

# 18 Cross-Cultural Interactive Preference Profile

*Morris Graham and Dwight Miller*

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## Summary

Many people encounter problems interacting in environments that are culturally different from their own. Everyone has preferences regarding interpersonal interactions, and these may vary from culture to culture as well as from individual to individual.

One important dimension of culture is *context*, which ranges from *high context*, (collectivism) to *low context* (individualism). The Cross-Cultural Interactive Preference (CCIP) Profile measures an individual's preferences for level of context as well as his or her ability to interact effectively across contexts. This profile comprises the following factors: socialization of information, socialization of people, spatial orientation, and time orientation. As a result of understanding his or her own preferences, a person can become more aware of the role that context plays in individual and group interactions.

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Most people do not do really well when interacting in an environment that is foreign to their own or with people of cultural preferences different from their own. This is particularly true within cross-cultural or cross-functional groups. Preferences regarding interpersonal interactions, group interactions, and information may vary from one culture to another, just as they also vary from one individual to another, regardless of cultural origin. People's interactive preferences need to be understood in order to facilitate productive group work. Such understanding can help to reduce potential interpersonal conflicts and can increase group effectiveness.

In cross-cultural or cross-functional group settings, what we can learn about ourselves through others is as important as what we can learn about others and their cultures. The ways in which we feel, think, and behave can be checked in terms of how others perceive and interact with us. Things take on new meanings in the context of

other cultural orientations. Moreover, things that we may consider to be uniquely individual about our "selves" are actually shaped by our culture, which determines, to a large extent, how we respond in different situations.

The Cross-Cultural Interactive Preference Profile (CCIP Profile) identifies how the respondents would prefer to interact in group activities or in situations in which more than one cultural orientation is involved.

## **Definitions of Terms**

Understanding any subject area requires a basic working vocabulary. In the cross-cultural field, this vocabulary has grown with the advance of research. However, only the essential terms are defined here, for the purpose of interpreting the CCIP Profile.

*Assimilate:* To become absorbed into the cultural traditions of another ethnic population or group.

*Context:* The information that surrounds an event and is inextricably bound up with the meaning of the event. The elements that combine to produce a given meaning—events and context—vary in proportion from culture to culture. The cultures of the world can be compared on a scale from low context to high context (Hall & Hall, 1990).

*Cross-Cultural Activities:* Activities that involve more than one cultural set, viewpoint, or environment. Such activities deal with an individual's personal and cultural self-awareness, other-awareness, intercultural communication barriers, and interaction skills (Brislin, 1990).

*Culture:* A collection of many beliefs, values, perspectives, behaviors, activities, institutions, and learned patterns of communication largely shared in common by a group of people.

*High-Context Message:* Communication in which the vast majority of the information is either internalized in the individual or the physical context of the situation. Very little is in the explicit transmission or coding of the message (Hall, 1977; Hall & Hall, 1990).

*Judgment:* The process of forming conclusions about what has been perceived by an individual.

*Low-Context Message:* Communication in which the mass of information is in the explicit coding of the message and not resident within the individuals involved or within the situation or context (Hall, 1977).

*Microculture:* A subculture or new culture formed by the interaction of two or more major cultures such as business organizations, nations, or persons. A formulation of beliefs, behaviors, values, characteristics, patterns of communication, etc., shared by a specific group of people, that originates from diverse, major cultural groupings (Fontaine, 1989).

**Multicultural Individual:** An individual who has assimilated understanding, precepts, knowledge, and characteristics of more than his or her own native culture by experiencing microcultural activities of cross-cultural groups. Adler (1986) notes that members of multicultural groups should recognize and integrate all the cultures represented.

**Multiculturalism:** Situations in which people from more than one culture (and frequently more than one country) interact regularly, thus forming a number of perspectives, approaches, and—in the case of businesses—business methods (Adler, 1986).

**Personality:** The result of conditioning by culture; the total of the individual's characteristic reactions to his or her environment.

**Predisposition:** The condition of being inclined beforehand or having a susceptibility to act or react in a particular way.

## **Conceptual Background: Low-Context and High-Context Orientations**

Theorists have identified a major dimension of cultural variability, called "context" (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987; Hall, 1977; Hall & Hall, 1990; Hofstede, 1984; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Marsella, DeVos, & Hsu, 1985; Triandis, 1988). The two basic dimensions of are low context (individualism) and high context (collectivism).

### **Low-Context Cultures (Individualism)**

Low-context, or "individualistic," people and cultures place emphasis on individualism and individual goals, facts, the management of time, nonverbal communication, privacy, and compartmentalization.

The cultural norms associated with low context, which dominate most North American and Northern European societies, are essentially task-oriented, focusing on data to provide the answers to living well. Progress is measured in tangibles. Goals are action-oriented and geared to produce short-term material profits. The driving force of a low-context culture is work, which is the usual context in which a person is honored. Societies are structured to honor individuals who succeed financially. Emotions are suspect and considered inappropriate in most social and work settings.

Low-context people are highly individualistic, assertive, directive, dominating, results-oriented, independent, strong-willed, competitive, quick to make decisions, impatient, time-conscious, solution-oriented, control-seeking, well-organized, and self-contained. The individual has a high need to be recognized for his or her performance.

Individualistic social skills include meeting people quickly, putting them at ease, finding topics of conversation that others can discuss readily, being interesting so that the others will have memories of the interaction six months later, and so forth. These

skills are useful, as they allow people to obtain information from others, central to the pursuit of individual goals (Brislin, 1993).

In a group setting, low-context individuals need less time to develop new, progressive programs that can be changed easily and quickly. However, these individuals can create less cohesion and stability in the group. Also, they are less committed to group agreements or planned actions.

In low-context cultures, when there is a conflict between an individual's goals and those of a valued group (i.e., co-workers), consideration of the individual's goals is of major importance. Individualists report (Brislin, 1993) that they would feel stifled if they were surrounded by others. There would be too many people whose opinions would have to be considered before an individualist could act in the pursuit of his or her goals. Individualists find that clearing their plans with others interferes too much with their desire "to do their own thing."

### High-Context Cultures (Collectivism)

High-context, or "collectivistic," individuals and cultures place emphasis on relationships, group goals, the process and surrounding circumstances, time as natural progression, verbal communication, communal space, and interrelationships.

High-context cultural norms are primarily group-oriented, i.e., honoring the relationships of their cultural group before that of an "out-group," such as a university, company, or country. Family and community ties are strong; feelings and emotions are valued and encouraged to be expressed; religious and spiritual beliefs are deep.

In a high-context culture, behavior is viewed in a complex way. People look beyond the obvious to note nuances in meaning, nonverbal communication cues, and the status of others in context. In general, Asian cultural orientations are high context.

Personal characteristics include being indirect, highly affiliative, team-oriented, systematic, steady, quiet, patient, loyal, dependable, informal, servicing, sharing, slow in making decisions, respectful, and good listeners. A longer amount of time is needed for individuals to become acquainted with and trusting of one another; after that, communication is fast. The culture is rooted in the past; it is a slow-to-change, highly stable, unified group.

Collectivists feel comfortable with the constant psychological presence of a group. Important collective social attributes are loyalty to the group, cooperation, contributing to the group without the expectation of immediate reciprocity, and public modesty about one's abilities (Triandis, 1988). People are more likely to downplay their own goals in favor of the goals of the valued group. Individuals are more committed to group agreements and planned actions.

## Contextual Factors

The factors or dimensions of context are time and space (Hall, 1977; Hall & Hall, 1990). These factors can be considered across all cultures; they are not specific to one culture or another or have meaning in and of themselves. Hall notes the importance of these factors as information is disseminated and acted on.

Hall uses the terms "monochronic" and "polychronic" to describe the individual orientations to time. In monochronic time, one pays attention to and does only one thing at a time. Events, functions, people, communication, and information flow are compartmentalized. In monochronic cultures, people are governed by time and work and they communicate in a linear fashion. In polychronic time, many things may happen or receive attention at the same time. In polychronic cultures, there is great involvement with people and events. People take precedence over time and schedules, and there is an emphasis on completing human transactions.

Monochronic cultures are basically low-context cultures that control and restrict information flow and communication. Polychronic cultures are basically high-context cultures in which information flows freely among all participants. Because the information is available to all, one is expected to use intuition and to understand automatically.

The purpose of meetings and communication in low-context cultures is to pass and/or determine information in order to evaluate and make decisions. In high-context cultures, the purpose of meetings is to reach consensus about what is already known. The two processes are mutually exclusive in that in the low context, meaning is derived primarily from the coding of the messages. In the high context, the individuals already have the information or message within them. Hall and Hall (1990, p. 19) strongly emphasize the fact that "one must always be contexted to the local time systems" when working across cultures.

Spatial changes influence and often give definition to communications and human interaction even to the extent of overriding the spoken word. Spatial cues are perceived by all of the senses. Some cultures may attune more to the auditory, some to kinesthetic, others to visual, and so on. Each individual is surrounded by invisible boundaries of personal space or territories. These often communicate ownership or power when linked to physical location. With low-context monochronic societies and individuals, personal space is private, controlled, and often large. In contrast, in high-context polychronic societies or individuals, space is often shared with subordinates and centralized or shared in an information network. Time and space are often closely linked in that access to individuals is often dictated by both location and timing. An individual's availability is often determined by how well he or she is screened or separated from others.

## Context and Communication

In his book, *Beyond Culture*, Hall (1977) identifies the critical need for individuals to transcend cultural barriers. He challenges us to ". . . recognize and accept the multiple hidden dimensions of unconscious culture . . ." (p. 2), because each culture has its own hidden or unconscious dimensions. In analyzing communication factors, Hall notes that it is impossible to know the meaning of a communication without knowing the context. Barker (1968) established that as the ecology or environment changed, so did people's responses.

With regard to context in relation to meaning, Hall (1977) states that context will largely determine the message that a person receives. Hall defines the collectivistic, high-context (HC) message or communication as one in which the vast majority of the information is either internalized in the individual or in the physical context of the situation. Very little is in the explicit transmission or coding of the message. With the individualistic, low-context (LC) message, the mass of information is in the explicit coding of the message, not within the individual or the situation (context).

Individuals perform the critically important function of correcting for distortions or omissions in the messages they receive. The key to being effective in communicating across cultures is in knowing the degree of information—context—that must be supplied and in the correct reading of another individual's verbal and nonverbal behavior. The context—the information surrounding an event that gives it meaning—varies from culture to culture and is often the determining factor in whether or not individuals from different cultures will communicate effectively, reach understanding, and make decisions. The integration of both verbal message and context is the basis of effective communication (Hall, 1977; Hall & Hall, 1990).

## The Profile

High versus low context, individualism versus collectivism, and the factors of time and space are not the only dimensions by which culture can be analyzed. However, they are ways in which a determination can be made as to how to communicate and work with individuals, regardless of their cultural orientations. Although many comparisons of major ethnic and national groups have been made based on contextual needs and decision-making processes, few, if any, have been developed to measure individual responses. The Cross-Cultural Interactive Preference Profile (CCIP Profile) was developed to reveal an individual's preferences in terms of contextual needs and socialization in interactive, group-decision-making processes so that effective communication, facilitation, and training designs could be established.

## Development

The profile items were developed from a review of the literature and were given to seven experts who had extensive knowledge and experience in cross-cultural environmental learning and group interaction. A conceptual review was completed first. To establish content validity on revisions, a Delphi panel was asked to review each of the profile items for appropriateness and inclusion. This panel was selected on the basis of working experience in highly cross-cultural learning environments and experience in designing either assessment tools or training materials that had been applied in that environment. Panel members also had worked as consultants or employees in business and industry. They reviewed items based on appropriateness to the culturally defined categories, readability, comprehension, and the exclusion of culturally charged contextual items. Individual reviews and further revisions continued until at least 75 percent of panel members agreed on each of the forty-eight retained items.

The profile was pilot tested with a culturally mixed group of university students, and feedback was solicited about the profile through focus groups and an interview process. Particular attention was paid to comprehensibility of the language. Minor adjustments were made before administering the CCIP Profile to 512 freshmen and sophomore students (247 males and 265 females) at Brigham Young University-Hawaii, where fifty cultural orientations were represented. Approximately 20 percent of the students were from the mainland United States and other (predominantly European) Western cultural mixes, 25 percent were from Hawaii, 25 percent were from the South Pacific, 25 percent were from the Asian-rim countries, and the remainder were from other parts of the world. It was observed that most foreign students, after their arrival on campus, would develop and retain socialization patterns that maintained close ties to their own cultural groups through culture-based clubs and organizations. Thus, the majority of the students surveyed were close to their native orientations.

The CCIP Profile is intended for use with individuals who are involved in cross-cultural activities that result in the development of knowledge and skills. The profile is designed to foster awareness of, and sensitivity to, contextual orientation that affect interactive behavior in culturally diverse groups.

## Validity

The content validity of the profile was assured through the implementation of the literature review, the iterative Delphi panel, and interviews during the pilot-testing stages.

Construct validity was determined by assessing the relationship of test items with cultural groups through the use of factor analysis and multi-discriminant analysis. The profile employs a Likert scale, which resulted in a single factor or construct when factor analysis was applied. Factor loadings were above a level of .45. To assure validity,

more than ten respondents per item were utilized. Item analysis utilizing two-tail probability showed  $p$ -value .001 on all items.

Overall validity was based on the strength of the factor-1 loadings and the significance levels of the individual items. However, it is noted that there are some weaknesses to be dealt with through a continued analysis with additional populations.

## Reliability

There are no current tests or standards with which to compare the results of the profile administration. A coefficient of internal consistency was determined utilizing a single-test administration. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used to test reliability, as the profile relies on a nondichotomous, six-level Likert scale to circumvent a neutral or nonresponse, and a method of rational equivalence could not be used. Reliability coefficients (alphas) were: .49 in seven of the eight factor groupings, with the eighth at .34.

## Suggested Use

The CCIP Profile can be used in various aspects of group decision making, cross-cultural conflict resolution, training and development, and team development in diverse work and educational settings. It is particularly useful as a clarification tool with newly organized groups or teams. Facilitators can be assured that finding out about one's own and others' preferences is a releasing experience, not a restricting one, as may be feared. Finding out about cultural preferences frees group members to recognize their own natural predispositions and to respect and learn how to effectively interact with the differences in the group with a minimum of conflict. Groups can become less polar or fragmented and more multi-culturally sensitive and unified in their interactions.

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## Cross-Cultural Interactive Preferences Profile

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There are no right or wrong answers on this questionnaire. The answers will be useful only if you respond honestly and candidly. By doing this, you will help us to better understand the ways in which you prefer to interact within a group where there is more than one culture represented.

*Instructions:* The following items describe how you might interact within a work or problem-solving group. Respond to each item by filling in the circle that best describes your preference, that is, how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement. This should take about fifteen minutes.

<b>Example:</b>	
<b>You would mark your questionnaire</b>	<b>If you strongly agreed with this statement:</b>
<input type="radio"/> SD <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> MD <input type="radio"/> MA <input type="radio"/> A <input checked="" type="radio"/>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>It's O.K. for new situations or ideas to be presented to the group for a decision even if some details are not included.</p>
<b>You would mark your questionnaire</b>	<b>If you disagreed with this statement:</b>
<input type="radio"/> SD <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> MD <input type="radio"/> MA <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> SA	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>I would let members do their own work the way they think best.</p>

SD = Strongly Disagree  
D = Disagree

MA = Mildly Agree  
MD = Mildly Disagree

A = Agree  
SA = Strongly Agree

- SD  D  MA  MD  A  SA 1. I need the leader of the group to explain the details before I can make a decision.
- SD  D  MA  MD  A  SA 2. I work best when we share information and then reach consensus as a group.

SD = Strongly Disagree  
D = Disagree

MA = Mildly Agree  
MD = Mildly Disagree

A = Agree  
SA = Strongly Agree

- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 3. Information should be held in common and not controlled by specific individuals or parts of the group.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 4. It is better to quietly acknowledge that a person may be incorrect or needs to change rather than to openly confront him/her in the group.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 5. It is best for all decisions to be approved by the whole group.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 6. Experts within a group should be allowed to make decisions for the group.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 7. Getting the details of needed information is more important than knowing who provided them.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 8. I am impatient when someone tries to explain something I already know.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 9. Individuals within a group do not need to share the information they have with the rest of the group until it is absolutely necessary.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 10. It is not important that all members of a group contribute ideas.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 11. I would compromise with others in order to maintain harmony in the group.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 12. I would expect the team leader to direct members away from problems or issues that would upset the balance of the group.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 13. I would trust the group members and support their shared interests even if I do not agree with them.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 14. I would use the utmost diplomacy in order not to embarrass anyone while working through problems in the group.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 15. Once a commitment has the group's approval, it is expected to be honored.

SD = Strongly Disagree  
D = Disagree

MA = Mildly Agree  
MD = Mildly Disagree

A = Agree  
SA = Strongly Agree

- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 16. I would decide on my own what should be done and how it should be done.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 17. I would direct others toward getting results as soon as possible.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 18. I would directly confront problems or conflicts between individuals in the group.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 19. I would say what I thought, even though it may hurt others' feelings.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 20. I would want outstanding individual performers in group activities rewarded more than those who did not contribute as much.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 21. I don't like doing work on my own or being separate from the group.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 22. I feel uncomfortable when there are individuals in the group who remain distant and don't interact with the group.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 23. In a group meeting, it is important that we stay close together.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 24. It is best to have the leader in a centralized location where all members of the group can interact with him or her.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 25. The best way to work in a group is to stay together in the same room until agreement is reached.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 26. I don't want to be interrupted when I'm working on or thinking about a problem.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 27. I need to be away from the group in order to think and make a decision.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 28. I prefer to work alone until I am ready to get with the group.

SD = Strongly Disagree  
D = Disagree

MA = Mildly Agree  
MD = Mildly Disagree

A = Agree  
SA = Strongly Agree

- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 29. The leader of a group or organization needs to be separate but where I can go to him or her when I need to.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 30. When working in a group, I prefer to work with individuals who think as I do.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 31. I would desire lots of time and flexibility to accommodate the different personalities in the group.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 32. If there were disagreement in the group, I would be patient while others worked through and resolved conflicts before proceeding.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 33. It is more important to take the time needed to develop or share ideas before making a decision than it is to meet deadlines.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 34. It is O.K. to stop a group discussion and take a break whenever needed.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 35. Plans should always be open to change.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 36. A group should not stop working or discussing until a solution is found or a decision is made.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 37. I would not tolerate postponements.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 38. It is very important that a schedule be maintained.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 39. The group should deal with only one thing at a time until a decision is made.
- (SD) (D) (MA) (MD) (A) (SA) 40. When the group has finished its work, it is best to move on and form new relationships.

## CCIP Profile Scoring Sheet

*Instructions:* Convert each rating that you gave to a profile item to a number, as shown, and place that number in the appropriate spaces on this sheet.

SD = 0      D = 1      MD = 2      MA = 3      A = 4      SA = 5

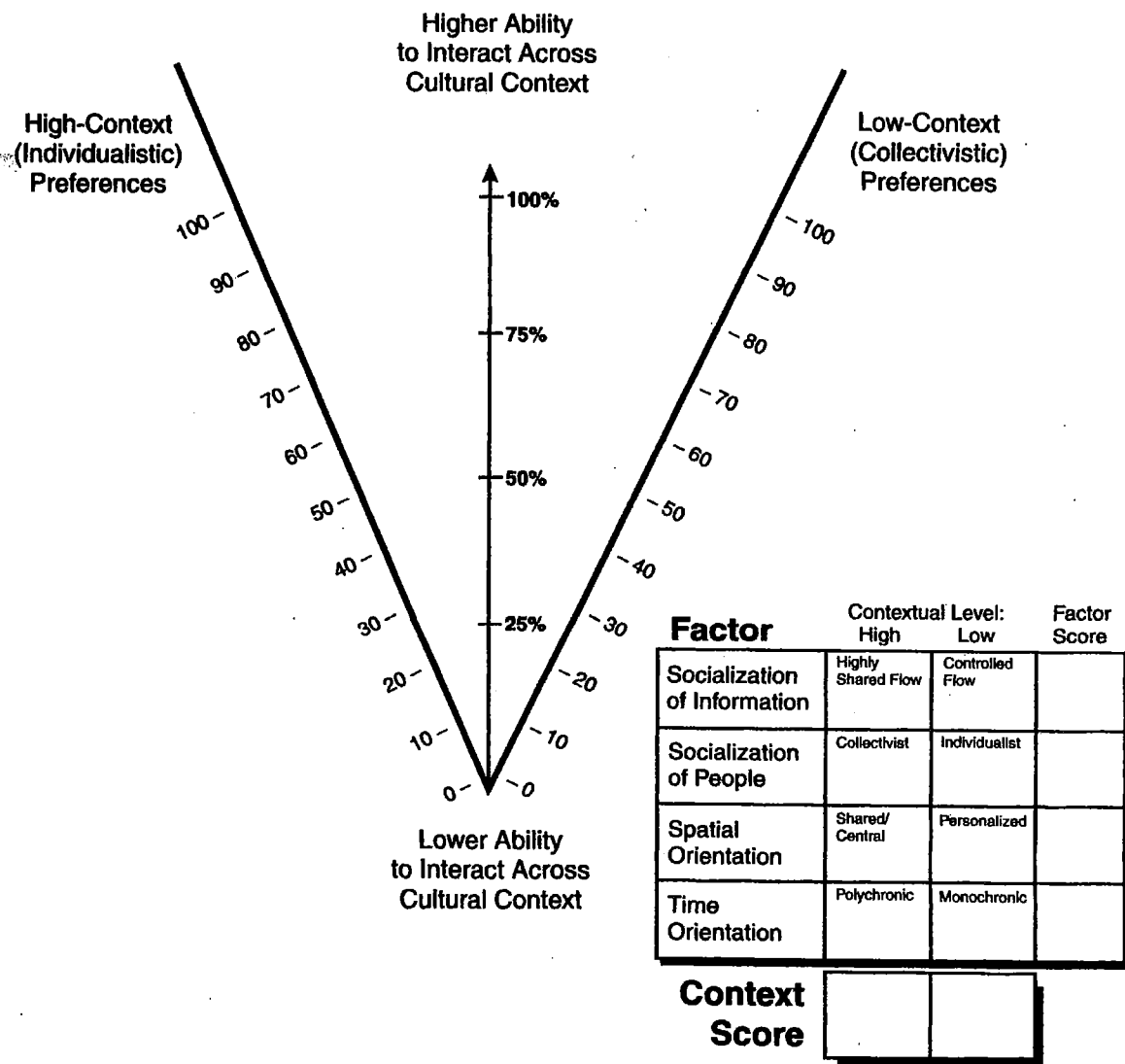
Place the *total scores* in the appropriate boxes on the following sheet.

Dimension	Subscores	
<b>Socialization of Information</b>	<b>Item — Highly Shared Flow</b>	<b>Item — Controlled Flow</b>
	1. _____	6. _____
	2. _____	7. _____
	3. _____	8. _____
	4. _____	9. _____
	5. _____	10. _____
	Total _____	Total _____
<b>Socialization of People</b>	<b>Item — Collectivist</b>	<b>Item — Individualist</b>
	11. _____	16. _____
	12. _____	17. _____
	13. _____	18. _____
	14. _____	19. _____
	15. _____	20. _____
	Total _____	Total _____
<b>Spatial Orientation</b>	<b>Item — Shared/Central</b>	<b>Item — Personalized</b>
	21. _____	26. _____
	22. _____	27. _____
	23. _____	28. _____
	24. _____	29. _____
	25. _____	30. _____
	Total _____	Total _____
<b>Time Orientation</b>	<b>Item — Polychronic</b>	<b>Item — Monochronic</b>
	31. _____	36. _____
	32. _____	37. _____
	33. _____	38. _____
	34. _____	39. _____
	35. _____	40. _____
	Total _____	Total _____

## CCIP Profile Interpretation Graph

**Instructions:**

1. Place the total scores from the CCIP Profile Scoring Sheet in the Factor boxes above.
2. Sum each row across to determine the Factor Score. Sum each column down to determine the Context Score.
3. Plot the "contextual level scores" on the graph, with the high-context score on the left axis and the low-context score on the right axis. Draw a line between the two plotted points.



## CCIP Profile Interpretation Sheet

### Background

As individuals develop within their cultures and in interactions with others, they form preferences about various aspects of interpersonal interactions. Many of these preferences have been identified in terms of what is called "context." Two basic contexts are "individualistic" and "collectivistic." The context in which one is interacting affects how one relates to others, communicates, interprets information, and so on.

### *Individualistic*

Individualistic people and cultures focus on individual goals, tasks, facts, solutions, time management, and privacy. Individualists are assertive, directive, controlling, results-oriented, independent, strong-willed, competitive, quick to make decisions, impatient, organized, self-contained, and have a high need to be recognized for their performance. Goals are action-oriented to produce short-term material profits, and financial success is esteemed. Emotions are considered inappropriate in most social and work settings.

Individualists tend to have a monochronic time focus. One pays attention to and does only one thing at a time. Events, functions, people, communication, and information flow are compartmentalized.

Individualistic communication is "low context," which means that interactions are linear and specific and do not carry a lot of cultural "context" within them. Meaning is derived primarily from the coding of the message. Social skills include meeting people quickly, finding topics of conversation that others can discuss readily, being interesting so that the others will have memories of the interaction six months later, and obtaining information from others in pursuit of individual goals (Brislin, 1993).

Individualists' plans are progressive and can be changed quickly. However, such individuals can create less cohesion and stability in a group. They are less committed to group agreements, and when there is a conflict between an individual's goals and those of the group, the individual's goals are of major importance. Individualists do not like to have to consider the opinions of others before they act. Clearing their plans with others interferes too much with their desire "to do their own thing" (Brislin, 1993).

### *Collectivistic*

Collectivistic individuals and cultures place emphasis on relationships, group goals, the process and surrounding circumstances, time as natural progression, verbal communication, communal space, and interrelationships. Cultural norms are primarily group oriented. Family and community ties are strong; expression of feelings is val-

ued and encouraged; religious and spiritual beliefs are deep. These mutual understandings and beliefs supply the "high context" of this orientation.

In such a culture, behavior is viewed in a complex way. People look beyond the obvious to note nuances in meaning, nonverbal communication cues, and the status of others in the context of a shared history and understanding. Thus, language need not be as specific; relationships are part of the message. Because the information is available to all, one is expected to use intuition and to understand automatically.

Personal characteristics include being: indirect, affiliative, informal, team-oriented, loyal, systematic, quiet, patient, dependable, cooperative, sharing, slow in making decisions, respectful, a good listener, contributing to the group without the expectation of immediate reciprocity, and public modesty about one's abilities (Triandis, 1990). A longer amount of time is needed for individuals to become acquainted with and trusting of one another; after that, communication is fast. The culture is rooted in the past; it is slow-to-change, highly stable, unified.

People are more likely to downplay their own goals in favor of the goals of the group, and individuals are more committed to group agreements.

Collectivists tend to have a polychronic time focus. Many things may happen or receive attention at the same time. There is great involvement with people and events. People take precedence over time and schedules, and there is an emphasis on completing human transactions.

Hall (1977) notes that it is impossible to know the meaning of a communication without knowing the context. Context largely determines what one pays attention to or does not pay attention to. The information surrounding an event that gives it meaning varies from culture to culture. The key to being effective in communicating across cultures is in knowing the degree of information—context—that must be supplied and in the correct reading of another individual's verbal and nonverbal behavior.

### *Individual Application*

People who score high on one side of the CCIP Profile Interpretation Graph and low on the opposite side (a steeply sloped profile) may interact well with those who have profiles similar to theirs, but not with others.

People whose scores are relatively high on both sides of the graph (a flat profile) probably have little difficulty in interacting within groups in which there are varying levels of contextual requirements. These people are better able to move between situations and/or groups with ease, to be more flexible and adaptable in interpretation and decision-making situations, and to be more responsive in learning and decision making. The higher the flat profile, the greater the flexibility.

The factor scores represent relative levels in each of the factor preference areas. Where flexibility and adaptability problems exist, low scores may indicate which orientation

or requirement may be responsible. Sub scores will indicate the dominance of the characteristic. The differences between sub scores indicate level of flexibility for a characteristic (higher differences represent higher flexibility). In general, low scores represent a potential difficulty in interacting across contextual boundaries.

*Note:* Language, religion, philosophical, and other communication or social barriers are not included in this profile.

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