

Overview:

There is often a tendency to equate culture with nationality. However, cultural behaviors, values, and identities often transcend national borders, or many different cultures can coexist within the same country. Therefore, this activity asks participants to consider how culture is both bigger and smaller than nationality by first mapping out subgroups within a particular country and then identifying cultural identities that eclipse the national border and appear throughout the continent/region surrounding that country.

Objectives:

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

1. Articulate understandings of culture that are both smaller than (illustrating heterogeneity and cultural variation within) and larger than (reflecting social groups that transcend borders) nations.
2. Exemplify these new understandings of culture with specific examples from their home country and cultural groups to which they belong.

Time:

30 minutes

Group Size:

Pairs

Materials:

Two pieces of paper and writing utensils for each participant

Optional: a world map to show learners for the third drawing task

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).

Activity Instructions:

1. Ensure that each participant has a piece of paper and a pen/pencil.
2. Ask participants to draw a quick outline of a country that they feel is home to them. Only give them 1-2 minutes to perform this task so that they don't get too caught up in drawing a "perfect" map. The shape of the country is not really important!

Note: Participant should draw the outline of their country large enough so that they can write clearly and legibly inside of it.

3. Then, participants should "zoom in" and map out the cultural subgroups that exist within that country. Those subgroups could consist of various religions, ethnicities, languages, or any other cultural trait that comes to mind.
4. Next, participants should "zoom out" and draw the continent or region surrounding their country. Once again, only 1-2 minutes for them to complete this drawing. Geographical accuracy is not really important here – they just need a space to stimulate their task in #5.

Note: Participants can either draw the continent surrounding their country, or they can draw it on the other side of the paper, depending on how much room they have left.

5. Participants should then identify cultural groups that transcend the borders of their country (race/ethnicity, religion, language, etc.).
6. Finally, either on the back of their original piece of paper or on a second sheet, participants should zoom out even further and draw a map of the entire world. With this map, they will identify how the cultural groups they identified in their previous maps are present across the world. Again, don't allow much time for the drawing of the actual map. Vague outlines that suggest continents are sufficient. If you think it would be helpful, you could project or screen share a map of the world for learners to use as a drawing guide.
7. Conclude the activity with the following debriefing questions. The facilitator could choose to have participants discuss in pairs first if they believe that would be helpful to stimulate discussion.
 - After drawing your maps, what conclusions can you draw about culture within and around your home country? What about across the world?
 - Why do we often equate culture with nationality?
 - What are we missing when we assume that culture and nationality are the same?
 - What are the dangers of equating culture and nationality? Can we think of any examples where this false equivalence has caused problems?

Related Tools:

Similar tools:

- [Culture and Values](#)
- [Draw a Tree](#)
- [Hidden Ways in Which Culture Differs, The](#)