



Diversity Lesson Plan

Students will understand the following:

Objectives

Assumptions can lead to stereotypes and unfair judgments about individuals and ethnic groups.

Stereotypes and biases affect our lives.

Materials

paper

Flip chart, large sheets of paper, black board

Magic markers

Art supplies (construction paper, scissors, tape, glue, magazines to cut up, etc.)

Activity

1. Begin by discussing with students how people often use labels or categories to describe others and how these labels can be based on such characteristics as clothing, looks, the way a person talks, or the groups to which he or she belongs. Explain that categorizing things or people is a natural human inclination; however, people often make assumptions about groups of people they don't even know.
2. Ask the class to brainstorm categories that are used at school to group people. Categories could include labels such as "jocks" or "brains." Write each category the class generates onto the board and then have students narrow that list down to five major categories.
3. Write these major categories onto five separate pieces of flip chart paper and post these around the room. Give the class 10-15 minutes to travel to each posted sheet and write down adjectives related to the category headings. Remind students that they should only add new descriptions to the list.
4. When they are finished, ask students to take a moment and look at the objectives that the class has generated under each group heading. Use the following questions to lead a discussion about what they recorded:
 - Do assumptions apply to everyone in a group?

- Do most people hold the same assumptions about a group? Why or why not?
- Do assumptions tell us anything definite about a categorized individual?

5. How do assumptions affect your behavior toward others?

Now ask students to help define the word "stereotype." Explain that when we make assumptions about an entire group of people, those assumptions are referred to as stereotypes. When assumptions and stereotypes influence our attitudes, we may find that making a fair judgement about someone or something is difficult. This influence on judgement is called a "bias."

Take another look at the adjectives recorded and hold a class discussion around the following questions: Do these adjectives describe stereotypes? How can they be unfair or hurtful?

Discussion Questions:

What are stereotypes and how do they affect people's lives?

Can you think of any events in history that were influenced by stereotypes and biases?

How can the media (newspapers, television, movies) help to reduce stereotyping?

How do people learn to make stereotypes? How might they unlearn them?

Do you think certain groups are more subject to stereotyping than others? If so, why?

What do you think an individual can do to help reduce bias and stereotyping?