

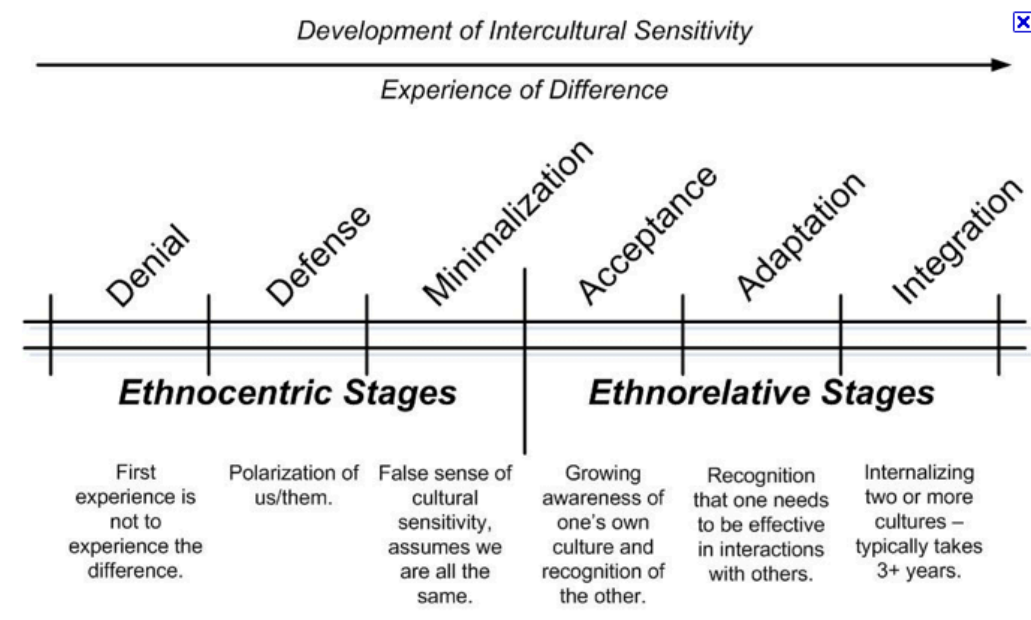
# 10 Activities and Multimedia Resources for Building Intercultural Competency

As you delve into dialoguing about culture, please take a look at some of the activities below to help your participants begin to think deeply about what it's like to interact with people from another culture or, experience living in a culture different from the one you grew up in.

## Pre-activity Resource

**What is intercultural competence?** A useful tool for you and for your participants as you begin to engage in intercultural dialogue is Milton Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). As you share the suggested activities found here within our guide, think about how group members' statements might indicate the stages of development below. Feel free to share the tool with your group in advance of any of the activities you do. You can read more at the following link and see the tool represented below:

[http://www.wholecommunities.org/pdf/privilege/4\\_Becominginterculturallycompe\\_Bennett.pdf](http://www.wholecommunities.org/pdf/privilege/4_Becominginterculturallycompe_Bennett.pdf)



### Suggestion 1: Watch the film, "Crossing Borders"

Have your participants watch either on their own or in small groups "Crossing Borders", a documentary film of Moroccan and American students as they travel together through Morocco and dialogue about what it means to be from either culture.

Please ensure that you purchase the appropriate downloadable version: <http://cb-films.org/purchase>

**Suggested dialogue prompts:**

- 1) What was your experience watching the film Crossing Borders? (e.g. thoughts, feelings, questions)
- 2) What impact did the film have on your own personal views?
- 3) Do you feel that the general view in the U.S. of Muslims is fair? (Why? Why not?)
- 4) In what way did that make you aware of the role of media images in the US?
- 5) Is there something that you are inspired to do after watching the film (after this discussion)?
- 6) Do you think that intercultural activities are needed in order to learn about the world we live in? (Why?)

**Suggestion 2: Have your group complete the Implicit Associations/Bias Test**

**What is Implicit Bias?** Attitudes, or stereotypes, that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

Unconscious bias leads to behaviors that can offend others without your direct social awareness of the offense. It often represents beliefs that seem so true that they become just part of how we see things. “We do not see things as they are, we see things as we are.” Anais Nin

We are exposed to lots of information every day. Our brains cannot process everything. It is normal and natural for our brains to adapt by processing only some of the information. This information isn't random, but is informed by our experiences or by society at large. It is not our fault, but it is our responsibility to be **aware**, to think critically about how these unconscious messages inform ours and others everyday experiences, and to consider what we can do to address them.

Have your participants take the Implicit Associations test from Harvard. Multiple cross-culture options are available including a) Arab-Muslim, b) Asian c) skin tone or d) Native American at: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>

To help your participants debrief and understand their scores, it may be helpful to either refer them to the FAQs page, or discuss some of the answers to these questions in your group: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/faqs.html>

**Suggested dialogue prompts:**

- 1) Did your answers surprise you?
- 2) How similar do you think your results are to other people at the school? In your hometown? What about other people who share your ethnicity or nationality?
- 3) What did your results say about what you've learned? Where do you think you learned your first messages about other cultures?

**Suggestion 3: Organize a photo story-telling session**

Have your participants bring in or pull up a photograph that represents one of the words below:

- a) Home
- b) Happiness
- c) The most significant thing that happened this past summer/in your life

Ask participants to be prepared to share a little about why they chose the photo and its cultural meaning to them.

**Suggested dialogue prompts:**

- 1) What elements of the “represented word” were similar to what you shared and others?
- 2) What elements were different?
- 3) Did something someone shared surprise you? Why? How?
- 4) How does this represent or share something important or unique about your culture?

**Suggestion 4: Do “The 5 senses” activity**

This is a great icebreaker to help participants learn who is in the room and the variety of meaningful experiences there are among the group.

Pass out a piece of paper to each participant. Have markers or crayons available. Ask your participants to draw a little picture to represent the 5 senses (sight, taste, smell, touch, sound) for what “Home” means to them. They can draw five separate small pictures or one big one. Give your participants 5-10 minutes to complete their drawing. Then go around the room and have them share.

**Suggested dialogue prompts:**

- 1) What elements of the “represented word” were similar to what you shared and others?
- 2) What elements were different?
- 3) Did something someone shared surprise you? Why? How?
- 4) How do you think what you shared represents important aspects of your cultural identity?

**Suggestion 5: Organize a Cross-cultural Potluck Party!**

Share in the joy of food from around the world! Have your participants each bring in a food item to share with the group that is meaningful for their culture. Have them explain the meaning of the food and then enjoy eating as a group. This is a great way to learn about different dishes, why certain foods are meaningful for different cultures, and how food is experienced from different cultures. Have participants share not only why this food is important for their culture, but if there are any particular traditions for how it is eaten i.e. with a group, as part of a particular festival, etc.

Food is only one of many ways to share culture at a potluck. You can increase the cross-cultural learning by asking each participant to add to an online playlist representing meaningful song traditions for each. Give guests the chance to share why they chose their musical choices.

### Suggestion 6: Watch “Everyone Has a Story” by Facing History and Ourselves

Watch the video of a Cambodian boy who experienced war and then was resettled in the United States and struggled to fit in. Use the sample discussion questions at the link (below the video) to begin a post-video dialogue.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/resource-collections/choosing-to-participate/everyone-has-story>

### Suggestion 7: Learn ‘The Danger of a Single Story’, a TED talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

“Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice — and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.” View it online here:

[http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en)

Have your participants watch the short TED talk during a meeting and discuss using the following prompts.

#### Suggested dialogue prompts:

- 1) What struck you from the video?
- 2) When have others reduced your story to a single one that didn’t represent you?
- 3) What stories have you had to re-build your understanding of? How? When did you realize?
- 4) How in our daily lives can we act more effectively around this?

### Suggestion 8: Organize a large group simulation activity!

These activities may require an entire extra-curricular organization, rather than just a dialogue group. Simulations can be a fun way to let loose and experience cross cultural miscommunications and challenges in a safe space. Two of the most popular games for building intercultural competency are suggested below. These can be a fun way to provide a strong jumping off point for rich dialogue.

- 1) Borrow Barnaga – a simulation game on cultures clash from a local library (if available) and play with your group.
- 2) Bafa Bafa - Lesson plan for Bafa Bafa including some good debrief/dialogue questions is available here:  
<http://www.nyu.edu/classes/persell/aIntroNSF/LessonPlans/BAFABAFALesson%20Plan.htm>

### Suggestion 9: Take a New Perspective on Historical/Current Events!

Find an example of how an international event was portrayed differently in popular news in different countries. Have your group read two articles and discuss the differences that you see.

Ask your group to decide an event to view from multiple perspectives. For example, a student whose family was born in Ethiopia might suggest the 1983-1985 drought that struck portions of Ethiopia. Ask one group member to volunteer to look at how news organization in the country where the event happened portrayed the event. Ask two other group members to volunteer to find articles from other countries that described the event. Have volunteers email or bring one or two articles to you as a moderator to compile for the group to compare. Then, after you've reviewed the articles for suitability, email or bring the articles to the group and ask all participants to read and label any differences they see in the way the events are described.

**\*\*Warning:** The vast differences between media portrayals can yield important dialogue and controversy when doing this exercise. Ensure that this activity is done when group members trust each other, and when a moderator can allow time between meetings to learn more about the historical event and cultural attitudes toward it.

#### Suggested dialogue prompts:

- 1) What struck you looking at the differences or similarities in portrayals?
- 2) What stories about the culture do you see presented? Are they full enough in your opinion?
- 3) What does this make you think about the different messages we get about other cultures?

### Suggestion 10: Have your group complete an Autobiography of an Intercultural Encounter

From the **Facilitator Guide** (read it here:

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/Source/AIE\\_en/AIE\\_notes\\_for\\_facilitators\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/Source/AIE_en/AIE_notes_for_facilitators_en.pdf))

“The Autobiography is a document for learners and normally should be their property to use as they wish. It guides learners to think critically about an intercultural experience, i.e. an encounter with people from another social group. The group can be of any kind: people from another country, from another ethnic group, from another religion, from another region of the same country, from another level or class or stratum of the same society. The Autobiography is to be completed in connection with one specific encounter (each encounter needs a new copy of the Auto biography).”

Find the tool for participants to complete in advance of a meeting here. In a small dialogue group, you can have each participant present on their encounter during each meeting:

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/Source/AIE\\_en/AIE\\_autobiography\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/Source/AIE_en/AIE_autobiography_en.pdf)

## Other Resources:

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Other activities can be found here: [http://www.afs.org/blog/icl/?page\\_id=100](http://www.afs.org/blog/icl/?page_id=100)