

Cultural awareness

Individual project

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Contents

[Versioning Table 3](#_Toc124425110)

[What is culture 3](#_Toc124425111)

[Which cultural aspects would you keep in mind when facing cultural differences? 4](#_Toc124425112)

[What is my culture? 4](#_Toc124425113)

[Current situation 5](#_Toc124425114)

[Describe a situation where your interaction with people from cultures other than yours, went different from how you had initially expected it to be? 5](#_Toc124425115)

[How would you act in the future when you know that you need to communicate or collaborate with a person from another culture? 5](#_Toc124425116)

[In your project group, what did you do to improve the group communications with respect to cultural differences? 6](#_Toc124425117)

# Versioning Table

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Content |
| 12/01/2023 | * Document initialization |

## What is culture

Culture refers to the set of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that shape and characterize a group or society. It encompasses a wide range of elements, such as language, religion, education, social norms, and material objects. Culture can also refer to the overall way of life of a particular group or society, including their way of thinking and acting. Culture is not just limited to traditional or ancient customs and practices, it is also the way people live their lives, the way they communicate, the way they think, the way they perceive the world. Culture is a dynamic concept, it is constantly changing and evolving, influenced by various factors such as historical, social, economic, and political developments.

## Which cultural aspects would you keep in mind when facing cultural differences?

As an Israeli student working in a group with students from different cultures, including Ukraine, the Netherlands, Romania, and Bulgaria, you may have noticed some cultural differences and similarities among your team members. For example, the girl from Ukraine might be more reserved and quieter in her communication style, while the Dutch guys might be more direct and assertive. The guy from Romania may share similar cultural characteristics and viewpoints with the Bulgarian guys, while you may have different communication styles and ways of approaching tasks.

It's important to be aware of these cultural differences and to communicate effectively and respectfully with each other to ensure a positive and productive outcome for the group project. You may also find that despite these cultural differences, you have a lot in common with your team members, such as a shared work ethic and sense of humor, and that you can learn a lot from each other's perspectives.

It's important to keep in mind that every person is unique and may not fit into a specific cultural stereotype and that you should always be respectful, open-minded and communicate effectively with each other. Overall, working in a diverse group can be a valuable learning experience and an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of different cultures.

## What is my culture?

As a citizen of Israel, my culture is a unique blend of various influences including Jewish, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, and European. The culture of Israel, of which I am a part, is deeply rooted in the history and traditions of the Jewish people and is shaped by the diverse backgrounds of its citizens.

I see that Israeli culture is a melting pot of various influences, with a rich history that spans thousands of years, from the ancient Israelites to modern-day Israel. It is a culture that is steeped in tradition, with a strong emphasis on family, community, and religion. The country has a vibrant arts and cultural scene, with a rich tradition of music, dance, theater, and visual arts.

As an Israeli, I am part of a diverse population, with many immigrants from all over the world, this diversity is reflected in the culture, which is a blend of various customs and traditions, as well as the languages are spoken, Hebrew and Arabic are the official languages, but you may also hear English, Russian, French, Spanish and many more.

I also realize that Israeli culture is heavily influenced by the ongoing political and social issues facing the country. This includes a strong sense of national pride and a deep connection to the land, as well as a commitment to social and political issues such as democracy, human rights, and peace.

It is important to keep in mind that culture is constantly evolving and that everyone's experience of culture is unique and personal. This is just a general overview of Israeli culture and I may find that my own experience of it is different from what is described above.

## Current situation

This semester, I am undertaking both an individual project and a group project. For the individual project, I primarily worked independently, but during class, I shared my findings and knowledge with my classmates. On the other hand, the group project required us to collaborate and communicate effectively as a team, both for group tasks and individual tasks.

Once again, I found myself in a group with individuals from various cultural backgrounds, including a Ukrainian student, two Bulgarian students, a Romanian student, and two Dutch students. From my previous experiences and this current project, I have formed some impressions of the cultural backgrounds of my team members. For instance, I have observed that the Ukrainian student is generally reserved, this could be since in Ukrainian culture, indirect communication is more common and direct communication is considered rude. The Dutch students are more direct and enjoy some jokes to improve the work environment. Romanians and Bulgarians are really similar in their culture, usually they stay in a group involving a majority of people of the same culture, they are louder than the Dutch and the Ukrainian and in some way reminds the Israeli culture.

## Describe a situation where your interaction with people from cultures other than yours, went different from how you had initially expected it to be?

Growing up in Israel, I have been exposed to a diverse range of cultures, which has allowed me to develop a strong ability to interact effectively with people from different backgrounds. I understand that cultural norms, values, and communication styles may vary. I was exposed to so many different cultures that I don’t feel that someone’s culture could affect my expectations.

## How would you act in the future when you know that you need to communicate or collaborate with a person from another culture?

In order to interact effectively with people from cultures other than mine, I research and educate myself about the culture I will be interacting with, I approach the interaction with an open mind and willingness to learn, I communicate effectively and respectfully, adapt my own behavior if necessary, take the time to build relationships, be aware of cultural stereotypes but not to generalize, and show empathy and try to understand the other person's perspective, remembering to treat each other with respect and kindness.

## In your project group, what did you do to improve the group communications with respect to cultural differences?

As an Israeli student in a group project with students from Ukraine, the Netherlands, Romania, and Bulgaria, I noticed that the Ukrainian student was more reserved and polite in her communication style, while the Dutch student was more direct and assertive. I was aware that in Ukraine, it is important to be more reserved and polite in communication, and that building trust and personal connections is important before discussing business or other matters, so I adapted my communication style to match hers.

When interacting with the Ukrainian student, I made sure to speak in a more reserved and polite tone, and to avoid making any direct or confrontational statements. I also took the time to build a personal connection with her before discussing any business-related matters.

I also observed that the Dutch student was more direct and assertive, so I adapted my communication style accordingly. I made sure to be clear and specific in my communication with him and to avoid any ambiguity or vagueness.

By being aware of and respectful of cultural norms and customs, and adapting my communication style accordingly, I was able to effectively communicate with and build positive relationships with all my group members, despite our cultural differences.