

Overview:

This lesson plan will challenge participants to consider how they view people in different situations and from different cultures, as well as how empathy impacts our views of others. They will first be introduced to the Alicja Iwanska's "scenery, machinery, people." Then, they will identify how they view people depicted in various images and discuss how empathy can help to change their perspectives and develop relationships.

Background and Information:

This activity was adapted from an article by Jerry Jones posted on his website, *The Culture Blend* (see citation below). The article is based on ideas by Alicja Iwanska, a Polish anthropologist.

Objectives:

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

1. Understand and articulate how we place people into categories.
2. Understand how empathy impacts how we form relationships.
3. Explain how they put people into categories in their lives.

Time:

30 minutes

Group Size:

Small group

Materials:

Projector/white board, original PowerPoint or updated PowerPoint ([Downloads](#)), copies of original blog (optional; in [Links](#))

Note: The updated PowerPoint contains more contemporary images.

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Minimization
- Acceptance

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).

Openness:

- To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
- To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

Empathy

- To interpret intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview.
- To demonstrate ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group

Other Skills:

Teamwork, Leadership

Activity Instructions:

Note: You may choose to use one of the PowerPoints provided (see Materials section above)

1. Explain the scenario of a farmer and his perspective on scenery, machinery, and people. You can also create and use your own example.
2. Explain the concepts of scenery, machinery, and people with basic examples.
 - a. Scenery: everything in the distance, i.e. mountains and clouds. Emphasize that they do not take *priority* to the farmer.
 - b. Machinery: everything used to complete a task or everything used by the farmer, i.e. tractors, horses. Exists for the purpose of *accommodating* the farmer.
 - c. People: people, such as family, friends, neighbors, community members, etc. Have value beyond the farmer and require *emotional labor*.
3. Complicate the previous explanation by explaining how the farmer also views people as scenery and machinery.
 - a. Scenery: Native Americans who live in the distance. The farmer does not encounter them in his day-to-day life.
 - b. Machinery: The workers and farm hands who help the farmer and are paid cheaply.
 - c. People: Those who are worthy of a relationship.
4. Finally, ask the group to complete the following chart:

Who are your...

people people?

machinery people?

scenery people?

For whom are you...

people people?

machinery people?

scenery people?



5. Debrief with the following suggested questions, or with questions of your own:
- Who sees you in these categories? Why?
 - What does it take to move up a category?
 - How does empathy build relationships?
 - How can we use this activity to change our relationships or alter our perspectives?
 - What was unexpected about this activity?
 - How did this activity change your perspective on the people around you/in your life?

Related Tools:

Tools to use before this lesson:

- [My Inner Rules](#)
- [The Parable](#)

Tools to use next:

- [Auditing Your Personal Networks](#)
- [If I Woke Up Tomorrow](#)

Similar tools:

- [Are You Listening?](#)
- [Living in a Bubble](#)