

Developing Cross-Cultural Intelligence

with Tatiana Kolovou

Developing Your Action Plan

	Analyze	Strategize	Take Action	Evaluate
What is the situation?	Ask questions to help you find out more about the culture, differences from your culture, the context of your specific setting, and any sociopolitical factors that may come into play.	Based on your analysis, list the strategies you will implement to be effective in your interaction. Who will be your cultural advisor? Where else can you gather information?	Take steps according to your research and your plan. Be flexible and open in dealing with ambiguity if that seems to be the theme when dealing with the new culture.	How do you know that you were effective? Who can you get some honest feedback from? Are there any markers to give you “do differently” opportunities?
Is there a complication?				
What is your desired outcome?				

Example

	Analyze	Strategize	Take Action	Evaluate
<p>What is the situation?</p> <p>I was preparing to host a high-profile alumni and political representative from another country. He was coming to our university as a leader-in-residence for a one-week visit. I had never met him before and my charge was to create a robust agenda that exposed him to various audiences in our university.</p>	<p>Ask questions to help you find out more about the culture, differences from your culture, the context of your specific setting, and any sociopolitical factors that may come into play.</p>	<p>Based on your analysis, list the strategies you will implement to be effective in your interaction. Who will be your cultural advisor? Where else can you gather information?</p>	<p>Take steps according to your research and your plan. Be flexible and open in dealing with ambiguity if that seems to be the theme when dealing with the new culture.</p>	<p>How do you know that you were effective?</p> <p>Who can you get some honest feedback from? Are there any markers to give you “do differently” opportunities?</p>
<p>Is there a complication?</p> <p>Since I had not met him before, I needed to build credibility and trust. Our time difference was substantial, and he had several administrative staff with varying levels of response rates to my email correspondence.</p>	<p>What is the time orientation of this culture?</p> <p>What is the power distance in this culture? How formal will my initial interactions have to be?</p> <p>Can I watch the news from this culture to pick up on nonverbals, people’s interactions, and sense of space?</p> <p>Can colleagues from the same culture provide any insights?</p> <p>What is the political scene in this country and where does this politician’s position stand?</p> <p>Are there any current events I need to be aware of or use in the conversation?</p>	<p>I learned that time orientation is polychronic, influence is huge, and relationships matter a lot.</p> <p>I will have to create a strong relationship with the politician’s staff before I can set up a meeting directly with him.</p> <p>On the domestic side, I asked for help from a common connection, someone who knew him personally and could give me more insight. I also asked this higher university official to introduce me to other administrators in the university system as the formal liaison—this gave me instant credibility.</p> <p>I got a strong sense of his political ideology and was prepared to ask some relevant questions for our first call.</p> <p>Since he was an alum, I contacted his former professors and arranged for meetings with some of them during his visit.</p>	<p>All of my research and strategy paid off. I picked him up from the airport and was able to have some casual chats during the drive. I arranged for him to have tea and snacks in his hotel room. I found out where his favorite student hangout was and made sure we made a visit. My questions were relevant but open ended. Knowing the need for certainty in his culture, all the agendas were detailed and audiences were described to a T. Overall, my interaction time with him allowed me to be more persuasive when it came time to review and make changes to his presentation visuals of the visit. I knew that impressions mattered for him and made sure that he was in contact with high-level university officials.</p>	<p>In an effort to read beyond the pleasantries, I made an effort to ask the senior administrator who knew my guest for feedback on the visit.</p> <p>I also invited my guest to send some feedback on the design of the visit with ideas for groups to interact with on the follow-up trip. I made sure not to ask for this right away, I wanted my guest to re-acclimate to his country environment before sending any follow-up. Besides the different gifts we exchanged, I was sure to send gifts for his administrative staff—without them, any coordination would have been impossible.</p>
<p>What is your desired outcome?</p> <p>Overall, my goal was to create a positive first impression, a solid relationship, and smooth first visit leading to a successful second visit to be planned 6 months later.</p>				