

The Danger of a Single Story

Introduce the activity by saying that the students will now watch a video and then discuss some questions related to it. Invite students to watch the video carefully and ask the facilitator for any clarifications.

The facilitator plays the video “The Danger of a Single Story” (see Resources for link to the video), a TED-Talk by writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Facilitate the discussion about the video using the questions below:

- How does the idea of a “single story” relate to stereotypes and generalizations?
- Can you think of “single stories” told about your own culture? Do these stories reinforce stereotypes? How?
- What can we do to start breaking these “single stories”?

Encourage students to start putting together a list with “alternative stories” (books, movies, etc.) to share with each other as a way to start breaking “single stories”.

Part III - Closing (10 min)

Close this activity by leading a discussion on:

- Identifying the fine line between generalizations and stereotypes.
- The benefits of generalizations in intercultural interactions.
- Things we can do to help ourselves and others transform stereotypes.

Give students their individual envelopes to add their personal reflections on today’s activity. Ask them to reflect individually and write down on post-its or index-cards a couple of sentences on what they have learned today about stereotypes and generalizations and how they plan to use these learnings on their everyday life. Make sure they put their notes on the envelopes and return them to you. Facilitator should keep the envelopes to be used in the upcoming activities.

RESOURCES

The Danger of a Single Story, TED-Talk by writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Available here: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.

Generalizations & Stereotypes, Intercultural Learning for AFS & Friends series, #1, 2011. Available here: <https://woca.afs.org/education/p/icl-for-afs-and-friends>

Bennett, M.J. (Ed.). *Basic concepts of intercultural communication: Selected readings*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1998.

O’Mara, J. *Diversity Activities and Training Designs*. San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Company, 1994.