

Prejudice

Jonathan Gallimore, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Prescott Campus
PSY 350 and PSY 101

Summary: This activity is designed to expose students' explicit prejudices.

Learning Goal: This activity should help students understand that everyone holds prejudices and to launch a discussion about the source of prejudice – especially ways to reduce it. Often, superordinate goals are a great way to bring together disparate groups, so the class does spend time talking about goals that may unite humanity.

Resources Used:

1. This activity uses a worksheet, “Acceptability of Prejudice,” from <http://breakingprejudice.org/teaching/group-activities/acceptability-of-prejudice.html>
The worksheet was adapted by Mary Kite and Elizabeth Tobin from a 2002 article by Crandell, Eshleman, and O'Brien. Go to the bottom of the page to download the questionnaire and discussion questions.
2. Kahoot – <http://www.kahoot.com/>
3. Discussion questions

Teaching Notes:

1. Have students rate how acceptable it is to have negative feelings about different social groups (acceptable, not acceptable, and neutral). Use a combination of risky social groups (e.g., spousal abusers) and safe social groups (e.g., people that own cats). I use Kahoot to display the social group and the answer options (i.e., acceptable, not acceptable, and neutral).
2. After each question, the instructor records the number of students that selected each answer option on the worksheet referenced in the first bullet point in “Resources Used”.
3. After rating the social groups, the instructor shows students the distribution of answers for all social categories. You can learn a lot about your students at this point because some categories are equally okay to have negative feelings about, but the categories are radically different. Point out categories that have a similar or radically different amount of agreement among students. For example, one class had many students say it was okay to have negative feelings about a women that drank while pregnant, but fewer students in the same class said that it was okay to have negative feelings about someone that abuses their children. Objectively, these are the same thing, but the class considered one group as less socially acceptable than the other.
4. The instructor uses the discussion questions below as the basis for a class discussion, but other discussion questions are perfectly acceptable. I suggest picking questions that you believe will help the class meet their Student Learning Objectives (SLO). The link in the first bullet point of “Resources Used” also has discussion question at the bottom of the page. In lieu of a discussion with the entire class, the instructor can have small groups process the discussion questions and have groups reporting their findings to the class.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it acceptable to have negative feelings about some groups but not other groups?
2. What determines whether it is socially acceptable to have negative feelings about a group or not?
3. How has prejudice changed over time? For example, what groups were acceptable to have negative feeling towards? Why was it acceptable at the time?
4. How can someone be prejudice but not discriminate against another group? Please give me an example.
5. What is an example of “*Old-fashioned*” discrimination?
6. What is an example of *modern discrimination*?
7. Explain how personality can contribute to prejudice.
8. *How does social dominance orientation (SDO) create prejudice?*
9. *How does the fundamental attribution error create prejudice?*
10. *How does the ultimate attribution error create prejudice?*
11. *How do defensive attributions create prejudice?*

According to *social identity theory*, self-esteem is partly determined by one’s social identity or collective self, which is tied to one’s group memberships.

1. How do people use *in-group favoritism and out-group derogation* – criticize out-groups perceived as threatening – to derive self-esteem?
2. How does *Stereotype threat* help people maintain prejudice?

One way we can reduce prejudice is by shifting from *automatic processing* to *controlled processing*, or from mindlessness to mindfulness. *Another way is superordinate goals* (or cooperative interdependence) requiring two groups to work together to achieve a mutual goal.

1. What types of superordinate goals might unite people in your town?
2. What types of superordinate goals might unite people in your state?
3. What types of superordinate goals might unite people in the United States?
4. What types of superordinate goals might unite people in the world?