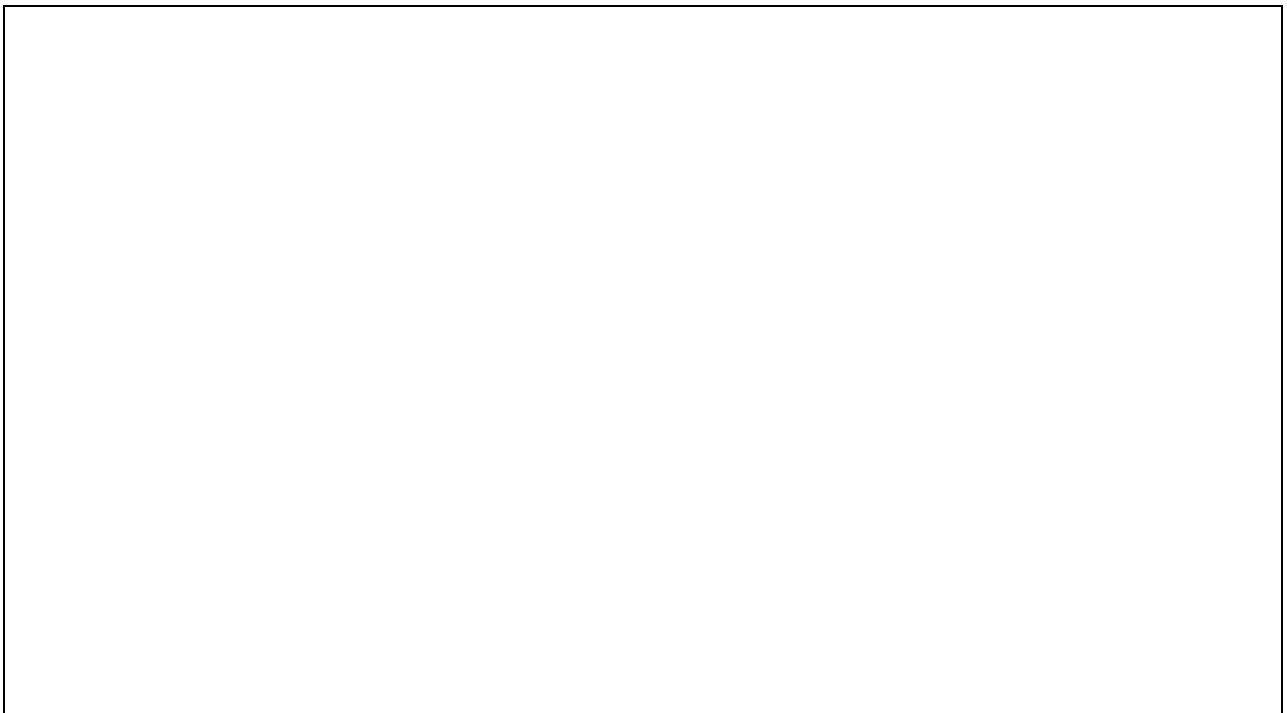
1.0. What has been your experience with cultural communities? Answer each of the five questions below.

- 1.1. *How diverse is your community (e.g., nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender)? In what ways is diversity recognized by leaders in your community (e.g., festivals, holidays celebrated)? This information can often be found on your local city/community websites. (30-60 minutes)*

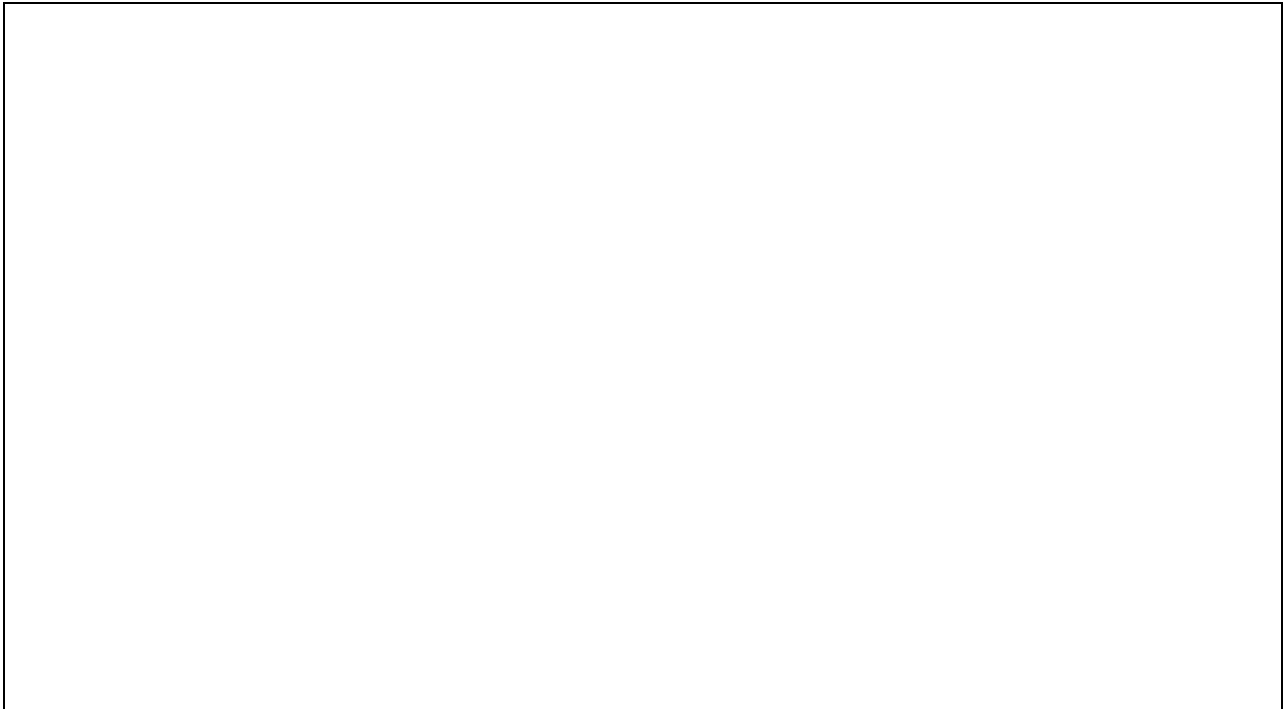
- 1.2. *How diverse is your workplace (e.g., nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender)? In what ways is diversity recognized by leaders in your organization (e.g., new hire orientation, organization-sponsored diversity events)? This information can often be found on your organization's website. (30-60 minutes)*



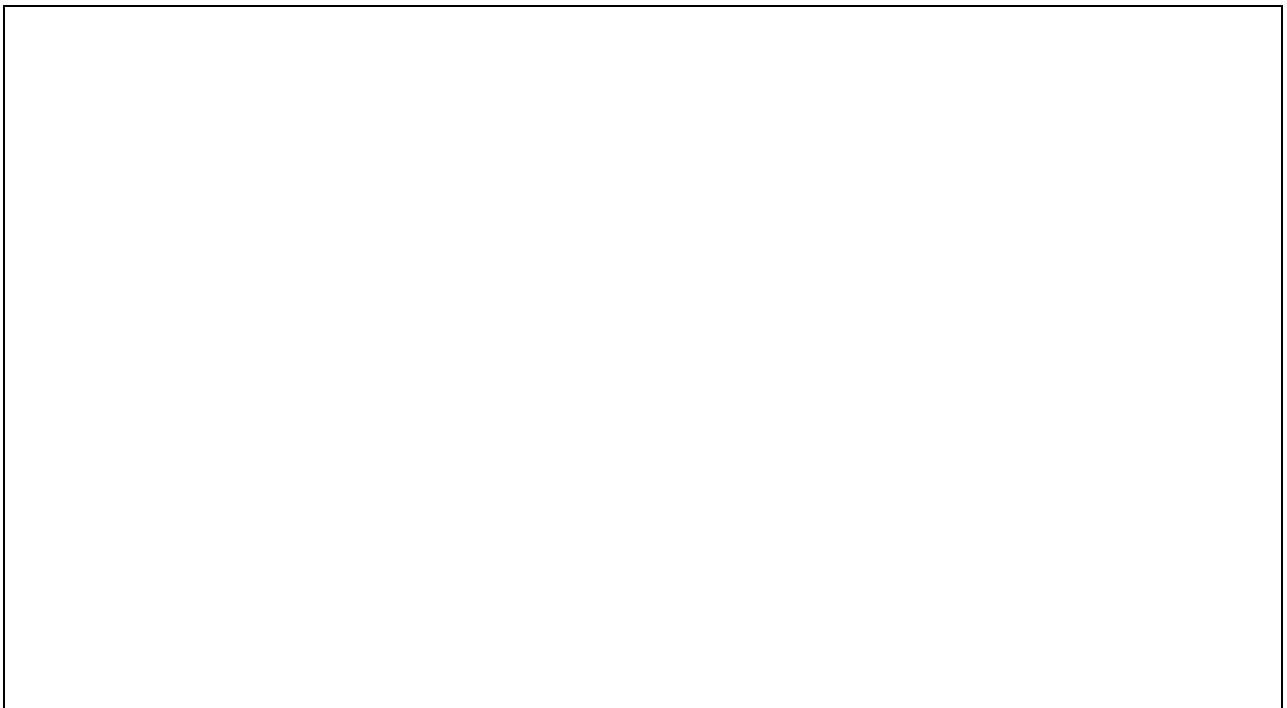
- 1.3. *When and how did you first become aware of cultural groups that were different from your own? (10 minutes)*



- 1.4. *What has been challenging and what has been rewarding in interacting with people from different cultures? (20 minutes)*



- 1.5. *In thinking about your answers to the questions from 1.1. to 1.4., what insights or conclusions come to mind about your overall experience with people who are culturally different from yourself? (20 minutes)*



2.0. Please identify 1-2 goals you have for more effectively navigating cultural differences and commonalities. How will you know you are making progress in meeting these goals? [20 minutes]

2.1. Write out each goal and progress indicator in the following format:

- “I would like to accomplish [xxx].” “I will know I have made progress on this goal when [xxx].” **Here are two examples of different goal/progress indicator statements:**
 - *Goal #1:* **I would like to** more deeply understand how my own cultural community has influenced some of my core beliefs and values.
 - *Progress Indicator #1:* **I will know I have made progress on this goal when** I can better explain my own views and values in cultural terms to people from my own cultural community and to people from diverse groups.
 - *Goal #2:* **I would like to** increase my leadership in my organization around diversity and inclusion efforts.
 - *Progress Indicator #2:* **I will know I have made progress on this goal when** I volunteer and become a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, when I ensure each of our monthly work meetings includes an agenda item related to our team’s progress in meeting diversity and inclusion goals, and when I engage in conversations about cultural differences with people from my own cultural group and other cultural communities.

Goal #1: *I would like to*

Progress Indicators: *I will know I have made progress on this goal when*

1.

2.

3.

Goal #2: *I would like to*

Progress Indicators: *I will know I have made progress on this goal when*

1.

2.

3.

3.0. Identify challenging situations or barriers you face.

3.1. What are 1-2 situations or barriers you face that could interfere with your completion of the IDP, and what could you do to reduce these obstacles? (15 minutes)

<p>Situation/Barrier #1:</p> <p>Actions to Reduce Barrier #1:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3. <p>Situation/Barrier #2:</p> <p>Actions to Reduce Barrier #2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.

4.0. The following exercises will help you increase your awareness and understanding of cultural commonalities and differences. Review each activity and select those that are most relevant to you now.

4.1. *The purpose of this activity is to help you identify what you feel you have in common with your own cultural group, what perceptions or characteristics you believe are different between your own group and another cultural community, and, finally, what perceptions or characteristics you have in common with the other culture group. Complete the chart below. (30 minutes)*

<p>Column A: Write down the name of a cultural group with which you belong (e.g., country, ethnic, region, gender). Do not identify your "organization" as your culture group:</p>	<p>Column B: Write down the name of a culture group with which you do not belong and which you feel differs from your own group:</p>	<p>Column C:</p> <p>Shared Culture A & B</p>
<p>List 3 perceptions or characteristics you <u>feel you share</u> with people from your group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<p>List 3 perceptions or characteristics you <u>feel are different</u> between your group and the other culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<p>List 3 perceptions or characteristics your group <u>has in common</u> with the group listed in Column B.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

4.2. Once you have completed the chart above, reflect on the following questions. (15 minutes)

Which group reflects a more positive or favorable evaluation—your own cultural community or another culture group?

Do the differences listed in Column B highlight negative or positive perceptions or characteristics? How might you rewrite those differences in ways that remove either positive or negative judgment yet still describe a cultural difference?

Are the commonalities you identified in Column C between your group and the other cultural group important commonalities or did you list more superficial similarities (e.g., similar foods)? If the latter, can you identify deeper commonalities between your culture and the other cultural group; for example, in values, beliefs, or practices?

4.3. *The purpose of this activity is to increase your understanding of some core values you have learned from your cultural community and to build awareness of cultural values in other groups. Think of cultural values as ideas people should or ought to live their lives by. As an example, for some people, three values that might be important are honesty, hard work, and achievement. For other people, family, harmony, and accountability may be valued. Answer the questions in the chart below in Column A, then Column B, then Column C. (30 minutes or more)*

Column A My Culture Group	Column B The Other Culture Group	Column C Reflections
<p><i>List three core values you share with people from your own cultural community:</i></p> <p>1. _____</p>	<p><i>Think about a culture that is different from your own – one with which you feel some discomfort or level of mistrust. List three values of this culture.</i></p> <p>1. _____</p>	<p><i>Was it difficult to think about the other culture having the same values as yours? Why or why not?</i></p>
<p><i>What might people from your group do that reflects this value?</i></p> <p>2. _____</p>	<p><i>What might people from this other group do that reflects this same value?</i></p> <p>2. _____</p>	<p><i>Were you able to list specific actions or behaviors people may do in the other culture that reflects the same value? Why or why not?</i></p>
<p><i>What might people from your group do that reflects this value?</i></p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p><i>What might people from this other group do that reflects this same value?</i></p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p><i>How can you learn more about commonalities you may share with the other culture group?</i></p>

- 4.4. *Challenge yourself to look for differences in situations where you feel you already have much in common with someone else. For example, if you share a similar belief (political, environmental, or social) with another person, find out why that individual has the view they do. Pay attention to whether you are judging any differences you find. When determining who to engage in these conversations with, consider some of the relationships you have that provide opportunities to explore differences. Consider engaging some of your classmates, colleagues, friends, family, mentors, or others. Take advantage of public spaces and forums where you can access different perspectives (virtual and in-person). Remember, the responsibility of building your awareness and understanding is yours, not others'. You may encounter some individuals that are uncomfortable, unable, or unwilling to engage some of these topics. It is important you accept others' decision of not wanting to engage in honor of their choice. Summarize your insights below. (30 minutes or more)*

4.5. Consider a time when you felt your culture group's way of doing things was better than another culture's approach. Alternatively, think of a time when you felt another culture's way of doing things was better than your own group's approach. (30 minutes or more)

Briefly describe this situation and your cultural group's way of doing things and the other group's way of doing things:

Identify 3 possible advantages your own cultural approach offers:

-
-
-

Identify 3 possible advantages the other cultural approach may offer:

-
-
-

What insights have you gained?

- 4.6. *Seek out 1-3 individuals in your community or organization who have found ways to make connections with people who are culturally different from themselves. Think of these individuals as “cultural bridges”. With permission, initiate a conversation with the individual(s), asking them about their experiences. When determining who to engage in these conversations with, consider some of the relationships you have that provide opportunities to explore differences. Consider engaging some of your classmates, colleagues, friends, family, mentors, or others. Remember, the responsibility of building your awareness and understanding is yours, not others'. You may encounter some individuals that are uncomfortable, unable, or unwilling to engage some of these topics. It is important you accept others' decision of not wanting to engage in honor of their choice. (1 hour or more per conversation)*

What do these individuals do to build bridges between themselves and people from diverse cultures?

List three benefits these individuals feel they have gained through their deeper interactions with people who are culturally different from themselves:

-
-
-

How might you apply insights gained from your conversations with these cultural bridges to your own relations with these cultural bridges to your own relations with people who are culturally different from yourself?

4.7. Summary reflection questions. (30 minutes)

Now that you have completed your selected activities, could this new information have changed a situation you experienced in the past? How would this situation have changed?

How can this new information change your perceptions, interpretations, judgments, reactions, and/or behaviors in the future?

“No culture can live, if it attempts to be exclusive.”

Mahatma Gandhi