

Overview:

This lesson plan will challenge participants to reflect on their own cultural experiences and connect with each other. They will write short poems where each line begins with "I Am," which will allow them to describe what's most important to the formation of their identities.

Background and Information:

This activity was adapted from resources produced by several organizations, including inspirED, Critical Multicultural Pavilion, the International Literacy Association (ILA), and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). The "I Am" poem frame has been used by educators in a variety of contexts.

Objectives:

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

1. Reflect on themselves as cultural beings.
2. Connect with others across identity borders.
3. Compare and contrast the cultural influences in their lives with other participants.

Time:

30 minutes

Group Size:

Small group

Materials:

Paper and pen/pencil for each participant

Note: Some versions of this activity are best facilitated by providing a template in a handout. Several templates are provided in the [Links](#) section of this tool.

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Polarization
- 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).

Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks:

- To demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs & practices.

Other Skills:

Friendship, Diversity & Inclusion

Links to Activity Instructions & Additional Resources:

- This version, "[Who I Am Poems](#)," was created by Paul C. Gorski. Gorski says that his version of the activity can either be used as an introductory activity to enable self-reflection and connections with others in the group. Alternatively, it can be used as a closing activity to allow participants to reflect on an experience in relation to their own identities.
- [This version from inspirED](#) uses a specific template and asks participants to share their poems anonymously (The facilitator will either read several out loud without identifying the author, or they will hand out the poems at random to other participants).
- [This version from On Course](#) asks participants to represent their poems on a poster and then hang up as part of a "Gallery Walk" for other participants to read their poems and provide feedback.
- There are several templates available that facilitators can use to help participants craft their poems.
 - [Template from ReadWriteThink.org](#)
 - [Eight different templates from tnellen.com](#)
 - [Template and a sample from Greeley Schools](#)

Related Tools:

Tools to use before this lesson:

- [Name Story, aka The Name Game](#)
- [25 Questions](#)

Tools to use in conjunction with this lesson:

- [Thiagi Debrief](#)
 - Use this tool to debrief participants after writing their I Am poems

Tools to use next:

- [Cultural Autobiography](#)
- [Danger of a Single Story](#)
- [Listening Deeply to Values](#)



Similar tools:

- [Are You Listening?](#)
- [Can Anyone Hear Me?](#)
- [Different Similarities](#)
- [Cultural Artifact \(Show and Tell\)](#)
- [Voices from the Past](#)
- [Who am I? Identity Dialogue](#)