

Plan on a Page | Lesson 4: Cultivating Identity Literacy

Guiding Questions:

- How can we talk with each other across our differences?
- What would need to happen at your school for students to feel like they could share personal stories about who they are and what they believe with their friends, peers, and adults?

Activities:

1. Reflect on Identity and Assumptions

Project the following questions for a journal reflection. Let students know that they won't be required to share what they write.

- Based on your identity, what assumptions do you think individuals, even close friends, might make about you?
- What questions could they ask in order to better understand you—your identity, values, experiences, and perspective?

If you feel comfortable, you can share ideas from your response and then see if any volunteers want to share as well.

2. Learn about Racial and Cultural Intimacy

Show the video **Lessons of Cultural Intimacy**. Pause twice at the following times for quick pair-share discussions:

- (02:45) What is the difference between “ego stories” and “soul stories”? Think about your own experience as a student. What are some examples of ego stories that you tell or hear others tell about themselves?
- (05:20) By sharing their soul stories with one another, what experiences did Priya and Winona learn that they shared? What assumptions did they realize they were making about each other? How did sharing soul stories, and not just ego stories, help to strengthen their friendship?

Show the video again if you have time. Then project the questions from Project Zero's "Take Note" thinking routine¹ and have students choose *one* for a journal response and pair share:

- What is the most important point?
- What are you finding challenging, puzzling, or difficult to understand?
- What question would you most like to discuss?
- What is something you found interesting?

3. Discuss the Challenge of Sharing Soul Stories

Divide the class into small groups and distribute the handout **The Challenge of Sharing Soul Stories Discussion**. Encourage students to support their ideas with evidence from the video, resources from this text set, and their own experiences.

2. Reflect on Personal Action

On an **exit card** that you create, have each student write a concrete step they can take to help foster a space that invites storytelling; the impact it would have on their learning, the classroom environment, and others in the class community; and how you can support them.

¹ ["Take Note" Thinking Routine](#) from Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education.