

Assumptions that Divide Us

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1. Overview and Objectives

Activity Overview

Students watch a YouTube video and reflect on why the waitress in the video was unable to communicate with her customers. Surprisingly the problem is not lack of a shared language but some very inflexible assumptions she makes. The activity is intended to give students a chance to reflect on the non-linguistic barriers to communication and the difficulties caused by unchallenged assumptions about the people we interact with.

Learning Objectives

General Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To reflect on barriers to communication
Specific Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To realize that the greatest barrier to communication is not always the lack of a common language.To reflect on the role of assumptions in interpersonal communication.

Keywords	cognitive bias, stereotypes, intercultural awareness
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2. Activity Context

This is a small part of a course on how to get along with people from different backgrounds. The class is relatively large, around 45 students, mainly from Japan but with a few from neighbouring countries. It is taught in Japanese. The students expect to do little more in the classroom than listen to the teacher speak.

Students

Number of students	2 Min.	18 Max.
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Do students need to use a second language?	Yes	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No
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3. Activity Materials & Prep

Activity Duration

Total duration in minutes:	20
How many sessions?	1
Any homework?	No

Materials

Material # 1 Title:	But We're Speaking Japanese!
Material Type:	Youtube video
Material Access:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLt5qSm9U80

Set-Up Instructions

1. Make sure the video is still available on YouTube.
Estimated Set Up Time (min.): 2

4. Activity Description

Suggested Time	Activity Instructions
30s	Teacher asks students to watch the video and think about why the waitress has difficulties communicating with her customers.
2m30s	Students watch the video.
5m	Students discuss with each other what they saw in the video.
5m	Teacher collects students' opinions on the waitress' communication problems.
5m	Students reflect on their own experiences/assumptions which may or may not be similar to those of the waitress.

5. Additional Information

Post-activity suggestions:

It is recommended to follow up this activity by asking students to write their reflections on what they learned by watching and discussing the video.

Additional application scenarios:

This can work as a solitary online activity. Send the students the URL for the video, and then provide some focus questions to answer as they watch and think about the video.