

**Overview:**

This lesson plan will challenge participants to reflect on how culture has affected their identities. They will write an autobiography where they consider how factors such as family, traditions, friends, and education have shaped them.

**Background and Information:**

This activity was created by Lise Sparrow and is available in the second edition of Theodore Gochenour's book, *Beyond Experience: The Experiential Approach to Cross-Cultural Education* (see citation below). There are also many versions widely available on the Internet. Links to several of those versions are on the following page.

**Objectives:**

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

1. Identify factors which affected participants' acculturation and identity, such as family structure, nationality, rituals, environment, friends, institutions, mobility, and education.
2. Demonstrate self-awareness of these factors to another person through discussion.

**Time:**

45 minutes

**Group Size:**

Pairs

**Materials:**

Paper and pens/pencils. May consider using electronic devices (e.g. smartphone) for note-taking.

**Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:**

- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization

**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).

**Other Skills:**

Friendship; Mentorship & Leadership; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

## Links to Activity Instructions:

- [How to Write a Cultural Autobiography by Jennifer Streit on Pen & the Pad](#)
- [Cultural Autobiography Prezi by Paige Meadowcroft](#)
- [Examples of cultural autobiographies from Jacki Miner & Suzanne Toczyski, Sonoma State University](#)

## Related Tools:

*Similar tools:*

- [Cultural Artifact \(Show and Tell\)](#)
- [Who Am I? Identity Dialogue](#)