

Activity Directions: The Danger of a Single Story

This activity is designed to help educators explore and gain understanding of the characteristics and components of responsive practices in standards-based education. This activity includes two steps designed to:

- Reinforce the importance of knowledge about the attitudes, background and beliefs that may differ from educators' lived experiences.
- Analyze ways to ensure that the implementation of standards-based education is inclusive and culturally sensitive.

Objective

The objective of this activity is to deepen understanding of equity and of the characteristics and components of culturally responsive practices.

Time

60 minutes or more (The length of time required for this activity varies by the number of teams – to shorten, the facilitator could request team members view the video prior to attending the meeting.)

Preparation

1. Review the video, the discussion prompts, and the 1-2-4-All Process.
2. Select a meeting space with tables and chairs for small group interaction, internet access, and video and audio projection equipment.
3. Consider and plan to accommodate the special needs of group attendees. Participants may prefer to follow a printed copy of the transcript while watching the video.
4. Print copies of the discussion questions for each group or participant.
5. Print copies of [Minnesota's Commitment to Equity](#) for each group or participant.

Directions

1. Share the objective and the introduction to the video with team members.
2. View [The Danger of a Single Story](#) video.
3. Read [Minnesota's Commitment to Equity](#) and use the discussion prompts provided.
4. Use the 1-2-4-All process to engage everyone in group conversation with the discussion prompts provided.
5. Discuss plans to learn more or to address concerns that were identified.

Suggested Discussion Prompts

Introduction to the video

“Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. 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” (TEDGlobal, 2009).

Discussion Prompts for debriefing the Video

1. What ideas or messages stood out to you, and why?
2. Identify one time when you operated under a single story and it challenged your beliefs, information, or assumptions. What was your reaction?
3. How does the message of The Danger of a Single Story apply to your daily work?
4. What are some ways in which we can ensure that our education system does not perpetuate a single story?

Discussion Prompts for Minnesota’s Commitment to Equity

1. Which of the items in the document stand out as being important for your work and why?
2. Which of these commitment are challenging for you to carry out?
3. What are some things our organization can do to better align with and act on these commitments?

Overview of 1-2-4-All Process

1-2-4-All is a way to access the inherent power and potential of a diverse group. During the process participants start alone then confer with an elbow partner, combine with another pair, and finally as a whole group to discuss answers to provided questions.

1-2-4-All Sequence

- Silent self-reflection by individuals on the set of questions: two to four minutes
- Singles pair with an elbow partner to generate ideas, building on ideas from self-reflection. Suggested time: four to six minutes
- Pairs join with another pair to create a foursome where ideas are shared and developed (notice similarities and differences). Suggested time: six to eight minutes
- Facilitator asks, “What is one idea that stood out in your conversation?” Each group shares one important idea in the large group (repeat cycle as needed). Length of time for large group sharing will vary by the number of participants.

Exercise adapted from [Liberating Structures](#).

Resources

- Access [The Danger of a Single Story](#) video. (TEDGlobal, 2009)
- Access the [Transcript](#) for The Danger of a Single Story.
- Access a [short video](#) providing more information on the 1-2-4 All: A Liberating Structure.
- Access some [guidance for leading effective discussions](#) and other tools.

- Access some [additional discussion questions](#) for Danger of a Single Story.